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# Design and Access and Heritage Statement

*Rebecca's Cottage, Crazies Hill, Berkshire, RG10 8LU*

*Erection of a detached outbuilding following demolition of the existing outbuilding, and retention of the existing timber gates.*

## 1. Introduction

This Design and Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a householder planning application at Rebecca's Cottage, Crazies Hill, Berkshire, RG10 8LU. It explains the proposed replacement outbuilding and retention of the existing timber gates, sets out the design and access considerations, and assesses their effect on the significance and setting of the listed dwelling.

The site is not within a conservation area. The main dwelling is Grade II listed, and its special architectural and historic interest is therefore central to the assessment. The proposal will provide incidental domestic space within the established garden while preserving the significance of the cottage.

# Part A - Design and Access Statement

## 2. Site and surroundings

Rebecca's Cottage stands within an established residential garden at Crazies Hill. The proposed outbuilding would be located to the side of the dwelling, on the raised garden to its north-east, in the same location as the existing outbuilding that is to be demolished.

Crazies Hill road runs along the western edge of the garden. The land rises eastwards and northwards from the road, so the outbuilding occupies an elevated position relative to the frontage. Existing mature vegetation provides screening and reduces its prominence. The site levels and vegetation are both relevant to how a replacement building would be perceived within the cottage's setting.

### 2.1 Existing outbuilding

The existing structure is a 1950s prefabricated outbuilding. It has a flat roof and an approximate overall height of 2.2 metres. The photograph below shows the existing building within its mature garden surroundings.



*Figure 1. Existing 1950s prefabricated outbuilding proposed for demolition, showing its flat roof and mature garden surroundings.*

# 3. The proposed works

### 3.1 Siting and incidental use

The detached replacement outbuilding would be erected in the same location as the existing outbuilding, within the established property boundary. It would remain associated with and subservient to the main dwelling, providing space for uses incidental to the enjoyment of the house.

The outbuilding would comprise a playroom and office space at ground-floor level, with a small play area in a loft that would have limited headroom and extend over only a smaller portion of the ground-floor area. The structure would therefore be predominantly single-storey, with a limited loft area rather than a full upper storey. The proposed use is incidental domestic accommodation serving the existing dwelling.

### 3.2 Scale and roof form

The replacement would have a gable roof, with an approximate ridge height of 3.77 metres and an eaves height of 2.42 metres above ground level. The ridge would be approximately 1.57 metres higher than the existing flat-roofed outbuilding, which is approximately 2.2 metres high. The proposed eaves would be approximately 0.22 metres above the height of the existing structure.

The change from a flat roof to a gable roof would increase the roof volume and alter the silhouette of the garden building. This is a material design consideration, particularly given the raised garden position. The predominantly single-storey form, incidental use and established siting are intended to maintain a subordinate relationship with the historic dwelling.

### 3.3 External materials

The walls would be formed from horizontally laid interlocking timber logs. The windows and doors would have dark grey aluminium frames and double glazing. The roof covering would comprise black bituminous shingles over a felt underlay. These materials would give the structure the appearance of a contemporary timber garden building.

### 3.4 Retention of the existing timber gates

The application also seeks retention of the existing electrically operated timber double vehicular gates incorporating a pedestrian gate. The gates have a five-bar design, with wire-mesh infill to their lower sections, and are approximately 1.2 metres high. They were installed in early 2024 to replace the previous damaged gates. Their retention would maintain the current access arrangement and the open timber character of the entrance.




*Figure 2. Existing electrically operated timber five-bar vehicular gates incorporating a pedestrian gate, with wire-mesh infill to the lower sections, installed in early 2024 and proposed for retention.*

# 4. Planning policy and guidance

### 4.1 Statutory and national context

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision-maker, when considering planning permission affecting a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and features of special architectural or historic interest.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, August 2026) provides the national design and heritage policy context. Policy DP3 requires proposals to respond to the history, character and features of their site and setting, including through the arrangement of buildings and their materials. Policies HE4 and HE5 require conservation of heritage significance and a proportionate assessment of the effects of development, including effects through setting. Policy

HE6 gives substantial weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets. The assessment in Part B addresses the significance of the cottage and the effects of the individual works and the proposal as a whole.

### 4.2 Wokingham development plan

Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Core Strategy, adopted in January 2010, establishes general principles for development, including high-quality design appropriate to local character. Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, adopted in February 2014, seeks to conserve designated heritage assets and their settings. It requires proposals to conserve, and where possible enhance, their important character and special architectural or historic interest, including setting and views.

The supporting text to Policy TB24 highlights the scale, proportions, design and materials of new development in relation to the heritage asset, together with the retention of original architectural features and historic garden or landscape features. The raised siting, increased roof height, external materials and existing garden screening are therefore relevant considerations for this proposal.

## 5. Design and access assessment

### 5.1 Principle and layout

The proposal would replace an existing garden outbuilding in its established location and remain within the existing property boundary. Its playroom and office accommodation would serve the main dwelling as incidental domestic space. It would not extend the residential use beyond the established garden, and would not result in harmful encroachment into the countryside.

### 5.2 Scale and appearance

The proposed gable roof provides a simple pitched form appropriate to a detached garden building. The 3.77-metre ridge represents an appreciable increase over the existing structure, while the 2.42-metre eaves limit the height of the external walls. The limited loft occupies only the smaller portion of the building. Considered with its incidental function and side-garden location, the design is intended to remain subordinate to the cottage.

The timber walls would provide a natural material within the garden. Dark grey window and door frames and a black roof covering would introduce a restrained colour palette. The design would be recognisable as a later ancillary structure, with its own simple construction and detailing.

### 5.3 Landscape and visual relationship

The rising land may make the outbuilding more prominent than a structure on level ground at the road frontage. Existing mature vegetation would moderate this effect and help integrate the building into the garden. Screening reduces prominence rather than establishing that the building would be invisible. The assessment therefore considers the increased ridge height as well as the established garden enclosure.

### 5.4 Access

No changes to the existing or pre-existing access arrangements are proposed. The established vehicular entrance and pedestrian access would be retained through the existing gate arrangement, including its incorporated pedestrian gate. The replacement outbuilding would continue to be accessed within the property's garden. The proposal would not introduce a separate access serving an independent property.

# Part B - Heritage Statement

## 6. Scope of the heritage assessment

The relevant designated heritage asset is Rebecca's Cottage itself. The assessment considers the contribution of its garden and entrance to its setting, the removal of the existing prefabricated outbuilding, the replacement building's siting, height and materials, and retention of the gates. The proposal concerns detached garden development and the entrance gates, no alterations to the listed dwelling form part of the application.

## 7. Heritage significance

### 7.1 Official list entry

Historic England records the building as 'Rebeccas Cottage', Grade II, under National Heritage List for England entry number 1118164. It was first listed on 23 December 1983. The statutory address is Rebeccas Cottage, Crazies Hill, within Wargrave parish and Wokingham Borough.

The list entry identifies an early 16th-century cottage, now a house, with 20th-century extensions. It is timber-framed with painted brick infilling and brick extensions to the north and south. The historic form comprises an L-shaped plan with a hall house of two framed bays and a crosswing of two framed bays, rising to two storeys. The entry describes a gabled old tiled roof and a chimney on the left.

The west front has an irregular arrangement of 20th-century timber casement windows, with the entrance in the later extension to the right. Internally, the list entry records that much of the timber frame is exposed, including arch and wind braces, and that the ground-floor joists are chamfered with stopped ends.

### 7.2 Architectural and historic interest

The cottage's significance derives principally from its early date, surviving timber-framed construction and legible hall-house and crosswing arrangement. The exposed internal frame, braces and detailed joists provide evidence of its historic construction. Its tiled gables, timber framing and painted infill also contribute to its architectural character. The later extensions and windows form part of the building's recorded development over time.

### 7.3 Contribution of the setting

The garden, rising land, mature vegetation and relationship with Crazies Hill road provide the immediate context in which the cottage is experienced. They allow the historic dwelling to be understood within an enclosed domestic garden, with the entrance giving views towards its west-facing frontage. The gate photograph illustrates this relationship between the low timber entrance feature, vegetation and historic house.

The existing outbuilding occupies part of the raised garden to the north-east. Its reported 1950s date and prefabricated construction distinguish it from the early timber-framed dwelling. For the present proposal, its contribution is principally as a later incidental garden structure. The replacement needs to preserve the ability to appreciate the cottage and its architectural hierarchy within this setting.

## 8. Heritage impact assessment

### 8.1 Demolition of the existing outbuilding

The existing prefabricated outbuilding is a later addition to the garden. No specific architectural or historic interest of the outbuilding has been identified in the material presented for this proposal. Its demolition is therefore assessed as having a neutral effect on the significance of the cottage, while its replacement continues the established incidental use of this part of the garden.

### 8.2 Siting, height and roof form of the replacement

Locating the new building in the same area as the existing outbuilding would maintain the established relationship between the principal house and ancillary garden development. The

proposal would remain detached and within the property boundary. It would not extend into the surrounding countryside or attach new construction to the historic dwelling.

The ridge would rise approximately 1.57 metres above the existing outbuilding. On the elevated garden, this would increase the potential visibility of the roof and should be recognised as a change to the setting. However, the 2.42-metre eaves, predominantly single-storey form and limited loft area would maintain the character of an incidental garden building. Mature vegetation would reduce its prominence and help retain the cottage as the principal building within the site.

The gable roof has a broad relationship with the pitched and gabled roof forms recorded in the listing. It would introduce a different silhouette from the existing flat roof, but a simple roof form rather than elaborate detailing. In combination with the established siting and screening, it is considered that the increased height would change the garden scene without harming the ability to appreciate the historic cottage or the features from which its significance derives.

**8.3 Materials and architectural relationship**

Timber is present in the cottage's historic construction and is a reasonable material for a separate garden building. The proposed horizontally laid interlocking logs would nevertheless have a different appearance from the cottage's timber frame and painted brick infill. This distinction would allow the new structure to be understood as a later domestic addition while retaining a natural material within the garden.

The dark grey aluminium frames and black bituminous shingles are contemporary finishes. Their suitability is considered in the context of the detached ancillary building, its simple form and screened garden position. Their restrained colours would limit visual emphasis, and the separate siting would preserve the historic materials and detailing of the dwelling. The proposal is therefore considered compatible with the setting without requiring imitation of the cottage's construction.

**8.4 Retention of the timber gates**

The gates were installed in early 2024 to replace damaged gates and are now proposed for retention. Their approximately 1.2-metre height, timber construction and five-bar form are suitable for the domestic garden and rural setting. The spaces between the bars, together with the wire-mesh infill, retain visual permeability at the entrance and allow the cottage to be appreciated beyond them.

The pedestrian gate is incorporated into the vehicular gate arrangement. Retaining this low, open entrance feature would maintain the established access and avoid introducing a more visually enclosing frontage. The electrical operation does not alter the gates' basic timber form. Their retention is assessed as having a neutral effect on the significance and setting of the listed cottage.

### 8.5 Overall heritage effect

The proposal preserves the cottage's historic fabric and recorded architectural features. The principal change to its setting is the taller gabled outbuilding on the raised garden. The assessment recognises this increased visibility, while taking account of the established outbuilding location, incidental use, predominantly single-storey form and mature screening. The gates remain a low, visually open timber feature at the entrance.

Taken together, the works are considered to preserve the significance of Rebecca's Cottage, including the contribution made by its setting. On the information available, no harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building is identified. This conclusion addresses the preservation duty in section 66(1), the conservation objectives of NPPF Policies HE4 to HE6 and the requirements of Policy TB24.

## 9. Conclusion

The application proposes replacement of the existing 1950s prefabricated outbuilding with a detached timber building for incidental playroom and office use, including a small loft play area with limited headroom. It would remain in the established outbuilding location, within the property boundary and to the north-east of the listed dwelling. No changes to the access arrangements are proposed, and the existing timber gates installed in early 2024 would be retained.

The change to a gable roof and the approximate 1.57-metre increase in ridge height are acknowledged. The 2.42-metre eaves, predominantly single-storey form, garden location and mature vegetation would moderate the visual effect. The proposal would remain associated with and subservient to the main dwelling and would not result in harmful encroachment into the countryside.

The heritage assessment identifies the early timber frame, historic plan, tiled roof slopes and surviving internal construction as key components of the cottage's significance. The proposal would preserve these features and is considered compatible with the garden setting. The five-bar timber gates would retain an appropriately low and open entrance treatment. On this basis, the proposal is considered acceptable in design, access and heritage terms, and planning permission is respectfully sought.