

# Listed Building Appraisal

The Pest House, Claygate Road, Collier Street, Kent, ME 18 6BB

Listed Grade II



Client: Wealden Homes, Wealden Court, Church Street, Teston, Maidstone, Kent ME18 5AG

Barbara Woda Associates Ltd.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the request to make an assessment of the significance of the Pest House, Claygate Road, Collier Street, I visited the site on 4<sup>th</sup> July. The present occupier was present. I was able to make an assessment of both the exterior and setting of the building; however, access to the interior in order to gain the necessary full understanding of the building was severely hampered by an excess of contents. In order to make a sensible and accurate assessment of the building's potential for restoration and repair, the contents would need to be removed.

I was also able to make a visit to the archive department of Kent County Council, however, there was little information about the building to be found, other than information about various tenants. The historic maps contained within this report are taken from Kent County Council's web site.

The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 11.35 of Maidstone Borough Council's draft Local Plan 2014. *"All development proposals will be expected to be accompanied by an initial survey to establish what on-site assets there are."*

## 2.0 NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 sets out national planning policy. With respect to Heritage assets, Paragraph 17 sets out a series of core planning principles which should underpin both plan making and decision taking. The relevant core principle to this site states that planning should:

*"conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations"*

2.2 And paragraph 132 states

*"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and grade II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."*

Maidstone Borough Local Plan – Preparation (Regulation 18) 2014

2.3 The Maidstone Borough Council's Local Plan addresses issues of Heritage in their policy DM10 "Historic and Natural Environment":

*“Maidstone’s Historic and natural environment is a fundamental part of the borough’s economic wealth and social wellbeing, the benefits of which are far reaching. It is essential to ensure these historic and natural asset bases remain robust and viable. (Paragraph 11.32)*

2.4 Specifically regarding the historic environment, the Local Plan states in paragraph 11.33:

*“Maidstone has been shaped and influenced by a long past history, the legacy of which is a strong and rich cultural heritage. The Archbishop’s Palace and Leeds Castle are two high profile heritage assets but the borough also abounds with many other historical buildings. These heritage assets contribute to the strong sense of place which exists across the borough. However, this rich historical resource is very vulnerable to damage and loss. The Local Plan allows some flexibility for the re-use and conversion of historic assets but care must be taken to ensure this does not lead to unacceptable adverse impacts.”*

The Setting of Heritage Assets - English Heritage Guidance October 2011.

2.5 This document, initially published in October 2011, predated the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and is currently being revised to reflect the changes. However, it still contains useful advice and would form the basis on which English Heritage would respond to consultations and how they would assess applications for development.

2.6 It is worth considering English heritage key principles for understanding setting. These are set out on page 5 of the document:

- *“Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. 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.*
- *The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration; by spatial associations; and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each. They would be considered to be within one another’s setting.*
- *Setting will, therefore, generally be more extensive than curtilage, and its perceived extent may change as an asset and its surroundings evolve or as understanding of the asset improves.*
- *The setting of a heritage asset can enhance its significance whether or not it was designed to do so. The formal parkland around a country house and the fortuitously developed multi-period townscape around a medieval church may both contribute to the significance.”*

### 3.0. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE – THE BUILDING AND ITS SETTING

#### **Listing Description.**

3.1 The building is included on National Heritage List for England (formerly the English Heritage Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest), having been added on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1987. It is therefore a designated heritage asset and listed Grade II.

The listing description states:

“House, formerly a pesthouse, now house. C16, with C19 or C20 façade. Timber framed. Ground floor red brick in stretcher bond, first floor tile hung. Plain tile roof. Now 3 timber- framed bays. 2 low storeys. Roof gabled to the left, and gabled down to roof over right bay, which is of slightly shallower pitch and hipped to the right. Multiple redbrick stack to left end of right bay. Irregular fenestration of two small recessed two-light casements adjacent to each other towards the centre. Three ground-floor casements; one single light to right end of central bay. Ribbed door to left end of right bay. Shallow lean-to in same materials to right end. Interior: only partly inspected. Exposed framing to ground floor central bay, with broad, close set axial joints. Partition of broadly spaced studs of relatively heavy scantling between left and central bays. Marked as a pesthouse on C19 O.S. maps.”

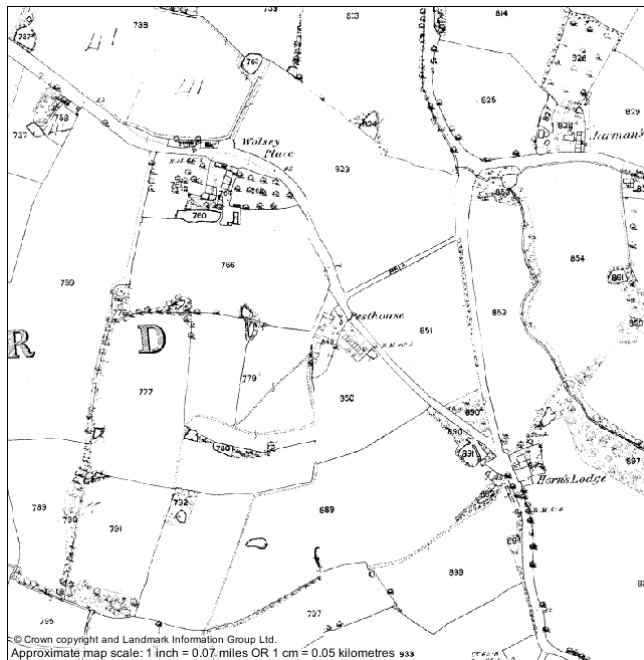
Listing NGR: TQ7040347163

3.2 This listing description has not been updated since the building was originally assessed. At that time, descriptions were mainly for recognition purposes, and not the definitive and detailed descriptions that are produced today. In other words, they do not distinguish between those parts of the building that must be retained, and those that neutral or harmful to the character or importance of the historic asset. It would be advisable to consult the relevant department at English Heritage (Guildford Office) and the local authority conservation officer at an early stage to ascertain their approach to this building.

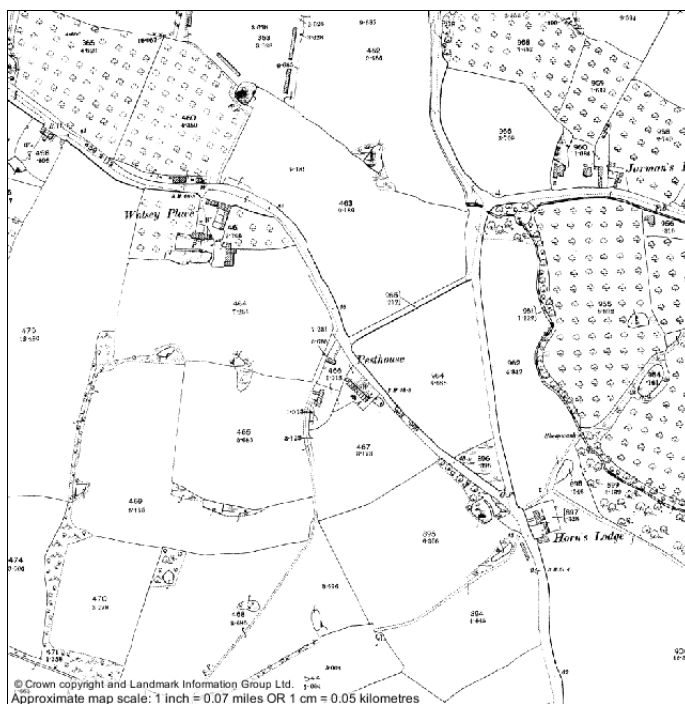
3.3 The basic criterion for listing is that the building or structure must hold special historic or architectural interest. There are four types of heritage value identified by EH in their document “conservation principles” that an asset may hold; these are aesthetic, communal, historic, and evidential value. The significance is a sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest. Better decisions will be made when applicants for listed building consent and LPA’s assess and understand the particular nature of the significance of an asset, the extent of the asset’s fabric to which the significance relates, and the relative importance of that significance.

## Brief History of the Area

3.4 An assessment of historic maps from 1871 until the 1950's shows that the Pesthouse stood on the site in the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, set back from the road and surrounded by a large garden. On the adjacent site to the south is a long row of huts, the use of which has not been ascertained, but could be hopper huts. The building and its garden were in a rural setting of small fields, most probably put to grazing sheep and cattle, or arable. Also present are larger and grander houses such as Wolsey Place to the north and Horn's Place to the south east, both on what is now Claygate Road.

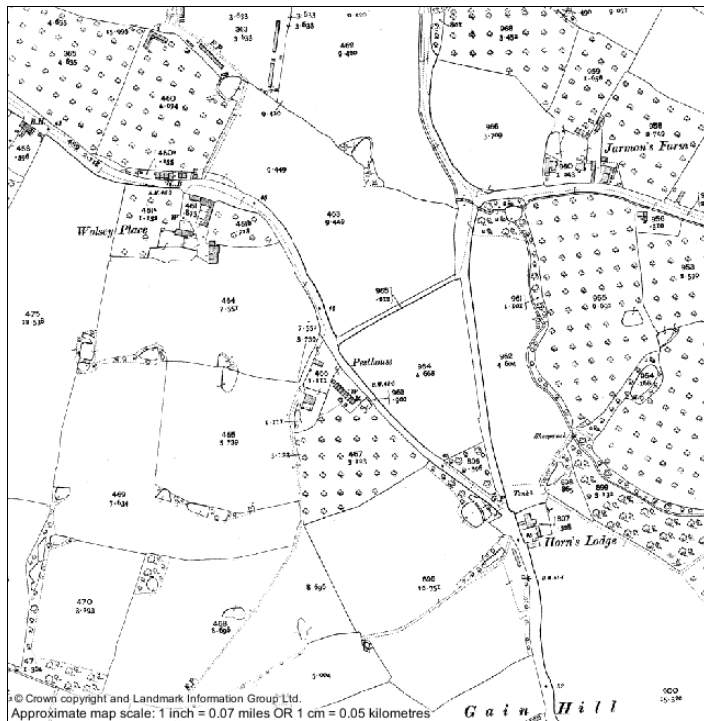


Map from 1871 – 1890

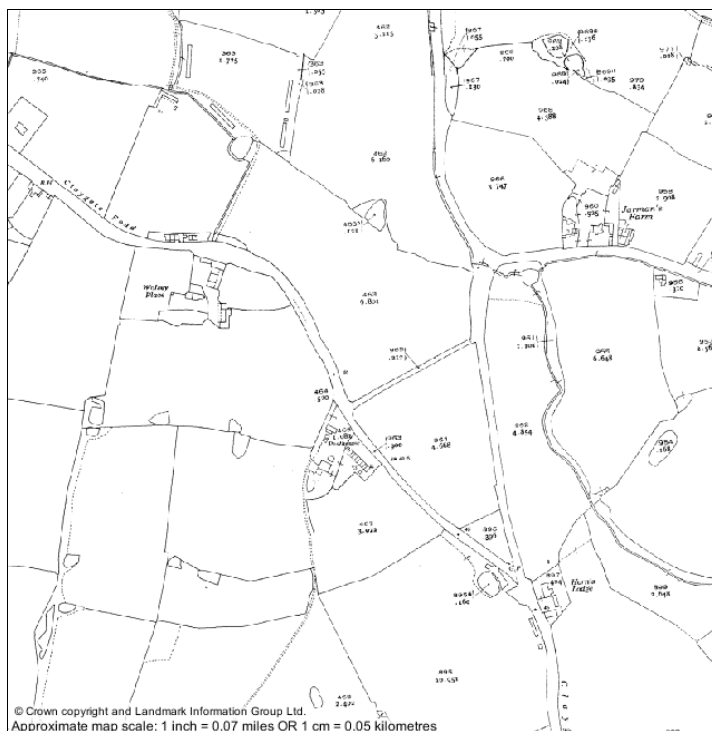


Map from 1897 – 1900

Little changes in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, other than the development of orchards and hop fields within nearby farms. The Pesthouse remains apparently unchanged, still within its large garden and surrounded by fields. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the field adjacent to the pesthouse has also been cultivated as an orchard.

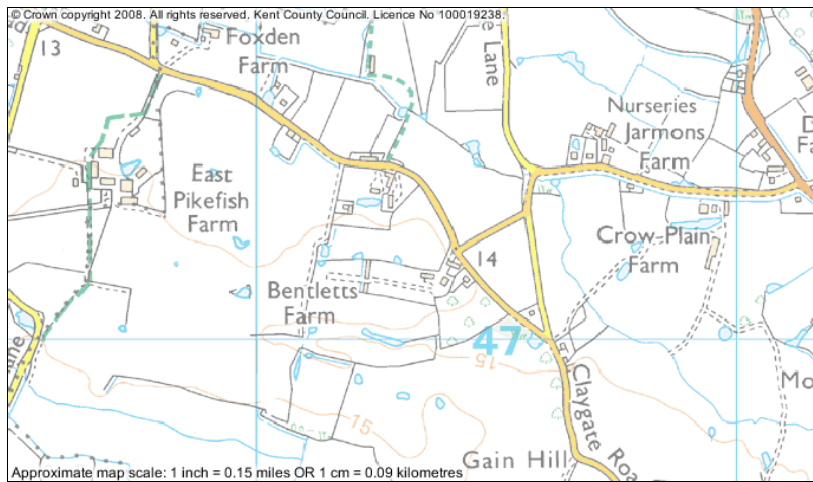


Map from 1907 – 1923



Map from 1929 -1956

The farm surrounding the Pesthouse is still in existence in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. The setting for the cottage remains substantially unchanged, with its large garden and surrounding fields.



Post 1956

### Brief History of the Building

3.5 It is believed that remaining pesthouses in the UK are rare. A trawl through Wikipedia would suggest that just five remain, though in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, when this cottage was built, there were many. Many more examples are found in the United States of America and Canada, where they were built to quarantine the sick and dying immigrants from Ireland, and were called fever sheds.

3.6 In rural areas pest houses would often be erected on the edge of villages and settlements, though some were built adjacent to churches or religious houses (as nuns and other religious would care for the sick). Pesthouses were set up in rural and urban areas to provide shelter and isolation for those with the pestilence. In 1666 Rules and Orders for the Prevention of the Spreading of the Infection of the Plague were published on the special command of the King, whereby “ each city or town forthwith provide some convenient place remote from same, where a pest- house, huts or sheds may be erected, to be in readiness in case any infection should break out” and “That if any house be infected, the sick person or persons be forthwith removed to the said pest-house , shed or huts, for the preservation of the rest of the family”. There was a great fear of the plague as in the Black Death of 1348 - 9, Kent lost one third of its population resulting in a scarcity of labourers who as a consequence were able to set their own wages and determine their own conditions of work. Pest houses were later used for those with smallpox, typhus, and other highly infectious diseases.

3.7 It is not yet known whether the Pest House in Collier Street was built as a pesthouse, or was an existing cottage identified for use as pesthouse when the statute decreed. The list description dates the cottage at the 16<sup>th</sup> Century which would be after the Black Death of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, but before the re-emergence of the Plague of 1665.

It is evident from information at Kent County Council Archives that the cottage was long inhabited by tenants. In the 1880's a Mr Middleton, rented it as part of Bentletts Farm; by 1903 a Mr Daniel Savage agreed to take up as a yearly tenant of Bentletts Farm for a rent of £25 per year.



## Character and appearance

### External appearance

3.8 The Pest House is a two low storey building, with a steeply pitched roof over the main building, with a prominent brick chimney and on the east elevation, a large catslide roof over the outshot. The west elevation is finished with a gable end. The main roof is of plain clay tiles with bonnet tiles on the hip, while tile hanging at the upper floor appears to be, at least in part, in modern concrete tiles.



*Street elevation of the Pest House*

The ground floor on all visible elevations is in a modern brick laid in stretcher bond. This appears to have been applied in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The brick appears to be an LBC Rustic Antique, or similar; a brick commonly used after WW II [*in conversation with the current occupier it would seem that the building has had a number of alterations, both externally and internally, over time using, in his words, salvaged materials*]



*modern brick facing and tile hanging.*

3.9 To the rear of the property is a modern 20<sup>th</sup> Century lean-to extension in brick and render with a shallow pitched roof which meets the underside of the eaves of the main cottage. The extension is of extremely poor architectural merit and is harmful to the appearance of this listed building.



*Unfortunate modern lean - to extension.*

The extension should be removed and replaced with a more sympathetic structure, to benefit both the character and appearance of the listed building as well as its eventual occupants.



*Only section of rear elevation visible.*

3.10 In earlier times the building would most probably have had visible external framing, of box or post and truss construction, most likely in oak, with bracing. It was the intention in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries that the frame would have been visible from the exterior as well as the interior. The infill panels would most commonly have been in wattle and daub. However early weatherboarding in tile hanging from lathes was also known. An inspection by a specialist in timber framing would be useful in ascertaining the materials used. The majority of timber framed buildings consisted of a simple rectangular frame in plan. However in some cases they were increased to provide either a staircase to the upper parts, or a service area. Usually an outshot would increase the width of the dwelling, but in the case of the Pest House, it is to be found to increase the length, enclosing the fireplace, and providing the service area, now fitted out as a kitchen. As the building has been tile hung and faced in modern brickwork, it is not at present possible to ascertain whether the outshot is original or built at a slightly later date. A detailed examination of the interior (when it has been cleared of personal effects and contents) should give a better understanding of the development of the house.

Windows; Doorways; Porch.

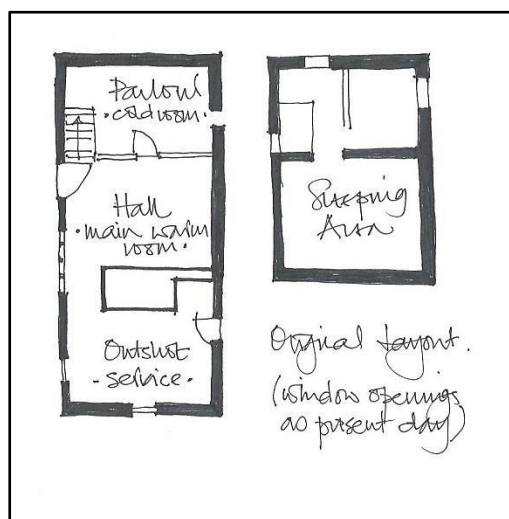
3.11 The fenestration in the property varies in date, appearance and state. While some of the openings may be in their original location, no window or frame is original. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century there would simply have been openings in the framing with mullions; internal shutters would have kept out the weather. It is likely that the long opening, currently having a four paned window, is in the original location. Detailed examination of the interior and the framing is needed to reveal the location of original openings.

Doorways would also have been formed from the main wall frame of the building. The main entrance door would have led into the main room and would have been of timber boards on hook and band hinges so that it closed flat against the frame. The existing front door is not original.

A porch of timber posts with double pitched roof, and brick pediment has been built around the front door. This is a later addition and does not enhance the appearance of the building. It is unlikely that the original cottage would have had a porch.

#### Plan and Interior

3.12 The original plan form of the cottage such as the Pest House would have had a main room, or hall, containing the fire place. The main entrance door to the house would lead directly into the hall. Beyond the hall to, a second room or parlour, would have been unheated, and from there stairs would lead to the floor above containing sleeping quarters or storage, also unheated.



Some cottages would also have a service quarter in an outshot, usually to the side to widen the building, but in this case it lengthens the building. The service quarter may have been added at a later date. The original plan form of the Pest House remains, and should be retained as such.



*Photographs showing entrances to parlour and to staircase. The main entrance door is open.*

3.13 There are two bedrooms in the upper storey, although originally they would probably have just been one sleeping quarter with storage. One of bedrooms is accessed through a very low entrance door, necessitated by the existence of a main beam running across the whole width of the building. It has not been possible to examine the structure further to find a possible solution due to the sheer amount of clutter in the house.



*Entrance to main bedroom on upper storey.*





*Bedroom interior*

3.14 The existing modern extension has not affected the original plan form of the house. There is however an opening between the outshot and the extension. It has not been possible to ascertain whether this is an early opening, or whether it was created to give access to the extension. In any event, it would be usefully retained to give access to the house for a new kitchen and bathroom wing.

#### General state of interior

3.15 It has not been possible to examine the interior in detail due to the large amount of furniture and personal effects kept in this small cottage. However, from a superficial assessment, it is clear that there are modern interventions that have harmed the character and appearance of this listed building. These range from the rather serious enclosure of the fireplace, to the less harmful but inappropriate decoration such as stick-on “stonework”. It is strongly advised that the services of a specialist building archaeologist, or specialist in timber framed buildings be engaged to further assess the building, once the building has been cleared to enable proper access.

#### Setting and curtilage

3.16 The building is free standing, set back from Claygate Road, within a small fenced garden to its north elevation. There is a fine mature weeping willow tree on the grassy street edge. It faces the junction with Jarmons Lane, and fields beyond. Immediately adjacent on the west is the concrete covered main access drive to Bentletts Farm, at present containing CMS (Kent) Ltd, a vehicle scrap yard. Large lorries pass directly next to the end of the cottage, apart from the visual intrusion, they would create noise and vibration which must be harmful to the listed building. To the west is Little Bentletts, a modern chalet bungalow of limited architectural value. Immediately to the south, there is a large shed and beyond that a concrete parking area, buildings and vehicles relating to the commercial use, and the sewage treatment facility for the cottage, the scrap yard and adjacent chalet bungalow. There is also a tall iron girder to the left hand side of the lorry entrance, adjacent to the cottage. The setting of this listed building is at present extremely poor and harms its character and appearance.



*Concrete access road to scrap yard and lorry traffic is harmful to the setting of this heritage asset*

3.17 The cottage would probably have been part of the farm that became Bentletts Farm, but the historic curtilage has long gone. The tithe maps would confirm this, and the maps from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century included in this report show the Pest House within a large garden surrounded by fields. The cottage would benefit from an enlarged curtilage which would go a considerable way towards restoring its historic setting. It would be reasonable to expect that at least some of the garden to the rear should be restored. Further enhancements should include the re-alignment and resurfacing of the access road, the removal of the sheds to the rear, removal of the iron girder, and ideally the removal of the lorry traffic. Consideration should be given to the siting of the sewage treatment plant; it would preferably not be within the curtilage of the Pesthouse.



*The poor rear setting for the listed building.*

#### 4.0 SUGGESTED PROPOSALS FOR ENHANCEMENT AND RESTORATION OF THE HERITAGE ASSEST

##### Repair and restoration of original cottage

4.1 A rigorous survey of the listed building needs to be carried out in order to put forward proposals for the restoration of this cottage. It is advisable that this should be carried out by an acknowledged specialist in timber framed buildings. Furthermore, in order to be accurate, it can

only be carried out once the building has been cleared in order to give access to the structure. This report cannot therefore give detailed and justified proposals for restoration at this stage.

4.2 From the necessarily superficial survey, it is however clear that there are a number of modern accretions that should be considered for removal. On the interior of the cottage, these would include the opening up of the fireplaces, and the removal of various modern and inappropriate decorative finishes; also the removal of the modern kitchen in the outshot, and restoring the room to its earlier, plainer appearance.



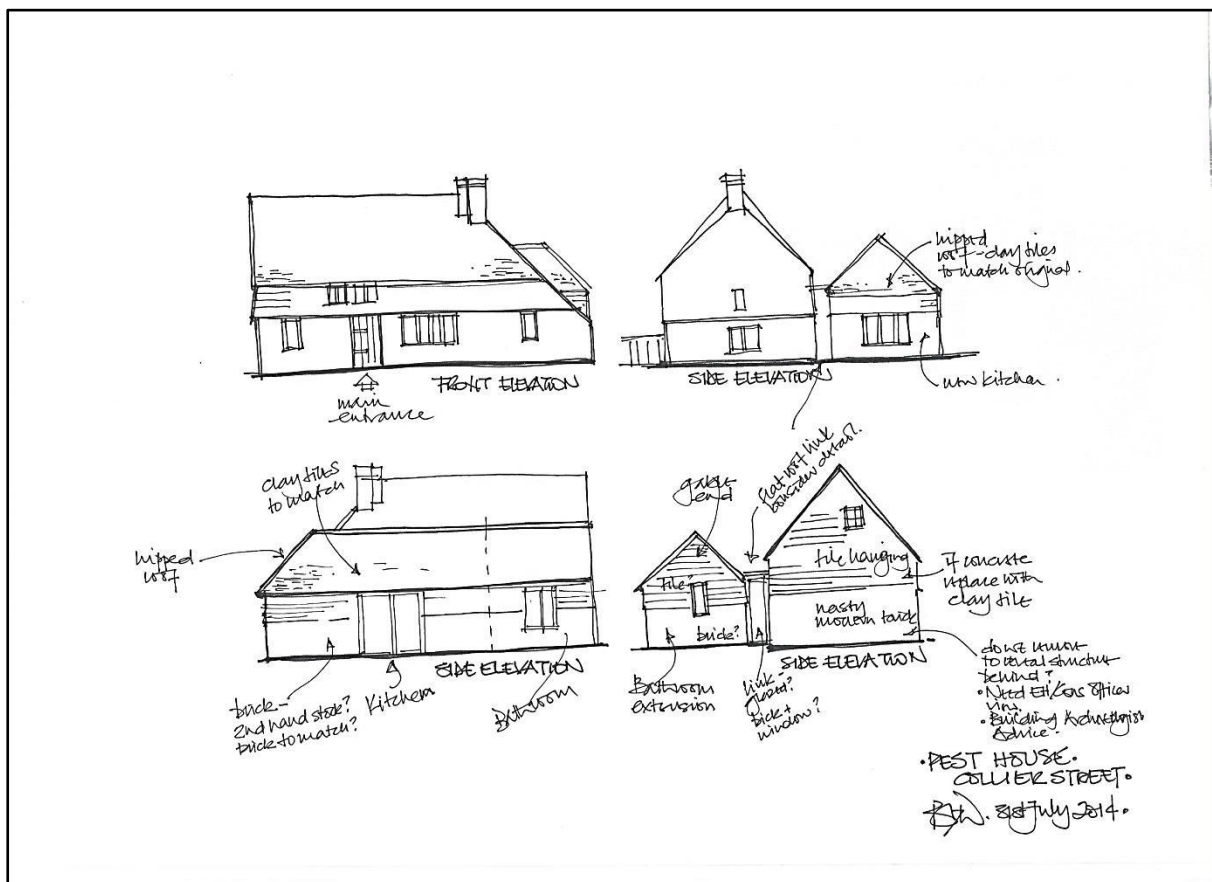
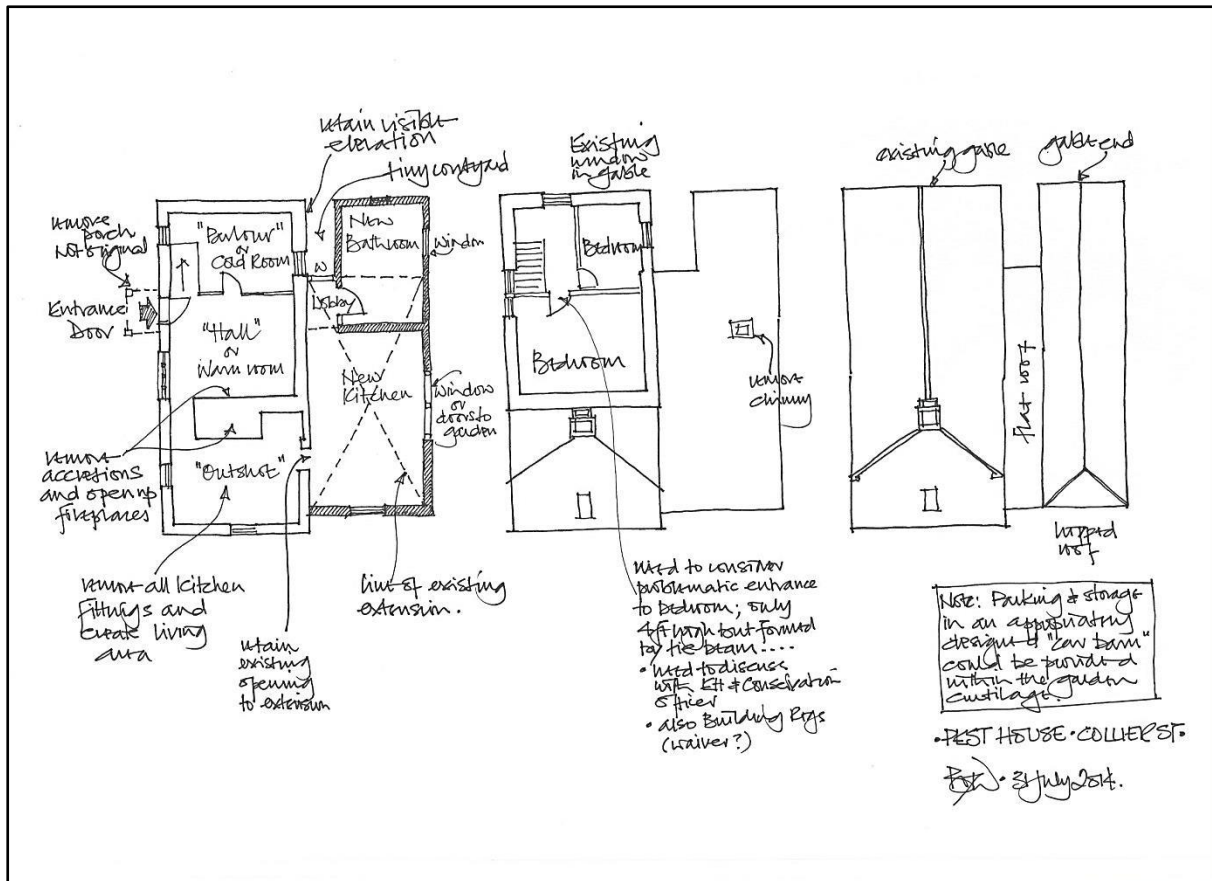
*Inappropriate infill of fireplace, and decorative finishes.*

4.3 With regard to the exterior, very careful consideration needs to be given to the approach to the modern interventions i.e. should the brick facing be removed (the application of the facing bricks may well have damaged the original finishes), replacement of concrete tiles where they occur, with clay tiles. In order to inform the development team, an initial and limited removal of modern materials, under controlled conditions, may well be needed to reveal important features or details hidden behind later additions and alterations. It would be advisable to involve the local authority conservation officer and English Heritage at an early stage in these discussions.

4.4 All windows and external doors would need to be replaced with appropriately designed timber replacements.

#### External Additions

4.5 The existing rear extension should be removed and replaced with a sympathetically designed extension to house a new kitchen and bathroom. The new extension should not obscure more of the cottage than at present, and should be attached at the points where the existing extension has been built. The existing doorway should be retained for access. The following sketches illustrate the potential for an extending the cottage, while respecting its immediate setting.





## Setting

4.6. The garden should be extended to the south, in order to enhance the immediate setting of the listed building. Careful consideration should be given to landscaping and boundary details. The wider setting of the cottage would be enhanced significantly by the removal of the adjacent existing commercial activity with all its accretions, and its replacement with a well-designed redevelopment scheme.



## Appendix 1

### Barbara Woda

#### Barbara Woda Associates Ltd.

Barbara Woda is the former Head of Urban Design and Conservation at LB Hammersmith and Fulham, and took early retirement in December 2010 for family reasons. Barbara has over 30 years' experience in town planning, all in the area of urban design and conservation. She has been responsible for overseeing the design aspects of major development proposals and master plans; for preparation and implementation of conservation and design policy in the Borough's local development plan; for the preparation and implementation of supplementary planning guidance in design and conservation. Also for the personal preparation, and later overseeing, the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals. She has personally dealt with proposals for many listed buildings both advising applicants and preparing proposals for Council managed listed buildings such as the Grade 1 listed Fulham Palace.

She managed a team of varying size between seven and four, all at senior level. She advised other professional departments and Local Authority Councillors both at formal Planning and Environment Committees, and briefings, and informally when advice was sought. She worked at a professional capacity with national bodies such as English Heritage, LDA, GLA, where the local authority representation was needed, on matters to do with her role.

She has worked in partnership with local amenity societies, in particular in preparing local lists of buildings of architectural and historic interest.

She represented the local authority in her capacity as an expert witness on matters pertaining to urban design, conservation and listed buildings, at Public Planning Inquiries and Hearings.

In November 2011, she set up her company, Barbara Woda Associates Ltd, and has been carrying out specialist conservation studies for a local authority, and has acted as an expert witness at listed buildings appeals. Barbara continues to serve on the Design Review Panel at LBHF.

Barbara has been a member of the RTPi for 26 years, and is an associate of the IHBC. For some years she was also a trustee on the New Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Trust, advising on matters to do with listed buildings and conservation areas.