

HERITAGE APPRAISAL, DESIGN
& ACCESS STATEMENT AND
SCOPE OF WORKS FOR
ROSEMARY COTTAGE
PEARSON ROAD,
SONNING RG4 6UL



Wokingham Borough Council
Application for Listed Building Consent for repairs
and alterations to Rosemary Cottage

1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Appraisal, Design and Access and Scope of works has been prepared to accompany a listed building consent submission to Wokingham Borough Council. The proposed works comprise repairs and internal alterations to the properties known as Rosemary Cottage and Sunnyside, located on Pearson Road within the village of Sonning.

1.1

The cottages, which now form a single dwelling, are Grade II listed (NHLE: 1313066) and are located within the Sonning Conservation Area. They make a positive contribution to its special character and appearance, forming part of a larger terrace of listed buildings along the northern side of Pearson Road. Together with the adjoining and opposing buildings, the cottages contribute to the distinctive historic character and group value of this part of the village.

1.2

The proposed works seek to sensitively modernise and improve the existing accommodation through appropriate repair and modest alterations to the internal arrangement. The principal objectives are to provide:

- First-floor bathroom accommodation.
- Upgraded and modernised services.
- Repair and replace elements of the building.

1.3

To achieve these objectives, the following works are proposed:

- Reconfiguration of the first-floor accommodation to create a new bathroom within the existing first-floor store, involving modest adjustments to the adjoining bedroom partitions and removal of an existing internal window.
- Rewiring and installation of new electrical services within the entrance hall, concealed behind the existing timber tongue-and-groove panelling.
- Repair of the metal-framed and leaded casement window to the rear elevation with a new timber-framed casement.
- Installation of secondary glazing to the ground- and first-floor windows on the principal, street-facing elevation.
- Repair and refurbishment of all existing windows and doors proposed for retention.

1.4

The pre-application document provides a useful photographic record of the proposed works and identifies their locations. It should be read alongside the existing and proposed drawings.

2.0 Heritage Significance

The cottages derive significance from their architectural and historic interest, as well as from their immediate and wider settings. Their significance is reinforced by their position within a terrace of historic cottages that retain a high degree of historic integrity, as recognised by their listed status. The cottages also form part of the wider historic townscape of Sonning village.

2.1

The cottages are of historic interest as surviving examples of evolved vernacular buildings that retain physical evidence of both their earlier origins and subsequent adaptation. Originally comprising two separate cottages,

Rosemary Cottage and Sunnyside, the building retains clear evidence of this historic arrangement in its external form, most notably through the survival of separate entrance openings to the outer bays of the principal south-facing elevation onto Pearson Road.

2.2

The principal elevation onto Pearson Road represents an 18th-century refronting of an earlier structure. It is constructed in painted brickwork beneath a small red clay tile roof. The elevation has a simple and largely symmetrical composition, with each cottage extending to two bays. The outer bays contain renewed timber doors beneath simple, flat canopies, while the inner bays are defined by vertically aligned window openings. This arrangement clearly expresses the domestic character and function of the building.

2.3

The simple composition and restrained architectural detailing of the principal elevation make an important contribution to the building's significance. Key features include the plain brick first-floor string course and segmental brick arch heads above the window openings. The windows are also important contributors to the building's architectural interest. At Rosemary Cottage, the ground- and first-floor windows comprise two-light, leaded, side-hung casements, while those at Sunnyside comprise horizontally sliding sashes, each containing six panes. The ground-floor windows are complemented by painted timber shutters and a half-glazed door beneath a flat hood.

2.4

The rear elevation retains evidence of an earlier phase of construction, including timber framing with brick nogging and an early leaded metal casement window. These features provide tangible evidence of the building's pre-18th-century construction techniques and phased development. The adjoining property to the west, Ivy Cottage (NHLE: 1117429), is described in its listing entry as being 17th century in origin and retaining timber framing internally. Although the external framing to its street frontage is a modern alteration, the false timber framing follows the lines of the original structure. Given the style of timber framing surviving to the rear of Rosemary Cottage and Sunnyside, it is therefore possible that the properties are broadly contemporary in origin.

2.5

The cottages have undergone a number of alterations over time to form a single residential unit. Internally, these alterations have included the removal of internal dividing walls, insertion of stud partitions and construction of a single-storey rear extension.

2.6

The family room is of particular significance internally, retaining sections of the original timber framing within the west and north walls, together with early ceiling timbers and evidence of the original joist sockets.

2.7

Other surviving internal features that contribute to the building's architectural and historic interest include the internal chimney breasts, which provide evidence of earlier heating arrangements and patterns of domestic occupation, and the brickwork dividing wall between the living room and entrance corridor to Rosemary Cottage. The red clay tile flooring within the snug is also of interest.

2.8

Other internal features are of more modest significance and appear to relate to a probable early- to mid-20th-century scheme of refurbishment. These include the tongue-and-groove timber panelling and herringbone-pattern red clay tile flooring within the entrance corridor, together with the parquet flooring to the living room.

2.9

Overall, the significance of the property derives from its architectural integrity and simple vernacular character, the survival of historic fabric dating from different periods, and its ability to demonstrate the evolution of the building from an earlier timber-framed structure to an 18th-century refronted pair of cottages.

3.0 Rationale for the Proposed Works

The proposed works seek to sensitively modernise the existing accommodation through appropriate repair and informed alteration. The intention is to ensure the building's continued active, viable and sustainable use in the long term while respecting and conserving its heritage significance.

3.1

The principal aims of the proposed works are:

- To undertake only those works necessary to bring a currently vacant and vulnerable building back into sustainable long-term use compatible with its significance.
- To address minor damp-related issues through targeted repairs to the external envelope, including windows and doors, using appropriate traditional materials and methods consistent with the building's historic fabric.
- To introduce a first-floor bathroom to meet modern expectations of comfort and living standards while minimising effects on the building's significance.
- To sensitively improve and rationalise circulation between the internal ground-floor spaces, enhancing functionality while respecting the historic layout and hierarchy.
- To improve thermal performance through installing secondary glazing.

4.0 Heritage Assessment

The proposed works have the potential to affect the significance of the building through physical changes to its historic fabric and character.

4.1

For the purposes of this assessment, the proposed works have been grouped into external and internal interventions.

4.2

External Works

The proposed external works to the principal elevation are limited to the repair of existing windows. These works will ensure that the windows remain sound and weather-tight, improving their longevity and functionality while conserving the architectural and historic character of the cottages and their contribution to the wider historic streetscape.

4.3

At the rear elevation, the proposed external works comprise the repairs of first-floor windows together with repairs to the remaining windows and external doors. As with the front elevation, the repair works will ensure that the retained windows and doors remain sound and weather-tight, improving their longevity and functionality.

4.4

The window proposed for repair is of historic interest and comprises a metal casement with leaded lights.

4.5

Internal Works - Cellar

Works will include minor structural repairs to the timber posts to ensure that it continues to support the floor structure above.

4.6

Access to the cellar is currently provided from the south-east, via the living room, and this existing access will be retained and stairs repaired

4.8

The timber posts forming part of the remaining section of the dividing wall will be retained. This will preserve an element of the historic subdivision and maintain legibility of the former plan form.

5.0

Internal Works – Ground Floor

5.1

Within the entrance corridor to Rosemary Cottage, it is proposed to remove the existing electrical cabling and install new wiring behind the existing tongue-and-groove panelling. The panelling will be carefully lifted to allow the services to be installed before being reinstated. This approach provides a modest heritage benefit by concealing modern services while retaining the panelling as a decorative feature.

5.3

Other ground-floor works include the installation of secondary glazing to the windows on the south-facing, street elevation. The window reveals have sufficient depth to accommodate secondary glazing. This represents a reversible intervention that will improve thermal and acoustic performance while avoiding alteration to the historic windows themselves.

5.4

Internal Works – First Floor

The principal intervention at first-floor level is the creation of a family bathroom. The bathroom will be located within the existing store room, with the partition between the store and adjoining bedroom (rear west side) modestly repositioned to provide sufficient floor area. As part of this reconfiguration, an existing internal window will be removed and relocated.

5.5

The formation of new partitions will also provide an opportunity to integrate new plumbing and associated services sensitively within the space. Some limited disturbance to historic fabric will be required to accommodate services from the ground floor and provide external ventilation. Such interventions will be minimised and, externally, will be confined to the rear elevation, leaving the appreciation of the principal elevation and the cottage from Pearson Road unaffected.

6.0 Summary

The proposed works are anticipated to result in a low level of less-than-substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building. This harm arises principally from the loss or alteration of limited elements of historic fabric. However, the identified harm must be considered in the context of the clear and credible heritage and wider benefits arising from the proposals.

6.1

Externally, the principal effect on significance arises from the replacement of a single historic metal casement window on the rear elevation. While the window contributes to the building's evidential value, its repair is necessitated by its condition and forms part of a wider programme of targeted repair. This approach will address existing damp and deterioration issues, ensuring that the building remains weather-tight and capable of long-term conservation. The replacement window will be appropriately detailed to reflect the character of the adjacent openings and preserve the overall appearance of the rear elevation.

6.2

Minor harm will arise from the reconfiguration of the first-floor partitions, including removal of the internal window. These interventions involve limited loss of historic fabric and have been carefully positioned to avoid principal structural elements, including the surviving timber frame. They are required to improve circulation, accommodate modern services and provide a first-floor bathroom, all of which are important to achieving modern standards of occupation and ensuring the building's continued viable use.

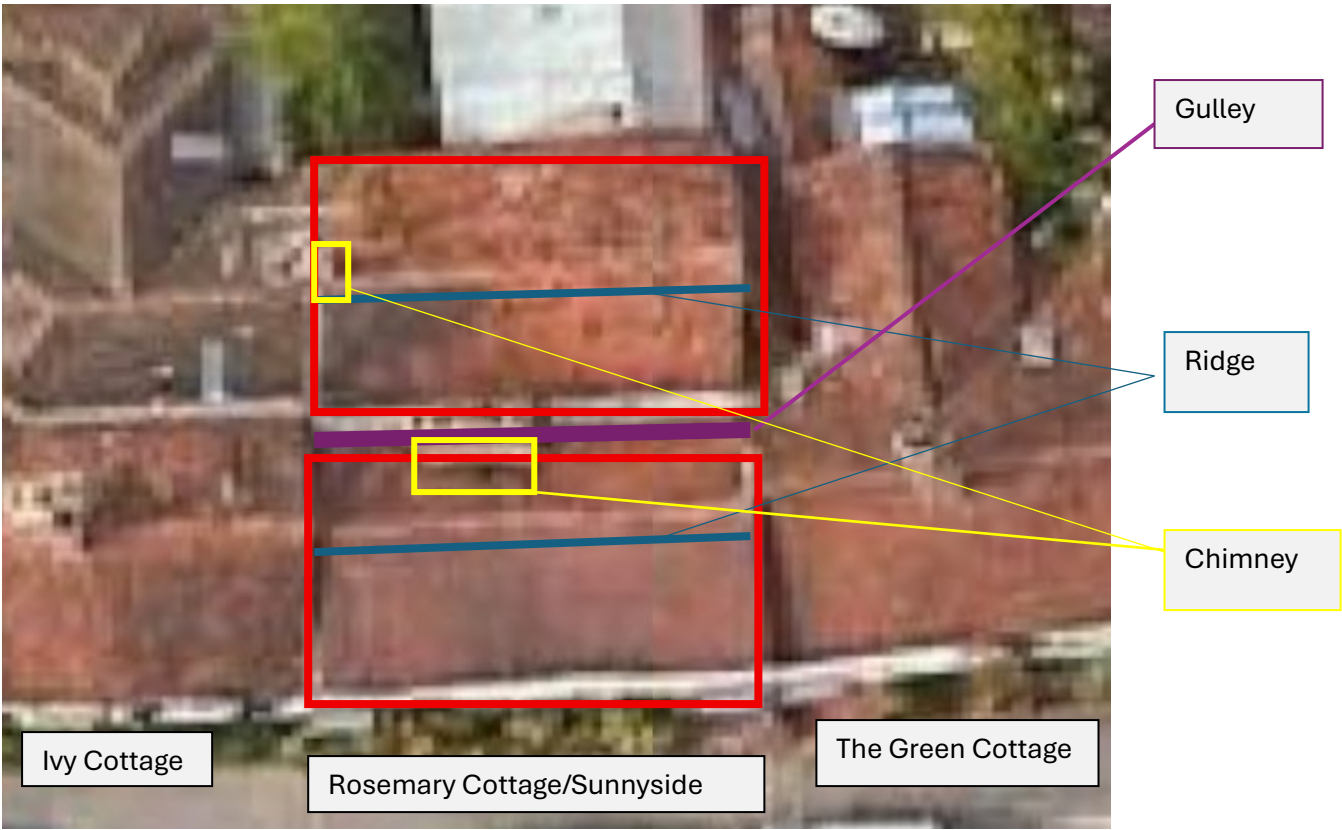
6.4

The installation of secondary glazing represents a series of low-impact and, where appropriate, reversible interventions. These measures will improve thermal performance and living conditions without adversely affecting significant historic fabric.

6.5

Taken as a whole, the proposals will return a currently vacant and vulnerable heritage asset to sustainable long-term use, address existing defects through appropriate repair, and establish a practical basis for its continued maintenance and conservation. These benefits directly support the long-term conservation of the building and its heritage significance. In this context, the identified low level of less-than-substantial harm is considered to be outweighed by the benefits arising from the scheme.

THE SITE



ABOVE – EXISTING ROOF PLAN

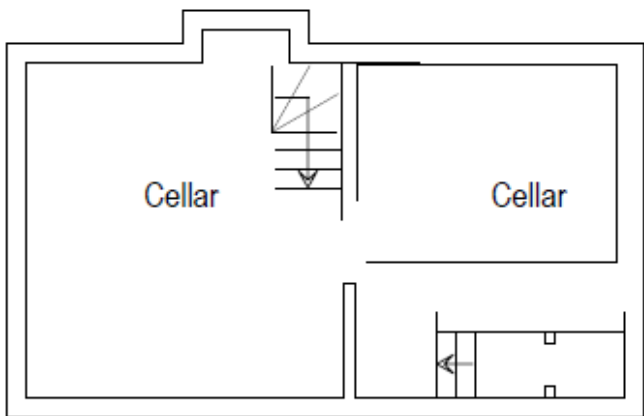
BELOW - FRONT ELEVATION EXISTING



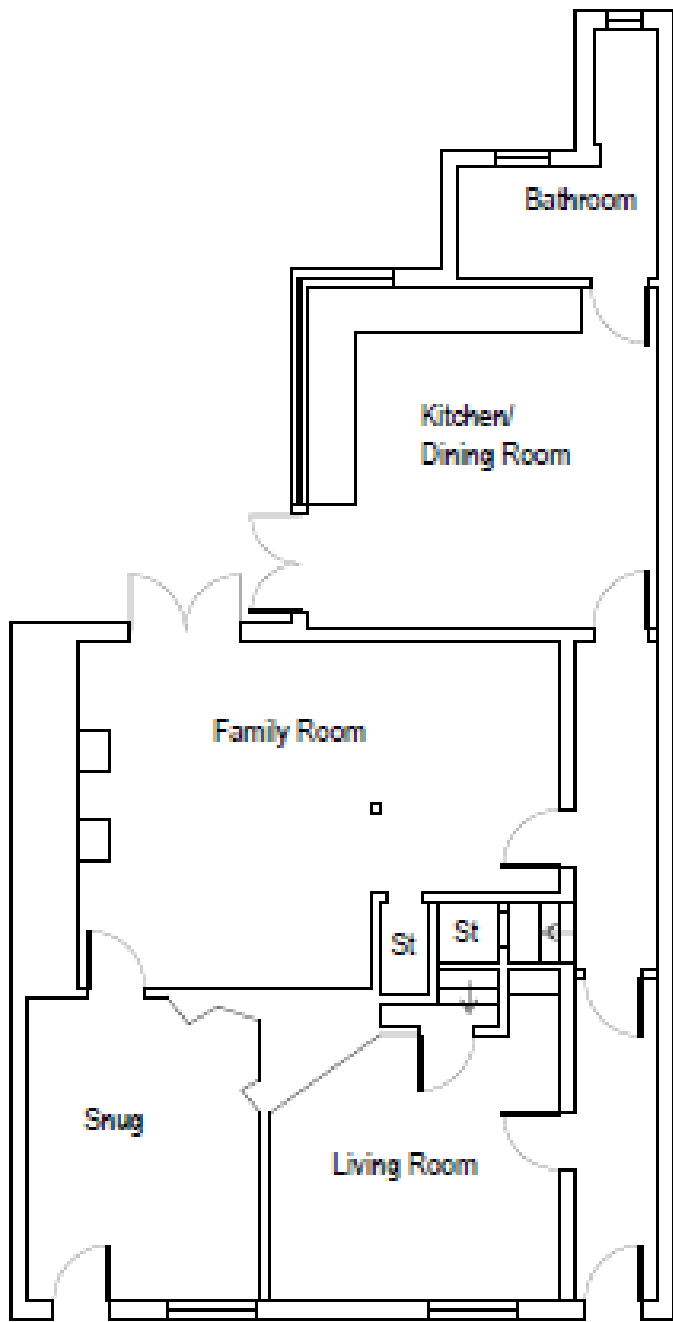
REAR ELEVATION EXISTING



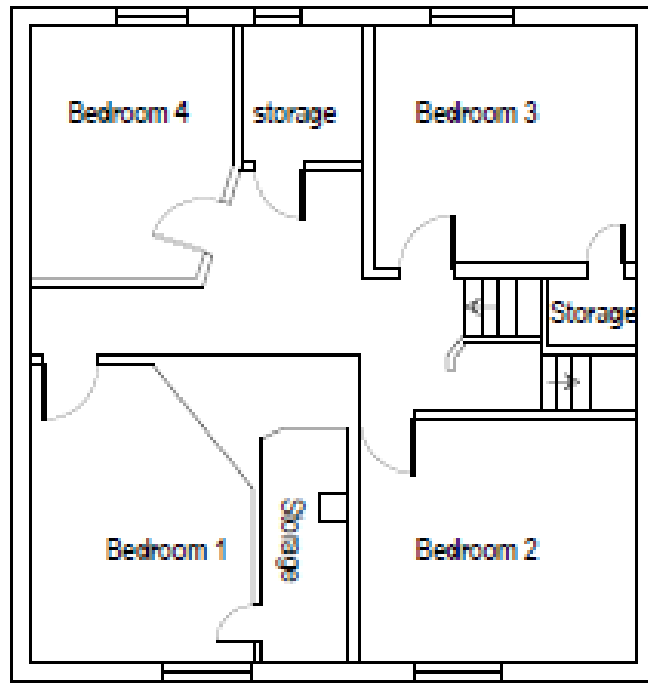
FLOOR PLANS - EXISTING



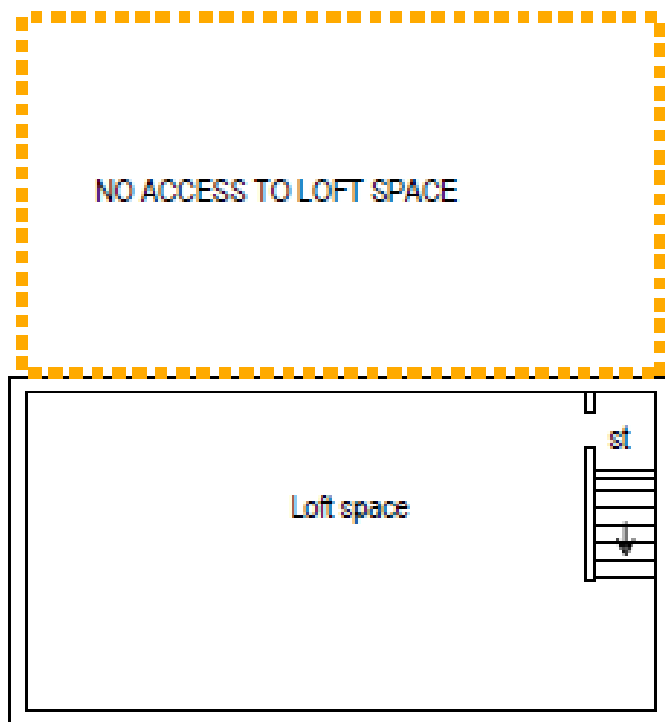
LOWER GROUND FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

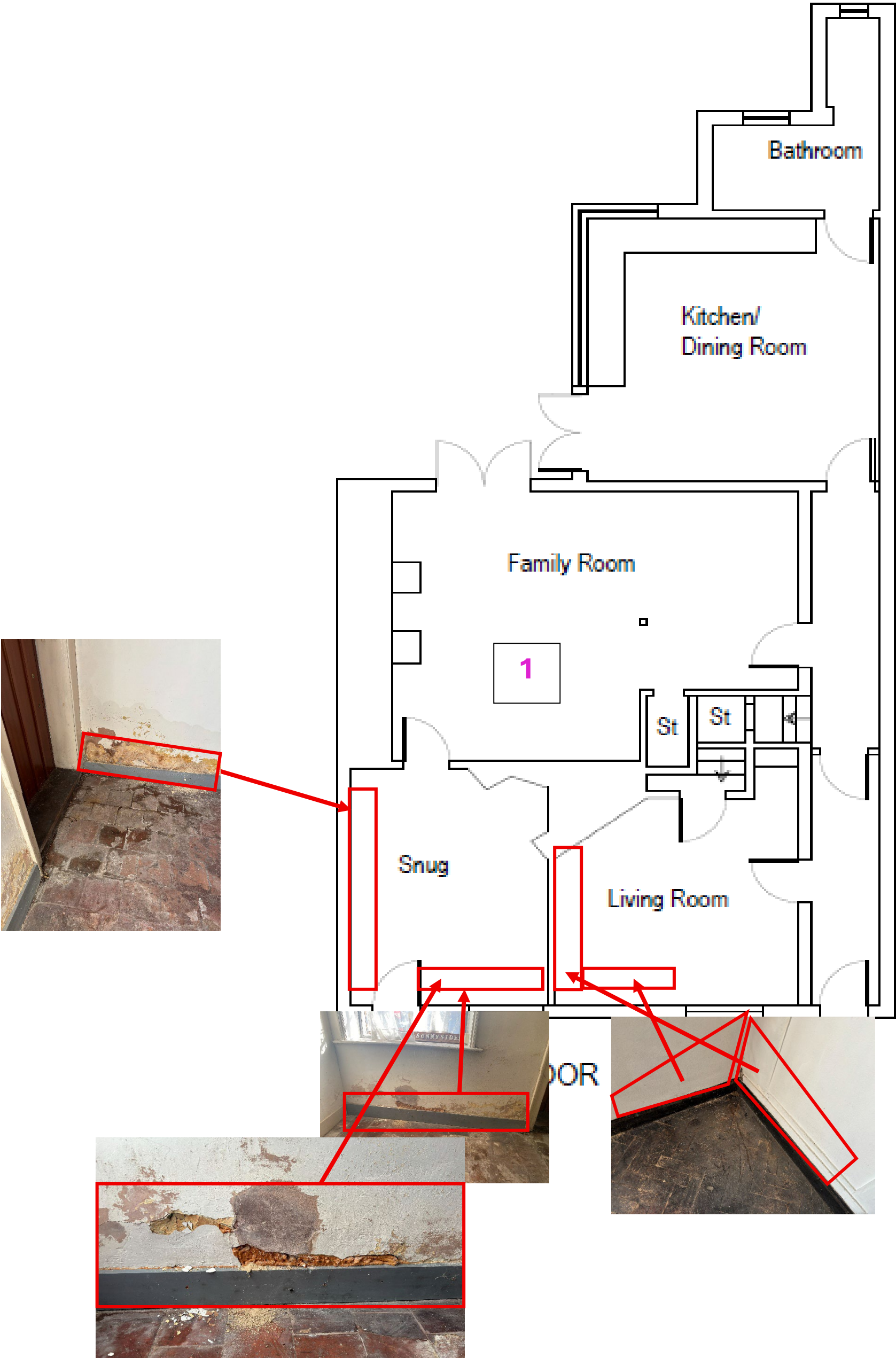


FIRST FLOOR

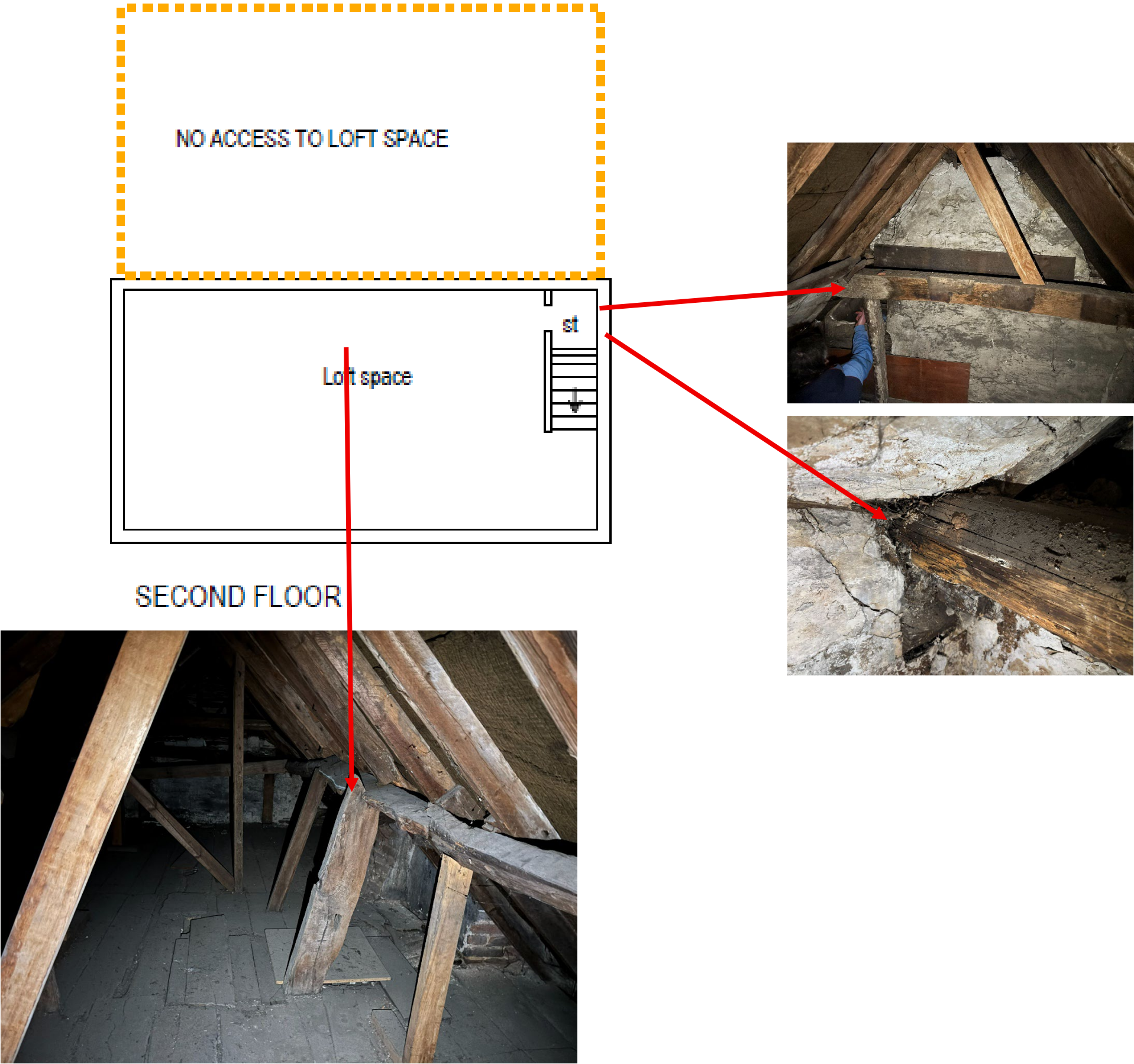


SECOND FLOOR

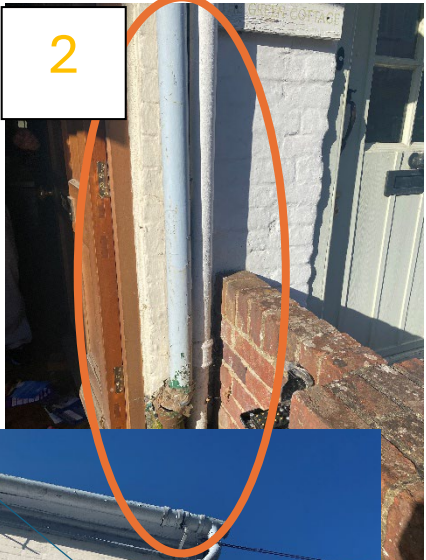
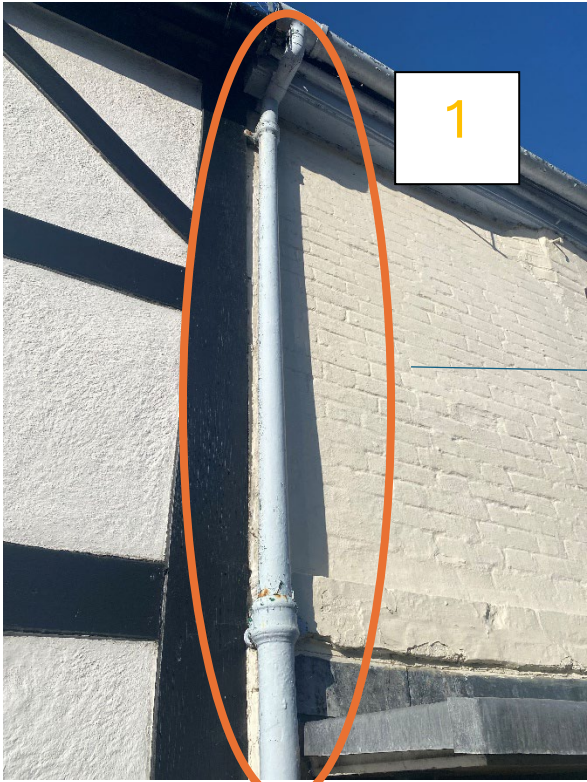
INTERNAL DAMAGE FROM INGRESS OF WATER/DAMP PROPOSED WORKS



EXISTING CONDITION OF TIMBERS WITHIN THE LOFT SPACE



THE SCOPE OF WORKS -
PROPOSED REPAIRS



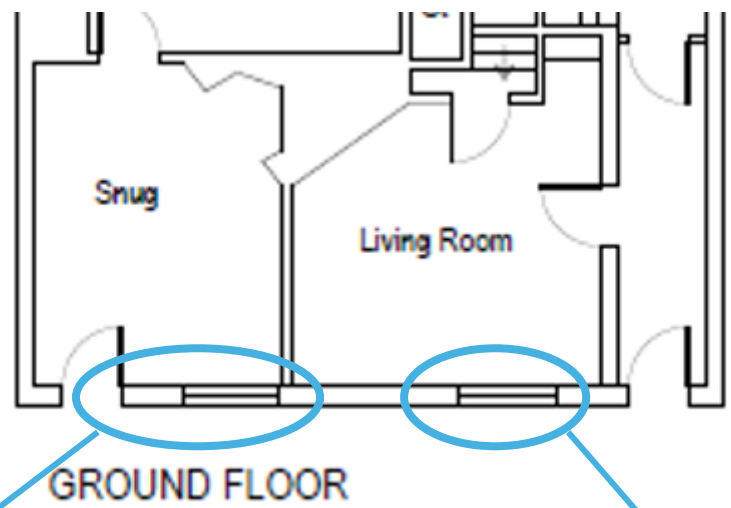
- 1. Make good and repair
- 2. Make good and repair
- 3. Make good and repair
- 4. Make good and repair
- 5. Make good and repair
- 6. Make good and repair
- 7. Make good and repair
- 8. Make good and repair

PROPOSED REPAIRS – REAR ELEVATION

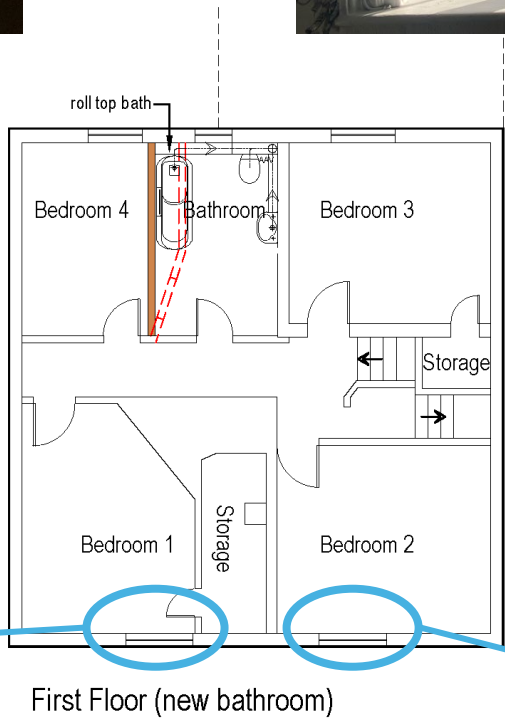


- 9. REPAIR
- 10. REPAIR
- 11. REPAIR

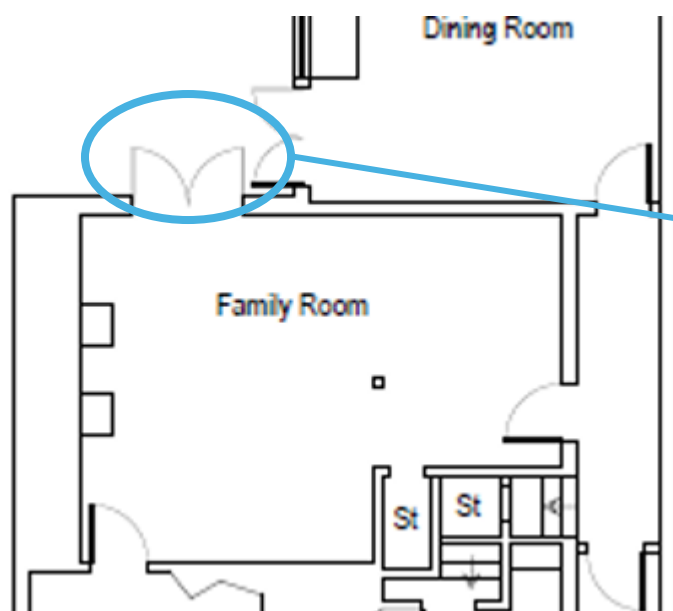
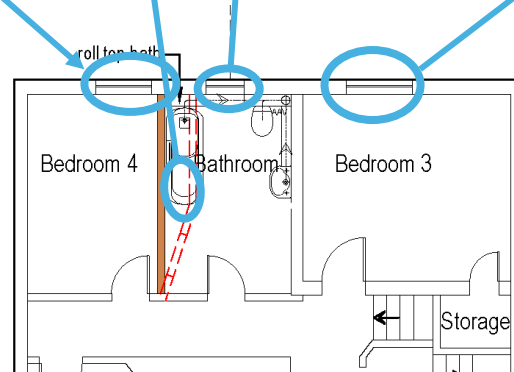
PROPOSED FENESTRATION IMPROVEMENTS



14



- 12. Repair, paint and secondary glaze
- 13. Repair, paint and secondary glaze
- 14. Repair, paint and secondary glaze
- 15. Repair, paint and secondary glaze



- 16. Retain and Repair
- 17. Remove
- 18. Repair
- 19. Repair
- 20. Repair door and Replace decking with glazing for light well to basement.

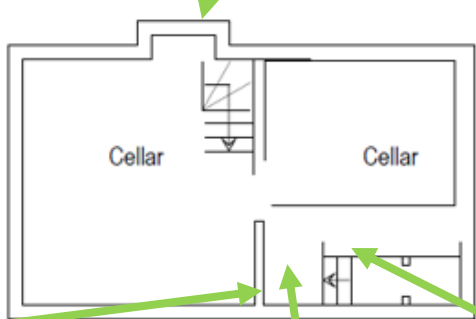
PROPOSED INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS



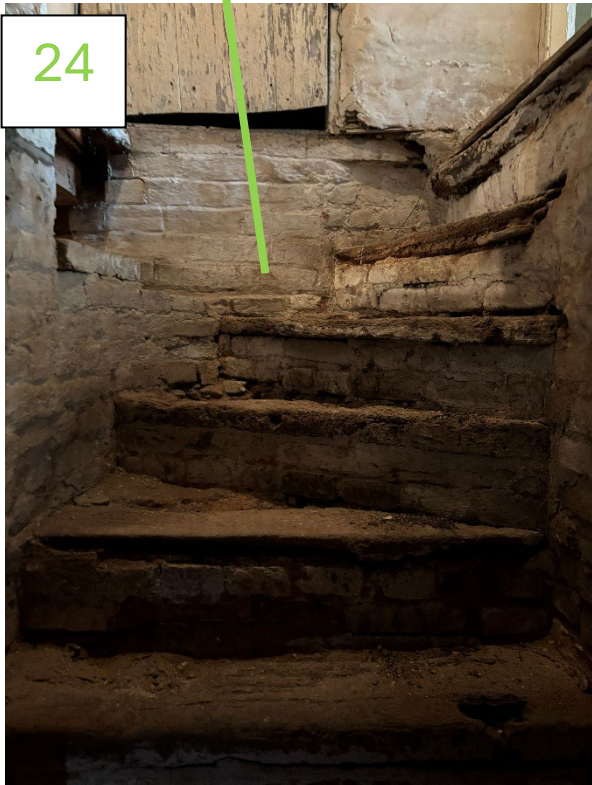
KITCHEN

21. Insulate and plasterboard kitchen ceiling with recess lights

BASEMENT



LOWER GROUND FLOOR



- 22. Remove brick and create lightwell
- 23. Repair and make stairs safe
- 24. Repair and make stairs safe
- 25. Make structurally sound

- 26. Make structurally sound, insulate in accordance with building regulations
- 27. Make structurally sound, insulate in accordance with building regulations
- 28. Make structurally sound, insulate in accordance with building regulations



26

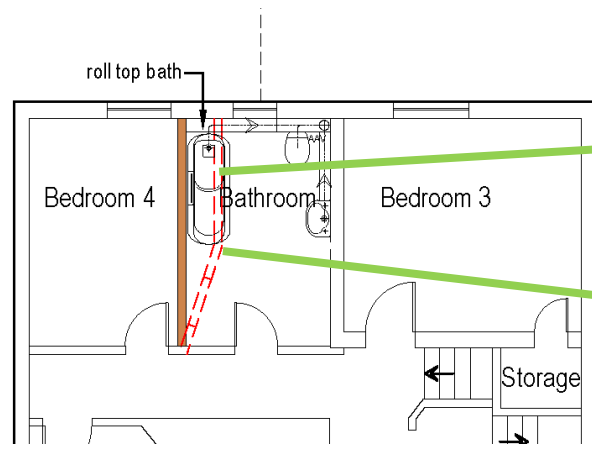


27

28



CREATION OF BATHROOM UPSTAIRS



- 29. Remove Walls, install plumbing.
- 30. Relocate window

31. Reinstall original door.



HALLWAY

- 32. Repair wall
- 33. Remove and relocate electrics to behind panelling
- 34. Remove and relocate electrics to behind panelling
- 35. Remove and relocate electrics to behind panelling

