

The Old Cottage

Pearson Road, Sonning, RG4 6UH

Condition 4: Method Statement RE: Listed Building Consent 232278

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Rev 01



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent (232278) dated 09.01.2024. Condition 4 relating to structural repairs safeguarding special architectural or historic interest.

1.2 Condition 4

"Except for the opening up works previously specified, works are not to be undertaken to make structural repairs to historic timbers and masonry work to each of the building's elevations until a method statement outlining the nature and extent of the repairs to be undertaken for each individual elevation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Structural works are then be undertaken in accordance with the details as approved."

2.0 OVERVIEW

- 2.1 Information has previously been submitted under application 253038, submitted on the 12th December 2025, and refused on the 6th February 2026. The comments received from the Built Heritage Officer were responded to via email by the agent, Rob Workman of Lime and Listed, on initially on the 7th February 2026, and in more detail on the 10th February.
- 2.2 Condition 4 pertains to structural design, and the current condition of the timber frame to the West and North gables is such that it is approaching accelerated decay and the internal rooms affected cannot be inhabited. For the benefit of the longevity of the building it is imperative a solution is found in the immediate months to enable the works to be carried out early autumn at the latest.
- 2.3 The applicant is mindful that the wording of Condition 4 describes, or assumes, the structure can be carried out as isolated works, and acknowledges the previous submission to discharge Condition 4 incorporated immediately adjacent elements of the building that would necessarily be either affected or require adjustment to enable the structural repairs to be carried out. As highlighted in the feedback of application 253038, the expectation is that areas impacted by the structural works are advised to require stand-alone listed building consent(s) not currently in place.
- 2.4 To expedite the flow of information, parts of this application highlight two specific areas that are associated to the structural works to the West gable that have been advised require separate applications. These are:
- 1) the proposal to replace the brickwork infill at the ground floor level of the West gable
 - 2) the proposed removal of the boiler house whose modern construction has caused excessive damage to the West gable timber frame and is a detriment to the overall property.
- 2.5 In order to facilitate the consideration of Condition 4 a separate listed building application has been submitted for the removal of the boiler house, reference 260838, to enable the purposeful consideration of the applications simultaneously.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposal pertains to a method statement to describe the structural repairs to the historic timber and masonry. The repairs' scope is limited to:
- the North elevation gable of the Phase 2 extension which has been dated in the heritage statement as 'likely C18-C19';
 - the West gable elevation of Phase 1 of the historic core, dated in the heritage statement as 'likely C15', however the ground floor infill to the timber frame is not deemed to hold
- 3.2 The timber frame repair drawings have been collated and updated since the previous Condition 4 application - reference 253038 - by specialist engineer David Evans of Clive Hudson Associate:.
- 246714-01-P4 – East Wing: Remedial Structural Works to North Wall (revision P4);
 - 246714-02-P1 – Remedial Structural Works to West Gable (revision P2).
- These drawings should be read in conjunction with the Structural Engineer's reports for the 'East Wing' and of the 'West gable' as submitted for 232278.
- 3.3 The timber frame has been revealed under the removal of the finishes to the timber following the discharge of Condition 3, application reference 241497 (of permission 232278).
- 3.4 This second application to discharge Condition 4 takes into account the Heritage Officer's comments as provided for 253038. For clarity, each comment is addressed in Section 4.0.
- 3.5 **Method Statement - East Wing, North Wall** - refer to drawing 246714-01-P4.
- 3.5.1 N1. Lateral Restraint Ties
- Install lateral restraint ties in accordance with structural engineer's details, drawing 246714-01-P4.
- 3.5.2 N2. Remedial Works to Historic Timbers and Masonry
- Undertake localised face repairs and fit metal straps to historic timbers as detailed, drawing 246714-01-P4.
 - Where required, make good adjacent masonry using handmade imperial bricks to match the historic fabric in colour, blend, texture and size.
 - Lime mortar to be non-hydraulic lime, matching the original in colour, texture and aggregate.
 - Decoration of masonry to follow the specifications set out in the originally approved proposals under 232278.

3.0 PROPOSAL (cntd)

3.6 The Method Statement - Remedial Structural Works to West Gable

3.6.1 W1. Temporary Propping

Specialist timber framers to install temporary propping, including:

- Pinning through the west gable beneath the mid-rail with suitable pins and acrow props.
- Acrow propping to provide necessary support to adjacent internal floors.

3.6.2 W2. Removal of Redundant Structure

To allow access to the timber frame the redundant boiler house must be removed. The removal of the boiler house form an existing listed building application, reference 260838. This method statement should be read in conjunction with this live application which sets out the harm it is believed to have caused to the timber frame and its lack of heritage significance - and acts as a detractor to the highly significant timber frame of the west gable.

3.6.3 W3. Structural Timber Repairs

The Clive Hudson structural report on the west gable identifies secondary studs 1-4 as the vertical timber studs at the ground floor between the 'end girt' (see Fig.1 for reference).

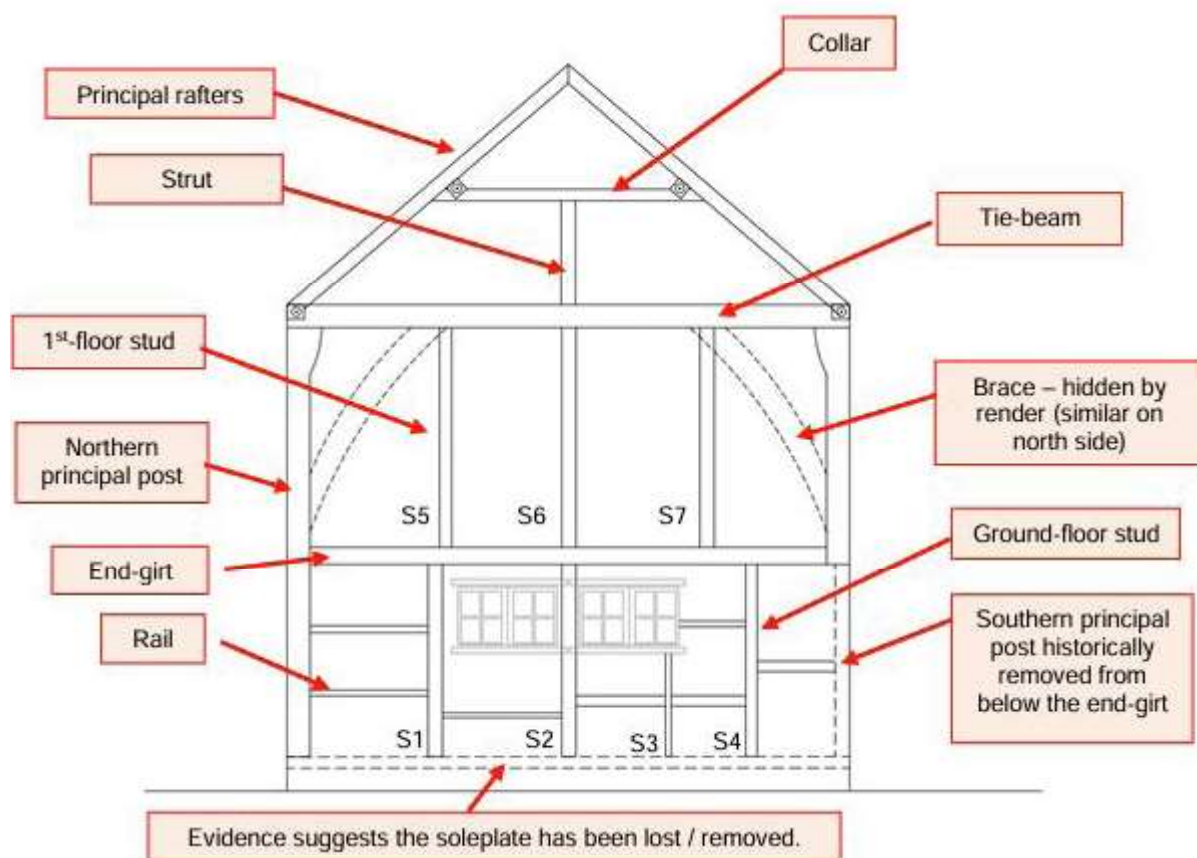


Figure 6. Elevation of the west gable with constituent elements of the timber frame indicated

Fig. 1: Extract from the Clive Hudson Associates' structural report on the west gable

3.0 PROPOSAL (cntd)

3.6.3 The author of the report, David Evans, has stated this as a SPAB Scholar, states the infill panels would (cntd) likely originally have been wattle and daub infill as opposed to brick; Rob Workman of Lime and Listed stated the bricks were from the C19 and of no heritage significance. The structural report advises the bricks are now, "...providing secondary, and even primary load paths for the loads to pass down through the gable". Historic England also highlights that whilst timber-framed buildings were 'occasionally' built with brick infill panels, a 'great majority' are C19 or C20 replacements for wattle and daub (2012).

In order to repair the timber and re-create the load paths of the original timber frame, three new studs are proposed to replace S1-S4, directly below the first floor studs S5, 6 and 7. The original peg holes on site provide evidence of the original arrangement of vertical posts proposed (refer also to paragraph 4.5.2) ie: the current locations are not the original locations.

The window insertion to the west gable has clearly disturbed the horizontal timber rails. With the replacement ground floor studs the horizontal rails are proposed to be replaced to pick up the adjusted gaps between the studs. The cleaned timbers have revealed the rails to be in a poor condition, however, if any material can reasonably be salvaged and re-used it shall be: David Evans has confirmed the rails do not provide structural support and could readily be removed, however it is suggested these are retained to respect the historic evolution of the timber frame. The studs shall be inspected for evidence of a rebate or coving to their edges which would suggest an early date for the brick infills.



Fig. 2: Close up of S1 stud and three rails

WBC has expressed a desire to visit site (refer to paragraph 4.8.1) which we encourage for the purposes of inspecting the condition of the timber frame as they are challenging to photograph owing to the narrow distance to the boundary. Indicative photos are included here.



Fig. 3: Close up of S3 stud and two rails

3.0 PROPOSAL (cntd)

3.6.3 The southern principal post location shall be accessed following the careful dismantling of the boiler (cntd) house (subject to application 260838 being granted). This shall allow the southwest corner post to be reinstated and the repair to the south end of the end-girt to be carried out.

In the partial replacement of the timber posts, the timber studs and horizontal rails the intermediate brick infills would necessarily require to be carefully removed and reinstated once the timber studs and rails are reinstated (refer also to paragraph 4.2.2). The cement render remains on the bricks' surface and it is not currently known what the condition of the brickwork is, or if it is wholly brickwork - adjusted and 'made good' when the studs and windows were reconstructed. Once the impermeable finish is removed the resultant condition of the brick faces shall be inspected. If the fired face of the bricks have been irreparably damaged in the removal process these shall be turned where possible to re-use the bricks.

- The replacement, scarf repairs and face repairs to structural timbers shall be carried out as specified on drawing 246714-02-P2, using appropriate air dried/ well-seasoned oak sections.

3.6.4 W4. Rebuild of Brick Plinth / Potential New Foundation

- Rebuild the brick plinth as detailed on the engineer's plans.
- Where required, install a new strip foundation.
- All brickwork to use non-hydraulic lime mortar and handmade imperial bricks matching the existing in colour, blend and size.

3.6.5 W5. Removal of Temporary Propping

Remove temporary propping once structural conditions allow and following adequate curing of lime mortars, refer to lime suppliers' guidance.

3.6.6 W6. Reinstatement of Infill Panels

Once the impermeable finishes have been removed from the bricks and their condition assessed (see 3.6.3 above) and the presence, or lack of, rebate to the studs established, the bricks shall be reinstated to the panels using a soft lime mortar. It is noted by Historic England that brick infill panels are less suited to timber frames owing to being less flexible than wattle and daub - which concentrates stresses into the frame, and they hold more moisture which can deteriorate the timber frame by keeping the members damp (2012). Any potential change to brick infill, with an alternative breathable material with higher thermal properties shall be considered in due course and form a separate listed building application.

Where new bricks may be required to replace damaged bricks, these shall be handmade imperial bricks to match the existing.

3.6.7 W7. Decoration

- Externally: lime plaster with limewash. (Refer to drawing WE01 Rev A as part of permission

4.0 WBC FEEDBACK and APPLICANT RESPONSE to previous Condition 4 submission

4.1 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

4.1.1 *"The submitted information raises several concerns, especially in relation to the western gable end. The scope of works described does not fully align with the approved details under Condition 4 of consent 232278. The method statement proposes removing the infill masonry (shaded green on drawing 246714-02-P1) and the modern boiler housing (shaded orange) to allow access for structural repairs. However, neither element forms part of the approved works shown on drawing WE.01 Rev. A."*

4.1.2 Applicant response via email (10.02.26):

"Without cleaning paint from the timber framing and removing areas of external render adjacent to the timbers, it was not possible to accurately assess the structural condition of the underlying fabric and specify all alteration works. As such, a degree of flexibility in the associated masonry works by condition is necessary in order to facilitate the required structural interventions to the timber frame... The west elevation timber framing — including corner posts, sole plates and intermediate posts — is in very poor condition at ground floor level, and the replacement of these elements has been clearly detailed by the structural engineer. We consider this approach to be fully justified, particularly given that David Evans is a well-respected specialist conservation structural engineer and a SPAB Scholar. We would, of course, be happy to provide additional photographs illustrating the condition of the timber framing?"

4.2 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

4.2.1 *"Wokingham Borough Council (WBC): "The western gable contains bulbous painted cement-rendered panels externally, with exposed brick infill internally at first-floor and attic levels. Consent was given only for the removal of the non-breathable modern render and its replacement with a breathable finish following timber repairs and installation of external insulation. Although the original render made it difficult to determine the underlying material, the method statement suggests masonry infill at ground-floor level, likely consistent with the upper floors. If so, these panels should be retained."*

4.2.2 **Applicant response via email (10.02.26):** "It is not safe to completely remove the render/plaster to the ground floor panels in west elevation due to condition of timber framing but they are a mix of brick and breeze block varying ages. Where possible the timber framing on west elevation has been cleaned. There is now no other option but to completely remove the infill panels to replace the decayed timber frame elements as outlined by the engineer. In short, the brick panels (shaded green) cannot be retained in situ if the timber frame is to be replaced."

4.2.3 **Additional Note:** Justification for the removal and reinstatement of the existing brick infill (not proposed to be replaced with insulation) is provided in paragraph 3.6.3.

4.0 WBC FEEDBACK and APPLICANT RESPONSE to previous Condition 4 submission (cntd)

4.3 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

4.3.1 *"It is noted with respect to condition 3 of consent 232278, relating to removal of modern render and paint, was discharged in July 2024, and Street View images from September 2024 indicate significant progress. Condition 5, concerning external insulation, has not yet been discharged, though the current submission includes elements relating to this work. This raises concern given the exposed and potentially vulnerable condition of the timber framing and brickwork, particularly on the northern elevation."*

4.3.2 Applicant response via email (10.02.26):

"As outlined in covering letter/method statement we do not intend discharging condition 5 as the insulating element of the proposed works will be omitted, given potential costs it is no longer feasible. We never intended to externally insulate the north elevation and elsewhere we would just lime render as item 7 on the approved plans. The majority of repair work and alteration works already approved/discharged has been completed. We are allowing the masonry to dry out before lime rendering/lime-washing progresses on north elevation and we're hoping to complete the structural work outlined."

4.3.3 **Additional Note:** In order to expedite the repair of the timber frame the WBC concerns are being addressed as closely as possible, and simultaneous applications for the stand-alone listed building application for the removal of the boiler house has been lodged.

4.4 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

4.4.1 *"The proposed removal of ground-floor masonry infill and the associated need to prop the gable also raises structural risks. The structural engineer's report identified the dropped first-floor ceiling beam, which has separated from the gable wall, but this was not included in the approved scope of works. Further intervention may require additional consent."*

4.4.2 Applicant response via email (10.02.26):

We fully appreciate works to bedroom ceiling requires additional consent and this will be forthcoming but that should not have an adverse impact on the discharge of Condition 4 as the adjacent ceiling beam is disconnected/broken. As such we need to restore the structural integrity of the west elevation before the bedroom ceiling structure can be reconnected, they are independent matters. Numerous supporting props have been inserted and remain in place on ground and first floors adjacent to west elevation and would remain in-situ whilst west elevation is also propped there is no structural risk other than not progressing the timber replacement to the west elevation at the earliest opportunity which refusing the DIS application has now imposed."

4.4.3 **Additional Note:** The internal structural repairs are separately covered under Condition 3 of the permission 232299 and the proposals pertaining to the internal repairs shall be submitted in due course. The same engineer that has been engaged with the project from the outset of the works - David

4.0 WBC FEEDBACK and APPLICANT RESPONSE to previous Condition 4 submission (cntd)

4.4.3 Evans of Clive Hudson Associates - is cognisant of the full scope and these external proposals remain (cntd) discrete from the internal structural proposals and are being proposed in the order of the sequence of works they necessarily shall be carried out. The external works have been prioritised to enable the frame exposed to the elements to be repaired as a matter of urgency.

4.5 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

4.5.1 *"Regarding timber repairs, the proposal includes removing—rather than reinstating—the historic horizontal rail and vertical studwork below the end girt, replacing them with new studs aligned to those above. No justification is provided for altering the historic arrangement instead of replicating it."*

4.5.2 Applicant response via email (10.02.26):

"Original peg holes on site provide evidence of the original arrangement of vertical posts proposed. Structural engineer advises we could reinstate posts as they exist now or as they were originally doesn't matter structurally. Either option would involve reinstatement/restoration due to timber decay so either approach would seem acceptable in heritage terms."

4.5.3 **Additional Note:** Justification is confirmed in Section 3.0.

4.6 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

4.6.1 *"The proposed demolition of the modern boiler extension also falls outside the approved works and cannot be considered under Condition 4. A separate listed building consent or a certificate of lawful works would be required."*

4.6.2 Applicant response via email (10.02.26):

"The redundant boiler house is a modern addition, likely added without listed building consent, which obstructs the replacement corner post and holds no significance in heritage terms compared to saving what we can of the historic timber frame which holds high significance."

4.6.3 **Additional Note:** The removal of the boiler house has since been submitted for listed building consent under application 260838.

4.0 WBC FEEDBACK and APPLICANT RESPONSE to previous Condition 4 submission (cntd)

4.7 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

4.7.1 *"The proposed structural measures to address the outward lean of the front elevation reflect those previously approved and are acceptable in principle. However, the inclusion of new internal blockwork to support floor joists—shown on drawing 246714-01-P3—introduces additional changes not previously assessed."*

4.7.2 Applicant response via email (10.02.26):

"The internal blockwork wall supporting existing floor shown on the drawings has existed for some-time likely before listing. It is annotated on David Evans drawing but not a new proposal. We believe you have misinterpreted this element."

4.7.3 **Additional Note:** drawing 246714-01 has been updated (Revision P4) to clarify with annotation the 'hatching' which identifies the existing internal blockwork (to the proposed reflected ceiling plan extract).

4.8 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC):

4.8.1 *"Given these issues and without a site visit to confirm the condition of the building, it is not possible to support the proposed works or recommend discharging Condition 4 at this stage."*

4.8.2 Applicant response via email (10.02.26):

"We would have welcomed a site visit to review"

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The structural repairs to the timber frame have been carefully considered by David Evans of Clive Hudson Associates drawing upon the information available from site that has been revealed in the removal of the external finishes where possible (the North elevation).
- 5.2 The proposed works have been demonstrated to be in accordance with the SPAB philosophy of removing only that necessary, and mindful of whether ethically recreating an imperfect C19 change to the ground floor of the west gable is an appropriate conservation approach. Further evidence of the original construction method may be revealed in the careful dismantling of the brick infills and studs and the works shall be reviewed and recorded as appropriate by Claire Truman, RIBA Conservation Architect at the appropriate juncture. The evidence may inform a future approach to these infill panels
- 5.3 The timber collar of the North elevation remains inaccessible until scaffolding can be erected - which is challenging owing to the roadside location. Once the black coating can be removed the extent of the proposed repair can be confirmed - shown indicatively by David Evans on drawing 246714-01-P4 based on his extensive experience.
- 5.4 The method statement in conjunction with the structural drawings clearly sets out the anticipated steps required to carefully repair the structural timber frame, and highlights areas that may require inspection by either David Evans or Claire Truman during the course of the works.
- 5.5 It is respectfully requested the condition is discharged in order the vital repairs to the timber frame are carried out prior to the 2026 winter to mitigate further deterioration.

6.0 REFERENCES

English Heritage. (2012). *Practical Building Conservation: Timber*. Routledge, Abingdon



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