

IAN WIGHTMAN

HISTORIC BUILDING CONSULTANTS



DESIGN ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

WHITEHOUSE FARM COTTAGE

Staplefield Lane
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH17 6AU

Client: Mr Julian Date and Mr Philip Robinson

Project: Internal and external alterations including replacement of windows, small extension to kitchen and new parking area.

Date: March 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Design Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared to inform planning and listed building consent applications submitted to Mid Sussex District Council on behalf of Mr Julian Date and Mr Philip Robinson.
- 1.2. Whitehouse Farm Cottage is a grade II listed building, though is not within a conservation area or a National Park.
- 1.3. The proposals seek to make internal and external alterations and sympathetically extend the building to the north. This includes altering some internal walls, replacement of a modern staircase and the creation of new bathrooms. Modern steel windows are being replaced with timber and openings enhanced. A parking area is also to be formed to the north of the building.
- 1.4. These applications have been developed following a very constructive pre-application enquiry (DM/24/2445) with planning and conservation officers. This has resulted in a greatly reduced scheme with less new development.



Aerial of the dwelling immediately surrounded by fields and woodland. ©Google

2. Description of the building and its setting

- 2.1. Whitehouse Farm Cottage is situated in a rural location to the south of Staplefield in Mid Sussex. It is set within a small group of trees to the east of Staplefield Lane and surrounded by a mosaic of small fields interspersed with pockets of woodland.
- 2.2. The house is oriented north-south and consists of a main two-storey range with a second range to the rear. The front range is of brick construction in Flemish bond with a Horsham slate roof on the facing west elevation and a clay tile roof to the rear. There are external chimneys at each end. The front elevation consists of a central front door with large casement windows either side and corresponding windows above which creates a strong symmetry.
- 2.3. The rear element is of stone construction laid to course with a slate roof. There are large multi-paned casement windows on the ground floor and one on the first floor with small historic casements above the ground floor windows. These are timber and split-paned. A central section of wall is brick infill suggesting a former doorway.

- 2.4. There are relatively large gardens to the east and west with the rear garden laid to lawn. This has a watercourse which travels to the south of the house and out towards the front. The southern boundary includes mature trees. Access to the property is via a drive to the north which is laid to gravel. This also has mature trees leading back to the lane.



The front range with its Horsham slate roof and the rear range in slate.



The north and south elevations which both have lean-to additions.



The drive to the north looking east towards the site of the proposed parking area.

3. Planning context

- 3.1. The proposed scheme is subject to national and local planning policies. These include heritage policies designed specifically to protect both designated and non-designated heritage assets.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policy for the Historic Environment. It states that any harm to, or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification (para 213).
- 3.3. In assessing applications, the NPPF also stipulates that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset the greater the weight should be) (para 212).
- 3.4. It goes on to state that where a proposed development will result in 'substantial harm' to a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent (para 214) and where the harm 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.
- 3.5. The vast majority of harmful impacts to designated heritage assets constitute 'less than substantial harm'. It is worth noting that this category can be subject to further grading where harm is perceived within a spectrum of 'high to low' and justification applied accordingly.
- 3.6. Where proposals may affect a *non-designated heritage asset*, paragraph 216 of the Framework states that 'a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'
- 3.7. The protection of heritage assets is covered under policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Council Local Plan. It states:

DP34: LISTED BUILDINGS AND OTHER HERITAGE ASSETS

- 3.8. Strategic Objectives: 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and 11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination.
- 3.9. Evidence Base: West Sussex Historic Environment Record; Register of Listed Buildings.

LISTED BUILDINGS

- 3.10. Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:
- A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal;
 - Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed

building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use;

- Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable;
- Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself;
- Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building;
- Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.

OTHER HERITAGE ASSETS

- 3.11. Development that retains buildings which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit, or which make a significant and positive contribution to the street scene will be permitted in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.
- 3.12. The Council will seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the character and quality of life of the District. Significance can be defined as the special interest of a heritage asset, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.
- 3.13. Proposals affecting such heritage assets will be considered in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and current Government guidance.

4. Historic context

- 4.1. The list description suggests that Whitehouse Farm Cottage is of 18th century origin. The scale and design of the building suggests that it was conceived as a single dwelling with a polite frontage befitting the period. This has been retained despite subsequent internal changes.
- 4.2. At the time of the Cuckfield Tithe Map of 1845 (shown below) the cottage is one of three buildings on apportionment 2295 which is described as 'House and Garden'. The mapping however suggests two dwellings (in red) with a barn (in black) and yard to the north east.
- 4.3. The apportionment tells us that the property was owned and occupied by a William Burt, who lived with 'Amos Juniper and others' and who are listed as co-occupiers. William Burt also owned a meadow identified as 2296 with the surrounding fields belonging to other landowners including Whitehouse Farm.
- 4.4. By the time of the First Edition OS map of 1874 the buildings here are described as *Whitehouse Cottages* with the subject building appearing as multiple dwellings. The name could suggest that the buildings had come under the ownership of Whitehouse Farm to the south, though they may have already had this name. The depiction of the cottage as multiple buildings is shown on the 1874 map below.
- 4.5. The subdivision of the buildings into multiple dwellings was not unusual in the 19th century and enabled more farm labourers to be housed, often corresponding with the high farming years, or the golden age of farming (1850 to 1875).

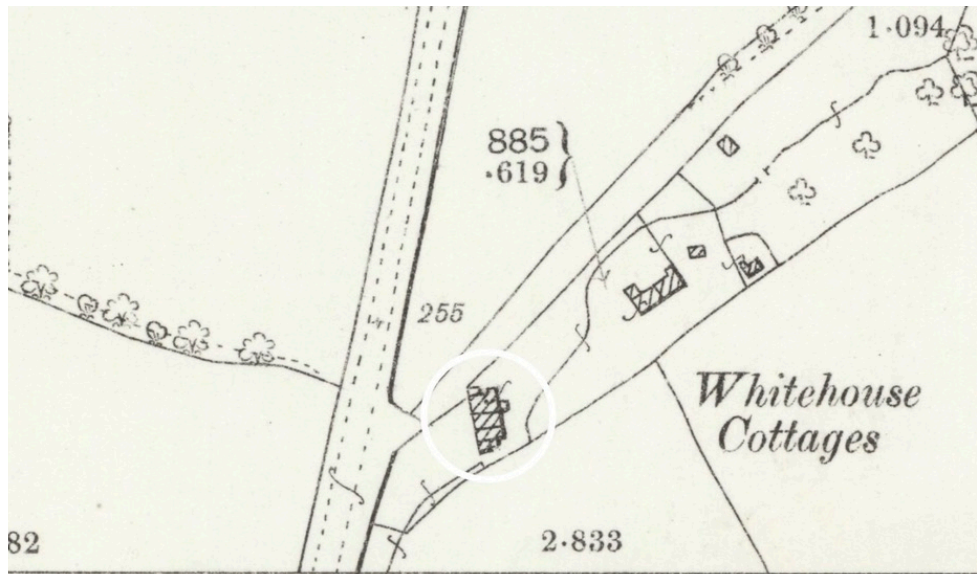


The Cuckfield Tithe Map of 1845 with the cottage highlighted. (WSRO)

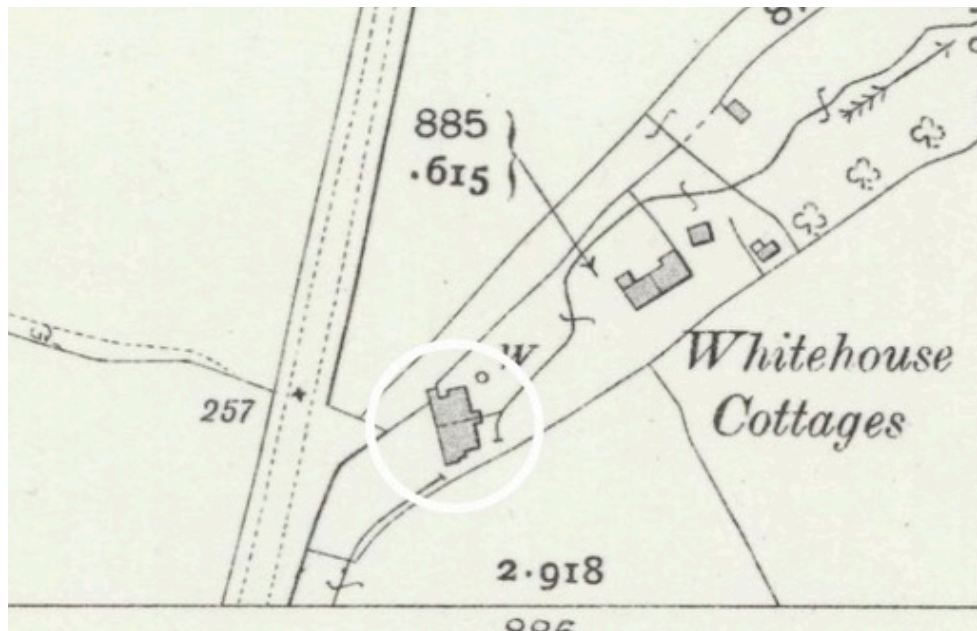


The First Edition OS map of 1874 with Whitehouse Cottages highlighted. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

- 4.6. The map of 1895 (see below) clearly shows the subdivision of the three cottages with additions either side that are retained today and a small protrusion to the rear. By the time of the Third Edition map of 1909 (see below) however, the building had been converted into two dwellings, perhaps suggesting a drop in demand for agricultural workers and/or an improvement in living standards.



The Second Edition OS map of 1895 with Whitehouse Cottages shown as three dwellings. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.



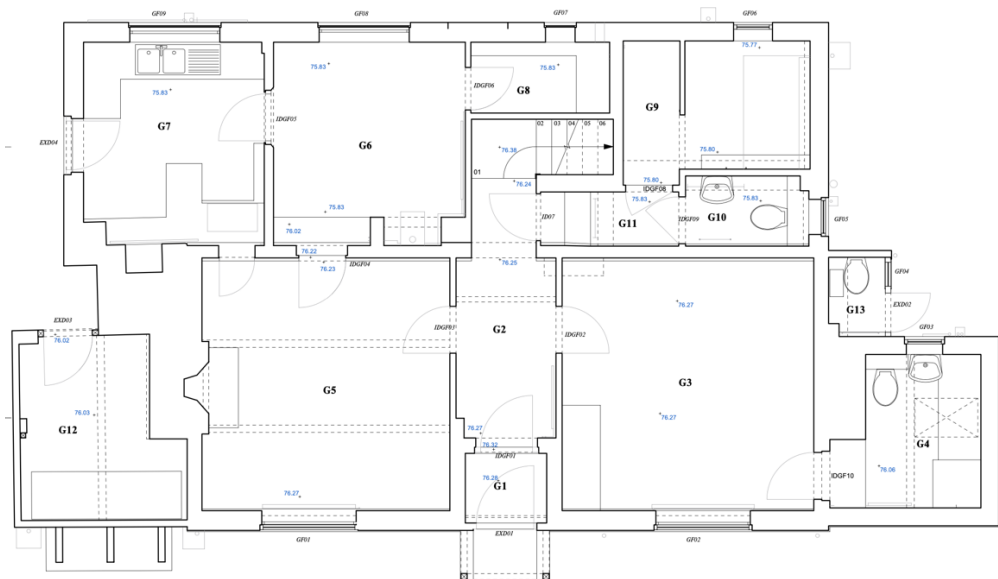
The Third Edition OS map of 1909 with Whitehouse Cottages shown as two dwellings. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

- 4.7. Looking at the internal plan today and the elevation it is clear that the building was not a regular terrace of three and the internal configuration was more complex. It is possible that a chimney at the rear has been removed, though it is more likely that the existing rear chimney formed part of the central cottage as part of the subdivision. The blocked-in doorway at the rear does not correspond with the current ground floor plan behind suggesting that the interior was remodelled following its infilling. This may have provided an access into a separate dwelling but at this stage is conjectural.



The rear elevation showing evidence of a former doorway and new stonework to the north.

- 4.8. The 'addition' at the rear is also unusual being constructed of ashlar. Stone is generally perceived as a more expensive and higher status material and to see it at the rear would strongly suggest that the stone has been salvaged. This would not be unusual in any context, but especially in agricultural development. This element has subsequently been extended at its northern end to create what is now the kitchen.
- 4.9. The slate roof allowed for a much shallower pitch to try and fit in additional accommodation; however, this did result in cramped conditions with low ceiling heights which are largely retained today. The exception being the later kitchen extension. The use of slate would suggest that this element is post 1830s when the railways started to distribute Welsh slate across the country.



The existing ground floor plan with a symmetrical arrangement to the front and stair in rear range.

- 4.10. Internally, the front range of the building contains a symmetrical floor plan which one might expect to see in a single dwelling with accommodation either side of a corridor and/or staircase.

The difference here is that the stair is now in the rear element. If a stair existed in the front portion of the house, the first-floor arrangement would have also been different and not included the central bedroom. This suggests a later alteration of the interior.

- 4.11. The two small lean-to additions to the north and south are thought to date from the late 19th century and corresponded with the building when it was multiple dwellings. During the early 20th century new windows have been added to the front and rear as part of its modernization and may correspond with internal changes, especially at first floor.

5. Significance

- 5.1. Most historic buildings (or heritage assets) have a level of special interest that often contributes to our appreciation of the broader environment in some way. In rural areas buildings can express local distinctiveness through the use of vernacular materials and traditional construction techniques, whilst in more urban areas design, quality of construction and architectural variation can often enhance the aesthetics of the townscape and provide historic interest. In both cases the character of building is often influenced by the region and topography.
- 5.2. Within sensitive areas such as conservation areas, national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty, buildings can take on an extra importance and can be identified as *important* or *positive*, especially within conservation areas. For unlisted buildings these can also form the basis for *local listing* and in some cases, be considered as *non-designated heritage assets*. Where a building's significance is considered of national importance, they are designated and listed according to the level of special interest retained.

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET

- 5.3. Whitehouse Farm Cottage is a grade II listed building and therefore a designated heritage asset. Listed buildings are protected under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This stipulates that: *'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*¹

LIST ENTRY

CUCKFIELD RURAL STAPLEFIELD ROAD 1. 5405 Warninglid Whitehouse Farm Cottage
TQ 22 NE 10/299 II

2. C 18. Two storeys. Three windows. Red brick and grey headers. Horsham slab roof.
Casement windows.

Listing NGR: TQ2696526405

Please note that many list entries are normally descriptions of the listed building for identification purposes and are not a complete inventory of what is important. Whilst some recent descriptions can be much more detailed, they are never exhaustive and open to new discoveries and interpretation.

¹ Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
<<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/section/66>> [accessed 29 November 2023].

THE VALUES OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.4. Within heritage protection, *significance* is a term applied to heritage assets that describes a structure or feature's special interest. The *National Planning Policy Framework* describes significance 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.'*
- 5.5. Historic England's Advice Note 12 - '*Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*' (2019), describes these different interests as follows:
- 5.6. **Archaeological interest:** *There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.*
- 5.7. **Architectural and artistic interest:** *These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.*
- 5.8. **Historic interest:** *An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.9. **Archaeological interest:** The building dates from the 18th century and therefore there is little scope for archaeological interest due to the lack of time depth.
- 5.10. **Architectural and artistic interest:** the building has architectural interest as an 18th century house or cottage which has been altered and adapted over the years and contains a mixture of traditional materials and detailing, including Horsham slate.
- 5.11. **Historic interest:** the building has historic interest as former agricultural cottages which have been altered over the centuries, perhaps reflecting changing demands for labour during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

6. Pre-application enquiry

- 6.1. Prior to the pre-application enquiry being made, the applicant had looked at remodelling the rear stone element of the building and adding a large dormer to increase head heights on both floors and make better use of the cramped spaces. Whilst this worked architecturally it resulted in a level of harm to the rear roof which was not considered appropriate.
- 6.2. The pre-application enquiry (DM/24/2445) therefore sought to extend the building to the north to provide additional accommodation and garaging, whilst some internal and external changes to

the cottage were also proposed. The annex was designed to appear as an outbuilding and constructed in brick and timber weatherboarding. Viewed from the drive, this building would appear as a garage with traditional double doors constructed in timber. The response from the conservation officer provided the following advice:

- The removal of partitions within the rear range was considered contentious except for those in room G10, which would likely be acceptable if the fabric was modern.
- A new opening between front and rear ranges would be acceptable as long as this was modest and maintained legibility.
- The remodelling of the staircase was acceptable as this was modern.
- The alterations at first floor in terms of altering room proportions were considered more contentious in the front range where the middle room had been subdivided though less problematic in the rear as the partitions are modern.
- The replacement of the windows with timber and the slight change to their proportions was not considered contentious as they were modern, though historic windows must be retained and repaired.
- The proposed annex and garage were considered problematic due to the location on an historic track, but also scale. There was also a preference for the garage to be detached from the main cottage.

7. Proposed scheme and impacts

7.1. The proposed scheme has taken full consideration of the comments made during the pre-application enquiry and is now proposing a scheme which includes a small extension with external and internal alterations to the house. These are grouped as follows:

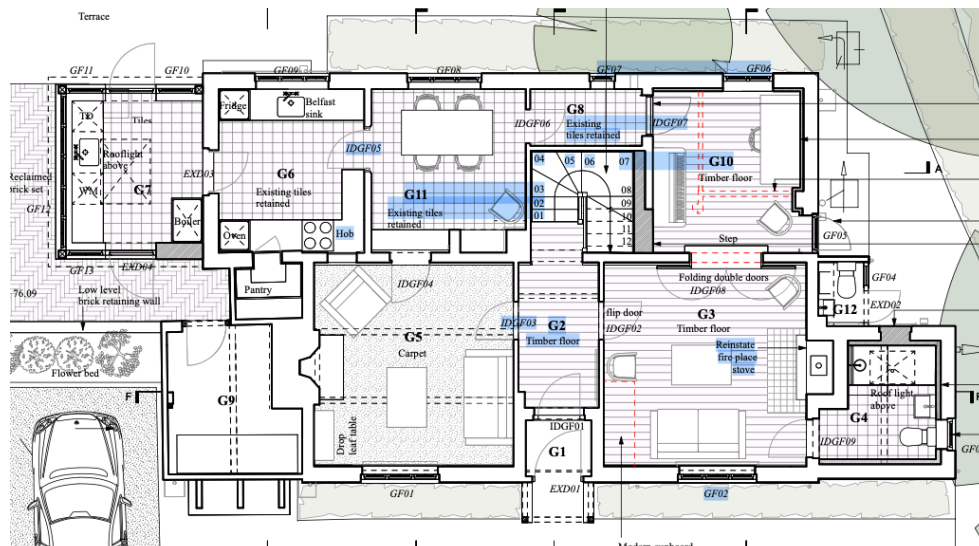
- GROUND FLOOR INTERIOR
- FIRST FLOOR INTERIOR
- EXTERIOR AND WINDOWS
- EXTENSION
- PARKING AREA

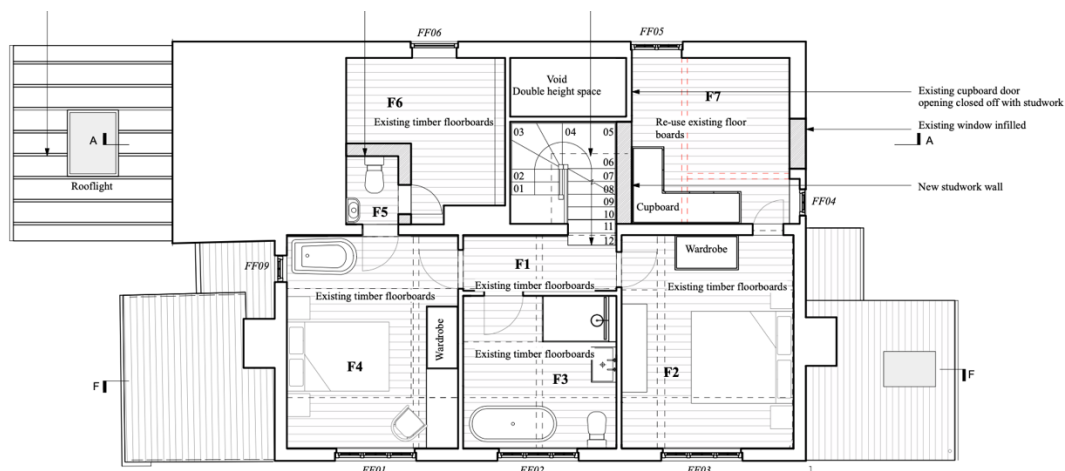
GROUND FLOOR INTERIOR

7.2. The proposed changes to the ground floor fully respond to the pre-application enquiry and now only seek the formation of the opening from room G3 to G10, whilst the partition in G10 will be removed as previously suggested. There is also a new opening proposed between G8 and G10. This is shown in the photo below. The wall between the kitchen and dining room is being retained as is the door between G8 and G11. The modern staircase is to be replaced with the locations of the half-landing and turning stair being swapped over.

7.3. All other changes on this level were proposed in the pre-application enquiry and therefore are not being treated as contentious.

7.4. **Impacts:** the opening of the wall between G3 and G10 will result in some loss of historic fabric as agreed however the remaining changes will only impact modern material and later alterations.





The proposed first floor plan. © Sommerer Architecture & Living

FIRST FLOOR INTERIOR

- 7.5. The proposed changes to the first floor also respond to the pre-application enquiry. The removal of studwork in room F7 is retained, though the intention to subdivide rooms F3 and F7 has been dropped with a single bathroom now occupying the F3.
- 7.6. The only other new proposals at this level are the installation of a WC (F5) in room F6 and a new doorway between F2 and F7, which will require some historic fabric to be removed. Access into the WC will use an existing opening though this will be enlarged. This will have a dormer window above with a matching dormer located over the newly oriented stairs to provide headroom.
- 7.7. **Impacts:** the removal of the walls in F7 are not considered to be contentious and believed to be modern, though the areas of wall between F2 and F7 and access to the WC are believed to have some historic value. The other significant change is the two dormer openings which will require two small areas of roofing to be removed and two rafters to be trimmed.



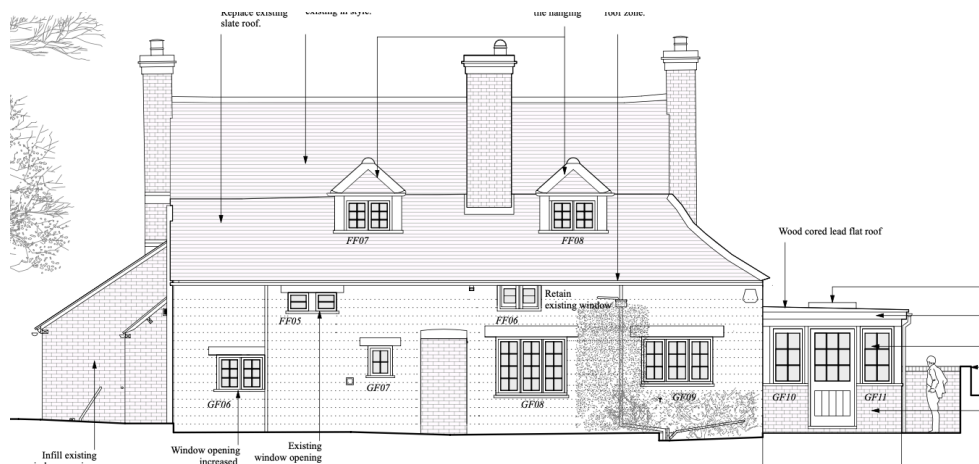
The proposed front elevation. © Sommerer Architecture & Living

EXTERIOR AND WINDOWS

- 7.8. The main alteration to the front elevation of the cottage includes the re-proportioning of the windows by reducing their height and replacing them with timber. The other works proposed are

remedial works to the Horsham slate roof and chimneys which will remove plant debris and repoint where necessary.

- 7.9. **Impacts:** the works proposed here will enhance the character and appearance of the building by making the windows a more sympathetic proportion and improving the condition of the brickwork.
- 7.10. The proposed works to the south elevation removes a modern window, reinstates a door at GF05 with the remaining works being repairs. The remedial works includes new roofing and cast-iron guttering with downpipes.
- 7.11. **Impacts:** the proposed changes to the windows and the new door will enhance the appearance of the building whilst the remedial works will make good the brickwork and roofing.



The proposed rear elevation. © Sommerer Architecture & Living

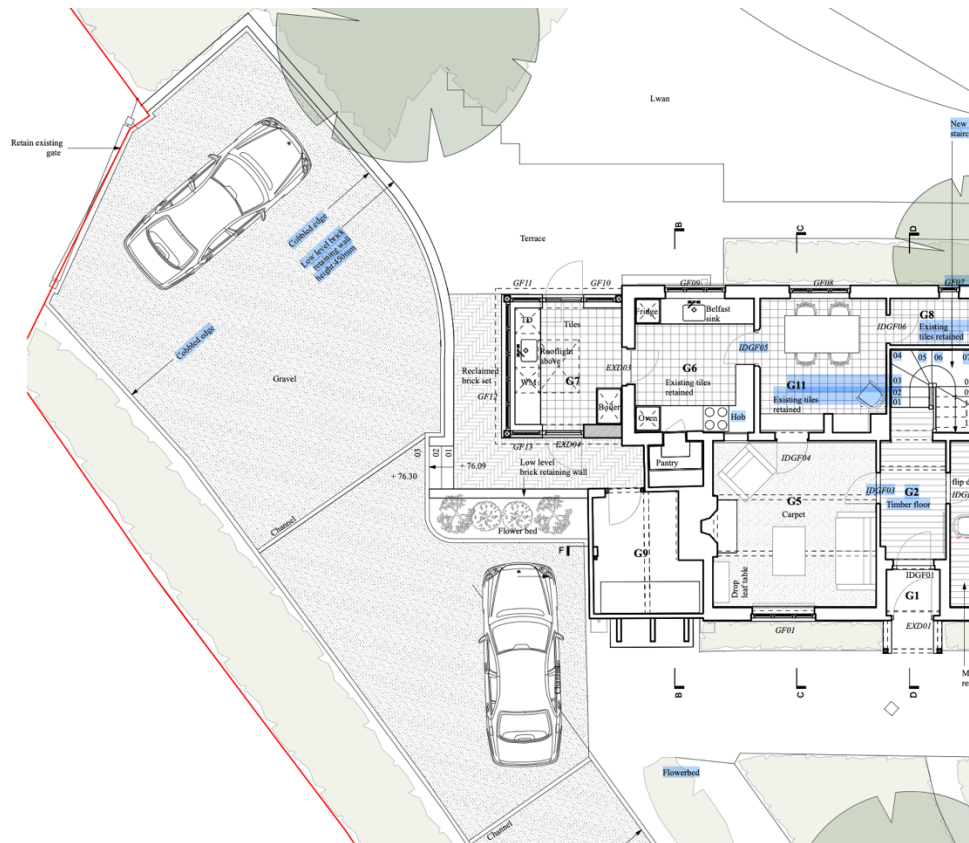
- 7.12. The rear elevation will see two modern windows altered in size and a window in the southern lean-to blocked in. The historic window FF06 will be retained.
- 7.13. The main change here is the introduction of two small dormer windows which serve the new staircase and formation of the WC. The roofs are hipped with handmade red clay tiles and vertical tile hanging.
- 7.14. The main roof slope is also being re-clad with salvaged new hand-made tiles to match. This will include new ridge tiles and flashing where necessary.
- 7.15. **Impacts:** the main impact here is the introduction of the dormer windows which are sympathetic in scale and design and compliment the design of the building without being too assertive. The changes to the modern windows and remedial works are also considered sympathetic and will enhance the appearance of the building.

EXTENSION

- 7.16. The pre-application enquiry proposed a much larger extension connected to the annex and garage. The proposal here is for a greatly reduced building which is modern in its form (with a flat roof) though uses traditional materials and maintains the architectural language of the house with Georgian style windows, Flemish bond brickwork and a leaded roof. The timberwork is in oak which differentiates it from the painted windows of the main house, though corresponds with the design, albeit in more muted tones. The result will be a sensitive and understated

addition that will provide a much-needed utility room to support the small kitchen. The paved area to the north and west will employ handmade bricks in a traditional herringbone design.

- 7.17. **Impacts:** the design of the addition is well-proportioned and continues the fenestration pattern in a manner that is sympathetic with the existing building. The extension will be attached to a later addition and therefore will not harm early historic fabric. Due to the land levels to the west and north, the addition will be largely concealed from the front and side.



The proposed parking area. © Sommerer Architecture & Living

PARKING AREA

- 7.18. With the removal of the garage from the proposals, the intention now is to provide an increased area for parking. This will take the form of a gravelled area with a cobbled edge and retained by a small brick wall. The design also includes the formation of a raised flowerbed to the west of the new extension.
- 7.19. **Impacts:** the parking area will take up a small area of the garden, but otherwise will not be intrusive and certainly will not be overly visible from the front of the house as it will be largely concealed by existing hedging and new planting.

8. Landscaping

- 8.1. There is no proposed landscaping associated with these works.

9. Access

- 9.1. There is no change to vehicular access.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1. Whitehouse Farm Cottage is a grade II listed building dating from the 18th century. The building has undergone change having been converted into multiple dwellings throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and today retains some of the characteristics of these changes as part of its significance.
- 10.2. The proposals outlined here have been led by the pre-application enquiry and the helpful advice of the council's conservation officer. It has sought to extend the building sensitively with minimal impact to the external appearance. The design approach of the extension and dormer windows are considered sympathetic with the listed building and its setting.
- 10.3. The internal alterations result in some minor impact to historic fabric; however, the more contentious of these have been addressed through the pre-application process and exclude all changes that were considered potentially harmful.
- 10.4. The proposals also include remedial and repair works that will enhance the appearance of the listed building, but also make sure that it is carefully maintained. This includes the replacement of the windows which will also constitute an enhancement.
- 10.5. It is hoped that these proposals now comply with policy DP34 of the Local plan and will be looked on favourably by the council.
- 10.6. In light of the NPPF, the changes that result in some loss to historic fabric are considered 'less than substantial harm', and within this spectrum of harm situated at the lower level. These should also be offset by the many beneficial proposals which will enhance the building and help to sustain it for the foreseeable future. On this basis the scheme should be found capable of support from the council.