The Old Cottage

Pearson Road, Sonning, RG4 6UH

HERITAGE STATEMENT& DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT for the REMOVAL of the 'BOILER HOUSE'

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Rev 02

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Revision History

Rev 00	Issued 02.04.2026	FIRST ISSUE
Rev 01	Issued 07.04.2026	FINAL ISSUE
Rev 02	Issued 09.04.2026	ECOLOGY STATEMENT ADDED

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1.1 This Heritage Statement is submitted as part of a listed building application for the proposed removal of a small 'boiler house' at The Old Cottage, Pearson Road, Sonning. The document is written to assist greater understanding of the impact of the proposals upon the heritage significance of the heritage asset - the Grade II listed property and the Sonning Conservation Area and the setting of numerous nearby listed buildings.

1.2 Listed buildings and conservation areas are considered 'heritage assets' as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore merits consideration in planning decisions (2024).

1.3 The 'boiler house' is a modern addition to the West elevation of the property, largely concealed from view from the street (refer to 'Existing North Elevation' on drawing 1362-HR-A-TP-XX-0203) located behind a side gate.

1.4 The submission draws upon the recent and relevant research carried out into the heritage signifiance of the property and environs by the applicant's Heritage Consultant Rob Workman of Lime and Listed. A redacted version of the Heritage Statement submitted for application 232278, which Rob Workman has provided to the applicant for their use as necessary to facilitate forthcoming applications associated to the refurbishment of this property, is referenced and included in the Appendix.

1.5 **Relevant Planning History for The Old Cottage, Pearson Road, Sonning:**

Application ref.	Summary	Date
253038	Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent (232278) dated 9/1/2024. Condition 4 relating to structural repairs safeguarding special architectural or historic interest. (Refused).	06.02.2026
232278	Application for Listed Building consent for proposed external alterations; conservation works including sensitive historic timber and masonry cleaning, cement and modern facing timber removal, structural repairs, installation of vapour-permeable wall insulation, lime rendering and breathable decoration to all elevations. (Granted).	09.01.2024
232299	Application for Listed Building consent for proposed internal alterations to East Wing and Utility Room; conservation works including sensitive historic timber and masonry cleaning, cement and modern plaster removal, structural repairs, installation of vapour permeable wall insulation, lime rendering and breathable decoration to all rooms. (Granted).	09.01.2024

1.5 (cntd)	Application ref.	Summary	Date
	240474	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed roof work to the East Wing and replacement roof covering, breathable roofing membrane and insulation, structural work to roof timbers if required and new MVHR unit to guest bathroom. (Granted).	29.04.2024

1.6 **Heritage Significance**

1.6.1 Proposals relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF). Such proposals require to be justified under this legislation with respect to potential effect on the heritage asset. Consideration is given to the impact upon a heritage asset's 'significance' and its 'setting'.

1.6.2 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF as:
"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting..." (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024, Annex 2: Glossary).

1.6.3 The 'setting' of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as:
'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.' (MHCLG, 2024, Annex 2: Glossary).

1.6.4 This Heritage Statement is written within the context of relevant best practice guidance:

- Historic England (2008). Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance.

1.6.5 The scope of the Heritage Statement is developed to be proportionate to the proposals in accordance to paragraph 207 of the NPPF which states, "The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance" (2024, para. 207).

1.6.6 This Heritage Statement identifies the heritage assets with potential to be affected by the proposals, it then describes the heritage assests' significance, and the document then analyses the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the heritage assets.

2.1 The heritage assets with the potential to be impacted by changes to The Old Cottage are as follows:

2.1.1 **Grade II listed, 'The Old Cottage'**

List Entry No.: 1117432

Date of listing: 26.01.1967

"The Old Cottage 26.1.67 GV II House. Early C15 hall house altered, 2 storeys, timber framed, painted brick infilling, old tile roof, central chimney inserted Cl7, and later chimney to east end. North front has gable to left, one bay of 4-light leaded windows, one irregular bay of 3-light leaded casements to right of gable, a small C20 single light and to right hand coupled 3-light leaded upper casements over a 3-light window on ground floor and C20 door in right corner. Large C20 extension to rear. Smaller gabled extension to east in painted brick. Interior:- most of timber frame visible including large roof purlins and wind braces heavily sooted. Large scissor brace truss in roof. Ground floor room right contains old carved heads and a carved panel, reputedly from the former Bishops Palace." (Historic England, 2026)

2.1.2 **The Sonning Conservation Area**

The property is within the 'Pearson Road' character area within the conservation area. The Conservation Area Appraisal highlights characteristics of this sub-area are:

- a number of age and style of properties are present in changing sizes of plots with diversity contributing to its 'charm'
- larger plots provide opportunities for glimpsed views between buildings which create a greater sense of openness
- Pearson Road contributes to a number of focal points within the conservation area

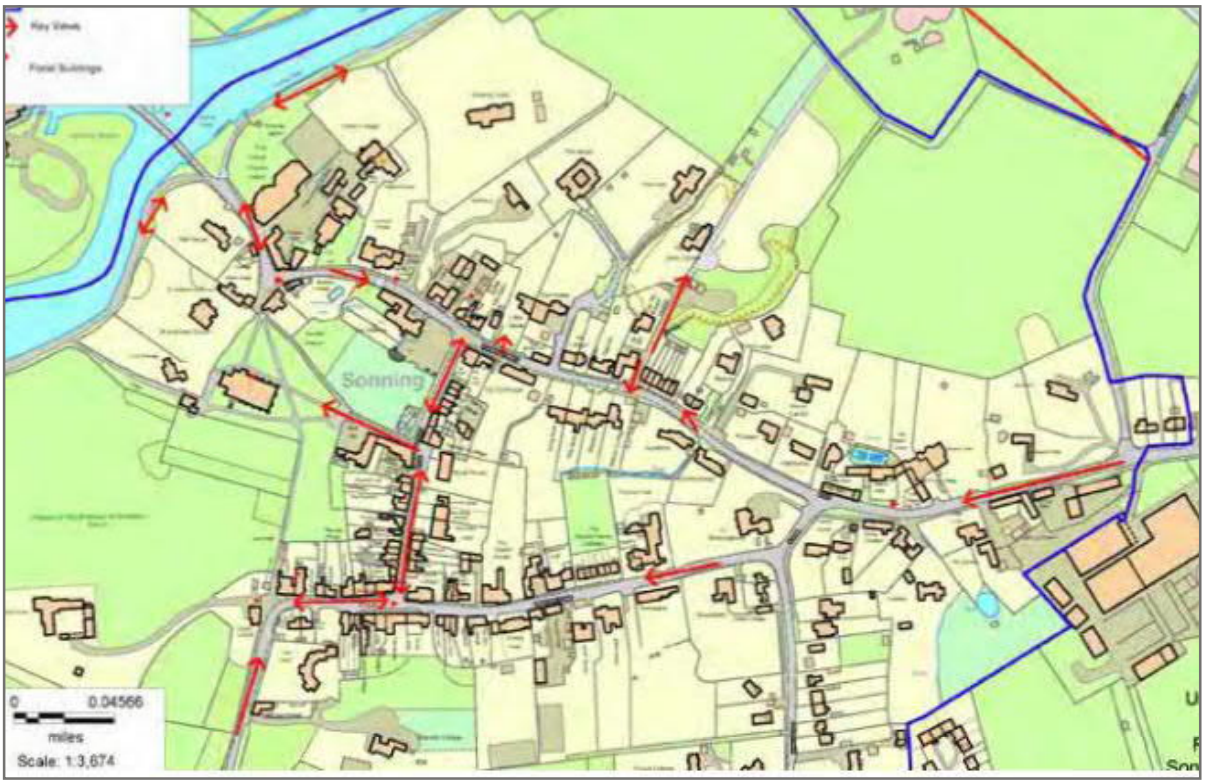

Image 01: Extract of the Conservation Area map showing focal points within the CA (WBC, 2017)

2.1.3 Listed buildings within the vicinity of The Old Cottage

These are summarised in the extract from Historic England's website below of the map of the immediate area (Historic England, 2026).

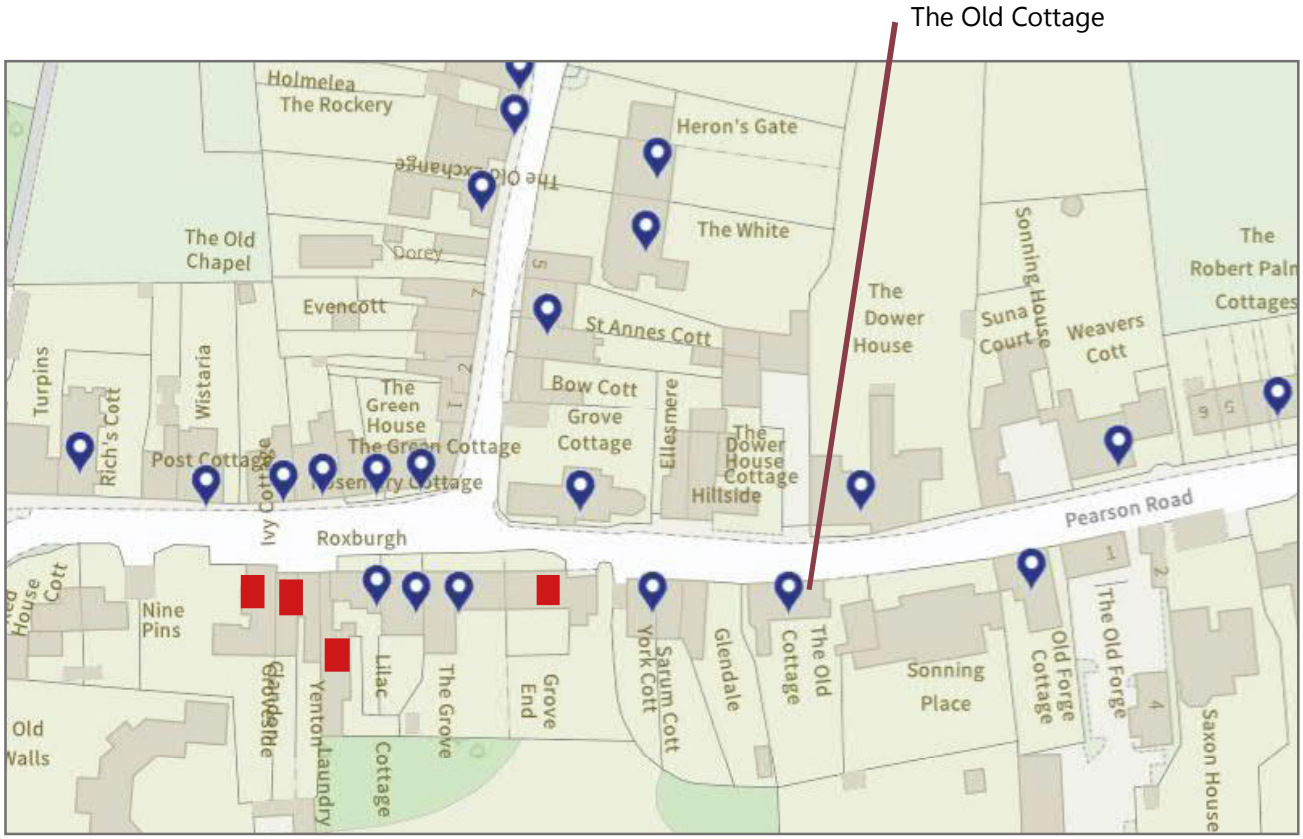

Image 02: Extract of map showing listed buildings in the vicinity of The Old Cottage (Historic England, 2026)

2.1.4 'Buildings of Traditional Local Character'

These are buildings considered "...important to the Borough's heritage" (WBC, 2026). Those on Pearson Road within the scope of the map have been marked up with a red square on the Historic England map, above, namely:

- Clandon,
- Grove End
- Groveside
- Laundry Cottage

2.2 Photographs

Image 03: View of North elevation along Pearson Road, and return East elevation

Image 04: View from Pearson Road at west end of property (2024)

2.2 Photographs of The Site and Context (cntd)

(cntd)

Image 05: View from Pearson Road at west end of property

Image 06: View of boiler house enclosure

2.3 **The fabric of the 'boiler house'**

The Heritage Statement submitted for 232278 and 232299 identifies the fabric of the boiler house as being within the Phase 3 construction period:

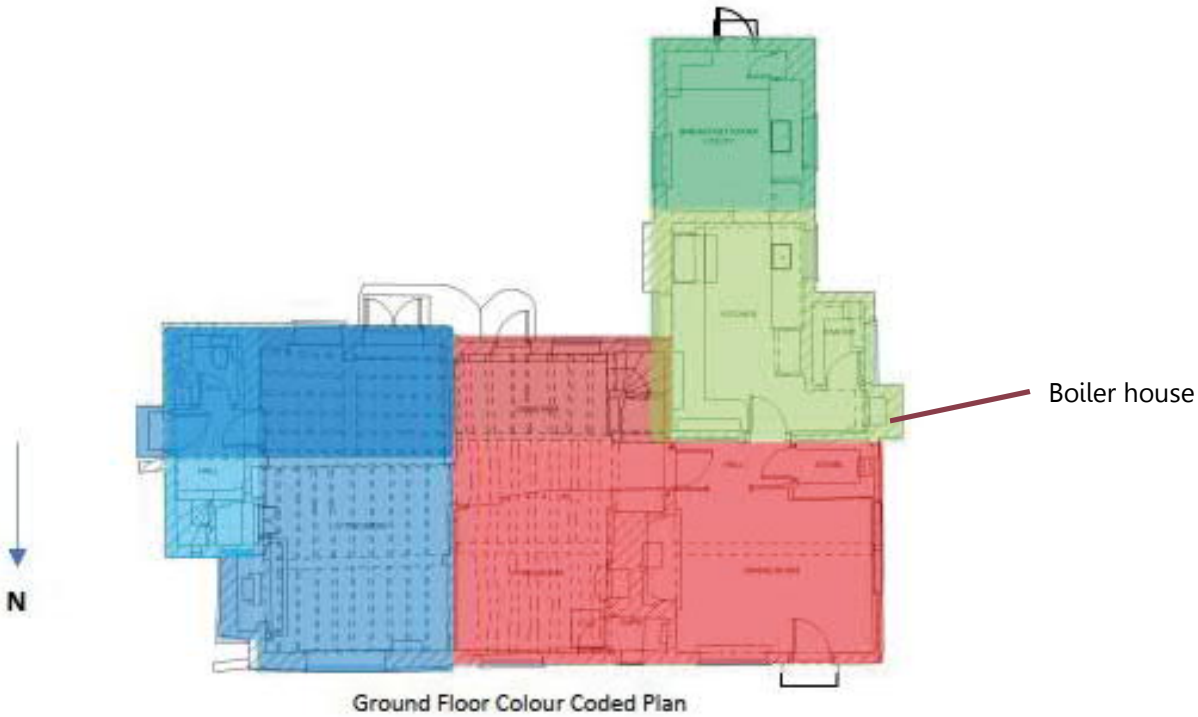

Image 07: Extract from the Heritage Statement showing the Phases of construction colour coded (Workman, 2023)

2.3 (cntd)

(green shades)

Phase 3: likely early-mid C20th. Predominantly brick built with timber roof trusses. As previously outlined these additions do not appear to be on historic mapping until 1932. It is hard to date the fabric at present due to modern paint/coatings on brickwork, but generally they appear to be older brick but of course may have been built using reclaimed brick.

Image 08: Extract from the Heritage Statement summarising the key for the colour coded phased construction plan (Image 07) (Workman, 2023)

The boiler house is included collectively within the Phase 3 - early-mid C20. Workman's email of the 10.02.2026 to WBC described the construction as 'modern'. It is noted that the walls of the boiler house have been constructed directly off paving slabs and is more generally of very poor construction.

2.4 With regards the visibiliy of the massing of the boiler house it is clearly a modern addition that conceals timber frame and is incongruous with the timber frame construction of the house. The boiler house does not contribute visibly to the conservation area and cannot be regarded as having influence upon the setting of nearby listed buildings and 'Buildings of Traditional Local Character'.

3.1 Heritage Significance

3.1.1 The Heritage Statement has identified the following as being of heritage significance at The Old Cottage, and a review of the range of nearby heritage assets that has potential to be impacted by these proposed works has determined those identified below remain relevant:

The significance of The Old Cottage is currently masked by later modern coatings it can be summarised as follows based in the information known to date:

- The building is a good example of a 14th/15th century dwelling (exact date TBC following dendro/isotope dating), with multiple later additions to the east and south of the primary phase. It is likely heritage significance reduces to a degree as the phases progress.
- Historically the building was possibly two separate units/plots, now combined into one.
- The plan form of the more significant primary and secondary phases is still largely legible, some of the rooms have lost their historic proportions having been 'opened up' or have had the interconnection altered and/or infill panels removed in the past.
- Most rooms retain at least some of their architectural features although modern inappropriate finishes may be disguising earlier more significant features. (Plan form is significant in understanding how buildings were originally occupied so some significance has been lost by the opening up of room plans and alterations to interconnection which does lower significance).
- The building's architectural form expresses its history and the narrative of its development. However, there is more to understand following the removal of inappropriate materials.
- Changes over time, including the connection between the two buildings, opening up between rooms and the alterations to the windows are all responses to changes in the occupant's living standards and lifestyle. As such, they add to the narrative of how the building is now experienced.
- Other alterations during the 20th century, such as the garage, bathroom extension and some of the modern Crittal windows, are less successful and may be considered to contribute negatively to the significance of the listed building.
- It is highly likely the building incorporates locally distinct vernacular building materials under modern finishes and coatings. The primary timber framing including a scissor truss provides evidence of local materials and local craftsmanship, so it is of high significance. It also contributes to local distinctiveness and character.
- Examples of other skilled trades such as internal carpentry, joinery and ironmongery all add to the significance of the listed building although provenance of some mouldings and carvings in dining room is questionable and requires further assessment. Historic timber framing and finishes such as wattle and daub and lime plaster should be preserved where they survive.
- The house makes a positive contribution to the character of Sonning Conservation Area. Conversely, the immediate surroundings of the house contribute positively to the value and significance of The Old Cottage.

The building's architectural and historic significance is formally recognised in its statutory designation as a Grade II listed building.

3.1.2 Identified within this list above are alterations made during the C20 that are considered to contribute negatively to the significance of the listed property, and it is considered the boiler house indeed falls under this collective term in its negative contribution to the property.

4.0 THE PROPOSED WORK AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE HERITAGE ASSETS

4.1 Historic England and the NPPF offer guidance on how to approach the assessment of the impact of proposed works upon the significance of a heritage asset. In particular the following are considered relevant to The Old Cottage, the Sonning Conservation Area and the setting of those listed buildings and 'buildings of traditional local character' in the vicinity of The Site.

4.1.1 "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance", (MHC&LG, 2024, para.212).

4.1.2 "Each generation should therefore shape and sustain the historic environment in ways that allow people to use, enjoy and benefit from it, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same", (Conservation Principle 1.3, Historic England, 2008, p.19).

4.1.3 "Conservation involves people managing change to a significant place in its setting, in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations", (Conservation Principle 4.2, Historic England, 2008, p.22).

4.1.4 With regards to the consideration of the effect of authenticity upon a heritage asset Historic England comment, "A desire to retain authenticity tends to suggest that any deliberate change to a significant place should be distinguishable, that is, its extent should be discernible through inspection. The degree of distinction that is appropriate must take account of the aesthetic values of the place", (2008, para. 93, p.45).

4.2 **Proposed removal of the boiler house**

The boiler house is proposed to be dismantled and the resultant wall opening to be infilled with stretcher coursed brickwork with a limewash finish.

The boiler house of modern impermeable materials is constructed in front of the original timber frame of the West gable, causing moisture to be trapped resulting in accelerated decay of the frame. The removal of the construction will enable the timber frame - of high heritage significance - to be revealed and to enable repairs to the frame to be carried out in due course.

The inaccessible timber frame is due for repair under permission 232278, subject to the discharge of Condition 4 - *relating to structural repairs safeguarding special architectural or historic interest.*

The removal of the modern construction will better reveal the heritage significance of the property, arrest the deterioration of the timber frame, and enable the highly significant timber frame to be carefully repaired owing to improved access.

The proposal to remove the boiler house is therefore considered to be a **positive impact** to the heritage significance of the property and the longevity of the historic fabric of high heritage significance.

5.0 ECOLOGY STATEMENT

5.1 **Potential Presence of Bats**

5.1.1 The Old Cottage was subject to a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment in May 2023 in which the boiler house was observed as part of the whole house assessment. The author of the report - John Wenmann Ecological Consultancy LLP (JWEC) - has been contacted as part of this new application to discuss specifically the boiler house with respect to the potential for providing a feature for roosting bats. John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP understand the building well owing to their site presence during roof works under license No. 2024-68217-EPS-MIT, valid until 01.10.2029.

5.1.2 JWEC advised that owing to the location of the boiler house to the West elevation - where is is dark and damp - the structure was highly unlikely to be attractive to bats, and all bat activity around the house had been concentrated within gaps behind timber frames on the rear eastern end of the property, and at the eaves and under roof tiles on the front northern side of the property.

5.2 **Mitigation strategy**

5.2.1 The owners of the property are understanding of the requirement to protect bats and their habitats and any works would be cognisant of this important factor.

5.2.2 The resultant hole in the wall ,once the boiler house is removed, shall be carefully overboarded to cover any potential timber frame so exposed to ensure that is does not provide a potential location for bats to occupy until the new in-fill construction is completed.

6.0 ACCESS STATEMENT

6.1 The proposal will not impact the existing access into and within the property.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The review of the proposed works has demonstrated to cause 'no harm' upon the heritage significance of the Grade II listed property, the conservation area or the setting of nearby listed buildings and those nearby 'Buildings of Traditional Local Character'.

7.2 The removal of the boiler house improves the ability to understand the evolution of the property more clearly. The modern construction is of poor quality and has caused detrimental damage to the West gable timber frame which has high heritage significance.

7.3 The proposal will create access for the necessary repairs to the West gable timber frame to be carried out and thereby improve the protection of the wider timber frame which has high heritage significance.

8.0 METHODOLOGY

The following methods were used in gathering the information that informed this Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment:

1) Site visit
The Old Cottaged was visited on the 02.03.2026 and recorded with photographs.

Historic England. (2008). *Conservation Principles Policy and Guidance: For the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment.* [Online]. Available from: www.historicengland.org.uk. [Accessed: 31.03.2026].

Historic England. (2019). *2019 Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Second edition, Historic England Advice Note 1.* [Online]. Available from: https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management. [Accessed: 31.03.2026].

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework.* [Online]. Available from: www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf. [Accessed: 31.03.2026].

Wokingham Borough Council. (2017). *Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal 2017.* [Online]. Available from: www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Sonning%20Conservation%20Area%20%20Appraisal%202017%20%28Adopted%2019%20April%202017%29.pdf. [Accessed: 31.03.2026].

Websites

Historic England	www.historicengland.org.uk

10.1 Redacted Heritage Statement

COMBINED DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

THE OLD COTTAGE, PEARSON ROAD,
SONNING ON THAMES, BERKSHIRE, RG4 6UH.

Proposed External Alterations; Conservation works including sensitive historic timber and masonry cleaning, cement and modern facing timber removal, structural repairs, installation of vapour permeable wall insulation, lime rendering and breathable decoration to all elevations.

Prepared by
Rob Workman *BSc (Hons) PG Dip (Historic Conservation)*
on 18th September 2023.

lime&listed™

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About the Author

Rob Workman has worked in the built heritage construction sector since 2004 and founded Lime&Listed in 2008. Initially undertaking specialist conservation building work, extensive repair and alteration projects with traditional materials for domestic clients and most recently also providing historic building and heritage planning consultancy for homeowners and organisations.

Rob has extensive practical on site experience relating to the challenges involved with listed buildings, particularly with historic timber framed buildings. With an honours degree in engineering from Brunel University (2002) and a further Post Graduate Diploma from Oxford Brookes University in Historic Building Conservation (2008-10). Rob has also been employed as a Conservation and Design Officer at South Oxfordshire and Vale White Horse District (2017-2021), also consulted for Wokingham Borough Council (2019) as an external built heritage consultant and has gained valuable experience of heritage planning matters, legislation, local and national planning policies during this period to compliment his practical knowledge and experience.

Rob is now perfectly placed to advise on repairs and alterations to listed buildings from a heritage planning perspective but with practical understanding of what is actually feasible to undertake such projects. Rob is a keen supporter of The SPAB Approach to building conservation and has also helped set up the Heritage Skills Centre for National Trust at The Coleshill Estate in West Oxfordshire and is currently a volunteer member of the Steering Group and is regularly involved in running practical conservation skills course and training days there.

1.0 BACKGROUND

This heritage statement has been compiled by Rob Workman BSc (Hons), PGDip (Hist Cons) of Lime&Listed Historic Building and Heritage Planning Consultants on behalf of Naomi Dwight, the applicant to support this application for;

Proposed External Alterations; Conservation works including sensitive historic timber and masonry cleaning, cement and modern facing timber removal, structural repairs, installation of vapour permeable wall insulation, lime rendering and breathable decoration to all elevations.

The purpose of the heritage statement is twofold. Firstly, to assess the architectural and historic significance of The Old Cottage, and then to consider the heritage impacts of the proposed alterations on the significance identified. This document is intended to assist the owners and the local planning authority in making informed decisions about the proposed alterations.

The heritage statement is written to comply with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) which require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by proposed alterations, including any contribution made by their setting, stating that *"The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance".*

Such an approach is also identified as best practice in Historic England's '*Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision – Taking in the Historic Environment'* (March 2015).

The Old Cottage is a significant Grade II Listed building located on Pearson Road situated within the heart of the Sonning Conservation Area and the setting of numerous nearby listed buildings.

Mr and Mrs Dwight have lived in the property for the last year and have taken their time to fully understand the building throughout the seasons, it's significance as a designated heritage asset and most importantly the current condition of the historic fabric. They have sought specialist advice from two structural engineers including conservation specialist David Evans (SPAB Scholar), a specialist conservation surveyor (Joe Hotson) and an eminent dendrochronologist (Dr Andy Moir) who have all visited the property within the last 12 months to inspect the fabric, provide advice and recommendations.

Alongside this statement please review the supporting surveyor and engineer inspection reports, their recommendations, the existing and proposed elevations which also outline the sensitive conservation works proposed to the external elevations.

The supporting survey reports highlight the structural, damp and timber decay issues throughout the building inevitably caused by the liberal application of impervious modern cement renders, gypsum plaster and plastic paint coatings that have been applied over the last 50-75 years. These impervious materials have trapped excessive dampness, both internally and externally, which now needs to be carefully removed to enable the fabric to dry out, to allow inspection and repairs to progress.

It cannot be understated how harmful this past approach to building maintenance and repair at The Old Cottage has been, not only to the building's historic fabric, but its heritage significance as further sections of historic timber and masonry will inevitably be lost to enable conservation repairs to the significant timber framing and surrounding fabric.

Dr Andy Moir has suggested the primary phase in the west wing, originally an open hall, may have a slightly earlier construction date than early 15th century stated in the official listing, this ties in with the Pevsner account. The smoke blackened roof rafters, braces and scissor truss are a rare survival and as such hold very high significance in built heritage terms.

Initial sampling for dendro-dating has unfortunately been unable to get an accurate date but further timber samples have now been submitted for isotope analysis which will hopefully provide an accurate date for the structural timbers in the next few weeks. We await his report and will update the Conservation Officer at the earliest opportunity and whilst listed building consent applications are ongoing.

The historic timber framing in the west gable wall is in a terrible state of degradation as highlighted in David Evans report, the true extent will not be known until further opening up, outlined in this initial application, has been approved by the Conservation Officer and so further inspections can take place.

It is highly likely specialist timber scarf and face repairs will be required to the structural timber framing with well-seasoned oak sections, alongside appropriate lime mortar repairs to masonry. Vapour permeable building materials and craft skills will be utilised in line with conservation best practice and Historic England guidance are to be adopted to resolve the current issues the building faces. There is no doubt this will be an extensive conservation project that will be implemented over a number of years as the owner's budget and planning consents allow.

The inserted ceiling in bedroom 1 of west wing (a later addition to the hall house) had failed before the applicant took possession of the property. David Evans inspected in January 2023 following temporary propping having been installed to enable further investigations. Wokingham Borough Council were informed of this structural issue earlier this year as it was considered urgent work may be required. However, with temporary support in place enabling further investigations, this has enabled the applicant to consider how best to approach the project and develop a holistic approach to resolving all the building's problems.

The defective beam and ceiling in bedroom 1 will be dealt with in due course, via a later application for listed building consent covering internal repairs in the west wing. However, it is considered structural repairs to the adjacent west gable wall are required in advance as it is this wall the bedroom ceiling beam is connected to and is of higher significance being earlier primary fabric than the inserted ceiling. Bat surveys are also being undertaken for any work to the roof and roof voids.

Alongside works outlined in this initial application for the external elevations the applicant would like to focus their attention on making the inside of the east wing more habitable in the shorter term as less intrusive work is required here than in the west wing and also so the more extensive structural works to the west wing can be fully investigated and progressed. In tandem to the above the applicant would also like to tackle an extensive overhaul to the roof coverings early next year, listed building consent/householder planning applications to cover these proposals will be forthcoming over the coming months once all bat surveys have been completed by the consulting ecologist.

The intention is to safeguard the remaining historic fabric and significance alongside the buildings special interest for future generations to enjoy.

This statement is based on cartographic, documentary and photographic evidence but primarily on a detailed inspection of the property and its setting onsite and we would encourage the Conservation Officer to review the proposals onsite. It also draws on the Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal, 2017.

It should be read in conjunction with the application drawings and any other supporting documentation.

2.0 DESIGN AND PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

The proposals predominantly look to conserve and repair, thermally upgrade and safeguard the existing historic fabric in a sensitive manner in line with conservation best practice and Historic England guidance.

We consider the works outlined in this application only require listed building consent as no 'development' is proposed and so a householder planning application has not been submitted.
Please do let the agent know at the earliest opportunity if this is incorrect and so an application for householder planning can also be made.

ACCESS

Access and parking arrangements are unaltered by the proposals and therefore there are no Highways impacts.

TREES

There are no mature trees within 25m of property. No trees will be impacted by the works outlined in these proposals.

ECOLOGY

No protected species will be impacted by the works outlined in this application.
NB. No roof work is proposed on this initial application for listed building consent. Subsequent applications will likely involve upgrades to the roof/roof voids which may require bat mitigation works. We await completion of all bat surveys for confirmation and to support future applications for works to the roof and roof spaces.

3.0 DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The conservation works proposed directly impact the following designated heritage asset including its setting:

THE OLD COTTAGE, PEARSON ROAD
https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1117432?section=official-list-entry
Grade II Listed, designated 26th January 1967.
Description:
14/29 The Old Cottage 26.1.67 GV II House. Early C15 hall house altered, 2 storeys, timber framed, painted brick infilling, old tile roof, central chimney inserted Cl7, and later chimney to east end. North front has gable to left, one bay of 4-light leaded windows, one irregular bay of 3-light leaded casements to right of gable, a small C20 single light and to right hand coupled 3-light leaded upper casements over a 3-light window on ground floor and C20 door in right corner. Large C20 extension to rear. Smaller gabled extension to east in painted brick. Interior: - most of timber frame visible including large roof purlins and wind braces heavily sooted. Large scissor brace truss in roof. Ground floor room right contains old carved heads and a carved panel, reputedly from the former Bishops Palace.

The setting of the following designated heritage assets may also be impacted;

THE DOWER HOUSE, PEARSON ROAD
https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1117431?section=official-list-entry

GLENDALE, PEARSON ROAD
https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1319456?section=official-list-entry

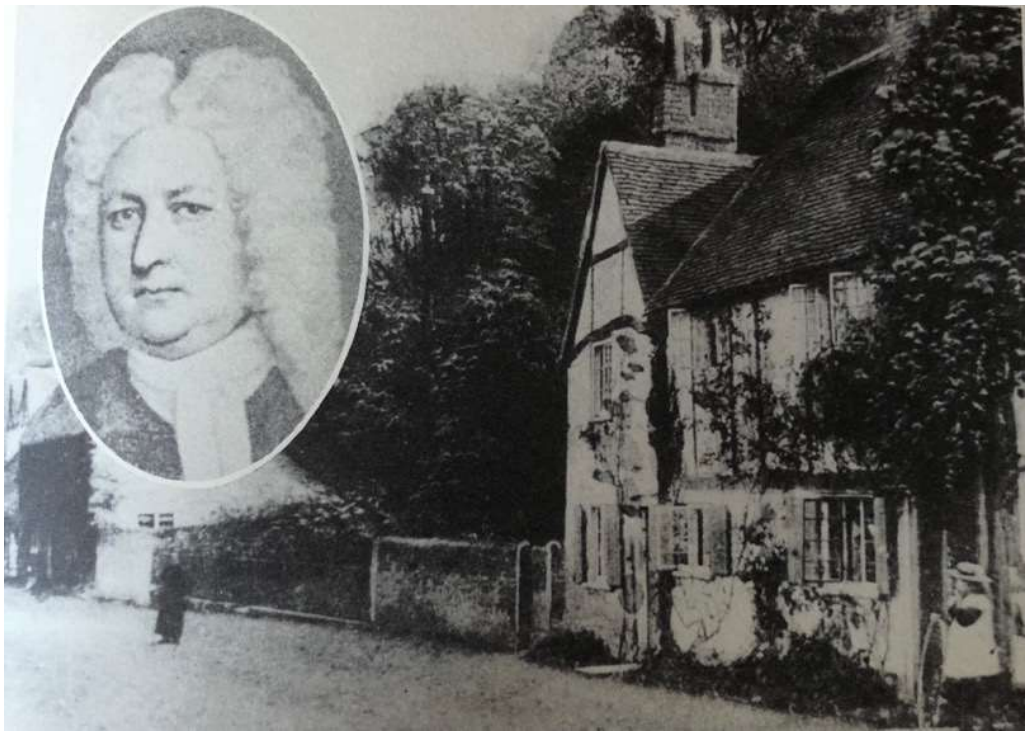
FORGE COTTAGE, PEARSON ROAD
https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1135905?section=official-list-entry

The proposals may also be considered to impact the character and appearance of the
SONNING CONSERVATION AREA, designated in 1971.

4.0 HISTORICAL SOURCES

The Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal gives an extensive description on the Historical Development and Spatial Analysis of Sonning as a settlement. However, in the context of The Old Cottage the following information is known in addition to that provided in the list description.

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner describes as follows;
"THE OLD COTTAGE, a C14 or C15 hall house, with scissor -bracing and a gabled cross wing."
Source: The Building of England, Berkshire – 1966.

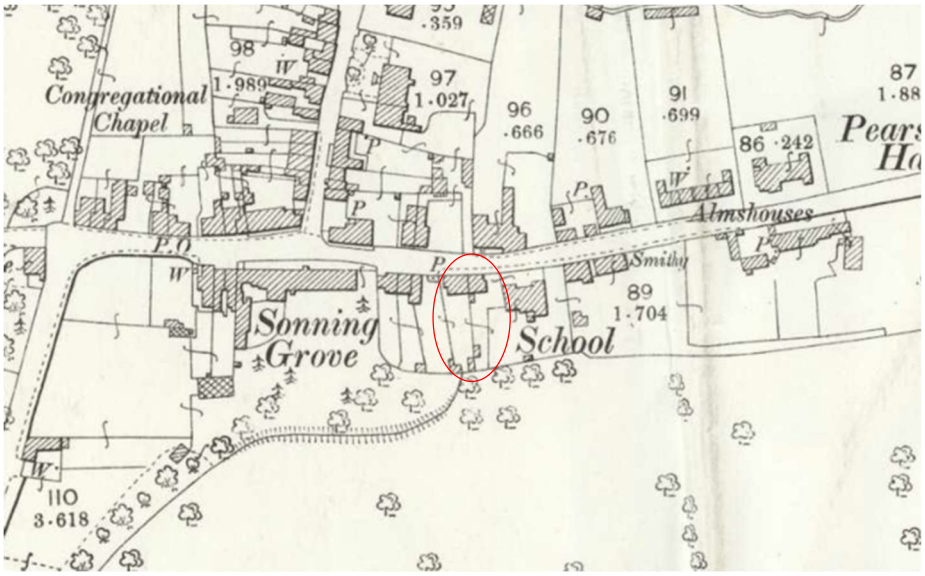


The Old Cottage, late 19th century, Source: The Book of Sonning by Angela Perkins, 1977

The above photo shows the majority of the front elevation. From this we can clearly see past alterations to the front boundary giving way to the driveway and garage addition to the east. All of the window frames appear to be a light colour (externally) or a broken white as brilliant white was not commonly used until post 1920 following the advent of titanium oxide. The ground floor windows also appear to have shutters now lost and the east wing is shown without the applied facing timbers to the first floor.

The book of Sonning by Angela Perkins also documents a fine C18th shoe that was discovered at The Old Cottage which is now at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

5.0 HISTORIC MAPPING



Source: National Library of Scotland, Extract from historic OS Map (1875) – The Old Cottage highlighted in red

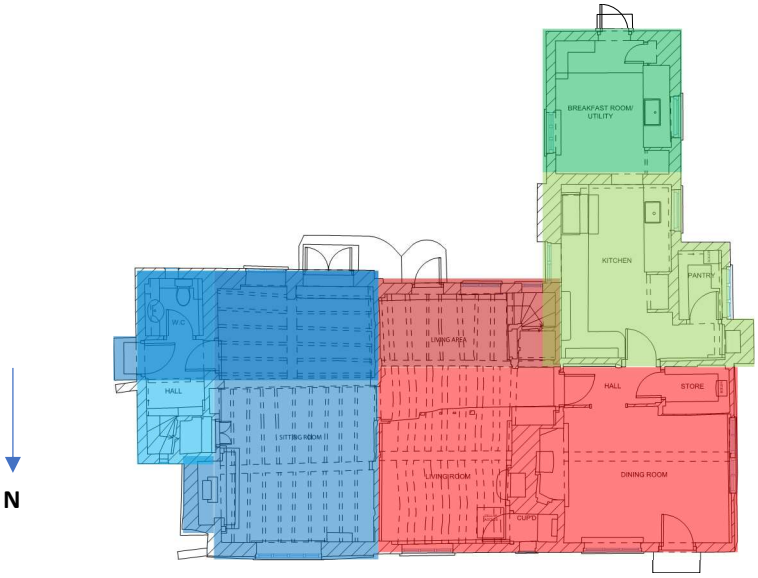
The extract above from the 1875 OS map shows The Old Cottage which appears to be split into two distinct units/sites at that time and without the current rear additions to the south elevation. There is very little change in the 1911 and 1932 edition OS maps except the loss of some smaller attached and detached out buildings. The 1932 mapping shown below appears to show the two units as one with the centre boundary treatment removed and still no additions to the rear. Interestingly the 1932 historic map on page 11 of the Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal (unsourced) shows the kitchen and utility room additions to the rear which may indicate their addition at this point?

Source: National Library of Scotland, Extract from historic OS Map (1932) – The Old Cottage highlighted in red

6.0 CONSTRUCTION PHASING

At present we have limited information on the construction phasing at The Old Cottage. However, based on the historic mapping, inspection of the measured survey and architectural features onsite the current layout would accord with the property having been two separate cottages as indicated by the historic OS mapping and given the awkwardly low access door between bedrooms 2 and 3. Albeit the property may have been one unit without interconnection at first floor when the eastern wing (Phase 2) was initially built.

It is hoped further inspection following the removal of inappropriate modern finishes on the building as outlined in this application for LBC will help inform a better understanding of the building construction, it's phasing and in turn help us gather an enhanced understanding of its heritage significance.



Ground Floor Colour Coded Plan

First Floor Colour Coded Plan

(red shades)

Phase 1: likely C15th (possible C14th). Predominantly timber framed with smoke blackened and scissor truss roof. The rear 'living area' ground floor element originally with a cat-slide roof may be a slightly later addition or contemporary to this original phase. The dressing room element on first floor is a later phase of historic alteration which likely removed the earlier cat slide roof some of which remains above the staircase. The central chimney stack, floors and ceilings would appear to be later insertion to the primary phase. The primary timber framing to the ground floor in front elevation has been lost and under built in brick, some of which appears to be C20th rebuild. It is possible wattle and daub infill panels may still exist within the primary phase but the majority do appear to have been rebuilt in brick.

(blue shades)

Phase 2: likely C18-19th. Predominantly brick built with timber roof truss exposed to front. The stair/bathroom addition is likely to be later still especially at first floor maybe even C20th, further investigation is required. There appears to be a change in direction of ceiling joists to ground floor at the rear of sitting room which likely indicates this rear section being a later phase or distinctly separate rooms if contemporary to east wing now opened up. There also appears to have been interconnection between bedrooms 3 and 4 historically which is likely to indicate the east stair/bathroom element is indeed later still.

(green shades)
Phase 3: likely early-mid C20th. Predominantly brick built with timber roof trusses. As previously outlined these additions do not appear to be on historic mapping until 1932. It is hard to date the fabric at present due to modern paint/coatings on brickwork, but generally they appear to be older brick but of course may have been built using reclaimed brick.

(yellow)
Phase 4: C20th. Predominantly brick built with timber roof trusses. Addition of west bathroom to first floor removing original roof line above kitchen that still exists above utility room, constructed using modern engineering bricks typical of 1950-70s used in the construction this may have been added prior to listing in 1967 or just after.

There are likely more than four main phases of construction at The Old Cottage, including numerous sub phases within each main phase, but we cannot put precise dates on some elements within each phase at present due to the inappropriate modern finishes that have been applied masking the underlying fabric and architectural detail.

As outlined earlier we are currently waiting on dendro-dating/isotope investigations on historic timbers to confirm the felling date of structural timbers in the primary and secondary phases. We hope more accurate dating for later phases can be confirmed by the removal of inappropriate modern render, modern facing timbers and/or modern paint coatings outlined in this initial application for listed building consent, all of which give a false narrative and understanding at present.

The existing windows in primary phase all appear to be later insertion. However, earlier windows or evidence of original windows constructed within the primary historic timber framing may exist under later alterations and finishes.

It is considered elements of phasing and dates will evolve as the project progresses and this heritage statement and the colour phased plans within are considered to be a dynamic document that will be updated as we undertake opening up work, further inspections and sensitive conservation repair works progress which will also help inform subsequent applications for listed building consent.

7.0 SUMMARY OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Assessing 'significance' is the means by which the cultural value of a place and its component parts is identified. The purpose in so doing is as the basis for effective conservation and management, because identifying aspects of higher and lower significance, based on thorough understanding of a heritage asset, enables proposals to be developed which protect, respect and enhance its character and cultural values. Such assessment can identify those areas where minimal changes should be made as well as areas where change might be positive and enhance understanding or appreciation of significance. Changes can then be designed to ensure that significant features are not compromised and that alterations conform to legislative and policy requirements.

The significance of The Old Cottage is currently masked by later modern coatings it can be summarised as follows based in the information known to date:

- The building is a good example of a 14th/15th century dwelling (exact date TBC following dendro/isotope dating), with multiple later additions to the east and south of the primary phase. It is likely heritage significance reduces to a degree as the phases progress.

- Historically the building was possibly two separate units/plots, now combined into one.

- The plan form of the more significant primary and secondary phases is still largely legible, some of the rooms have lost their historic proportions having been 'opened up' or have had the interconnection altered and/or infill panels removed in the past.

- Most rooms retain at least some of their architectural features although modern inappropriate finishes may be disguising earlier more significant features. (Plan form is significant in understanding how buildings were originally occupied so some significance has been lost by the opening up of room plans and alterations to interconnection which does lower significance).

- The building's architectural form expresses its history and the narrative of its development. However, there is more to understand following the removal of inappropriate materials.

- Changes over time, including the connection between the two buildings, opening up between rooms and the alterations to the windows are all responses to changes in the occupant's living standards and lifestyle. As such, they add to the narrative of how the building is now experienced.

- Other alterations during the 20th century, such as the garage, bathroom extension and some of the modern Crittal windows, are less successful and may be considered to contribute negatively to the significance of the listed building.

- It is highly likely the building incorporates locally distinct vernacular building materials under modern finishes and coatings. The primary timber framing including a scissor truss provides evidence of local materials and local craftsmanship, so it is of high significance. It also contributes to local distinctiveness and character.

- Examples of other skilled trades such as internal carpentry, joinery and ironmongery all add to the significance of the listed building although provenance of some mouldings and carvings in dining room is questionable and requires further assessment. Historic timber framing and finishes such as wattle and daub and lime plaster should be preserved where they survive.

- The house makes a positive contribution to the character of Sonning Conservation Area. Conversely, the immediate surroundings of the house contribute positively to the value and significance of The Old Cottage.

The building's architectural and historic significance is formally recognised in its statutory designation as a Grade II listed building.