Lullings Cottage

Structural Assessment

Stantec

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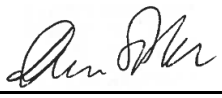
Prepared by: 

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Executive Summary

Lullings Cottage is an unoccupied residential property of traditional construction. In its current condition, and in order to bring the building back into habitable use, it requires a range of works from maintenance to repairs and replacement of fabric.

Structurally the cottage is in a fair condition and the roof, walls, ceilings and floors generally appear sound with localised structural damage observed.

A schedule of recommended works has been prepared to accompany the submission of the application and this report should be read in conjunction with the schedule.

1 Introduction

Lullings Cottage is within the curtilage of the main house, Lullings. This report comprises a structural and condition survey of the cottage.

Figure 1 - Site plan

1.1 Brief

The client brief was as follows: *The project includes demolition of an existing cottage which is deemed to be curtilage listed, and therefore we wish to thoroughly assess its existing state to enclose as part of the planning application. Please can you assess the current condition of the property and critically if possible, what means would be necessary to repair and restore the cottage back to its full, former state.*

1.2 Inspection

A visual inspection was carried out on 9th May 2025 by one of our engineers, Duncan Woolsmith. Duncan is a Chartered Structural Engineer with an MSc in Historic Conservation and several years' experience inspecting, surveying and assessing historic assets. The inspection was carried out in good weather and access was available to all rooms of the property, the exterior inspection was undertaken from ground level and no high-level access was provided. Safe loft access was not available, but a camera was put through the loft hatch. The majority of the exterior was visible, but the proximity of adjacent trees restricted some views of the roof.

Figure 2 - Lullings Cottage

1.3 Background

This report should be read in conjunction with the submitted Heritage Statement (Stantec, 2025), relevant abridged extracts of which are provided below.

Lullings Cottage is a Victorian/early Edwardian cottage of modest design, most likely constructed as a farm workers cottage in the 19th century. It is evident that no architectural detail has been ascribed to the property, with the materiality of the cottage being markedly different from the main house, constructed of red brick, now painted white and slate pitched roof. A later lean-to extension has been constructed to the western elevation. There are no surviving features of note, the windows are generally 20th century replacements that are not in keeping with the age and architectural style of the building, any surviving rainwater goods are UvPC, there is limited evidence of historic features internally. Overall, it is considered that Lullings Cottage holds limited architectural interest and is of low historic interest. Given the associative relationship between the cottage and the farm at its time of construction, it most likely had an ancillary use to the main house. Archival research suggest there appears to be an associative relationship between the cottage and Lullings, but it has always occupied a separate 'plot' marking it as separated from the other buildings within the site. Based on this Lullings Cottage is considered to have the same level of statutory protection as the designated heritage asset adjacent, Lullings and Listed Building Consent would therefore be required prior to undertaking any alterations or demolition.

2 Observations

2.1 Exterior

2.1.1 Walls

There were no indications of movement in the external walls, no significant cracking was observed, and all walls appeared vertical and in generally fair structural condition. External walls were of painted brick in a stretcher bond. Multiple layers of paint were apparent with some layers appearing to be brittle and impermeable, flaking off in various locations especially where exposed to moisture.

Figure 3 - Example flaking paint

Field microscopy suggested previous layers of paint are more porous and potentially more permeable than the outermost layer.

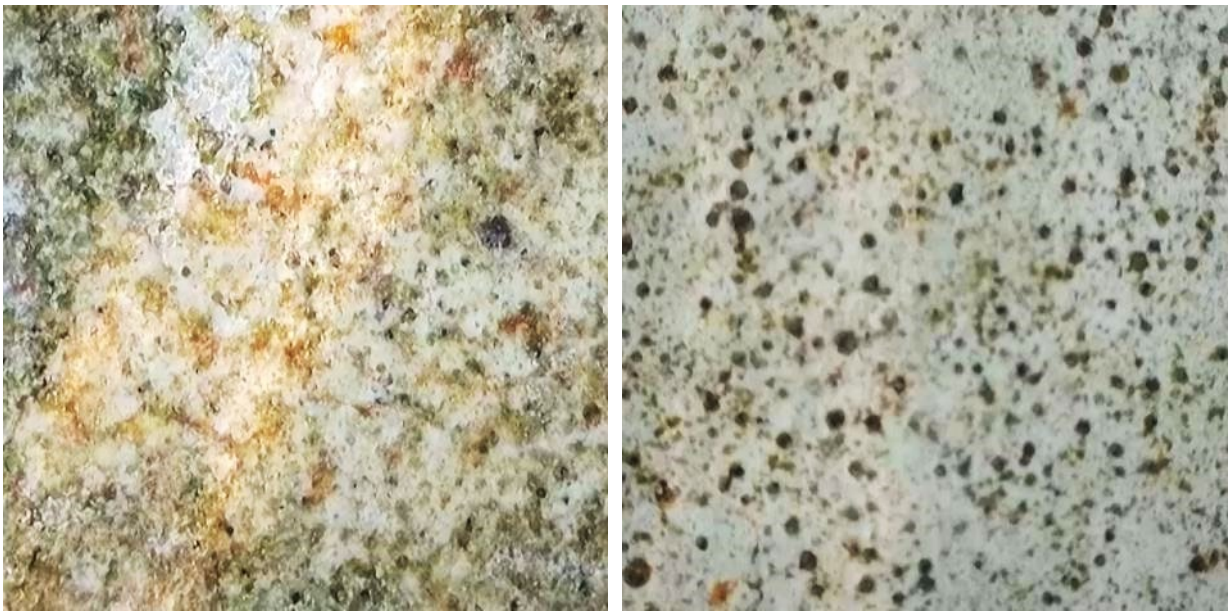

Figure 4 - Inner paint layer (left), outer paint layer (right)

Localised areas around the western side of the building had surface growth of russet coloured mould/lichen suggesting elevated moisture levels, likely due to these elevations being in shade and protected from both sun and wind by substantial tree cover.

Figure 5 – External Mould/Lichen

2.1.2 Chimneys

The cottage features three chimney stacks. The north chimney appeared vertical and in fair condition.

Figure 6 - North chimney

The southwest chimney appeared vertical and generally in fair condition. The stack had a greater degree of paint flaking than the northern chimney which is indicative of moisture ingress and perhaps indicates some deterioration of the brickwork. Closer high-level inspection would need to be undertaken to establish the condition of the existing bricks.

Figure 7 - Southwest chimney

The southeast chimney appeared vertical and was generally in fair condition with localised deterioration, primarily to the south face.

Figure 8 - Southeast chimney

2.1.3 Roofs

The main roof had a level ridge and hips with little visible indication of movement. The tiles on each slope appeared to be in fair condition without significant slippage or damage.

Figure 9 - Main roof (from west)

Figure 10 - Main roof (from Northeast)

A small section of roof adjacent to the southwest chimney appeared damaged but no vantage point could be gained to obtain a clear view of it as a result of existing vegetation. This would need to be investigated further in order to establish what damage has occurred and determine possible cause.

Figure 11 - Main roof damage

The majority of soffits and facias on the main roof had flaking paint but visible damage and decay was viewed. This was localised to a few specific areas. Generally, boards appeared to be soundly attached.

Figure 12 - Main roof example soffits and facias

The northeast lean-to roof was in fair condition with no visible structural deterioration and limited movement of tiles. The flashing detail at the southern end appeared to have deteriorated, with the adjacent wall showing signs of moisture damage, potentially linked to the condition of the guttering above.

Figure 13 - Northeast lean-to roof

The western lean-to roof was in poor condition. The eaves at the northern end had decayed, guttering was missing and had failed, and several tiles had slipped. Generally, the tiles need maintenance and there was extensive moss growth, likely exacerbated by windblown debris from adjacent trees.

Figure 14 - West lean-to roof

2.1.4 Fixtures

Generally guttering was present but in localised areas was missing or detached. Several sections appeared from ground level to be blocked with debris. Down pipes were generally present but with several damaged areas where they did not connect into below ground drainage.

Figure 15 - Example downpipe damage

Timber door and window framing was of mixed condition from fair with localised deterioration to poor with large areas of decay. The northeast lean-to features metal framed windows that appeared to be in fair condition.

Figure 16 - Window frame in fair condition

Figure 17 - Window frame in poor condition

2.2 Interior

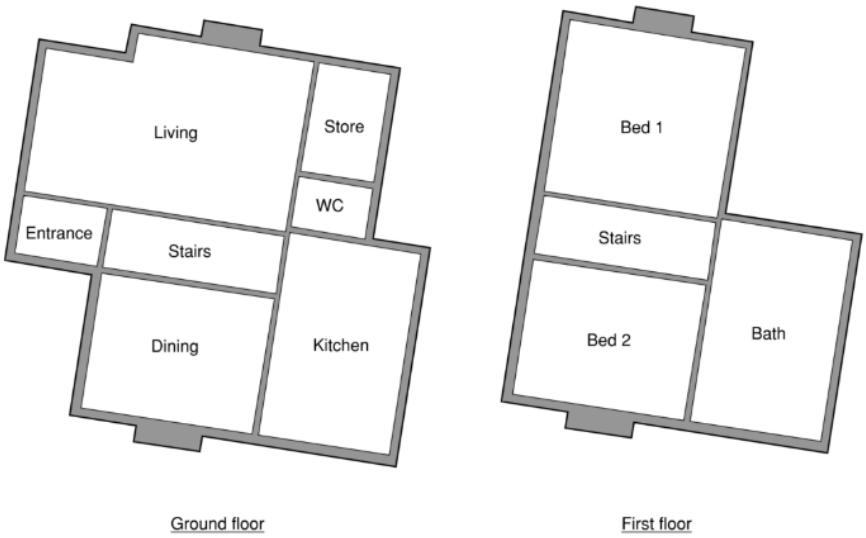

Figure 18 - Indicative floor plans

2.2.1 Kitchen

The kitchen floor was bare concrete and appeared structurally sound. Walls were brick and appeared structurally sound but with various layers of paint extensively peeling, blistering a flaking off. Large

sections of the walls appeared to have black mould growth, especially in the corners behind the stove. All of which are indicative of high moisture level within the room. The ceiling also had blistering and peeling finishes but appeared to be structurally sound. There were no obvious points of water ingress, and it is likely that the high moisture content has arisen as a result of the prolonged lack of heating and ventilation within the building.

Figure 19 - Kitchen

2.2.2 Dining

The floor was timber boards and walls were generally finished in plaster/board with the chimneybreast exposed brick. Floor, walls and ceiling all appeared structurally sound but with blistering/peeling finishes.

Figure 20 - Dining room

2.2.3 Entrance

The entrance had an exposed brick floor, and the same peeling wall and ceiling finishes found throughout. Floor, walls and ceiling appeared structurally sound.

Figure 21 - Entrance

2.2.4 Living

The living room comprised timber floorboards in fair condition, plastered walls with some paint blistering and a ceiling with some blistering of finishes and a large area of plaster delamination revealing the lath structure above. The extent of plaster loss on the ceiling is suggestive of water ingress rather than high moisture content generally within the building.

Figure 22 - Living room

2.2.5 Store & WC

The ground floor store and WC comprised a brick floor, painted brick walls and probably a plasterboard ceiling. There were no indications of structural damage to any of these elements, although the rooms were in a general state of disrepair with failing finishes etc.

Figure 23 - Store and WC

2.2.6 Stairs

The stairs themselves were timber and appeared to be in a fair condition without significant creaking or similar when used. The ceiling of the first-floor landing had a large section of delaminated plaster revealing the lath structure behind with further cracking visible..

Figure 24 – Stairs

2.2.7 Bed (North)

Ceiling, walls and floor all appeared to be in fair condition structurally. The northwest corner specifically had more deterioration of finishes, with peeling wallpaper, indicative of trapped moisture similar to that observed elsewhere in the property.

Figure 25 - Bedroom (North)

2.2.8 Bathroom

Almost all surfaces in the bathroom had failing paint with large areas blistering, peeling and flaking on both walls and ceiling. However, the structure appeared in fair condition with a few exceptions. Over the window a large section of plaster/render had been lost from the underside of the lintel. There did not appear to be any structural damage associated with this.

A section of ceiling in the southwest corner had failed and staining is visible in the surrounding plaster. This appeared to be the result of water damage. This area is roughly in the position of the main roof damage noted in 2.1.3.

Figure 26 - Bathroom

2.2.9 Bed (South)

Ceiling, walls and floor all appeared structurally sound although with deteriorating finishes, again indicative of a high moisture content throughout the property. A section of floorboards had been replaced with sheet material, the reason for this is unknown. The South window was in a poor condition and hanging off its hinges.

Figure 27 - Bedroom (South)

2.2.10 Loft

The roof structure comprised a simple A-frame of rafters and a ridge (without purlins, collars or diagonal members) supporting battens and slates. No sarking or roof felt was observed. Ceiling joists were suspended from the rafters with vertical timber hangers. All timbers generally appeared dry and in fair condition. No structural damage was observed from the access available.

Figure 28 - Loft space

3 Discussion

3.1 Condition

It is understood the cottage was last inhabited in 2021 and at that point had been in a dilapidated state for some time. It is clear the property has been wanting of maintenance for an extended period and that previous interventions have potentially exacerbated deterioration, chief among which is the widespread use of what appears to be impermeable paints both internally and externally. Impermeable paints can trap the moisture naturally occurring in the fabric of historic buildings, preventing it from evaporating, leading to the blistering and peeling seen throughout the interior, and the flaking of paint from the exterior. At present this does not appear to have caused any structural damage, but over an extended period of time there is potential for it to do so.

Despite being unoccupied, the structure of the cottage is in a fair condition. No indications of movement were observed, and floors, walls and ceilings generally appeared sound, with a few localised exceptions of relatively minor structural damage as noted within the report.

In addition to the failing finishes, there were indications of localised damp, mainly in cupboard and corners of rooms with little air flow. This is likely due to the fact that the building has been unoccupied for an extended period and has not been subject to appropriate levels of heating / ventilation, resulting in extensive failing of finishes throughout the interior, presence of mould and high levels of moisture throughout. Generally, despite the condition of the rainwater goods the roof appears to be keeping water out of the property. Based on the findings of this report demolition is not warranted by the structural condition.

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