

Design and Access Statement

868_The Half Moon Inn

February 2026

Revision: 2

The Applicant :
Jeff Thomson

Project Location:
The Half Moon Inn,
Haywards Heath Road,
Balcombe.
RH15 6PA

Householder Application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent

Fire safety and access improvements to the Grade II listed Half Moon Inn, Balcombe. The works respond to the findings of a recent Fire Risk Assessment and focus on enhancing means of escape, fire compartmentation, and life safety, while preserving the building's historic character and community use.

This document must be read in conjunction with the full plans associated to this application.

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Contents

- 01. Introduction
- 02. The Site and Access
- 03. Existing Appearance and Materials
- 04. Proposed Appearance and Material

1.1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports a planning application for proposed fire safety and access-related improvements to the Grade II listed Half Moon Inn, a community-owned public house located on Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe. The proposals respond directly to the findings of a Fire Risk Assessment undertaken in October 2025 and seek to improve life safety, means of escape, and fire containment while preserving the building's historic character.

The works focus on enhancing the protection of escape routes, particularly in light of the firstfloor residential accommodation above the public areas, and improving compartmentation within the existing timber-framed structure. Key interventions include the upgrading of fire doors, improvements to internal fire separation, enhanced fire detection and emergency lighting provision, and the removal of inappropriate exit locking arrangements.

Given the heritage significance of the building, all alterations have been carefully developed to minimise impact on historic fabric, using discreet and reversible solutions wherever possible. The proposals aim to achieve a proportionate level of fire safety that aligns with current guidance and legislation, while respecting the architectural integrity, community function, and long-term viability of this important local asset.

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Half Moon Inn, Balcombe
View from the street

1.3 List Entry

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1192770
Date first listed: 11-May-1983

List Entry Name:
Sopers Garden the Half Moon Inn

Statutory Address 1:
SOPERS GARDEN, HAYWARDS HEATH ROAD
Statutory Address 2:
THE HALF MOON INN, HAYWARDS HEATH ROAD

Location

Statutory Address:
SOPERS GARDEN, HAYWARDS HEATH ROAD
Statutory Address:
THE HALF MOON INN, HAYWARDS HEATH ROAD

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:
West Sussex
District:
Mid Sussex (District Authority)
Parish:
Balcombe
National Grid Reference:
TQ 30942 30673

Details

BALCOMBE HAYWARDS HEATH ROAD 1. 5405
Sopers Garden and The Half Moon Inn TQ 3030
32/363 II GV

2. One building. C17 timber-framed building, refaced with stucco. Hipped slate roof. Sash windows with glazing bars intact on first floor. Modern windows below. Two storeys. Three windows.

Listing NGR: TQ3094230673

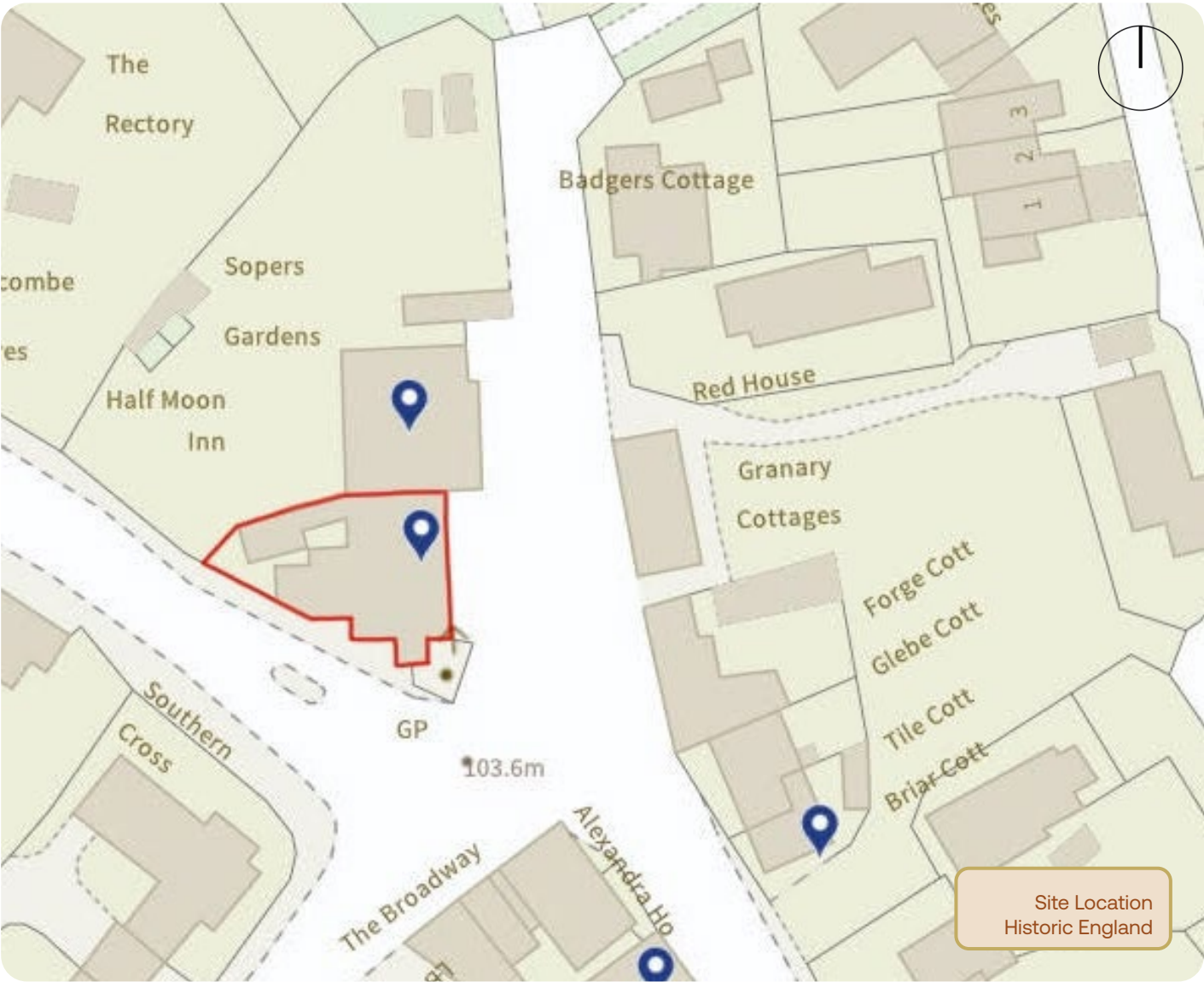
Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:
302332
Legacy System:
LBS

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



2.1 Site Location and wider access

Balcombe is a village and civil parish in the Mid Sussex District of West Sussex, England. The village sits on a ridge within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), characterized by rolling countryside, ancient woodlands, steep valleys, and gill streams. The High Weald AONB is a legally protected landscape, recognizing it as one of the best examples of pastoral landscape in the UK.

The name Balcombe may mean “Mining Place Camp”. Bal is a Cornish word meaning a mining place as in Bal Maidens, and the same word may have existed in Ancient British Celtic. Although Coombe or Combe can mean a valley, it can also come from the Roman “camp”. So possibly from its name Balcombe could have once been a Romano-British mining settlement.

Balcombe lies 31 miles (50 km) south of London, 16 miles (26 km) north of Brighton, and 32 miles (51 km) east-northeast of the county town of Chichester. Nearby towns include Crawley to the northwest and Haywards Heath to the south-southeast.

Balcombe has its own train station, Balcombe Railway Station (BAB), located on London Road (RH17 6JQ). It is served by Thameslink trains on the Brighton Main Line, with services typically running hourly to London Bridge/Bedford and Brighton. It is a well-connected commuter village with 46-min trains to London.

Bus services through the village are infrequent and cease in the evening. Travel in and out is mainly by car or train. The majority of the working population works in London or within the Gatwick/Brighton diamond.

It offers key amenities including a well-rated primary school, local shop, pub, and various community halls. However, as a rural, historic village, its infrastructure is more tailored to village life than high-density urban convenience, with potential, albeit minor, traffic congestion during school hours.



2.2 Local Site Context and access

The Half Moon Inn is located on Haywards Heath Road within the village of Balcombe, West Sussex. The site occupies a prominent position along one of the village's main routes and sits within close proximity to key local landmarks, including Balcombe Village Green, St Mary's Church, and the Balcombe railway station to the south-east.

The immediate surroundings are semi-rural in character, with residential properties lining Haywards Heath Road and open countryside extending beyond the village edges. Areas of agricultural land and mature trees contribute to the rural setting, reinforcing the Inn's role as a historic village public house within its landscape context.

The site benefits from access to local bus services along Haywards Heath Road, providing connections to nearby settlements including Haywards Heath, Crawley, and surrounding villages, although services are relatively infrequent. Balcombe railway station is located approximately 1km from the site, offering direct rail links to London and the south coast.

Vehicle access to the site is taken directly from Haywards Heath Road. Limited on-site parking is provided to the rear of the building, with additional informal parking occurring along the surrounding streets. The road is relatively narrow in places, with pavements provided intermittently, reflecting the historic village character and traffic-calmed nature of the area.



2.3 Local Character

The Half Moon Inn is located within the Balcombe Conservation Area, as designated by Mid Sussex District Council. The Conservation Area was first designated in 1984 and focuses on the historic core of the village, extending in a linear form from the central crossroads towards St Mary's Church to the north and Mill Lane to the south.

The Conservation Area includes a significant number of historic buildings, many of which date from the 16th and 17th centuries, with the majority being pre-20th century in origin. To the southeast of the village centre, particularly around the junction of Haywards Heath Road and Mill Lane, the area is characterised by older timber-framed and brick buildings, including several listed structures dating from the 17th century.

The Balcombe Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance sets out the local design principles that new development in the village should follow. The document emphasises that:

Development should “respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials.”

The Half Moon Inn contributes positively to this historic and architectural context as a Grade II listed, timber-framed building that reflects the vernacular character of the village. Its scale, form, materials, and historic use as a public house align with the established character of the Conservation Area. Any proposed works therefore seek to preserve and enhance this character, responding sensitively to the building's heritage significance and its setting within the wider Conservation Area.

Balcombe

Conservation Area

Part of Balcombe was designated as a Conservation Area in 1984. This was focused on the central village crossroads and extended in linear form, as far as St. Mary's Church in the north and Mill Lane in the south. Some of the buildings grouped around the village centre date from the 16th and 17th Centuries and most are pre 20th Century. To the south east, grouped loosely around the junction of Haywards Heath Road and Mill Lane, is another area of older timber framed and brick properties; whilst many are Victorian there are several listed buildings dating from the 17th Century.

The Conservation Area boundary was extended in March 1990 to include two additional areas:

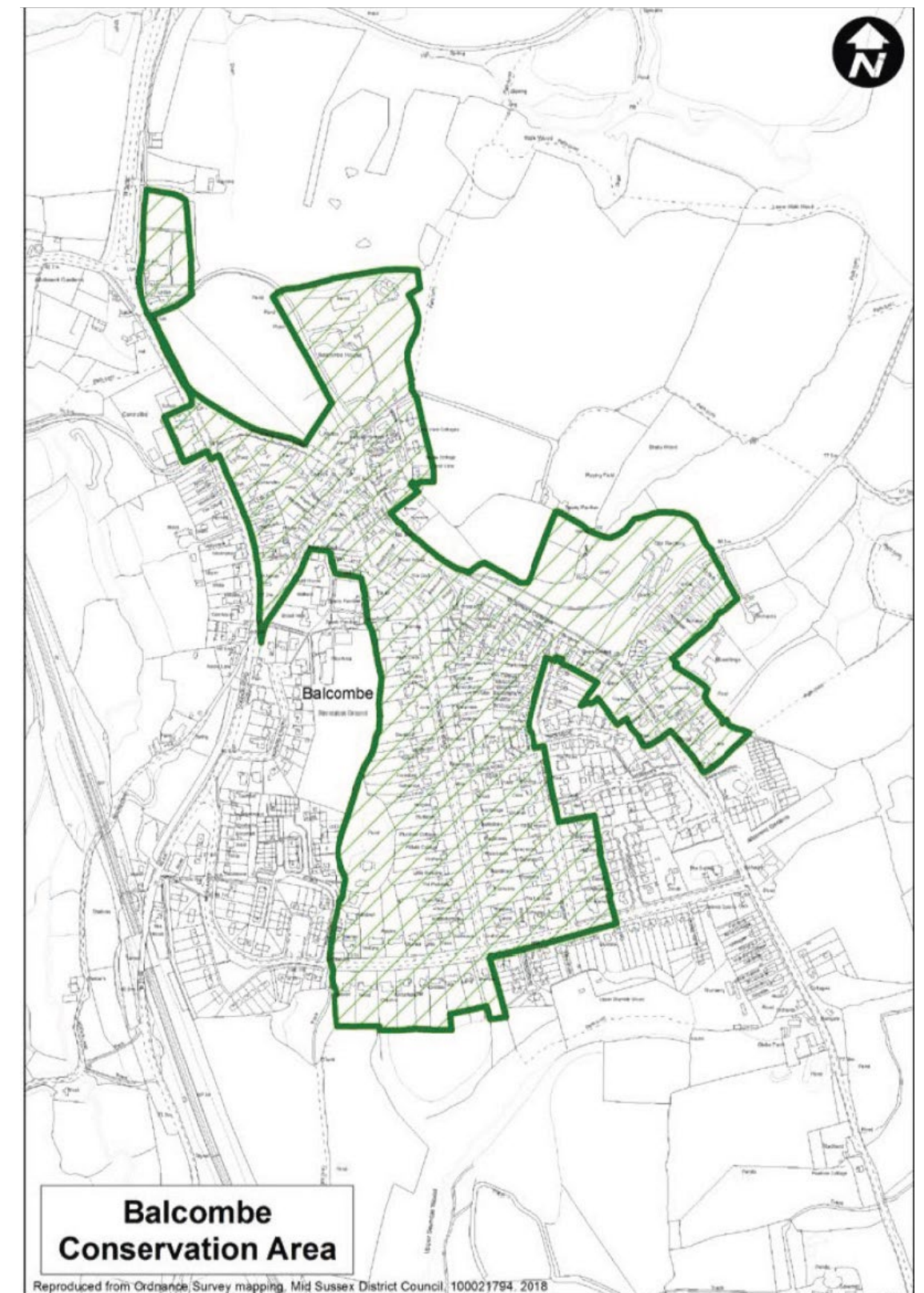
- (i) the northwest side of Bramble Hill and the trees and hedgeline on the south east side, together with the east side of London Road northwards to the original Conservation Area boundary, and
- (ii) those parts of Stockcroft Road and Deanland Road not previously covered, together with Victoria Road and part of Oldlands Avenue.

These roads are, for the most part, characterised by large detached houses of varying ages and styles with spacious gardens, set in attractive tree and hedge lined roads with wide grass verges. Although there has been some recent infill development these areas have retained an attractive character and appearance worthy of Conservation Area status.

The following features, in particular, contribute to the character of the Conservation Area:

- the attractive stone walling within the area;
- the large detached houses, set predominantly in spacious gardens, and the extensive grass verges bordering wide roads which contribute to the overall open character of the residential area of Stockcroft Road, Deanland Road and Oldlands Avenue;
- the number of hedgerows and fine trees, both deciduous and evergreen, in the area;
- the use of natural and traditional building materials including clay roofing tiles and local stock brick;
- the ornamental barge-boarding on some of the properties in London Road; and
- the attractive views of rolling countryside.

Balcombe Conservation Area Description
Mid Sussex Council



Balcombe Mid Sussex Council
Conservation Area Map

03 | Existing Appearance and Materials

3 Site Photos

The Half Moon Inn is a grade II listed building of traditional construction, characterised externally and internally by historic timber elements consistent with its age and historic character. The existing doors comprise a mixture of later replacements and original timber ledge doors.



View of cavity above lobby door



View of cavity above kitchen hood



View of serving hatch



View of the Inn from the Street



View of cellar door from inside cellar



View of lobby fire door

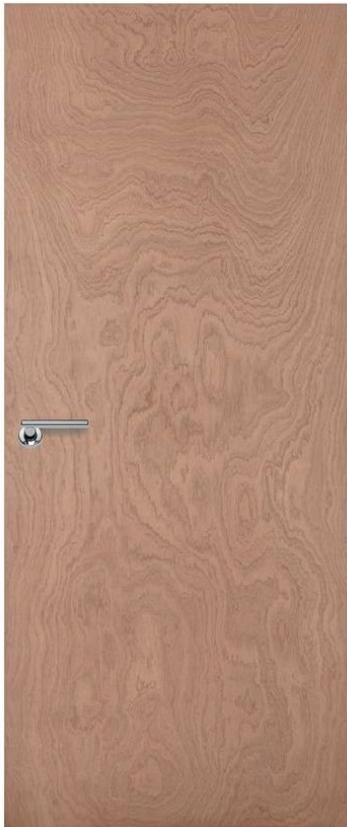
4.1 Proposed alterations - non historic doors

The proposed works will be done in a sympathetic manner to the original historic fabric. Existing doors comprise a combination of original timber ledge doors and later replacements. 3 non-original doors are to be replaced with purpose made timber fire doors (to meet FD30S standard), incorporating smoke seals and self closing devices. They will be detailed to match the existing in form, proportions and finish, ensuring that the character and appearance of the building are maintained. One of these doors (the current lobby door) has cladding on the outside to make blend in with the historic fabric of the rest of the building. This is to be removed and reinstalled on the new FD30S fire blank.

Localised fire-stopping works are also proposed between the ground and first floor where gaps have developed. These measures will be discreetly installed within existing floor voids and junctions to prevent the spread of fire, without altering visible historic surfaces. Materials will be compatible with the existing construction and installed in a manner that safeguards the integrity and legibility of the original fabric. It will be fixed like for like.



Example of adhesive Intumescent tape and smoke seal



Example of replacement FD30S door

4.2 Proposed alterations - non-historic serving hatch

The existing serving hatch is a modern insertion and does not form part of the historic fabric of the building. It is proposed to replace this element with a purpose-made FD30S fire-rated serving hatch, sized to fit the existing opening. The new hatch will be designed to minimise visual impact and will be installed without alteration to surrounding historic fabric, ensuring that the character of the interior is preserved while achieving the required level of fire protection.



View of current non-historic serving hatch



Example of FD30S serving hatch

04 | Proposed Appearance and Materials

4.3 Proposed alterations - historic cellar door

The historic cellar door will not be removed, altered, or otherwise modified as part of the proposed works. Instead, it will be permanently pinned back in its existing position so that the historic fabric is retained in situ. A new fire-rated door will then be installed independently in front of the existing door to provide the required level of fire resistance to the escape route.

This approach ensures that the historic door and its associated joinery remain intact and clearly legible within the building, while allowing the necessary fire safety improvements to be implemented. The new fire door will be installed in a manner that avoids direct intervention into the historic door itself, ensuring that the historic fabric is protected and that the intervention remains reversible. Should fire safety requirements change in the future, the new fire door could be removed without causing harm to the original door or surrounding historic fabric.

Previously considered option:

In developing the proposal, consideration was given to upgrading the fire performance of the existing historic cellar door through the application of fire-resistant treatments. This included the potential use of fire-resistant cladding and the application of Envirograf intumescent fire protection paint to the existing door.

However, these approaches were ultimately discounted as they would require direct intervention to the historic fabric of the door and could alter its appearance. In addition, such treatments may not be fully reversible and could affect the long-term conservation of the historic material.

As a result, the preferred solution was to retain the historic door in situ and permanently pin it back, with a new fire-rated door installed independently in front of it. This approach avoids any alteration to the historic door itself and ensures that the historic fabric is preserved while still achieving the necessary fire safety requirements.



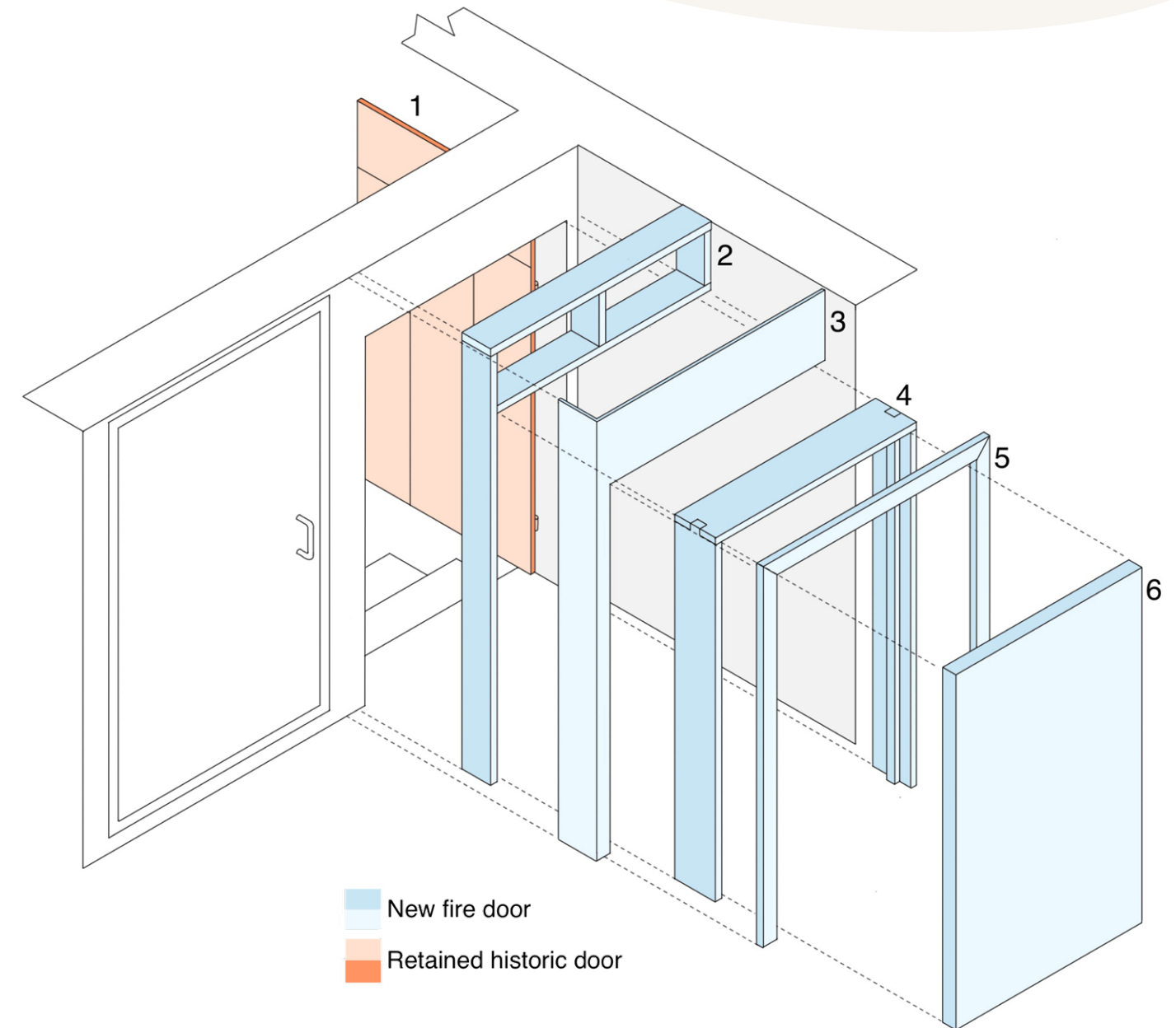
View of cellar door from inside cellar - the direction in which it will be pinned back



View of cellar door from outside the cellar



View of cellar door frame from outside the cellar



1 - Existing historic door retained and pinned open.

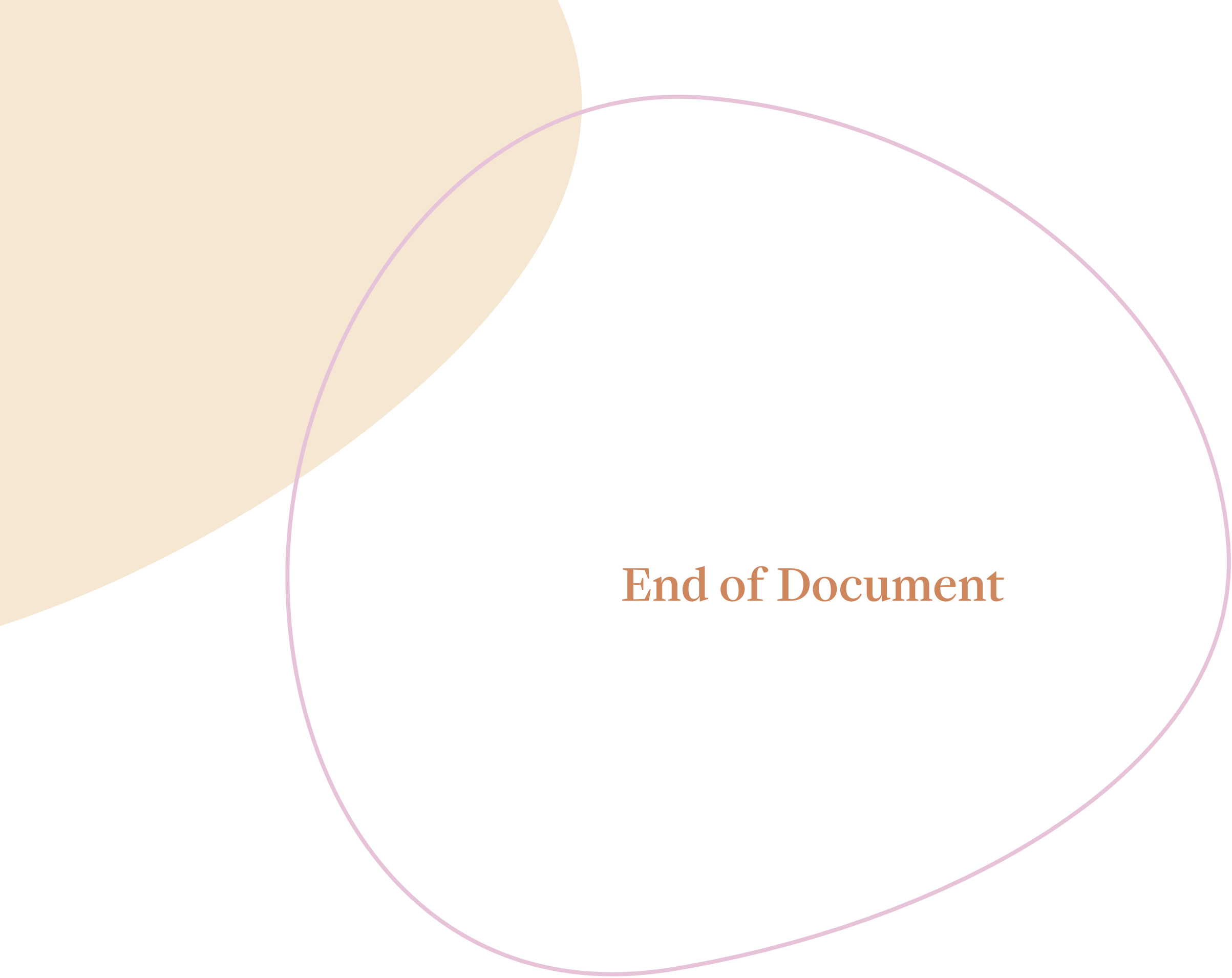
2 - Stud work applied to front of existing frame and continued up to ground floor ceiling level. This is to aid in the fire stopping which is required due to the degradation of the fabric above the door.

3 - 2 layers of 12.5mm plasterboard.

4 - Fire door frame lining with intumescent smoke seals.

5 - Soft wood architrave.

6 - FD30S fire door to open inwards (in the same direction of the pinned back historic door).



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