

The Horns Public House

Crazies Hill RG10 8LY

HERITAGE IMPACT ADDENDUM

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Rev 01

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Revision History

Rev 00	Issued 12.02.2025	FIRST ISSUE
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- 1.1 This Addendum is submitted to summarise responses pertaining to comments received 31.01.2025 from the Built Heritage Officer for Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) regarding application 242954 *“Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed external alterations to the building, including changes to fenestration and erection of a single storey canopy roof to the side; internal refurbishment of the bar area; removal of 3 no. chimney breasts at ground floor and associated structural works; structural works to the existing ground floor timber frame and 1 no. ground floor chimney, toilets and first floor rooms; new signage to the main elevation and a replacement roadside post sign.”*
- 1.2 To facilitate the responses each comment has been attributed a letter where a response is noted as required. This document should be read in conjunction with the Built Heritage Officer’s response.
- 1.3 It is noted some comments by WBC have been made in direct relation to the objections, and others are made as queries with respect to clarity of information. The information contained herewith shall respond to the objections first (Section 2.0) and follow with items of clarity (Section 3.0).

2.1 Objections Advised

"Objections to the proposal on the grounds of harm to significance due:

- 1 to alteration and removal historically significant timbers of the earliest historic part of the building.
- 2 due to the intended removal of 19th century era ground floor internal walling and fireplace/ chimney breasts, which will result in loss of historic fabric and features with a detrimentally impact to the historic planform and the legibility of the phased development of this historic public house.
- 3 Insufficient level of information provided on the ensuite bathrooms to demonstrate these would be achievable without harm being caused.

2.2 Response to objections

1 Objection 1

WBC Comment

'Historic Doorway' (at the bar area)

"Only details, drawings and images have been submitted of this walling between the main bar and the smaller rear bar from the side of the main bar side, no corresponding details given with respect to the opposite face of this wall"

Applicant Response

Image 36 of the Heritage Statement shows most of the return walling. In addition, please find below photographs of the return wall:



View of return wall at RHS of bar



View of return wall at LHS of bar

It can be seen there is no wall in-fill remaining. The proposed location for the steel column with concrete pad foundation is proposed at the corner of the existing timber frame only, and not along the return wall.

WBC Comment

'Historic Doorway' (at the bar area)

"the concern is with respect to the intended structural works to support the upper floor- Of greater concern with the proposal structural steel is that this proposal calls for the removal of parts of the timber framing around the historic doorway... in order to accommodate one of the supporting posts it is intended to 'notch' the historic beam proposed to do so. Built Heritage strongly object to this loss and alteration of historically significant timber frame components pertaining to the earliest phase of this property."

Applicant Response

The Structural Engineer has summarised the existing loading conditions upon the timber frame at this location - refer to Advisory Letter in the Appendix.

To summarise: the existing timber frame is excessively loaded from both the first floor and from poorly executed past alterations, and has distorted in two directions: left-to-right and back-to-front. This condition is exacerbated by the cut-away timber post - that visible in Image 36 of the Heritage Statement abutted by cement blocks, and the detail, below, whose strength has been judged by the Structural Engineer to be much reduced.



View of cut away timber post

The structural integrity of the building at this critical point - that of the oldest part of the property - is unsustainable in its current condition. Investment is required to adequately support the building and make it safe, which is currently temporarily supported with props. The use of props in the long term is impractical and would always create a 'building site' atmosphere to a portion of the building that would become impassable by building users - essentially sterilising the central space of practical use and being unsatisfactory for the customer experience.

The proposed steel design - as per drawing 1886-21 P in the application - has been revised from partially relieving the load, to entirely relieving the loading upon the historic timber frame - refer to drawing 1886-21 P1 - by the introduction of a second cantilever which reduces the masonry proposed to be cut away.

As explained in the accompanying Structural Engineer's Advice Letter enclosed (refer to the Appendix) the notch in the existing timber is required to stabilise the existing frame, to avoid the need to remove more of the timber frame that would become more unstable, or remove the timber entirely to avoid collapse. The proposed design seeks to do as little as possible to the existing historic structure, whilst achieving a safe solution for the building and securing its viable longterm retention, without which the building may remain propped and unusable.

We trust this further explanation assists to understand the proposal is considered the optimum solution for the retention of the historic significance of the building.

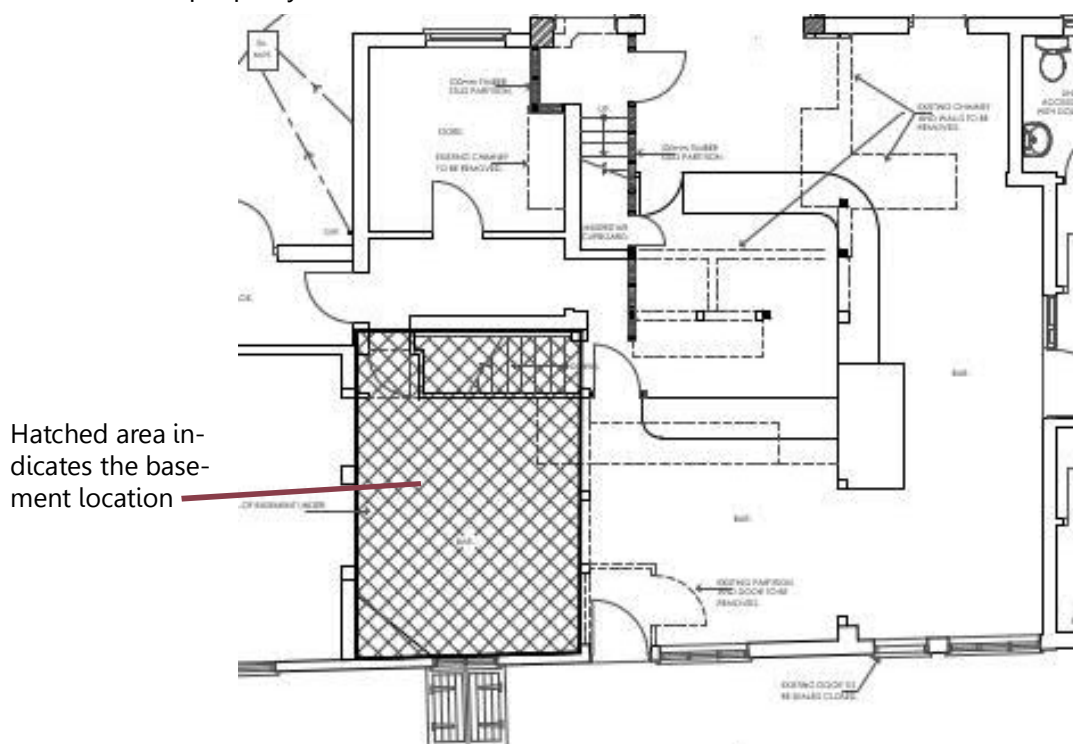
WBC Comment

'Historic Doorway' (at the bar area)

"Furthermore, at this stage there is concern also with respect to the intended support posts, with their concrete posts, as to whether this aspect is actually achievable.... Should the cellar be below this would have implications as whether the suggested concrete bases is achievable or not"

Applicant Response

The concrete pads have been carefully designed to be appropriate for the necessary support for the steel - which secures the longterm stability of the building. The cellar is not located where the historic timbers are located - the cellar location is clarified in the accompanying drawing 1885-15P, extracted as below. The floor adjacent to the bar area is a raised timber floor over a shallow floor void, approximately 300mm deep. The timber floor to the area of the proposed concrete pads is not original, and is in fact modern, with no historic significance - therefore its partial removal to provide access to create the concrete pads will not cause harm to the historic significance of the property, and their inclusion will provide an overall public benefit to secure the longterm structural integrity of the listed property.



Extract from drawing 1886-15 P

Objection 2:

WBC Comment

Removal of Walls & Chimney Breasts (which impacts the planform)

"Planning permission had been given in 2017, under 171384, for a large rear single storey extension to be built off the existing modern service corridor to the kitchen that runs along the back of the barn. From a heritage stance that unimplemented scheme had had merit to in that it left unchanged to the historic planform layout of the ground floor and provided further the additional trading space in the new extension. As such it is somewhat disappointing from a heritage stance that the applicant had not taken that option as opposed to the much greater harmful approach to this designated heritage asset that appear driven by costs."

Applicant Response

The 2017 permission, submitted by the previous owners ie: vacant landlords, would have created an additional isolated space that would continue to exacerbate the problem of lack of useable space. This problem has since been identified by the community that have used and experienced the pub for many years, and are now the owners.

Secondly - but critical with respect to the economic viability for the resurrection of the operation of the pub - the proposed extension under 171384 would have been located over existing drains and the grease trap for the commercial kitchen; the external ventilation system adjacent that serves the kitchen which would require to be located - refer to Image 23 of the Heritage Statement, and the image below.

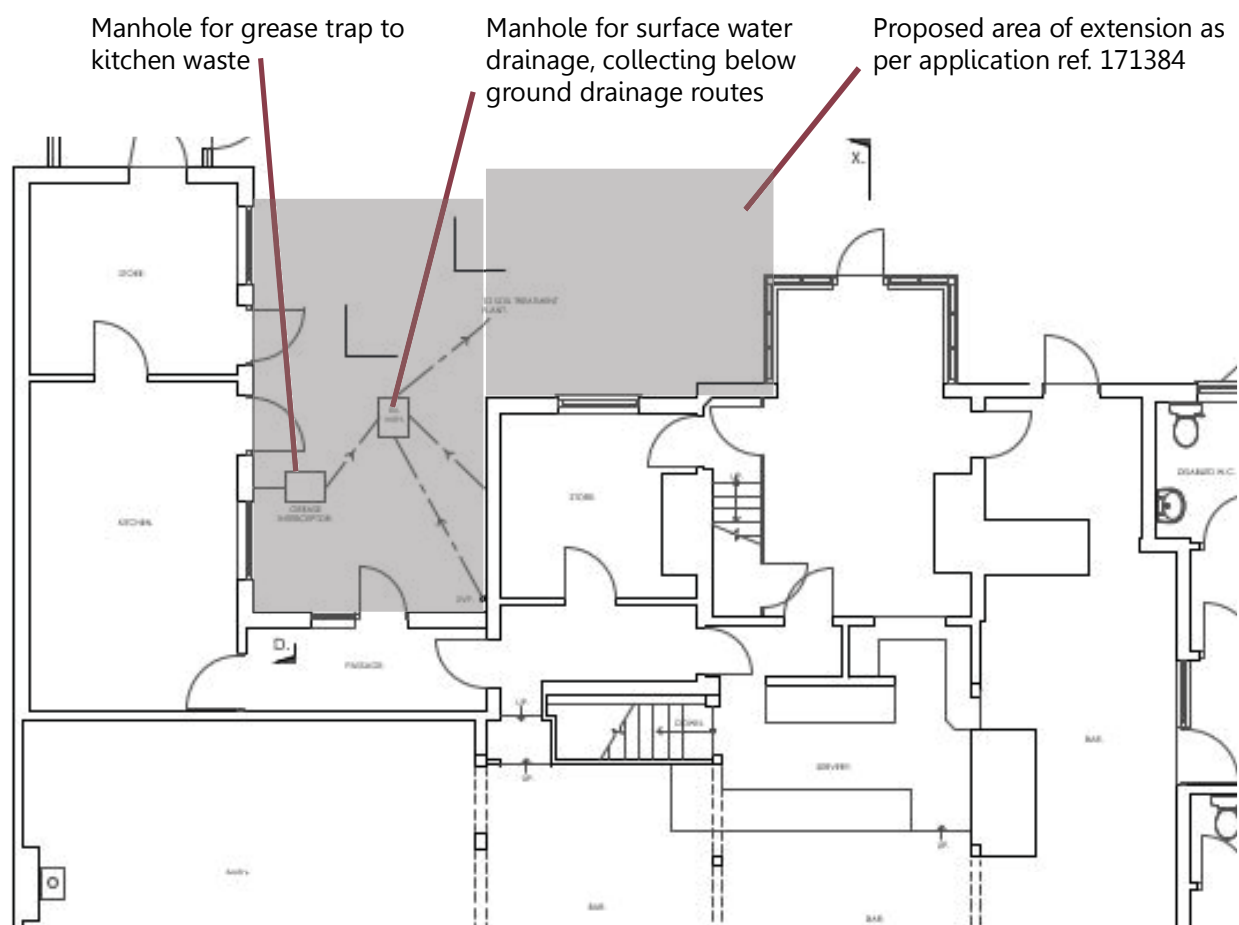


View of rear courtyard location of proposed extension under application 171384

The practical construction costs to execute the lapsed permission 171384 with associated construction challenges, in an era of recognised increasing inflation within the construction industry, would cause the build-costs to be economically unachievable for the community owners.

The Applicant has been advised by both its Architect and Quantity Surveyor the approximate cost to realise this specific extension to this property would be in the region of £350K-£400K owing to the practical challenges: the complexity of connecting into the adjacent buildings; the kitchen extraction would be a major and costly undertaking; the removal of grease trap, drainage and other subterranean infrastructure; the necessity to provide natural lighting to the kitchen with a new skylight etc. Such extension costs, in addition to those required to refurbish and carry out structural works to the property, would make the project commercially unviable. In this scenario, the stated community benefits and optimum viable use for the property would not be realised.

Thirdly, from a heritage perspective, the most economically viable solution for the property, to maintain its optimum viable use, would secure its longterm survival. In this specific situation such an inappropriate extension that does not solve the inherent challenges within the building, would ultimately cause further harm to the historic significance of the property, in tandem with not achieving its long term use.



Extract from drawing 1886-01 P

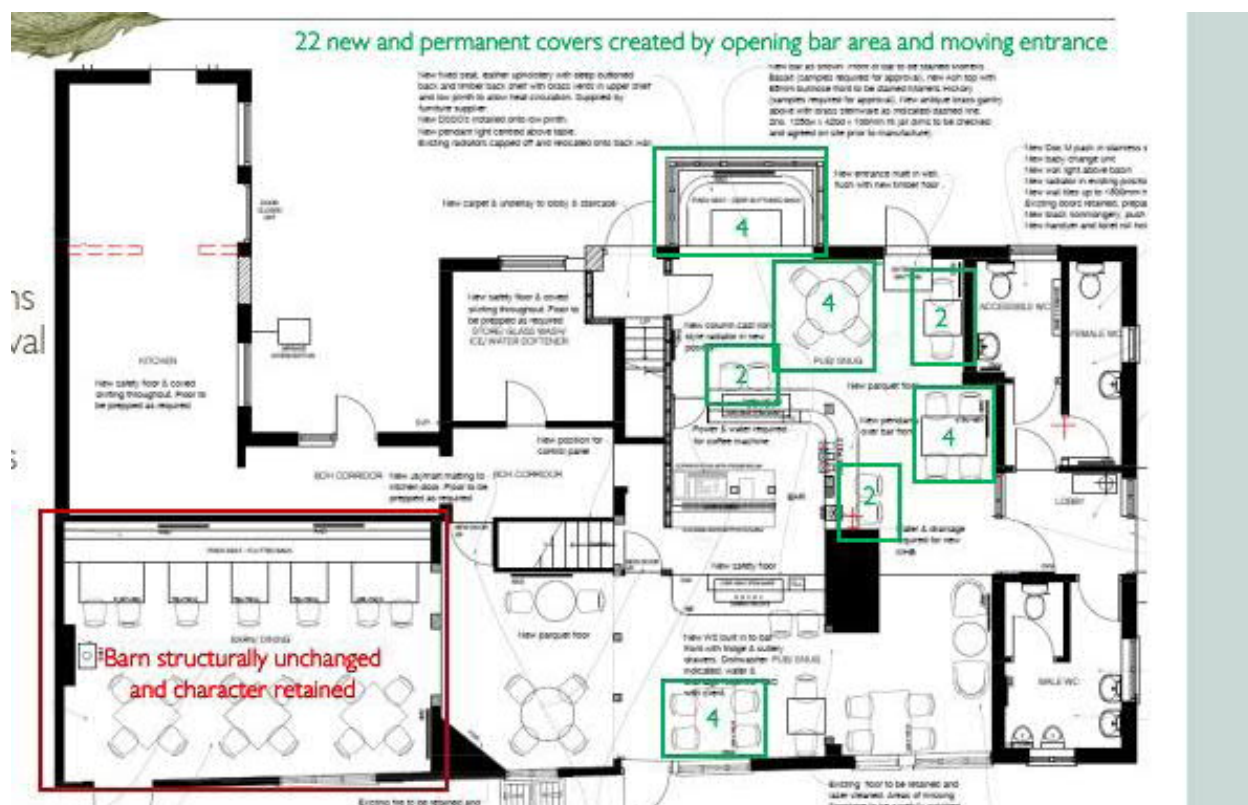
WBC Comment

Removal of Walls & Chimney Breasts (which impacts the planform)

"Built Heritage raise objection to extent of internal walling and chimney breasts that it is intended to be removed on the ground floor. These works would impact the 19th century phases of expansion of the original building. Whilst in age and significance of less importance than late 16th century historic core or that of the attached barn structure these 19th century extension to the rear and north-eastern end of the public house are thought to be more than 150 years old and are considered to hold a degree of historic significance due to their age and in their contribution to the historic phased development of the building. As such, given removal of historic fabric/features further diminishing an already much eroded historic ground floor planform/layout of this designated heritage asset."

Applicant Response

As stated in the Economic Analysis document, the internal alterations account for a 50% increase in the number of dining 'covers' that can be accommodated, of this over 1/3 (8no.) seats are directly attributable to the removal of the chimney breasts and associated walling, whilst the remaining increased number of covers have predominantly been gained by the spatial efficiency and internal flow of the connected spaces, currently cellular in character and disconnected in operation and utility. All covers are proven in the document to be necessary for financial viability.



Extract from page 22 of the 'Economic Analysis' document

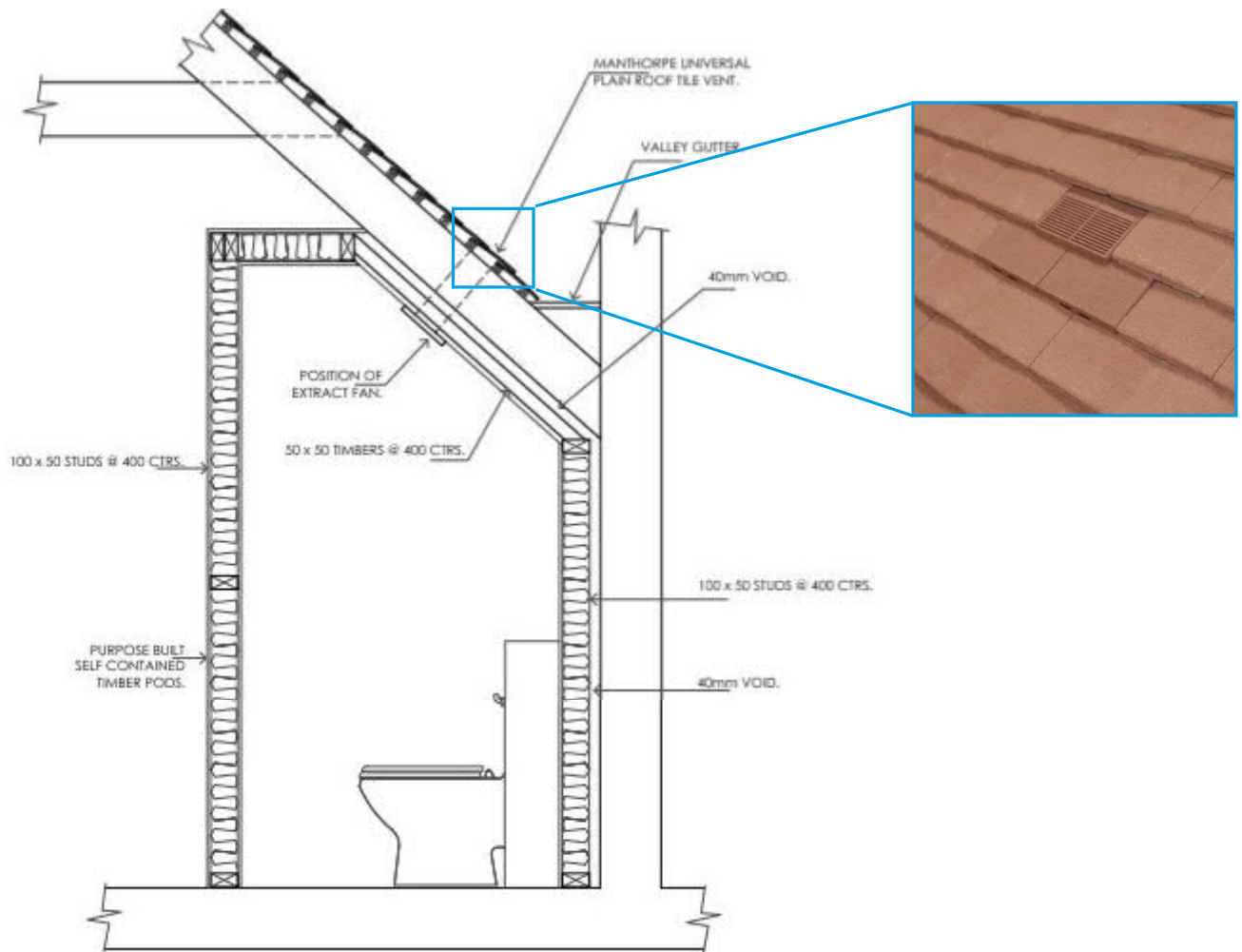
Objection 3:

WBC CommentFront Guest Rooms (Two Guest Rooms at First Floor)

"...concern in both the form for the ensuite bathroom and the lack of sufficient details with the respect to the provision of services/pipework needed for them or details as to how extraction ventilation for the ensuites would be provided given that these two rooms form part of the most historically significant part of the property."

Applicant Response

Additional details for the ventilation design are provided in drawings 1886-18 P and 1886-19 P, refer to the extract of drawing 1886-18 P, below. The floor is a modern timber floor and therefore the drainage will not cause harm to historic fabric - refer to 4.5.1A of the Heritage Statement.



Extract from the ventilation drawing for Guest Bedroom 2

WBC Comment

Front Guest Rooms (Two Guest Rooms at First Floor)

"...the location of the ensuites would however result in most of the historic timber in the backwall of both of the guest rooms being hidden from view..." leading to an unusable space, additionally, "...the applicants should reconsider the design for ensuite bathrooms and see a more compact module modern designed one as are on the market, seek to locate them within the rooms to firstly avoid harm to historic timbers"

Applicant Response

The proposed size and location of the ensuite pods were re-configured and adjusted as agreed with the Built Heritage Officer during the pre-app site visit on the 4th June 2024 - refer to 4.5.1A of the Heritage Statement.

The bathrooms are located along the two walls with the least visible timber frame when compared to the other three walls of each room - refer to Images 46-47 and 49-50, and 52-53 and 55-56 in the Heritage Statement and is therefore considered the most appropriate location in each room.

Each ensuite is designed as an independent 'pod' with a separate independent wall and ceiling to its complete enclosure with no structural co-dependency upon the existing wall - refer to the 40mm void shown in the previous section through the bathroom pod.

The size of the ensuites are based upon market research of commensurate 'offers' within the locality with similar target market. To offer ensuites that are knowingly of lower calibre in size to local competition would harm the projected market share - refer to page 15 of the Economic Analysis document that identifies nearby pubs with ensuites as 'top up revenue'.

By way of context, refer to the following three images of the ensuites to three local pubs:

The Old Bell, Hurley (3.7 miles away); The Bull, Wargrave (1.8 miles away); The Flower Pot, Aston, Henley-on-Thames (3 miles away).



Ensuite at The Old Bell, Hurley



Ensuite at The Bull, Wargrave



Ensuite at The Flower Pot, Aston

2.3 Summary of response to objections

With regards to the objections, these are summarised by the Built Heritage Officer as collectively considered to cause 'less than substantial harm'. Justification for the harm caused has been made both in the Heritage Statement and supplemented here with additional information to explain the decision process.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states, "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use".

The harm anticipated to be caused has been deeply considered and justly balanced against the public benefits of this specific project.

The community have come together to save a building that has proven uneconomically viable under a tied agreement with a parent brewing company. To secure its optimum viable use - to be retained as a local pub and the only communal gathering space in Crazies Hill - the site has been proven to need to evolve the way in which the services it offers meets the needs of both the local community, and be attractive to visitors from beyond the community to generate additional and sustainable income.

The public benefits for securing this optimum viable use are summarised as follows, noting not all benefits can be economically measured - such as the social and community value anticipated to be achieved:

- the return of the community's social hub,
- In a report by Localis in 2023, it was identified that, *"Pubs are vital social infrastructure pillars for communities across the UK... The permanent closure of rural pubs could threaten the social fabric of many communities."*;
- the reinvestment and retention of residents' money into their local community,
- The pub refurbishment and reopening is being funded in whole by the community group, whose members are local or adjacent residents. Without approval of these applications, the funds would likely be spent elsewhere, outside of the village and Wokingham Borough;
- the increase to local employment:
- The community plans employ three full time members of staff, and up to 7 more part-time staff;
- the preservation of a listed building that had been neglected owing to mis-alignment of economic viability and optimum viable use
- As highlighted by the Applicant's structural engineer, the building is currently structurally unsafe with insufficient support around the main bar area. Approval of the Applicant's plans will see funds invested into the building to ensure its long term structural integrity and secure its future use by the general public.

The Applicant submits that the balance under paragraph 215 of the NPPF weighs significantly in favour of net community benefit against less than significant harm to the building. These community benefits will not be realised if the Listed Building and Planning Consent Applications are not approved by Wokingham Borough Council.

3.0 ITEMS FOR CLARIFICATION

3.0 Items for clarification

3.1 WBC Comment

"A small point to also raise is the question of the supposedly angled door further point of note is that it is not believed the side of the existing door opening adjacent to the cellar stairs is sloping as shown."

Applicant Response

The angle of the vertical post in drawing 1886-21 P has now been amended in 1886-21 P1.

3.2 WBC Comment

"Floor plan drawing showing existing and proposed do not show the existing door to the cellar stairs"

Applicant Response

Drawing updated to show cellar door - refer to drawing 1886-05 P1.

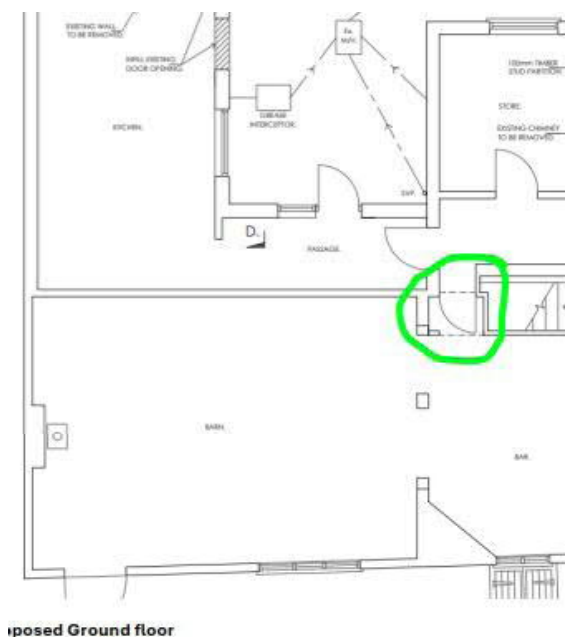
3.3 WBC Comment

"Drawing 1886-05 P (Proposed Alterations and Refurbishment) show the doorway adjacent to the cellar entrance that gives access to the back of house areas from the bar would as a result the intended new partition walling be reduced down to 600mm width opening (with no frame and/ or door to it) as best measured from the drawings."

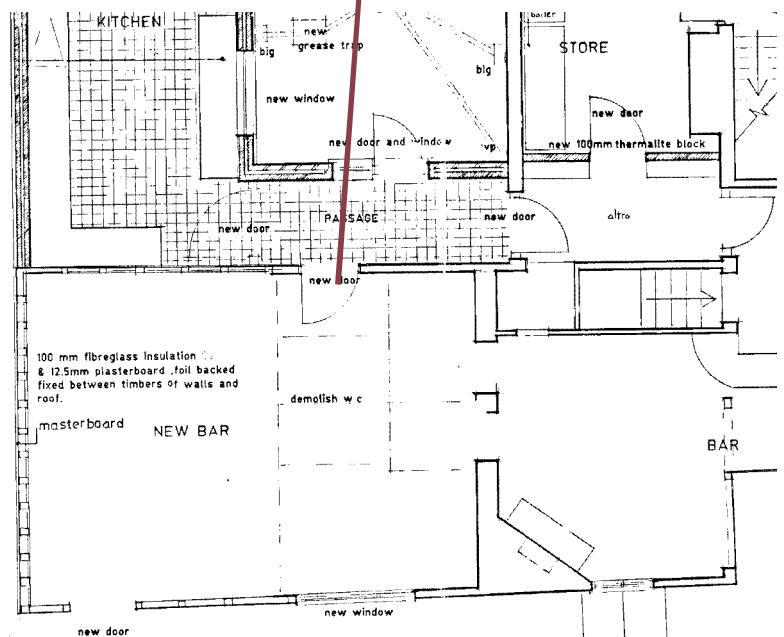
Applicant Response

Comments made regarding the width of the door are noted, and it is not intended to alter the existing opening width. Should, for any reason, the door not work in practice, there is precedence for a door within the wall of the bar directly from the service corridor in the proposed (and approved) 1990's plan.

Possible alternative internal door



Extract from Built Heritage Officer's comments



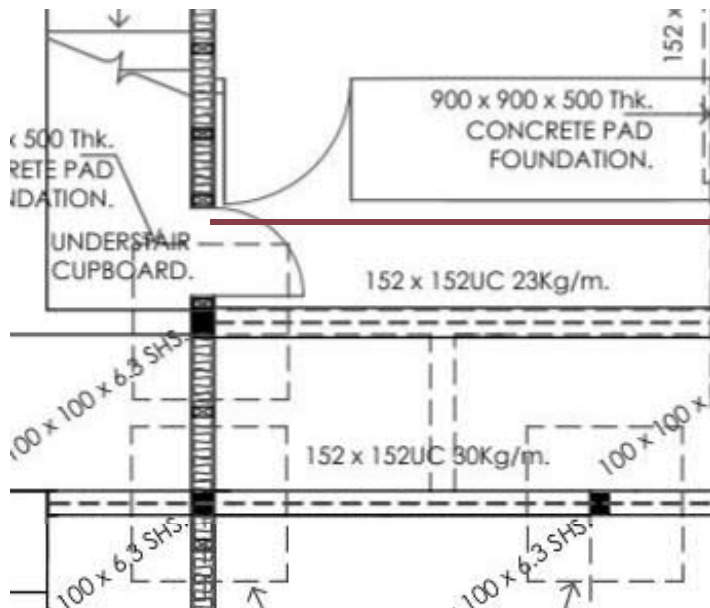
Extract from Proposed GA Ground Floor Plan 1990

3.4 WBC Comment

"With respect to drawing 1886-05 P and that for the Ground Floor Structural Plan (drawing 1886-20 P). The latter drawings shows a post to the edge of the bar top in line with that of the end of the intended partition wall (with calculated 650mm wide access doorway to the bar). Whilst the position of this post on the other drawing is shown off-set from the end of the partition wall."

Applicant Response

The post referred to in drawing 1886-20 P was drawn in error, this has been removed in the revised drawing '1886-20 P1'.



Post drawn in error - now removed in updated drawing

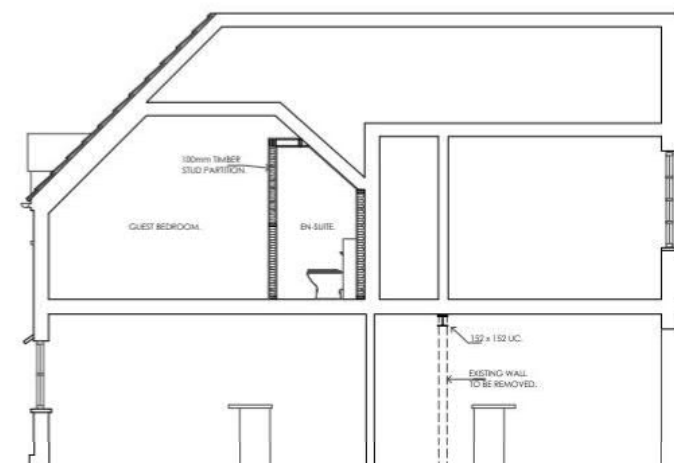
Extract from drawing 1886-20P

3.5 WBC Comment

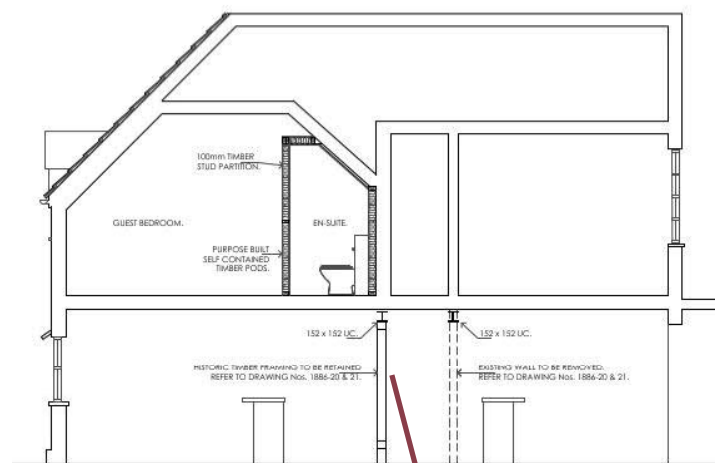
"Cross sectional views as proposed shown on drawing 1886-10 P, appears to depict a wall still remaining where walling is to be removed."

Applicant Response

The wall referred to in drawing 1886-10 P was drawn in error, this has been removed in the revised drawing '1886-10 P1'.



Extract from drawing 1886-10P



Extract from drawing 1886-10P1

Wall section updated

3.6 WBC CommentRepair to Chimney

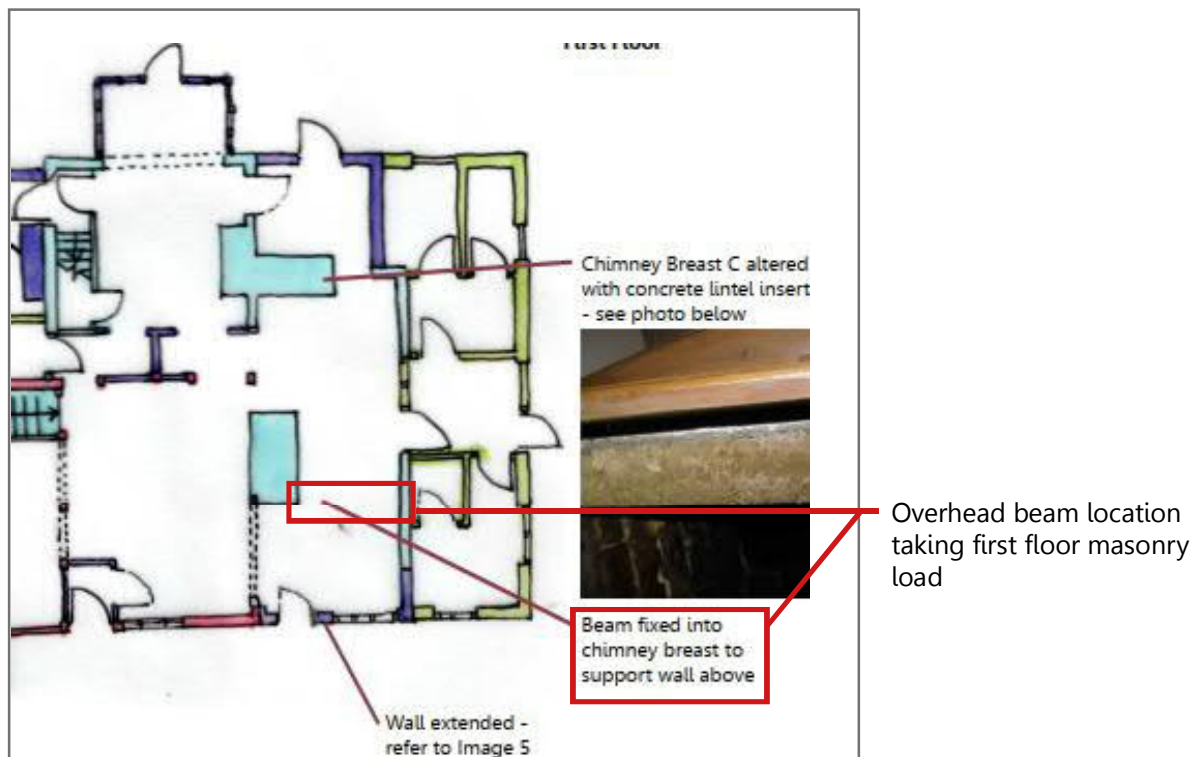
"Drawing 1886 - SK01 P (Helibar Detail to Existing Chimney) has been provided which on it does not clarify where in the building the intended works are for... In principle the proposal is believed acceptable although question is however raised to the state mortar mix to be used. The expectation here is for the mortar to be a lime mix"

Applicant Response

The notes to drawing 1886 - SK01 P have been updated to clarify that the pointing shall be as follows: "POINT UP JOINT IN 1:3 LIME MORTAR. (1 PART NHL 3.5 : 2 PARTS BUILDING SAND, 1 PART SHARP SAND);

PLASTER EXISTING CHIMNEY WITH 10mm BACKING COAT 1: 2.5 LIME PLASTER (1 PART NHL 2 : 2.5 PARTS BUILDING SAND.); 3mm FINISH COAT 1:1.5 LIME PLASTER (1 PART NHL 2 :1.5 PARTS FINE SILICA SAND.)" - Refer to 1886-SK01 P1.

The grout directly in contact with the helibars are required to be in a cementitious resin mix to bond and transfer the strength to stabilise the building: when extending the building a steel beam was inserted into the side of the chimney to support the first floor masonry above. This has transferred excessive load onto the chimney which now needs to be structurally stabilised as per the repair proposal - refer to the extract above from the Heritage Statement which indicates the beam location.



Extract from page 12 of the Heritage Statement

3.7 WBC Comment

Lounge/Kitchen

"Ideally, this feature (the fireplace) should be kept and remain a visible feature of this room."

Applicant Response

The room works most successfully as a kitchen-diner-living room in the proposed arrangement. The drainage required to take away the waste from the kitchen appliances is required to be routed to the rear of the building, and rearranging the room away from the fireplace would incur challenges with a successful drainage solution.

The applicant proposes to retain the existing fireplace and surround - albeit the surround has been altered in the past to support a modern mantelpiece. The fireplace shall be overboarded and the mantelpiece incorporated into shelving for use in the kitchen. Refer to drawing 1886-06 P1 for up-dated notes.

3.8 WBC Comment

Staff Bedroom

"It is noted that the position of the door of the landing corridor to the rear staff/guest bedroom is to be moved, as shown on drawing 1886-06 P, with a sliding door to be positioned further along the corridor (no detail for this door appeared to have been submitted). No justification is given for the need to reposition the door, which it is noted on drawing 1886-09 P is shown still in its present position".

Applicant Response

Pre-app feedback regarding the fireplace in the staff bedroom was for the fireplace to be retained. As a bedroom this limits the location of a possible bed to one of the walls only - that opposite the fireplace. If the existing door was retained in its current location access into the room would not be possible owing to the bed.

Secondly, a new secure door to the flat requires to be installed for fire protection to the staircase. The distance between the door and the existing bedroom door would be too close for practical use. Consideration to re-hang the existing door to swing outwards was given, however this would obstruct the fire escape route from the flat and cause a fire hazard. The solution offered is therefore a sliding door to enable the fireplace to be retained, and access to the flat and the bedroom to be safely resolved.

3.9 WBC Comment

Roof & Vents

"There are no complete roof plans provided".

Applicant Response

'Existing' and 'Proposed' roof plans have been created - refer to drawings 1886-16 P and 1886-17 P.

3.10 WBC Comment

Roof & Vents

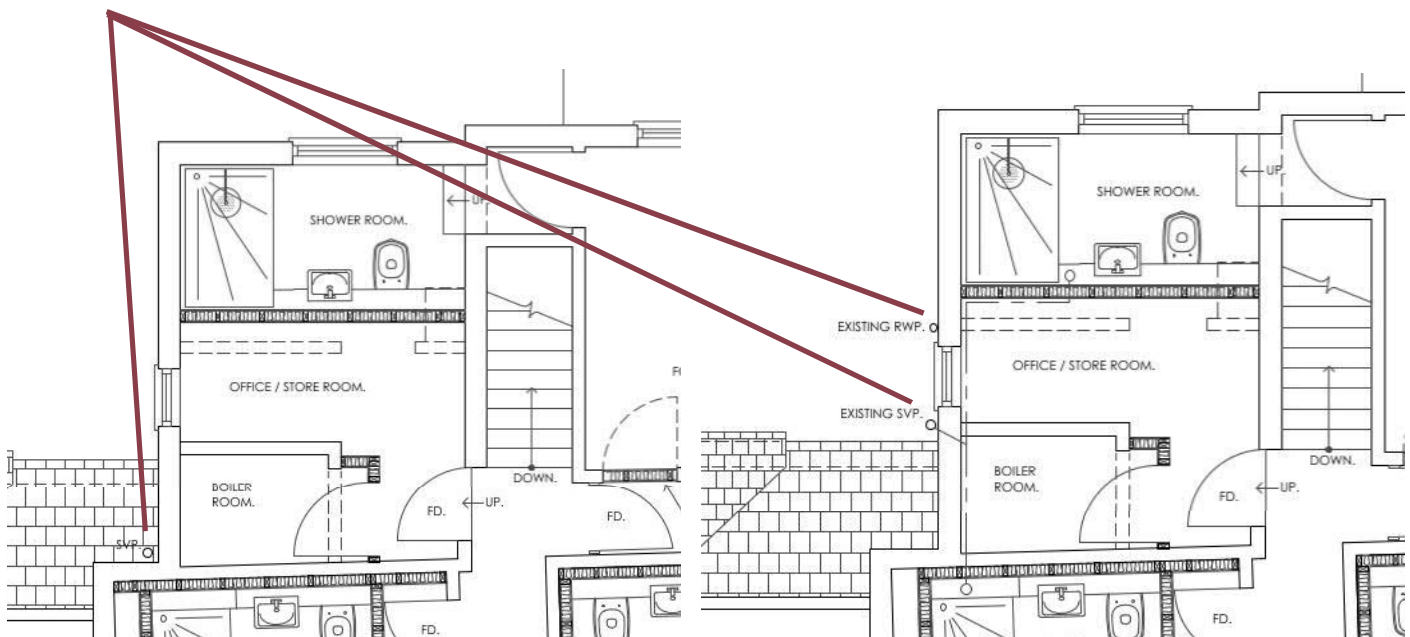
"No details of such roof vents has been provided or indicated where they would on proposed first floor plan be situated. The addition of roof vents in this historic part of the property is of some concern as there is the potential historic fabric of the roof may be harmed or lost. Although in terms of potential visual impact the vents may have, it is believed if sited in the valley of the roof created by the taller flat roofed 20th century extension should mean the vents would not be visible."

Applicant Response

Ventilation details have been created - refer to drawings 1886-18 P and 1886-19 P.

As suggested, the vents have been sited in the valley of the roof - refer to new roof plan drawing 1886-17 P.

Downpipes updated



Extract from drawing 1886-06P

Extract from drawing 1886-06P1

3.11 WBC Comment

"The intention is for a new SVP, shown on drawing 1886-06, sited externally on the rear walling to the historic frontage range, of the first floor (LHS) guest bedroom, and that of the flat-roofed 20th century extension. This SVP is not however shown in the corresponding elevational view (Proposed Elevation E-E) on drawing 1886-08 P although it appears the existing one is. As such further clarification as to the routing externally of the new SVP would be expected to be confirmed, including whether the existing is being kept."

Applicant Response

Elevation drawing 1886-08 P is correct, the drawing 1886-06 P has been updated - refer to drawing 1886-06 P1.

3.12 WBC Comment

"no indication of measure for the insulation of the roofs, works that in all likelihood would require consent to do so."

Applicant Response

There is no change of use to the spaces and the roof is not proposed to be retrofitted with insulation.

3.13 WBC Comment

"Further clarification on signage: no measurements or scale provided for the graphics or labelling cross-reference to the proposed elevations to indicate where each of the sign is located."

Applicant Response

Measurements are now provided on drawing 1886-07 P1.

3.14 WBC Comment

"Drawing 1886-07 P shows the intention for new longer sign board. Visually, it is thought a larger sign is unwelcomed change that detracts from the traditional barn exterior more so than the existing. For clarification purposes should the intention be for any of the new signage boards to be larger than the existing then this needs to be stated along with the intend dimensions for the boards."

Applicant Response

The new signage boards are proposed to be the same as the existing signage boards.

Refer to drawing 1886-07 P1.

3.15 WBC Comment

"Drawing 1886-SK.03...whilst the drawing is a scaled drawing, it only shows the front and reverse sides...There are however no side elevation provide or confirmation as to what the new post is to be made from and the finish to it."

Applicant Response

Refer to updated drawing 1886-SK.03 P1 which provides the side elevations. The existing post was removed due to safety concerns and remains on-site for inspection. The replacement post shall be exactly the same - made of timber to the same dimensions - as the original post.

Letter of Advice from Structural Engineer - as referred to in Section 2.2, pages 5 and 6.



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Once the soft strip off the bar area was completed, a full review of the existing structure could be undertaken. There are currently a number of original 16th century timber members forming the wall with infill brickwork which has been installed at a later period. The timber frame exhibits signs of distortion with the vertical posts being out of vertical plumb by some 80 to 90mm in the side-to-side direction and some 45 to 50mm in the front to rear direction.

To the left-hand side sections of the original beams have been removed in the past, which is now partially supported by a modern-day timber post (built only off the existing timber floor) and a section of timber coach screwed to the original post. The cross-sectional area of this original post has been greatly reduced by two thirds by stitch drilling in the past which we believe may have been for cabling. (Refer to photographs 1 & 2.)

To the right-hand side there is the main original corner support post. This has been drastically reduced in section over the years (refer to photographs 3&4.) Having undertaken a load analysis a total load of 72KN is being applied to the wall (more than 7 Tonne.) There is also no acceptable foundation to this wall, and as such the wall / timber framing is not structurally acceptable to support the loadings. To relieve the loading on the wall / frame to prevent the likelihood of failure, a scheme was devised to insert a steel beam over the top of the original wall / frame providing two new small posts. The original wall would then become a non-loadbearing element and could be retained in its current location, thus preserving the historic elements of the building.

To enable this system to be installed it does require that the original top timber beam is notched to allow the steel post to connect to the steel beam. The only possible alternative to this would be to remove the entire wall / frame and rebuild it like for like in new oak timbers, or alternatively to use the steel beam as specified but remove the end post and replace this with a new steel column.

We feel however that the original wall / frame should be retained and that with careful notching to the original timber beam to enable the steel post to be inserted, would be a less intrusive solution to the historic fabric of the building.

We noted the Conservation officers comment with regard to bearing the steel beam onto the original rear 16th Century wall and have amended our design so that the steel beam cantilevers at both ends and therefore no load would now be transmitted onto any part of the original fabric of the building.

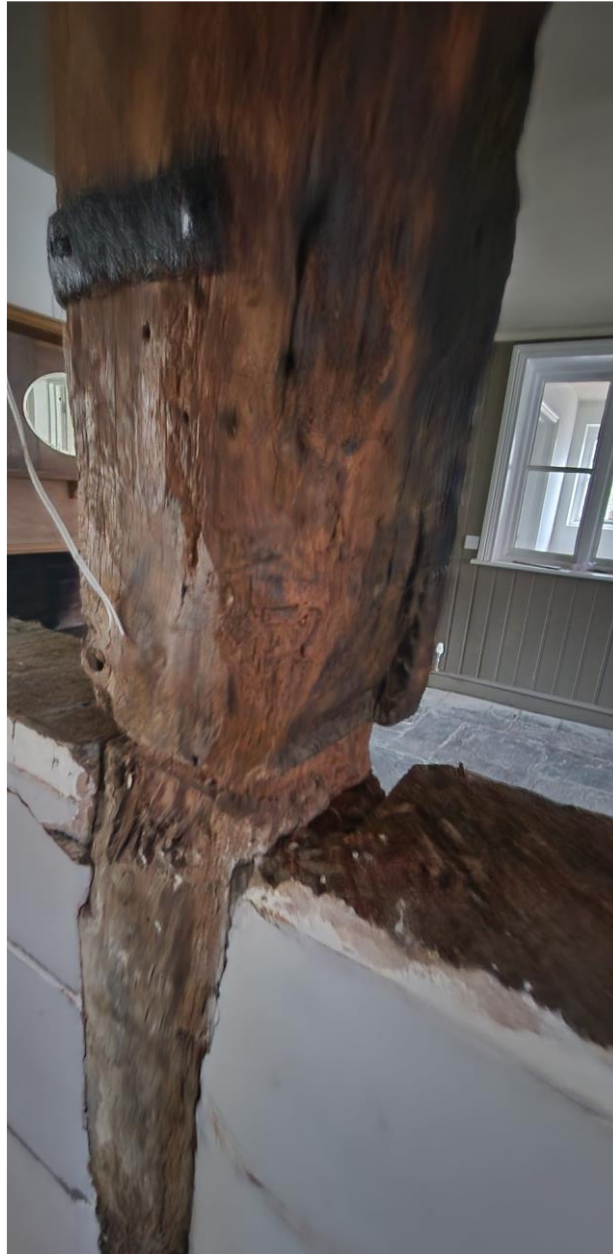
We further noted the comment with regard to the location of the Cellar, this was identified as not impacting this area, on the layout drawing issued on the 20th January 2025.



PHOTOGRAPH 1.



PHOTOGRAPH 2.



PHOTOGRAPH 3.



PHOTOGRAPH 4.

