Installation of multiple Property Flood Resilience measures to Unicorn Cottage, Castle Combe, Chippenham, SN14 7HU (EA Ref No. CCOM016)

Design & Access Statement for LBC app: PP- 12685270

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Design Statement for:

Unicorn Cottage, Castle Combe, Chippenham (EA Ref No. CCOM016)

Aim of the Scheme:

The aim of this scheme is to offer a solution to fluvial flooding for listed building properties in Castle Combe. This is to be done whilst considering the special architectural and historic interests of each property, ensuring the physical characteristics of each listed property will not be substantially affected by flood protection measures.

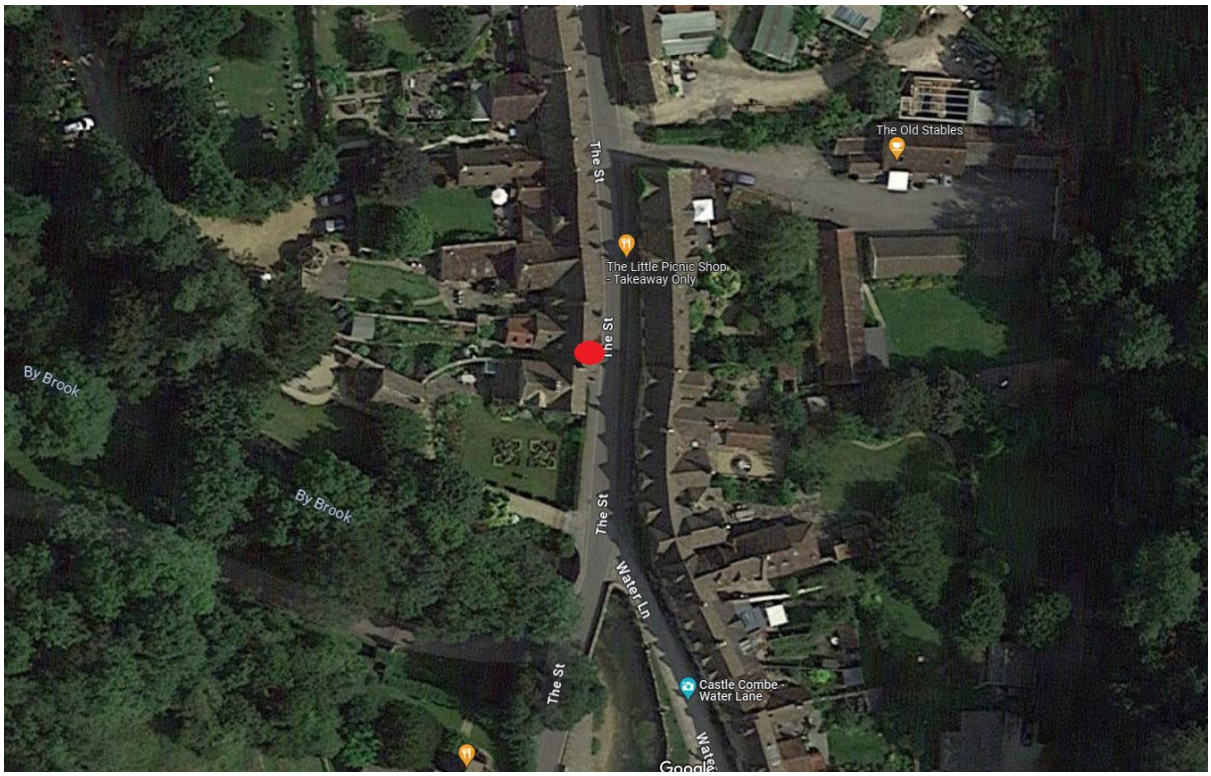
Location and Access Site Location and Context:

The following property at Unicorn Cottage is Grade II listed:

- Unicorn Cottage, Castle Combe, Chippenham (**List UID:** 1283480)

This property is located in Castle Combe, England, SN14 7HU, NGR ST 84198 77104.

Location of works shown by Red spot on image below.



Proposal:

1. The proposed work will involve the installation of Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures to Unicorn Cottage, Castle Combe, Chippenham as follows:

   a) **Unicorn Cottage, Castle Combe, Chippenham (CCOM016)** –

      i. Front Door (D1) – **Reveal** – A deployable demountable Aluminium Flood Barrier with new base C channel & rails powder coated to match.

      ii. Rear Door (D2) / Extension Window (W1) – **Left Face & Right Reveal** – A deployable demountable Aluminium Flood Barrier new base C channel, rails powder coated to match.

      iii. Puddle pumps x2

      iv. Hard-piped upgraded puddle pump x1 (core drilling required)

      v. Single airbrick & heritage cover

      vi. Mortar Repairs to cracks and holes to external walls to 600mm (x10 l/ms)

      vii. Seal Services (sealant applied) to all service and drainage points (x5)

      viii. 110mm Non-Return Valve (NRV)

Notes:

- Photos of the location of each PFR measure listed above can be found in the corresponding properties' *JBA PFR Survey Reports - Section 4;* and in the attached *Photos of Barrier locations D1 & D2_(CCOM016).pdf submitted with this application.*
- The description of each PFR measure can be found in the accompanying *22 03 14 PFR Guide for Listed Building Officers and Conservation Officers.pdf*

2. Where Demountable Barriers are proposed for installation (see location D1 & D2 / W1 in Figure 3-1 on page 9: *Main potential ingress routes* of the supporting PFR Survey Report), the following will be respected:

   a) When possible, the preferred location of the flood brackets / fixings should be within the reveal of the doors to minimise the impact on the appearance of the elevations.

   b) Drilling should be done through the joints, avoiding possible harm to any historic masonry.

   c) A bead of sealant will be used between the Hardwood Packers and the stonework / masonry to achieve waterproof seal and dressed / finished with lime pointing such that the sealant will not be visible.

Consultation and Design Features[1]

Castle Combe has been called 'The Prettiest Village in England' and with good reason; visitors have been coming to enjoy its charms for at least a century and the small street leading from the Market Cross down to the By Brook is as picturesque today as it ever was.

Castle Combe's history goes back much further than this though. The site of the castle is above today's village, but little other than earthworks now mark its one-time presence. Originally it was a British hill fort which became occupied by the Romans due to its proximity to The Fosse Way. After the Romans, came the Normans, who built the fort up into a Castle.

By the Middle Ages the village in the valley had become an important centre for the wool industry. The spinsters and weavers lived in the cottages (hence names such as "Weaver's House") and the river, still known as By Brook, provided the power to run the mills.

In more recent times the village has played host to many filming activities, the most famous of these being 'Doctor Doolittle' filmed in and around the village in 1966. More recently the village has had a major role in 'War Horse', 'Stardust', 'The Wolf Man' and an advert for Solvil et Titus.

The village is also a sanctuary to wildlife as it is a conservation area and enjoys the beauty of nature at its very best.

The village houses are all of typical Cotswold type, constructed in stone with thick walls and roofs made from split natural stone tiles. The properties are many hundreds of years old and are listed as ancient monuments. Strict rules apply to preserve the beauty and character of Castle Combe for later generations to admire.

Castle Combe is situated on the southern-most edge of the Cotswolds and is approximately 12 miles from the Georgian city of Bath.

The Assessment:

Physical / Short Heritage Statement

Unicorn Cottage (CCOM016) – The list entry mentions a "*House, C16 or early C17, rubble stone with stone tiled roof and south end stack. One-and-a-half storeys. 2 dormer gables with 2- light leaded timber casements, right side gable incorporating chimney stack. Ground floor door in shallow gabled stone porch, 3- light flush ovolo-moulded stone-mullion window with dripstone, and 2-light chamfered stone-mullion window with dripstone. Leaded lights. To right side is through passage with heavy timber doorcase, now part of Unicorn Gallery (q.v.). Rear wing with west end stack.*" The building is special because of these features and attributes. The Environment Agency's proposed installation of Property Flood Resilience measures will preserve these factors and attributes of the building because by their very definition they will provide flood resilience to the property thus increasing the longevity of the building for other generations to enjoy and learn from.

Social & Economic

The development will not directly affect the people / community within the locality. The scale and location of the works means that impacts would be localised. There is potential for impact on the significance of Unicorn Cottage. A change in the appearance of the buildings could affect the Conservation Area and the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings (see Conservation Map on Page 4 below).[2] However, as the neighbouring buildings are dissimilar to each other (noting that a

[1] https://sites.google.com/site/castlecombewiltshire/

[2] Wiltshire Council Conservation Map see page 4 below

precedence has already been set in Castle Combe with a number of properties already having permanent rails to facilitate deployable flood barriers fitted to their respective front doorways), impacts on their settings can be considered by reference to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The National Planning Policy Framework, revised in July 2021. Paragraph 152 states, "*The planning system should … take full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to … minimise vulnerability and improve resilience....*" Thus, the EA's PFR Programme (development) aligns with government's policies for planning and prioritises the protection of the fabric of Ham Mill, Wells Road, Shepton Mallet for the benefit of future generations.

Design (Please see Section 5.2 Design Criteria on pages 12 & 13 of the supporting PFR Survey Report)

Unicorn Cottage is in a Flood Zone 3 area and thus at severe risk to future flooding, which is only going to increase due to climate change and global warming.

The Environment Agency (EA) commissioned JBA Engineering and Environmental Consultants (designers and scientists) to carry out a PFR Survey of Unicorn Cottage, Castle Combe.

There have been a number of significant flood events in the area, notably in November 2012, and January 2023.

The homeowners reported that the main flood risk to the property is groundwater flooding.

Groundwater is known to have risen up through the ground floors on at least three occasions. The most recent event occurred in January 2023. During this event, internal flood depths were reported to reach approximately 50mm. The two other reported events occurred prior to the owners purchasing the property, however it is likely that one of these events occurred in November 2012.

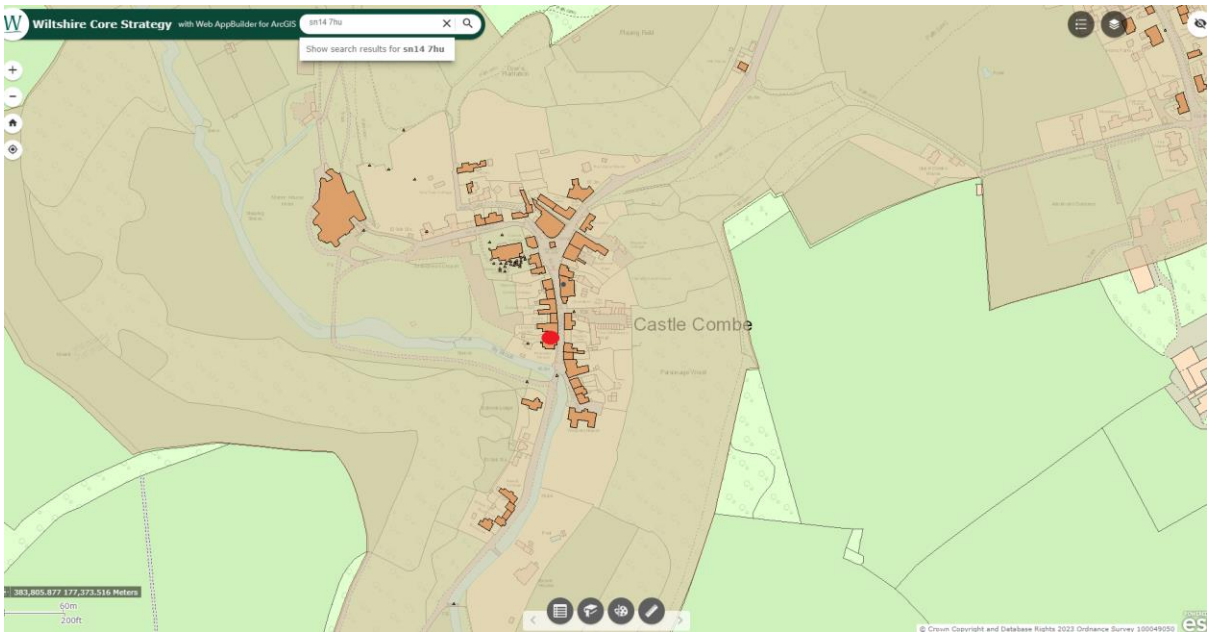
As mentioned in Section 1.3 above, the owners of Unicorn Lodge to the north installed a sump pump system in the rear garden in approximately 2009. This system manages groundwater levels at the rear of the properties and thought to have benefitted this property.

JBA Engineering and Environmental Consultants (designers and scientists) proposed recommended PFR options that have been assessed within the scope of the Castle Combe PFR Scheme. The primary intention is to develop a cost-effective and practical range of PFR options within the immediate curtilage of the property, to help mitigate and reduce the effect of flooding through the use of resistance measures. Any other local options are also noted for further consideration where feasible or practical.

The EA's Contractor (Watertight) for the manufacture, supply & installation of PFR measures and materials, then carried out a property Inspection and finalised their proposed recommended PFR measures considering JBA's PFR Survey.

Conservation Area

Unicorn Cottage, The Street, Castle Combe (Highlighted by **Red** dot)



Evaluation:

The proposed works were passed to the Environment and Planning Services team at the Environment Agency for environmental and planning appraisal, which confirmed the following:

i. it will not affect any site designated for nature conservation value.

ii. the proposal will not impact on any protected species; it has not been possible to locate The Wiltshire Council Biodiversity Checklist for Urban Locations on the Wiltshire Council's Web pages; therefore, this may be required, and signposting required.

iii. the works will not require the removal of any trees or hedgerows designated under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

iv. the scheme will not affect any site of landscape importance. The works are not located within an AONB.

v. the works proposed are located within Castle Combe Conservation Area.

vi. the works will not have impacts on archaeology.

vii. the development is at high risk of fluvial flooding.

viii. the proposed development will not give rise to noise or odour nuisance.

ix. additional lighting is not proposed.

x. on completion, the development will not give rise to additional traffic movements.

xi. No public rights of way will be affected by the proposal.

xii. the location of this scheme has not been designated as Contaminated Land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act.