

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE



Property Address: The Barn House, Cuckfield Road, Ansty, Haywards Heath
RH17 5AG

Client: Mr Michael Dykes

Inspection Date: 6th October 2020

Report Date: 5th November 2020

Prepared by Richard Pocock MSc MRICS

1. INSTRUCTIONS AND CONTEXT

The building in question is a timber framed farm building, situated on the western boundary of a former farmyard.

The property is Grade II listed and the listing is reproduced for reference in Appendix I.

It is proposed to convert the building into a residential unit

2. CONDITIONS DURING THE INSPECTION

Directions:	As facing the property from the main road
Front aspect:	Approximately west
Weather during the inspection:	Dry, but with heavy rain just prior to the inspection
Inspection Limitations:	None of consequence

3. DESCRIPTION

The subject building is a simple, but well built four bay cattle byre. The quality of the framing construction is a feature of this small building and sets it apart from similar structures.

The building is in four framed bays, all of which were originally open to the western face – facing the barn and into the centre of the farm yard. Each framed bay has posts of scantling (around 170mm). The bay posts are jointed with fairly slim, lightly arched tie beams, connected via tease tenon joints, with chamfered and cut back jowls.



There are lower opening bars installed to the four bay openings (as can be seen in the image above, situated below the wall plate). These are original and denote the open bays on the western face. Upward bracing is straight and, unusually, cuts into the jowl (probably to ensure that they were sufficiently out of the way, as much as they could be).

The bays are numbered, but the numbering is specific to the bay trusses and not numbered consecutively along the bays themselves. This tends to denote a date well after the 17th century, and the numbers are impressed with a chisel blade, or similar – again a slightly later date indication.



Trusses are simple and workmanlike, with raking struts clasp the purlins.



Rafters are also hardwood and are jointed with a pegged side halved joint at the apex. Hipped ends are original, with the purlins cantilevering beyond two end lateral braces, again clasping the purlins.



There are no notable iron fixings, and the frame is wholly pegged.

Studs to the closed walls are simple vertical examples, pegged to the upper joint with the wall plates, with no lateral bracing. Any stiffness was conferred by outer cladding boards, none of which are original.

There are straight diagonal braces to both of the end panels and also on the face returns at the rear to prevent racking.



Apart from the main frontage bay posts and the dropped entry bars, none of the framed structure was meant to be visible from outside. Certainly, there were not meant to be any exposed frame elements, as is presently the case with the diagonal braces and studding on the southern end (above).

The central end studs between the diagonal braces on both ends were slightly larger timbers than the remaining infill studs.

The structure was built with a sole plate, laid upon a brick plinth, of which only a small section remains and we are also not convinced that much of what can be seen is wholly original in any case. There are some bricks which can be identified in situ.



Internally, the unit was subdivided into stalls and some stall sockets can be seen, but alongside other, more modern sockets for later subdivision, probably in the later 19th century. No original stalling, or subdivision timberwork remains.

The building has sufficient remaining structure to suggest a date at the very end of the 18th century. Whilst there may be a slim possibility that this just creeps into the beginning of the 19th, the lack of iron fixings, together with the framing methodology better suit a date of perhaps 1785-90 onwards.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 2005/6 Restoration and General Alteration.

The restoration of the structure in around 2005/6 has had little effect upon the main framed structure and there has been little significant fabric loss.

The roof covering was renewed at this time, but this led to no fabric loss, or alteration to the structure of the roof other than the loss of older tiles, which may, or may not have been of any great vintage in any case. There is no binding staining, or any other indication of whether the unit had thatch at any time in its life and this is considered unlikely.

The floor of the unit was also replaced. The original flooring is not known, but there is presently a modern concrete slab in the north bay, together with a concrete floor, topped with chippings in the main body of the building.

The restoration at this time did, however, require the replacement of the south plinth wall, along with the sole plate, together with the entire eastern plinth wall and sole plate. There was an attempt to ensure that as much of the studding and frame fabric was retained. There is minimal blocking to bracing, but otherwise, the original studs joint directly to the new wall plate (it also seems very likely that the building was levelled at the time).



The only section of original sole plate is retained on the north end, but the plinth wall is heavily butchered underneath, especially on the outer face.



The frontage bay posts were also cut back to sound timber and stood upon masonry plinths, with wooden sole blocking, probably due to the deterioration of the bay post feet.



Otherwise, the restoration imposed no other loss of fabric.

Earlier in the building's life, there was some minimal loss of fabric when a doorway was created in the northern wall. The central stud was removed and its mortice can still be seen.



Later timber stud framing was inserted adjacent to the existing studs to form the frame of the door and the existing diagonal braces were slightly shortened to allow for the insertion.



Modern alterations have since enclosed the north end bay with an internal softwood partition (below). The date of the inclusion is not known, but it most likely appeared at the same time as the 2005-6 restoration.



4.2 Building Setting and Site Context.

The building is situated as part of a former farmyard, serving what was for some time Ansty Farm. The farm had considerable lands to the east of Ansty village and certainly farmed cattle and cereals right through the 19th century.

The subject building is a cattle shelter and is typically situated across the yard from a threshing barn and forming a quadrangle with other nearby buildings, but looking out north to grazing fields. The farm pond is also only just to the north and this was, again, a fairly typical arrangement allowing the cows to be sheltered in security, but with easy access to watering and for milking (which will have been carried out elsewhere).

The present situation of the building has not changed a great deal, apart from the courtyard being much more of a formal driveway and garden than the former open yard will have been.



The space is quite intimate and despite the modern hedges on the northern boundary of the yard, the vista out towards the pond and fields can still be conjured.

The subject building is now resting within the context of modern conversions of the barn and also other surrounding buildings, together with modern aesthetic treatments of the former 'farmyard'.

Conversion of this building too will have little direct affect upon the setting and site context, especially if there is no additional requirement to change the courtyard setting, or provide parking space in front of the building. The retention of the pergola arrangement will dramatically reduce the impact of any changes to the building, for instance.

4.3 Affect of the Proposal Upon Historic Fabric

The proposed plans have two aspects that will need to be clarified in respect of the affect upon fabric.

1. Cladding and wall linings, internally and externally.
2. Removal of bracing.

In respect of the cladding, the use of the same lapped cladding to the exterior provides no significant concern per se, as it was added to the building in the 2005-6 alterations and probably matched previous cladding applied to the building over many years. Therefore, extending this to enclose other parts of the building should not, in our view, be an issue.

There are concerns, however, over the treatment of the main bay posts on the front aspect. Currently, these are, along with the dropped opening bars, fully visible and are a visual reminder of the vernacular of the building.

The current proposal would see these elements 'packed out beyond brickwork with insulated timber frame' (Gould and Co. Drawing H5271.0.PL001 Rev. N/A). The proposed detail will hide the bay posts externally and would seemingly almost wholly hide them internally, losing a good deal of the internal impact of the structure and allowing any external view of the structure to appear, for all intents and purposes, 'modern'.

There is also no detailed drawing of the packing/cladding to indicate how the upper tenon joints and braces at the head of the posts are to be treated, along with the dropped opening bars. The elevation drawing, too, is indistinct in this respect. The teased tenon joint could be a very awkward detail to clad effectively, for instance.

A possible solution to this would be making the doors slightly less wide and recessing them within the frame a little, thereby giving the impression of open bays and leaving the dropped opening bars intact. This would also allow the presently exposed bay posts to remain on display.

The interior insulated cladding to the main walls will not extend much past the inner face of the studs and, therefore, the bay posts to the rear of the unit should remain just visible.



We note that the partitions for the two flanking rooms are in line with, but very slightly offset from, the bay posts (probably sufficient to rest the plasterboard directly against the face of the braces?). If this assertion is correct, this would reduce the visual impact of the trusses. Ideally, any internal partitioning should be away from the bay post trusses by around 60-100mm to allow for these truss arrangements to be seen, unencumbered, from within the entrance vestibule room. If the proposal is to clad the truss braces within the linings, then this too would lead to a reduction in visual impact, internally.

In respect of the two left flank windows, these could be reduced in width to retain existing stud fabric. There is no particular need to apply such large fenestration, when there are reasonable spaces between the studs to allow for insertion in between and the 'slit windows' could be considered a reasonable aesthetic feature/addition.

To the north elevation, no changes are warranted to the proposed fenestration.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposal, as a whole, will have little impact upon the wider aspects of the site and the situation of the surrounding buildings, so long as the formal garden arrangement in front of it is not altered to provide hardstanding, or additional vehicle parking.

In respect of the detail of the proposal itself, our comments can be summarised as follows:

1. The design proposal should be altered to recess the main front entry doors into the unit behind the presently visible fabric, perhaps reducing their width a little to allow for a more sympathetic thermal connection/bridge between the door frame and the bay frame that does not lead to the bay frame being so fully clad and hidden internally and externally.
2. Cladding detail drawings to be submitted for areas where any upper truss fabric is to be clad and insulated – for instance teasele tenon joints and the like.
3. Confirmation should be provided of the partition cladding details and exact position of the partitions in relation to the existing trusses. Ideally, the partitions should be stepped in to the north and south by around 60-100 mm to allow the trusses to be seen unencumbered.
4. Fenestration should be designed around the existing studs on the south elevation.

The above recommendations should lessen the risk of both actual loss of fabric and also 'visual' loss of fabric by virtue of undue cladding.



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APPENDIX I

LISTING

Heritage Category:

Listed Building

Grade:

II

List Entry Number:

1025702

Date first listed:

28-Oct-1957

Statutory Address:

THE PLACE, CUCKFIELD 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:

Ansty and Staplefield

National Grid Reference:

TQ 29668 23337

Details

CUCKFIELD RURAL CUCKFIELD ROAD 1. 5405 The Place, Anstye
TQ 22 SE 15/265 28.10.57 II

2. C18. Two storeys. Four windows. Ground floor red brick, above tile-hung. Tiled roof. Glazing bars intact.

Listing NGR: TQ2966823337

APPENDIX II

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR HERITAGE RELATED REPORTS, SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, STATEMENTS OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Please note: These Terms & Conditions of Engagement form part of the contract between the Surveyor (Desbruslais Chartered Surveyors) and the client. Where these terms are sent to the client by email, they can be accepted and agreed by acknowledging receipt by email return from the client.

Subject to express written/email agreement to the contrary and any agreed amendments/additions; the Terms and Conditions upon which the Surveyor will undertake the inspection is set out below.

1. General

Before the inspection, the client will agree the purpose, aims, objectives and extent of the engagement, together with agreeing any reasonable limitations to research, scope and reporting, and provide a specific description of The Asset to be inspected..

2. The Asset

The Asset is the part of the structure to be inspected. This might be an entire building including external areas, or a specific clearly defined element or elements of the structure or property.

3. The Service

The objective of the service is to give the client professional advice on Listing or Heritage Asset matters, tailored to the purpose of the instruction – which must be suitably outlined prior to engagement, as set out in Sections 1 and 2. The objective will be met either in the form of a desktop written assessment, utilising mapping, documentation, images and other materials supplied by the client, or obtained by The Surveyor for the purposes of the engagement, or in the form of an onsite inspection and written report, also utilising appropriate material research as may be agreed in the scope outlined in Section 1.

The Service does not provide any advice on the condition of the asset inspected. However, where The Surveyor is requested to report on an Asset that is clearly in a state of disrepair, and if previously agreed as a part of The Service, The Surveyor might give an opinion on the condition and whether The Asset is beyond repair and cannot, therefore, be salvaged.

A separate service to report on condition can be provided on request.

4. The Inspection

(a) Accessibility and Voids

The Surveyor will inspect as much of the surface area of the structure as is practicable, but unless agreed prior to the inspection or on site, will not inspect those areas that are covered, unexposed or not reasonably accessible. If opening up of the structure is considered desirable, the client will take all steps possible to assist the surveyor in this regard.

(b) The Surveyor will have a ladder of sufficient height to gain access to a roof hatch or to a single storey roof, not more than 3.0m (10' 00") above the floor or adjacent ground. It will not be possible to physically inspect roofs above this level unless an alternative safe means of access is available. Pitched roofs will be inspected with the aid of binoculars. The Surveyor will follow the RICS and Health & Safety Executive guidance on surveying safely. The surveyor will not walk on flat roofs if there is a risk of damage.

5. Cancellation

The Client will be entitled to cancel this contract by notifying the Surveyor's office at any time up to the close of business on the day before the inspection. In case of cancellation, the Surveyor will refund any money paid by the Client for the Service, except for expenses reasonably incurred. In the case of cancellation by the surveyor, the reason will be explained to the Client.

6. Validity

No term in the agreement between the surveyor and the client is enforceable under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 by another person other than Desbruslais Chartered Surveyors or the Client. The survey can report only on the condition at the time of the inspection.

7. Fees and Expenses

The Client will pay Desbruslais Chartered Surveyors the agreed for the report and any expressly agreed disbursements in addition. All fees must be paid prior to the report being issued.

Like many businesses, Desbruslais occasionally pays a referral fee. This is part of a wider marketing strategy that encompasses social media, presentations, entertainment etc. promoting our reputation for quality based on experience and independent, pragmatic reporting. Our priority is always to our client and their professional advisers.

8. Restriction on Disclosure

The report is for the sole use of the named Client and is confidential to the Client and his/her professional advisers.

Unless expressly provided, no term in the agreement between the Surveyor and the Client is enforceable under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 by another person other than Desbruslais Chartered Surveyors or the Client. Any such parties rely upon the report at their own risk. The report must not be reproduced, in whole or part, without the prior written consent of the surveyor. We reserve the right to act for and to advise any third party on this same property in the event that the client decides for any reason not to proceed with the purchase.

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