

Heritage Statement

23004 - Church Cottage

Castle Combe

Then Now When

Conservation + Architecture + Sustainability

Cover Image: View of front and side elevation of Church Cottage

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Section One:

Statement of Significance

Image: View looking south in centre of Castle Combe

Introduction

This statement supports an application for works to the Grade II listed Church Cottage, Market Place, in Castle Combe. The property is located within the centre of Castle Combe at OS grid reference ST 84180 77194.

The need for a Heritage statements derives from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. (Paragraph 128)

This heritage statement addresses significance, identifies impacts, and then justifies those impacts. So as not to undermine the purpose of the statement, we undertake each stage sequentially with the production of: 1. a statement of significance and 2. a heritage impact assessment. A statement of significance sets out the values that a heritage asset contains. Historic England's Publication Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance, 2008, explains that:

A 'statement of significance' of a place should be a summary of the cultural and natural heritage values currently attached to it and how they interrelate, which distils the particular character of the place. It should explain the relative importance of the heritage values of the place (where appropriate, by reference to criteria for statutory designation), how they relate to its physical fabric, the extent of any uncertainty about its values (particularly in relation to potential for hidden or buried elements), and identify any tensions between potentially conflicting values. So far as possible, it should be agreed by all who have an interest in the place. The result should guide all decisions about material change to a significant place. (Paragraph 82)

Heritage impact assessments catalogue the proposed changes and their effects on the heritage asset. The classification of impact is ranges from highly adverse to highly beneficial, and can be neutral.

This statement does not purport to be a whole condition survey of the building fabric. It has been written following visits to the site by James Cusick BSc(Hons) Arch PGDipCHE.



Front Elevation of Church Cottage



Map showing listed buildings and the extent of the conservation area



Aerial photograph of Castle Combe

Statutory Designation & Heritage Assets

Castle Combe contains no fewer than 107 Listed Buildings, mostly Grade II status and 2 scheduled monuments, one of which being the Market Cross directly to the east of Church Cottage. The cottage is also surrounded on three sides by dwellings with listed status: all the other houses on Market Place are Listed Buildings including Ellen's Cottage immediately south of the property, numbers 1-4 on West Street to the north of the cottage, and even many of the tombs within the churchyard behind the cottage are listed. The Church of St Andrew, stands to the west of Church Cottage and is Grade I listed.

Church Cottage is situated within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Castle Combe Conservation Area. Core Policies 51 and 58 relate to these designations, although there is no Conservation Area Appraisal published by the Local Planning Authority here which can be consulted further.

Listing Description

CASTLE COMBE MARKET PLACE ST 8477 (west side) 6/148 Church Cottage (formerly listed as The Police House 20.12.60)

GV II

House, C17 origins, altered earlier C19, rubble stone with double Roman tiled roof, large rear wall stack and north end stack. 2 storey and attic, 3-window range. 3 small dormers, 3 C19 recessed cyma-moulded 2-light mullion windows to first floor, central flush doorcase with C19 studded door and 2 C19 stone canted bays with stone tiled roof and mullion windows. Diamond leaded lights throughout. North end wall has cyma-moulded single light. Rear wing with west end stack, lean-to to right and at south-west corner, facing churchyard path, diagonally set crowstepped gable with finial and hood-moulded window. Chamfered beam with label stops within.

Listing NGR: ST8417377202

Panoramic of the centre of Castle Combe , including church cottage (far left)



Previous Applications

There are two applications within the Local Planning Authority's online database. These are:

17/01119/LBC – 'Extension of internal stud wall, and installation of fan' (Attic En-suite bathroom), approved April 2017

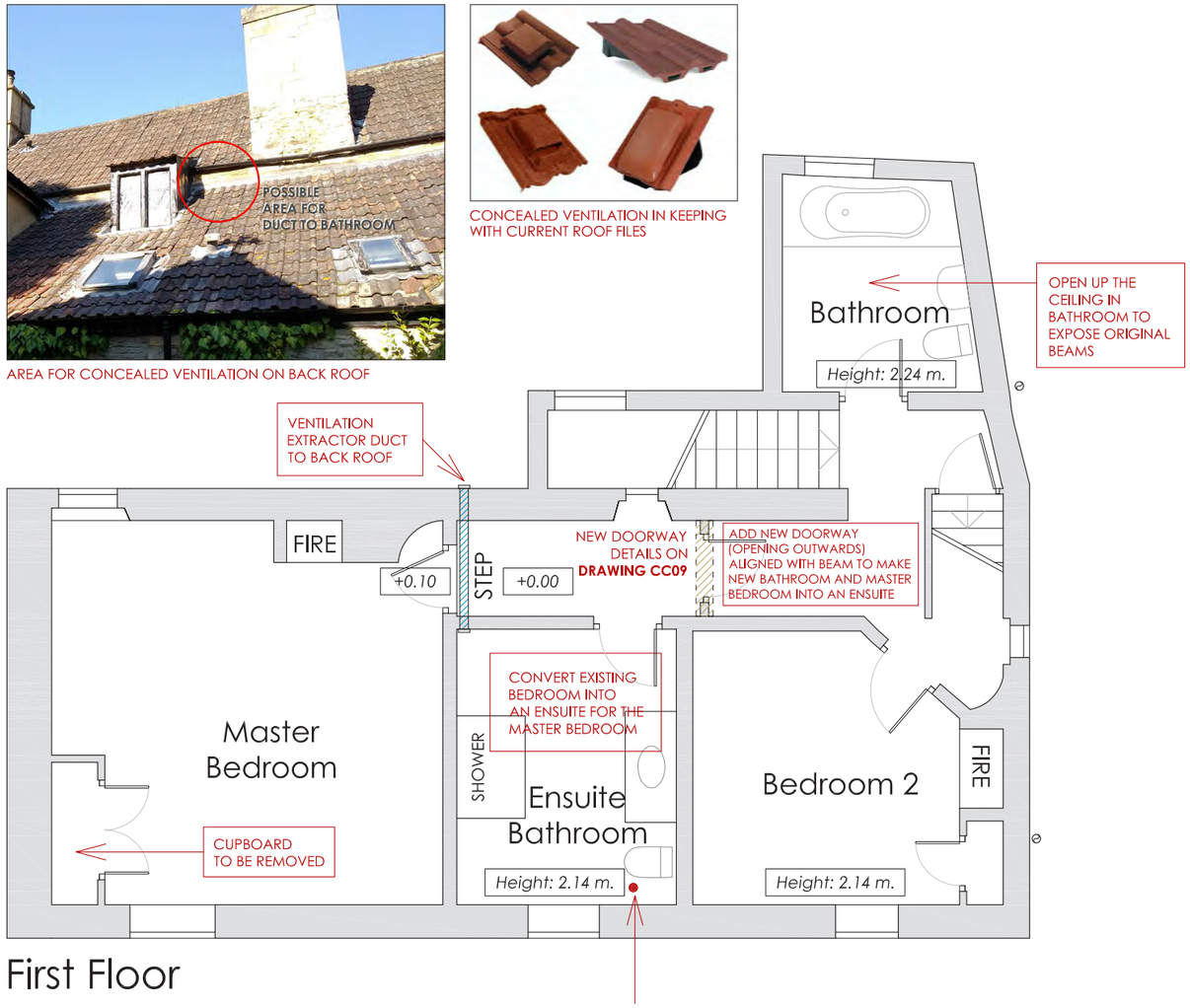
PL/2021/09304 - Refurbishment works and internal alterations, approved May 2022

The first of these was implemented, albeit (as the listed building officer notes in their delegated report for the second application) 'the scheme was not built exactly as per the approval, but the principle of the shower room was accepted'.

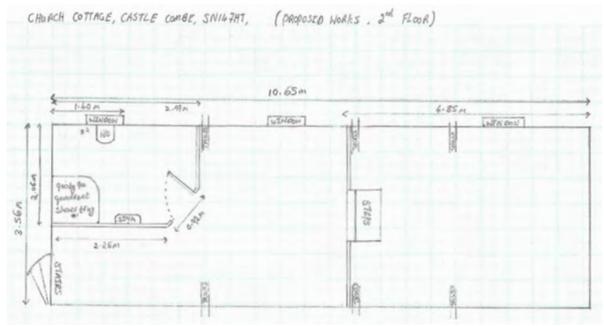
The second application was summarised within the same delegated report:

'Overall, the proposals that have been revised, ignored many of the comments made and do not provide adequate details. Some works are required as repairs to the building, such as replacement of the dining room rooflight. Unfortunately, a great deal of information will have to be submitted via pre-commencement conditions in order to address the concerns already raised. Other elements, such as rearranging the second floor shower room, will make the space more awkward to use.'

The full delegated report is contained within Appendix A of this document.



Extract from drawing from previous application



Drawing from application for the addition of internal partitions to loft

History

The area of Castle Combe has been plausibly settled since as far back as the Iron Age, with the likelihood of Castle Hill once having been an Iron Age Hill Fort. Devizes Museum and the Castle Combe Historical Society Museum (currently in storage) contain locally found Bronze and Iron Age items in their collections. There are also Iron Age ditches, pits, post-holes and long-barrows in the near vicinity.

Roman-British activity in the area was centred round the newly built Fosse Way, which passes just north of the Castle. The Romans also quarried limestone from the slopes beneath Castle Hill. Amongst a wealth of evidence of Roman settlements in the Castle Combe area:

"Roman coins unearthed from gardens and around the church at Castle Combe indicate that the village may have been founded on the site of a Roman settlement or shrine. Devizes Museum has c220 copper alloy Roman coins dated to the 3rd or 4th century AD excavated from Castle Combe (1825) or North Wraxall (1859-60) (DZSWS2005.30.1-219) and the name 'The Street' applied to the village's main road is a possible indicator of Roman settlement."

Castle Combe Ringwork & Baileys: Earthwork Survey, by Nicky Smith, 2020, Historic England, page 5

There is also recorded evidence of Saxon activity on the hill. The first record of a village at 'Come' was in the Doomsday Book of 1086, amongst the property of Humphrey De Lisle, but the castle of 'Castle Combe' was built later, before 1140s either by the De Dunstanville family and it was then that the village began to grow in importance. As the fortification's use faded, the village spread southwards, centering on the church, 'Market Place' and the public inns. The village was a popular stop for monks and pilgrims travelling between Glastonbury and Malmsbury Abbeys.

A weekly wool market was granted to Castle Combe in 1315 and the Market Cross was built c.1450 after a weekly sheep market was granted to Castle Combe by Henry VI in 1440. The positioning of the Cross at the junction of the three main streets into the village and the distance between the Cross, Castle Inn, the White Hart Inn, the now demolished Church House public building which was built in the early-mid 1400s, St Andrew's Church and Church Cottage highly suggest that there was a building or dwelling on the site of the cottage before the Cross was erected. However, any physical evidence of this structure is now buried beneath or within the current cottage.

The Manor House of Castle Combe is known to have existed by 1392 as the baronial centre but by the mid-1600s it was considered to be dilapidated and so was replaced by 1664. During this period, there were also many rebuilds and refurbishments undertaken by the manor on the buildings, farms and tenements that came under its ownership. It is expected that Church Cottage was (re)built during this period, although the precise date within the mid- to late 1600s is unknown from the documents available at the time of writing this report. (Further manorial documents from the Scrope Family covering the 13th-19th centuries are held at the British Library and it is possible that the property is mentioned within these.)

Church Cottage remained in the possession of the Scrope Family as part of the Manor's ownership of the village until 1867 when the estate was sold off to Sir Edward Chaddock-Lowndes, nee Edward Gorst. He made many alterations and improvements to the Manor House but not the tenements and by 1947 his granddaughter could not afford the repair bills for the estate that were ordered by the Calne and Chippenham Rural District Council. The entire estate and village were put up for auction and Church Cottage was owned as a single entity for the first time.

1750

1773

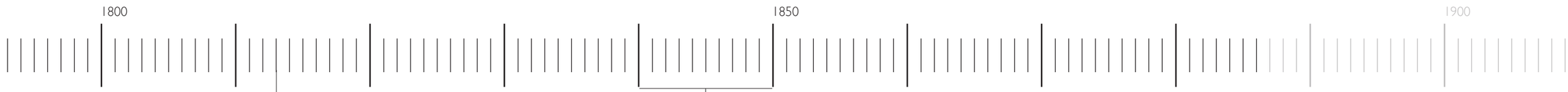
Cartographic



Andrew & Drury 1773 Map

The earliest cartographic evidence to show Church Cottage dates from 1773. The map of this time shows the pattern of development in Castle Combe better than individual properties, but it is with confidence that we can say the map shows the property's existence.

Pictoral





1813 Edmond Crocker OS Survey

An 1813 OS survey drawing is the next to depict Castle Combe in any detail. It is of a wide scale, but does show the church and the market cross prominently. Church Cottage, albeit fainter, can be discerned between the two.



1840s Tithe Map

The tithe map of c.1840 is extremely useful and detailed. It is also accompanied by a tithe award that is detailed in the following section 'Occupancy and Estate data'. The map shows that Church Cottage was a single dwelling with a non-residential area at the back. Typically, this may have housed livestock within rural communities, but due to the proximity to the church is likely to be of another use such as workshop or perhaps storage. From the cartographic evidence alone this is conjectural. Where '2' is written on the map, is the dwelling's garden area. The setting of the road and churchyard would lead us to suppose that this garden area had been associated with the house for some time, therefore it is a longstanding relationship.



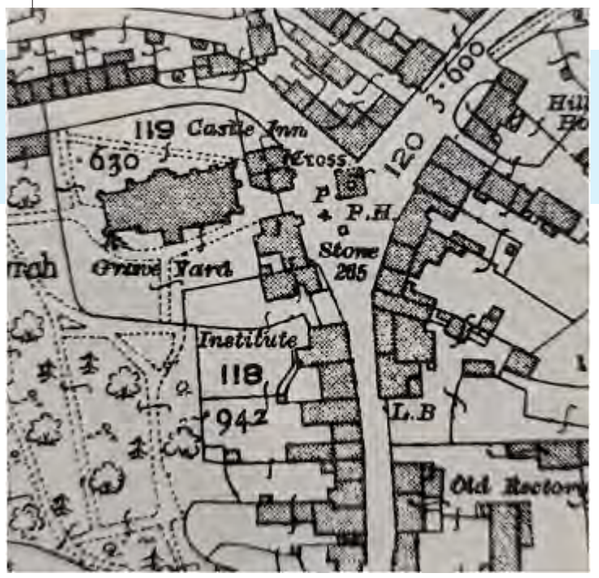
1890s OS Map

By 1890 we can see from OS maps that the property has been split into two dwellings. A more accurate depiction is presented, with the front bay windows and a side projection into the garden. The chamfered corner nearest the church does seem to follow the tithe map, although there is reason to think that this rear corner may have been rebuilt in the mid-late C19th.

There are numerous recent images of Church Cottage due to modern tourism, but we do find a few historical images dating c.1900. The first of these, an oblique view of the front elevation, shows that there was no front garden wall, only cobbles to delineate any space between the building and the road. The projecting stone bay windows, topped with stone tiles and containing leaded lights are evident. We can pick out discolouration of the stone jambs, indicating that the bays were long established at this time.



c1890-1900 Photograph p13391 Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre



1900s OS Map

Later OS maps show that, by 1900, the projection into the garden was removed.



c1901-1925 Postcard Wiltshire & Swindon History

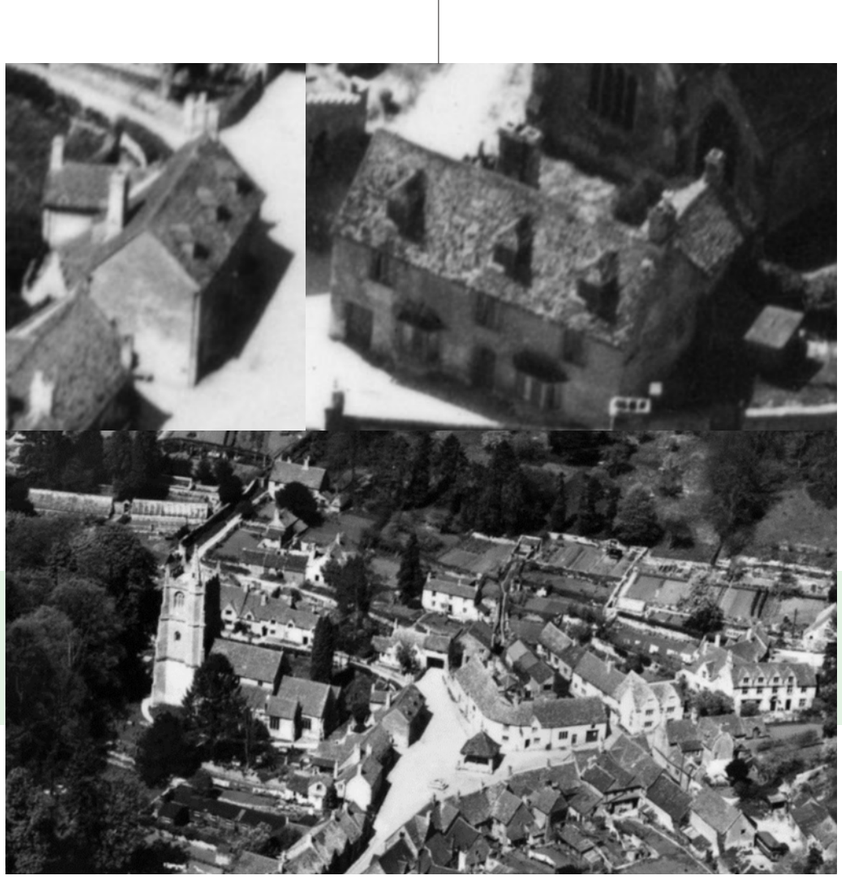
The ivy growth covering the first floor elevation also features within an early C20th postcard. However, this image does show a now blocked ground floor door. This supports the cartographic evidence that Church Cottage was two separate dwellings in this period. We can also see that the roof and dormers were stone tiled.

1950

2000

1948
1949

1955



1948 britainfromabove.org.uk ref: EAW014926 and EAW014927



1949 britainfromabove.org.uk ref EAW027306

A c.1955 photograph shows the ivy cleared and, for the first time, the front garden wall and a clay tiles roof. The dormer windows now match those that we see today. The RAF photographs from 1948/49 which show the previous stone tiled roof. The two entrance doors can again be seen, although it is now apparent that the southern door is relatively wide. This 'improvement' works followed the sale to new owners in 1947.



c1955 Francis Frith collection

1950

2000

1965

1984

2015



1984 photo from Wiltshire Buildings Records

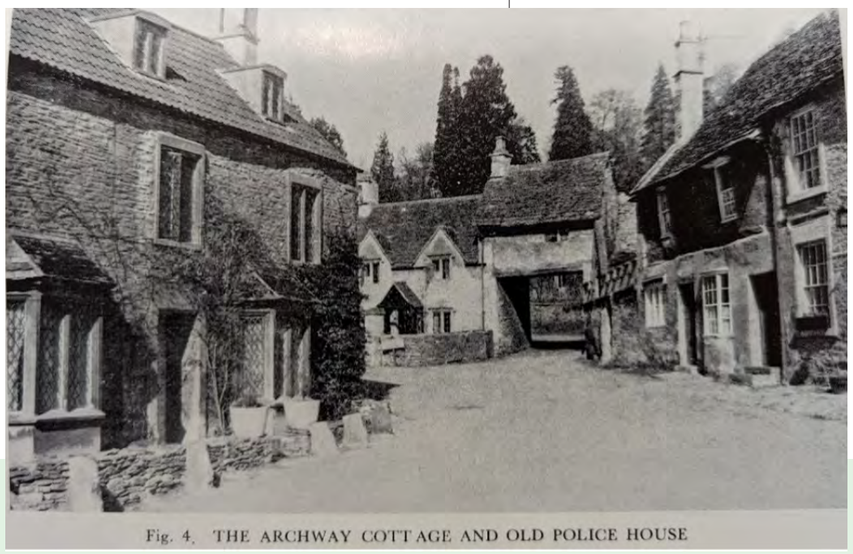


Fig. 4. THE ARCHWAY COTTAGE AND OLD POLICE HOUSE

Fig4. from Castle Combe, E J Cruse, 1965



Image from The Times. September 8th 2015

Occupancy and Estate Data

Census and tithe data can tell us who was occupying the property and give us an idea of how the property was used during that time.

The tithe award that accompanies the map of 1840 tells us that the Church Cottage property was numbered '2' in the parish and that this was occupied by Giles Broom on a Lifehold lease. Using this as a starting point, we can see on the Manor estate documents of 1817 and 1822 that Giles Broom occupied Church Cottage ("one messuage opposite the Salutation Inn" – the earlier name for the Castle Inn) and that the property had recently built a 'Skilling on the outlet' – nowadays referred to a lean-to structure. The 1817 document also tells us that the property had been granted as a lifehold in 1767, which is prior to Giles Broom's birth. From historical court documents, it is possible to trace the property back to Francis Broom, Giles's grandfather, who bought leases for at least 4 properties in Castle Combe for his grown family. Giles inherited the lease through his parents John (a carpenter) and Love Broom in 1813. Earlier documentation to occupancy prior to 1767 may be available in the Manorial documents held in the British Library, which date back into the medieval period, but this is subject to further research beyond the scope of this report.

During the Victorian era, the most readily available information for occupancy data is within the census collections, although this is also slightly problematic due to the lack of consistent numbering of the properties around Market Place and different year's Census Officers starting at different points around the 'Place'.

1841 – Census unavailable (but only one year post the Tithe data)
1851 – Jane Broom, widow of Giles Broom, aged 66, "Draper & Grocer"
Ann Bailey, servant, aged 19, maid servant
Robert Robins, Head, aged 24, Groom and Gardner
Martha Robins, wife, aged 27, wife & servant

This census of 1851 is the first indication we have of when the property was split into two dwellings with trade use, the Robins having the second part of the property, backing up the divisions shown on the later OS maps.

1861 – William Pullin, married, aged 35, Grocer and farmer (6 acres)
Jane Pullin, wife, aged 35, shop assistant
Emily, daughter, aged 11, scholar
Robert Pulllin, son, aged 10, scholar
George Pullin, son, aged 9, scholar
Henry Penton, Boarder, aged 19, Nat. School Pupil/Teacher
William Herbert Allcorn, boarder, aged 13, scholar

1871 – Wiliam Henry Tyler, married , aged 47, Certified School Teacher
Rosanna Tyler, wife, aged 43
William H Tyler, son, aged 15, Pupil / teacher
Rose Emily Tyler, daughter, aged 14, scholar
Richard Frederick Tyler, son, aged 12, scholar
Victoria Rose Tyler, daughter, aged 10, scholar
Jane Hollis, Aunt, aged 74, Imbecile's assistant
Charlotte Robeson, boarder, aged 51, Imbecile

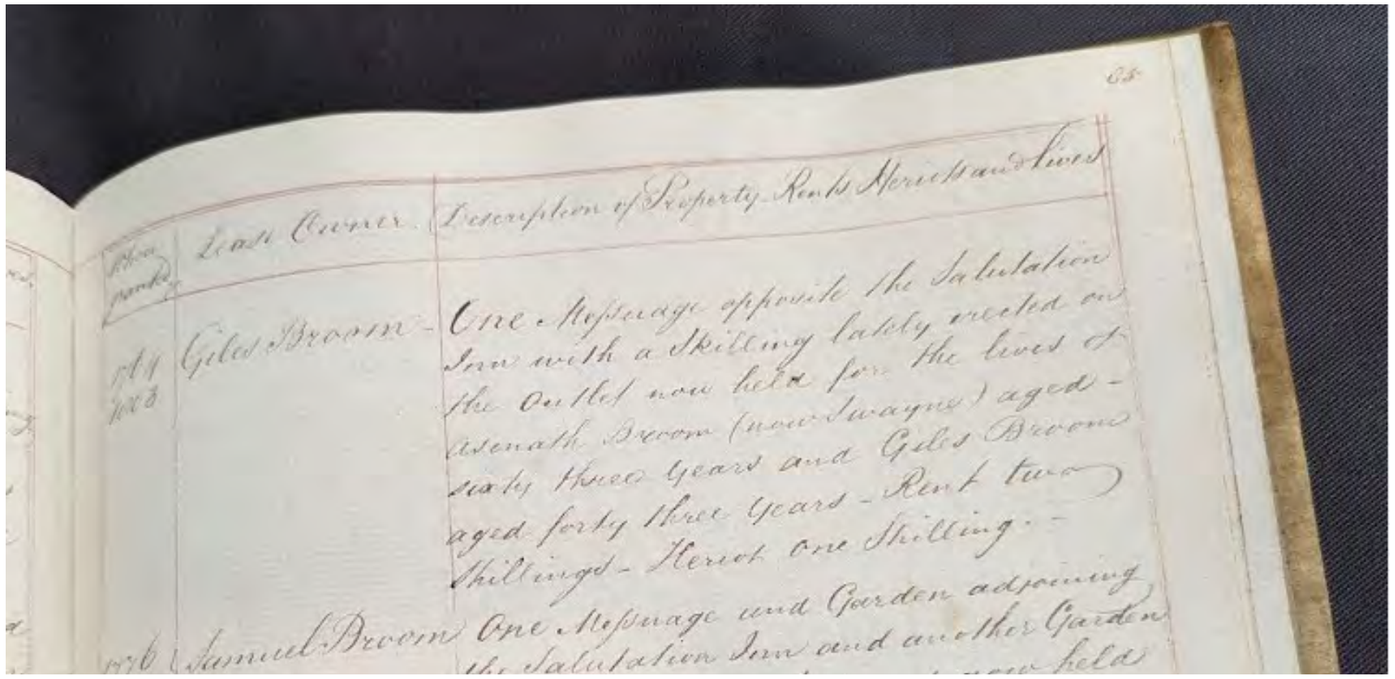


Photo of part of the 'Scope Papers' held at the Wiltshire Achive, collection 1171/6, page 85,

1881 – William F Tisbury, married, aged 43, Schoolmaster Cert.
Jane Elisabeth Tisbury, wife, aged 41
Florence Emily, daughter, aged 13, scholar
Blanche Elizabeth, daughter, aged 11, scholar
Louisa Alice, daughter, aged 8, scholar
Ethel Clara, daughter, aged 7, scholar
Arthur William, son, aged 3

1891 – Elizabeth Sully, married, aged 32, National School Mistress
Lillian M. Sully, daughter, aged 7, Scholar
Elizabeth Osmond, Aunt, 53, living on own means

1901 – Elizabeth Sully, aged 42, School Mistress, national school
Lillian Mary Sully, aged 17, Pupil/School teacher
Elizabeth Osmond, aged 64, living on own means, partially blind

1911 – Elizabeth Sully, aged 52, School mistress employed by County Council
Lillian Mary Sully, aged 27, Assistant school mistress

1921 – Elizabeth Sully, aged 62, School Mistress
Lillian Mary Sully, aged 38, Assistant Mistress, certified

Elizabeth Sully took over the running of Castle Combe School in 1882 and was a celebrated headmistress – she not only made the school excellent for its time, with many pupils going on to secondary school, but also provided good Pupil/Teacher training for those who wished to go on to become fully certified teachers themselves, which her daughter did and became Headmistress in 1924. In fact, the Chaddock-Lowndes were so pleased with Mrs Sully's achievements after only 4 years of work there that she was allowed to live in her house rent-free! [Cruse, p74] She was an eager adopter of new technology and was one of the first to get a 'wireless' at home in the village, and used a bicycle to cycle up the hill to the School. An excellent account of the School and Mrs Sully's time there is found in Castle Combe, Wiltshire, England by E J Cruse, Colin Venton Publishing, 1965.

Also according to Cruse, after a period of housing the School's Head Masters and Mistresses, and being known as the Old School House, Church Cottage became the home of the local village constable until the 1947 Estate Sale, which is why it was monikered the Old Police House and would explain the dual names in the Listing Details. However, it should also be known that Church Cottage was neither the 'original' Police House - as this was traditionally next to the Old Court House on the other side of Market Place - nor the site of the Village School.
1947 Sale – The sale data for the estate is probably (but not definitely) available in the Manorial papers in the British Library. We cannot absolutely state that the property was sold then – although Cruse does say that it was – but it has been possible to check the sales documents for the final estate sale in 1949 and Church Cottage was not among the lots, therefore we can with some certainty claim the property was sold in the earlier Village Sale of 1947.
Trade Directories such as Pigot's (1839) and Kelly's (1860s, 1880s) were consulted but provided no further relevant information.

Video Evidence

In this age of modern tourism, Castle Combe is one of the most photographed places in the UK, with hundreds of visitors every day. As such, there is a wealth of current images and amateur films of Castle Combe (and Church Cottage) on social media sites.

Historical Film is, not un-expectedly, harder to come by. However, British Pathe does hold 3 films on their website featuring Castle Combe – one is a black and white 'One Minute News' reel featuring the news of the 1947 Sale of the village, but unfortunately the view of Market Place is taken from standing directly in front of Church Cottage, looking east and down the hill. Another film, probably pre-1940s, shows black and white footage of Bath and Castle Combe – but again, not of Church Cottage specifically.

The final reel is a 1m15s piece from 1962 showcasing Castle Combe as the village that was just named the prettiest in Britain the previous year. This does show Church Cottage: the frontage and also the side wall opposite the Castle Inn. The full film can be seen on the British Pathe channel on YouTube here - (6) Castle Combe (1962) . The stills from this film (right) are useful because they show the new roof tiles, the removal of the left entrance door, and the fencing on top of the curved garden wall; it is not built to the full stone height that exists now. This is the first time we can see the fencing. It is also clear that the wooden gates are not yet installed.

There is also stock footage filmed in the same year (1962) which can be found on YouTube from a company called footageforpro.com. This footage clearly shows the TV aerial still atop the chimney breast.

There are also stills available from the numerous TV and film productions that have used Castle Combe as a location. These are discussed within the later sections 'Communal Value' and are included within Appendix B.





Stills taken from British Pathe 1962 footage



Panorama showing Church Cottage and the church behind

Evidential Analysis

The following is a summary of observations of Church Cottage; it can be thought of as 'reading' the building.

To aid assessment and understanding, this section is formatted to give a summary of the building as viewed externally, then at each floor level. We catagorise the relatively historic and modern features, although this is not to say that modern features are definitively harmful or that they do not provide value to the building.

External

Historic Features

Walling Stone – Oolitic limestone as quarried in the area. There are minor differences to be found within the elevations, indicating a two-storey and a single-storey rear extension. Plain chamfer stone door surround, as seen elsewhere in Castle Combe.

Bay Windows – Appear to be original to the building and feature stone tiles, contrasting the main roof but matching the village's materiality.

Leaded windows – albeit renewed with uniform flat plate glass, the small panes ('quarries') are appropriately sized for the C17th.

Window Surrounds - The window style is formed by ovolo moulded stone frames, and there is a hood mould to the rear elevation; both features are typical of the C17th.

Blocked doors to front and rear elevations – Evidence of change and authenticity. Doorway to front blocked 1948 - c.1955.

Diagonal rear south-west elevation – Stylistically C17th Dutch influence and to be found on a 'local' building is unusual. [We theorise that the feature could have been part of the C17th rebuild of the Manor House, which would explain why it seems overly ornamental for a tenement building, and that the alteration of the adjacent church c1850-51 may have exacerbated an already weak wall construction, hastening the need for repairs to the cottage. The Manor House was much updated in the years following 1867 – stone left over from this rebuild would have provided a cheap and aesthetic solution. This would also explain the change in plan shown between the 1840 Tithe and 1891 OS maps.]

External paviours – Limestone cobbles 'on-edge', located between the front elevation of the house and the short wall to the road.



Image: rear elevation of Church Cottage

Modern Features

Roofing tiles – Clay double-Roman roof tiles and half-round ridges. These replaced stone tiles 1948-c.1955

Dormer windows – Rebuilt, with the installation of clay tiles, using leadwork and black stained timbers. This design is not found elsewhere in Castle Combe.

Front door - A late C20th door that poorly replicates a C17th studded door (replicated doors of this time had relatively narrow planks when compared to earlier examples).

Crittal windows – Within the south and rear elevations, incorporating homogenous leaded diamond pattern. These windows have concrete sills and / or heads.

Garden – although of historic plan, concrete paving is used. The drystone wall to the road has been rebuilt with a convex concrete capping and a trellis fence atop.



Image: Side (south) elevation of Church Cottage

Image: rear elevation of Church Cottage



Ground Floor

Historic Features

Plan form – within the footprint of the original house, the plan is that of a cross-passage house currently. There are two competing theories historically: unless the front door permitted access directly to a ground floor room, the passageway would have stopped short of the original rear elevation. This is because the arched window niche at the rear of the reception room and the window within the first-floor hallway evidence the original depth of the building. A ground floor passageway, from the front door, would then turn right, leading to a winder stair located in the far rear corner of the reception room. It is the curvature of the staircase at upper floor levels that is indicative of a winder staircase here in a customary position.

Reception Room Fireplace – This appears to be in its original position, although altered by the insertion of a stone overtopping of the hearth and a lining at the rear. This may have replaced a bread oven, inglenook bench or suchlike. It is not a 'bulky' fireplace that could indicate pre-C17th origins, but is certainly larger than typical 18th or 19th century styles. It is also worth remarking that the smaller ground floor fireplace is located within the larger living room. This would support the idea of the reception room being the original kitchen, or that the reception room wasn't partitioned from the entrance hall.

Plain chamfered stop end beams - Typical of the C17th

Window Recess – Found within the Reception room's wall opposing the bay window. It is arched, a feature unlikely to be original, so might indicate a former route through to the rear extension. This cannot be established without intrusive investigation.

Roof Structure – Within the dining room, 'third rate' and inferior. Possibility that construction inherited from ancillary use, or that it was built at a time of material or monetary shortage.

Modern Features

Flooring – the hallway has two layers of tiles (cementitious and modern square clay) atop a concrete floor. The reception room, living room and dining room have modern floorboards, whilst the kitchen is again concrete.

Ceilings and wall linings – Plasterboard used in areas, with hardwall skim plaster applied to both plasterboard and directly to older lime plaster.

Doors – Modern 4 panel doors and brass ironmongery, brought in from elsewhere and head strips applied to increase door height.

Floorboards – C20th pine regularised boards, all varnished.

Fixtures - The kitchen is late C20th.

Joinery - Architraves, and skirting boards are all modern at this building-level.

Fireplace – Living room has new protruding lintel with the name of the property carved into it; aesthetically disruptive to the room.

Images: Modern fireplace to living room (left), Historic dining room roof structure (right)



First Floor



First floor hallway



Bathroom



Bedroom



Bedroom

Historic Features

Floorboards – Throughout the bedrooms and hallway, some floorboards are characterised by their width, which would lend to them being historic. These are thought to be elm boards, but further inspection is required to establish this. They run below partitions to the hallway, another indicator of age. However, the historic flooring has been relayed throughout at some point in the past. The historic boards were cut to make them much shorter, and pine floor boards and piecing-in strips are found throughout. Within the bedrooms, all boards have been coloured using a thick dark varnish in an attempt to provide uniformity. Aside from pine floor boards, those at the top of the stairs and into the bathroom are narrower deal. They match those use to block the former curved stairwell, indicating that the historic curved stair was removed when the current bathroom extension was built.

Stairwell – Below the staircase to the attic, the curved walling is indicative of an earlier staircase.

Hallway window – within this passageway, the window opening looks over the ground-first staircase and to a rear roof slope dormer window. This is evidence of the original depth of the house and of the later building of the rear extension roof.

Plaster and lath ceilings – Each bedroom has plaster and lath ceilings. Due to the water ingress from a burst pipe causing collapsed areas, we can see the joists above are made of machine finished timber. Saw marks could not be identified, but from the flat surface of the timber it is thought that the joists are Victorian.

The thinning of the walls below the east elevation's south window is, we think, a historic repair. The north window within this elevation retains rubble stone walling as originally built, but such thin rubble stone is prone to failure. Therefore, dressed stone blocks were inserted; from photographic evidence we can say that this was pre-1948.

Modern Features

Windows – Although stylistically appropriate to the purported age of Church Cottage, the leaded lights that serve all rooms have matching details, and the clear glazing is uniform and flat. This indicates likely refurbishment as a whole.

Doors - All C20th. The architraves match those of the ground floor to the living and reception rooms.

Floors – Pine floorboards merged into historic floors, with new reinforcing joists set next to old.

Cupboards – North and south bedroom, both modern.

Fireplace surrounds – very simplistic in form, with quadrant beading to the opening. There is no erosion of detail or aging, and both surrounds have been heavily varnished. That within the south bedroom retains the colour of the timber used, whilst that within the north bedroom has the same thick dark-brown varnish applied to it.

Bathroom fixtures – All modern.

Top Floor Attic



Main attic Space

Historic Features

Staircase – Although constructed of modern planed softwood, the staircase to the attic is steep and curved at the top. This is indicative of a historic stair within this corner of the building.

The principal structural roof frames and purlins – these are historic generally with modern interventions (see following section). The timbers display extensive evidence of furniture beetle, Anobium punctatum, with other unidentified larger wood borer holes evident. This damage does not appear to be ongoing. There is a pronounced grain and the purlins are bowed and vary considerably. We can also see that the purlins have been removed and reinstated; there are timber boards added to the A-frames that give 'ledge' support to the purlins. This method of support originates with the introduction of cut nails, supposed from the 1790s, but possibly earlier - studies by the Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group suggest early 1700s. These ledge boards are a historic repair. A replacement square edged purlin (east side, penultimate south bay) has been installed whilst the A-frames were in place; the ends are supported by ironwork rather than bearing into the principal frames. The alterations carried out to these A-frames are evidence of their authenticity.

Modern Features

Floorboards – Modern laminate atop the raised chipboard floor across the southern half of the building. This area is accessed by a few modern stairs and accompanying short banister.

Roofing membrane – Bitumous non-breathable roofing felt.

Rafters - Although doubled-up, none bear the markings of previous plaster and lath. This is evidence of the renewal of the roof and its subsequent repair in modern times.

Roof lining – Plasterboard throughout.

'Secondary' Roof Structure - The southernmost A-frame has been repaired with the addition of a new, relatively large, oak tie chord. This appears to now act as both a roof tie and as a beam to support floor joists. Because of its raised position, it is thought that the original tie chord is located beneath. There is a replacement 'square' purlin hung from metal brackets.

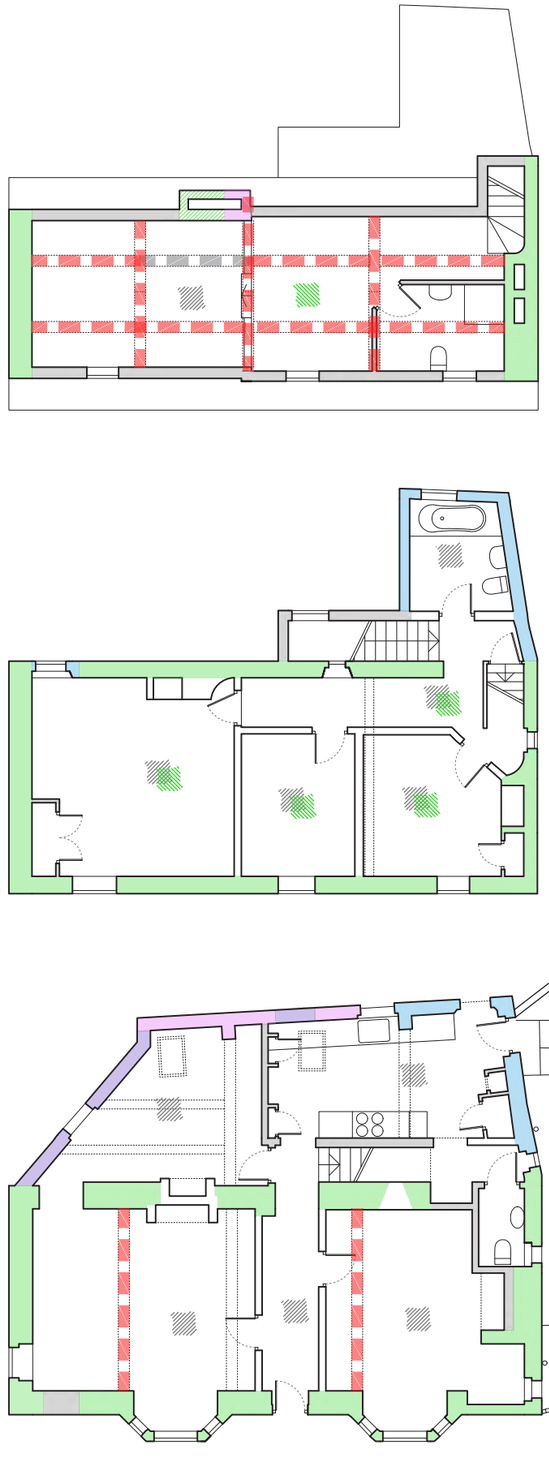
En-suite Partition – CLS Studwork with plasterboard

Dormer windows – The internal cheeks are tongue and groove softwood planks

Phasing

The floor plans opposite show the fundamental phases of Church Cottage. Dating vernacular construction with certainty can require techniques, such as dendrochronology, that are beyond the scope of this report. However, as shown, the plans allow for the proportional assessment as required by the NPPF (section 16, para 194).

The first-floor shows a combination of historic boards interwoven with new. The assessment of floor structure beneath requires opening up works, but should be assumed to be original with modern reinforcing timbers based on the limited amount of structure that we could see.



Historic Timbers - Assumed Original
Phase 1 - 17th Century
Phase 2 - Pre 1840
Phase 3
Phase 4
Phase 5 - Modern

Phasing plan

Significance

Significance can be defined as the sum of the cultural values which make a building or site important to society. These values take into account both the physical fabric and more intangible qualities.

Evidential Value

Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. It is dependent on the inherited fabric of the place.

Vernacular dwelling-houses were commonly altered, repaired and re-roofed over time. Church Cottage is typical in this regard and displays evidence for successive phases of enlargement, re-roofing and development (modern partitioning etc.). Although less important, the late C20th works add to this story, however post- 1948 works have also eroded the evidential value of the building, being out of keeping with its history.

The wall thicknesses, roof timbers, the now-internal windows, and the curved walls around historic stairs are particularly revealing and display a variety of phases to the construction. The evidential value here is based on the layered succession of works, where visual comparisons about the different phases of construction can be drawn.

Evidential value is also based on the demonstration of original construction. At Church Cottage we can see the outside stone walling, stop-end beams and fireplaces that are characteristic of the properties in Castle Combe and its wider area. However, this material is somewhat limited in what it can tell us – we have lost an understanding of the original workings of the house through adaptation and modern alterations, including to the plan form. We can no longer appreciate how past generations lived here in any great detail from the physical evidence.

At ground floor the alteration from a single house to two, and then into a shop and back to a single house destroys the links to early inhabitants. The room layout of upper floors are evidence of how the house was used, most probably with servant's or tenant's lodgings within the colder roof space and improved accommodation below.

The evidential value is derived from the historic building material. Although the construction techniques of the time are well known and understood, the evidence of the works of the house can only be derived directly from the building fabric. It is the primary source for establishing the building's development.

Historical Value

Historical value can be thought of as narratives that buildings tell, connecting people and their everyday lives though the past present and future. This value can be associative or illustrative.

From the occupancy data we find that although the people who lived at Church Cottage were important to historical village life (a carpenter, draper, schoolmasters and the village constable), but Church Cottage is not associated within notably important historical people. Neither is there an association with notable historic events, and, therefore, the value we can find is illustrative.

The historical value of Church Cottage is related to the value of the village as a whole – it is part of a medieval built village in the service of the Manor / Barony and the sense of domestic life herein. Because of the loss of internal historic fabric, the level of value we derive is limited. It is the exterior of the building and its overall positioning within the village that gives the cottage most of its historic value.

But that is not to say that Church Cottage is devoid of historical value internally. The previously discussed evidence of the earlier plan form (reception room window niche and earlier staircase) indicate the original depth of the house was only one room deep. This is an example of the smaller extent of cottages in Jacobean times; tenement accommodation was far more modest. The subsequent building of extensions during the Georgian and Victorian (and more contemporary) periods demonstrate the evolving requirements of the inhabitants.

The large width of the fireplace in the reception room demonstrates the importance of this feature within the house. This is characteristic of pre-Victorian properties due to the need for large log fires to heat and help light the rooms, especially at night and during the winter months.

There is also some historic value that we can discern from the division of the property over the years, illustrated by the blocked-in external doorway on the south-east corner. This is supported by manor records and map data. There is now only the partition wall and traces of the left hand door being filled in on the front elevation to tell us about how people lived in tandem with their trades. It demonstrates the necessity of dual usage and the importance of it to their everyday lives via the ratio afforded to the trade within the space of the dwelling. Half of the ground floor would have been dedicated to the livelihood and it is not unreasonable to think that 'backroom' storage would have been needed in other rooms of the house as well. This partition of space can be seen in other shops of the village such as in The Gates, below Church Cottage, and others on Market Place.

Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic Value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place, through conscious design or the way a place has fortuitously evolved over time.

The aesthetic value of Church Cottage is rooted in both its C17th origins, (window design, chamfered stop-end beams, Jacobean fireplace opening) and use of the Cotswold's characteristic, vernacular building style. As such, these features connect the cottage firmly to the area and within the village as a whole from which we derive a 'collective aesthetic' - the cottage is an important part of the harmonious vista of Castle Combe and of Market Place, seen from many points on the hills surrounding the valley.

The cottage fits into the aesthetic value of the village because it is part of a series of similarly aged properties that have seen minimal external change, that are eroding collectively. Church Cottage, and other buildings in the village, have vegetation (ivy) scaling the walls; this encroachment of nature reminds viewers of the rural setting of the village and the passage of time, adding to the historic appeal of Castle Combe.

Nevertheless, it does retain some individuality within the village, derived from its detachment to other buildings, the unique step-gabling and the C17th bay windows (those on The Old Post Office are a later addition).

The step-gabled elevation shows some influence from the late 1600's Dutch aesthetic style. It has window features matching the first-floor front elevation, but the stonework is clearly of a later stage (it has a more regular coursing and larger stones). Nevertheless, it remains a curious 'high-design' feature for a small cottage and its origins are still mysterious.

The aesthetic value has been severely diminished by the application of cement render to external walls made of rough (i.e. not dressed) oolitic limestone. The stone walls and stone roof tiling are typical of the area and the basis of the local building identity – there is a strong sense of this identity being eroded because of the mid C20th works.

Communal Value

Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Church Cottage is an important part of the area in Castle Combe called Market Place and is also part of the group of historic, listed, dwellings that make up most of Castle Combe. The building itself is not one that will have much communal value to the local people, other than it is part of the village whole – i.e. it is not a shop, Inn, Hall or other communal structure.

However, as part of 'Castle Combe', the oft voted Prettiest Village in Britain, world-wide tourist attraction, and popular filming location, the cottage has entered the wider communal sphere. Millions of people have seen films that have been shot on location here and so Castle Combe village has entered into the realms of recognisable places in England such as York, London, Bath and Lacock, not only to those in this country but to people around the world. Castle Combe is now linked to a cultural ideal of what a quintessential English (Cotswolds) village should look like – and Church Cottage makes up a small but essential part of that ideal.



1948 britainfromabove.org.uk ref: EAW014926

Summary

Church Cottage likely originated in the C17th, and has seen expansion and alteration over its lifetime. More recent alterations are particularly harmful.

The dwellinghouse possesses a range of heritage values, principal among these are the positive aesthetic and communal values. This is due to the positive contribution the house makes to its setting, and thereby the setting of other heritage assets in Castle Combe, and to Castle Combe's composition as a quintessential English village. The evidential and historic values are less significant because the sense of domestic life and the integrity of the building's original construction have been lost. The late C20th fabric has negative significance because it detracts from the historic.

Section Two:

Heritage Impact Assessment

Image: View of Church cottage

Proposals and Heritage Impact

The proposals now put forward follow the previous application, PL/2021/09304, for 'refurbishment works and alterations', granted consent in May 2022. It is noted where works listed within this section have been previously approved.

The following table summarises the application drawing set. In brief, the proposals are to replace the inappropriate post 1948 works. This involves re-roofing the property with stone tiles, replacing pine floorboards and modern 4-panel doors. Measures to reduce energy usage will also be adopted, allowing the house to be run from an air-source heat pump. This is not an insignificant undertaking – the improvement of historic buildings so that they are resilient in a low-carbon future is a challenge pertinent across the historic environment.

The assessment below uses a range from 'Highly Beneficial' through 'Medium' and 'Minor Benefical' to 'None'. On the opposite side of the scale, we use a comparative grading of 'Minor' through 'Medium' to 'Highly Adverse'. The impact on significance is based on both the impact to the Heritage Values, and on our ability to appreciate them.

Impact on the Conservation Area and the Setting of Heritage Assets		
Proposal	**Impact on Significance**	**Commentary**
Re-roofing, replacing clay tiles with stone, reinstating stone tiled dormer windows	Highly beneficial	The existing tiles and dormer windows are incongruous. Replacing them with natural stone tiles and reinstating the original form of the dormer windows will undo the harm caused by C20th works. The roofscape of Castle Combe will be enhanced. Particularly consequential because of Church Cottage's central positioning within the village. Care with detailing is required, such as bedded the new ridge tiles in lime-based mortar
Lime-render chimney stacks	Minor beneficial	Overlays recon stonework. An aesthetic improvement to Church Cottage, but also of consequence to the setting of St Andrew's Church. The roofscape of Castle Combe is improved.
Replace two rooflights within the west elevation (previously approved)	Minor beneficial	The replacement of two Velux rooflights with conservation rooflights is an aesthetic improvement to Church Cottage, and an improvement to the setting of St Andrew's Church. The rooflights will be set flush within the roof plane, be of thin metal frame construction, and feature a central vertical glazing bar. The rooflights will be sized such that no cutting of the roof timbers will be required, as stipulated within the delegated officer's report for application PL/2021/09304.
Remove loose cement-based pointing	Minor beneficial	A discrete general improvement that will not be individually apparent to most. Limited in extent by the ability to successfully remove this pointing without damaging the underlying stonework. New mortar will need to be made to the original mortar specification following technical analysis.
Rebuild the upper parts of the drystone garden wall	Minor beneficial	The drystone wall will remain as-is within a repaired state. The concrete capping will be replaced by lime-based mortar.
Internal works	Minor beneficial	The re-occupation of the building will benefit Castle Combe; it will allow for ongoing maintenance and repairs, and will enhance the vitality of the place.
Impact on Conservation Area and the Setting of Heritage Assets - Summary **There is a clear enhancement of the conservation area that accords with the requirements of S.72(1) of the Planning (LBCA) Act. No element of the works are considered to be harmful.**		
Impact on the Listed Building		
Proposal	**Impact on Significance**	**Commentary**
External:		
Re-roof with stone tiles / recon stone tiles, rebuild the front elevation dormer windows as stone tiled hipped dormers and install a cat-slide stone tiled rear dormer roof	Highly beneficial	Restores the building to its original state and reverses harmful works from the mid C20th. The proposal is supported by photographic evidence and the local building vernacular. The use of stone tiles will substantially increase the structural loading onto the building, for which the existing, historic, A-frame and purlin structure is unsuitable to bear. Installation of the stone tiles, and the benefits derived from this work, are dependent on the installation of a hidden steel frame.
Relay the front path to direct water away from the entrance door threshold	Highly beneficial	Will reduce the risk of water ingress into the building. The historic cobbles to each side of the entrance path will be unaffected.
Install a French drain to the perimeter of the building	Highly beneficial	Will reduce the level of moisture within the solid stone walls that the breathable insulation is required to dissipate
Reduction of levels within the garden beside the north elevation	Highly Beneficial	Will reduce the level of moisture within the solid stone walls that the breathable insulation is required to dissipate
Renew leadwork where defective	Highly beneficial	Long-term conservation as an item of ongoing repair that is overdue.
Render the recon stone chimney stacks with lime-based render	Minor beneficial	The stone chimney stack of the north chimney will be left as it is; the recon stone blocks are found on the west elevation. Rendering is an aesthetic betterment and there are existing stone details to 'contain' the render.
Renew rear Velux windows (previously approved)	Minor beneficial	New conservation rooflights will be a visual improvement externally. The rooflights will be individually sized to avoid cutting into existing roof timbers.

Repair stonework as per detailed elevations.	Highly beneficial	Repairs are to be agreed, but will be to the extent required only to halt advanced erosion and not to undo natural, ongoing, weathering. Long-term conservation as an item of ongoing repair that is overdue.
Remove loose cement-based pointing	Minor beneficial	Only where loose and damage will not be caused to underlying stonework.
Remove the pvcu drainage pipe from the garden elevation (previously approved)	Minor beneficial	Removal of an incongruous material and modern feature.
Ivy growth is to be pruned	Neutral	Control of plant growth to avoid future problems.
Structural:		
Install a new steel frame hidden within the roof construction	Neutral	The steel frame will not lead to the loss of the historic A-frames and purlins. It will allow for the stone tiled roof covering to be installed which is highly beneficial.
Renew rafters throughout the main roof	Medium beneficial	Post 1948 timbers have very limited historic significance and are considered to be 'modern'. Replacement allows for the benefits of a stone tiled roof to be realised. The renewed rafters are to bear the weight of a tiled roof again, so it is anticipated that the rafters will be deeper. Engineer to confirm design so that they can alleviate pressure on the a-frames and purlins, preventing further deformation of these historic structural elements.
Replace recently installed attic floor beam	Medium beneficial	The removal of the modern oversized timber tie chord will undo an insensitive repair. It is recognised that the material used for the tie chord was appropriate to the building, but its size and positioning impacted the attic space substantially. By using metalwork to both sides of the existing tie chord, the strengthening of the roof required to maintain the historic tie-chord in place will be hidden. This work is required to return the attic floor to its original position.
Strengthen the southern first floor structure	Neutral	There will be no loss of historic material, with straps used to reconnect historic floor joists to their main floor beams. The existing modern timber joists will be retained and a plywood layer fixed to the underside of them (requiring the removal of a plasterboard ceiling below). This will allow the floor to act in unison structurally. It is not intended to level the floors in any way.
Renew the rafters over the kitchen	Neutral	The existing rafters are modern, but not sufficient to bear the weight of the proposed natural stone tiles.
Walls:		
Remove all gypsum based plaster	Neutral	This will allow the building to breath, but will inevitably mark the lime plaster beneath in areas. Some areas of gypsum plaster have been found to be installed atop historic paint finishes, and so are easily removed with no damage caused. A method statement and works undertaken by skilled operatives is warranted to ensure careful removal.
Installation of cork board	Neutral	Wall surfaces will be brought into the rooms by 50mm, leading to the resetting of modern torus-profile skirting boards. Window reveals will deepen slightly, and window boards will need to be extended (they are modern throughout). Insulation will be returned into window reveals where insulation thicknesses will taper down to meet flat portions of window perimeters.
Installation of diathonite insulated plaster and decoration with breathable lime-based paint	Minor beneficial	The surface of the wall finish will be an improvement of the existing gypsum plaster.
Removal of the wall between the kitchen and the dining room	Neutral	This wall is made of modern studwork and plasterboard.
Flooring:		
Keep identified historic elm flooring, renew throughout elsewhere with engineered wide elm or oak floorboards	Medium beneficial	Pine floorboards will be removed. The new elm boards ate first-floor level and oak boards at ground and second-floor levels will be more befitting of the building, albeit engineered and not solid for reasons of cost. They will not be artificially eroded, but allowed to wear away as one would expect. The removal of patched-in pine will unify the floors again, without losing the historic boarding or the ability to read which boards are historic.
The concrete floor within the hallway will be replaced by timber joists and a void below.	Highly beneficial	The restoration of timber boards within the hallway. The removal of a concrete floor infill will encourage the drying of walls within the floor void, helping to avoid issues of rising damp.



c1890-1900 Photograph p13391 Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre



Remove the attic flooring within the southern half of the building, with its steps and balustrade (previously approved)	Medium beneficial	Restoration of the original attic height and removes the separating steps and balustrade.
Install underfloor heating and Insulation between joists throughout the house where it is possible to do so.	Minor beneficial	This change will remove the modern panel radiators from each room that underfloor heating is installed within. It is anticipated that underfloor heating will be installed within the whole of the ground floor where joists are all modern, and areas of the first and second floor where modern joists are encountered. This is a requirement of moving to a low-temperature heating system
Ceilings:		
Repair of lath and plaster ceilings	Beneficial	In matching materials and using historic techniques. Considered an item of ongoing repair that is overdue. All laths encountered in Church Cottage have been of the machine cut type rather than riven, and so it is proposed to continue the use of this type.
Open up the ceiling within the first-floor rear bathroom (conditioned within previous consent)	Potential for medium beneficial	Plasterboard ceiling and modern joists removed, believed to restore the ceiling profile of this room. Further investigatory work required following opening up. Original beams to be exposed as anticipated historically.
Lower attic ceilings so that insulation can be fitted between and below roof joists	Neutral	The incorporation of insulation here allows the house to be run from an air-source heat pump rather than using gas for heating. This investment that will increase the value of the property. Removal of modern plasterboard only, but insulation below the rafters will overlap the a-frames and the purlin ends (the purlins are significantly bowed such that insulation will reduce the gap to the middle of the purlin back faces. The purlins, a-frames, ledge plates and tie collars will all still be visible and the ability to read the original roof construction unhindered.
Doors:		
Replace all internal doors with 2 panel versions	Neutral	Replacement of modern 4-panel 'victorian' styled doors with new 2 panel version introduces a more historically sympathetic design.
Replace kitchen stable door with single, wide-boarded, timber door	Medium beneficial	An aesthetic improvement and a more historically sympathetic design.
Insert a new door within the first-floor hallway (previously approved)	Neutral	To follow detailed design drawing within May 2022 consent.
Windows:		
Secondary glazing to be replaced throughout	Minor beneficial	Controllable horizontal sliding format that replaces fixed secondary glazing which prevented ventilation of some rooms. Use of slimlite glazing increase the thermal performance of the windows in winter months. In the tourist-season summer months, the glazing will be capable of removal, restoring the windows to just their single-glazed leaded lights
Replace the Critall windows	Minor beneficial	As found within the southern and western elevation, replacement with timber casement windows. The Crittal windows have no historic value to them, but an improvement would benefit the heating strategy of the building.
Replace two rooflights within the west elevation (previously approved)	Minor beneficial	The replacement of two Velux rooflights with conservation rooflights is an aesthetic improvement internally. The rooflights will be sized so that there will be no cutting of roof timbers, ensuring no harm is caused to the building.
Fireplaces:		
Remove modern stone infill of the reception room fireplace	Medium beneficial	Restores the previous proportions of the fireplace and aids interpretation of its historic use. Will re-expose the earlier stone hearth. Concrete pointing will also be removed where it is loose or can be successfully removed without damaging the underlying stonework.
Remove the engraved lintel of the living room fireplace. The hearth is to be replaced. (previously approved)	Medium beneficial	As previously approved. To be replaced by oak set flush with the wall surface. The hearth is to be replaced by stone set into the floor. Undoes harmful late C20th alterations.
Fixtures and fittings:		

c1955 Francis Frith collection

Install new fixtures within the kitchen, WC, bathroom, existing en-suite and proposed en-suite.	Neutral	The fittings are not relevant to the significance of Church Cottage.
Removal of the wardrobe within the southern bedroom and the alcove cupboard within the northern bedroom. (removal of wardrobe previously approved)	Minor beneficial	Removal of modern interventions that restore original room proportions.
Services:		
Installation of new drainage run (previously approved)	Neutral	A new drainage run is to be provided within the building to serve the first floor central bathroom and the attic en-suite bathroom. This is a repetition of already consented work, albeit there is a slight improvement because of the inclusion of an air admittance valve. This will negate the need for a SVP with a tile or lap vent.
Installation of an air source heat pump	Minor beneficial	Replaces an area for the storage of gas bottles. Ensures that Church Cottage is adapted so that its future is made secure.
Installation of underfloor heating	Minor beneficial	Installation of underfloor heating throughout the house where it is possible to do so without interacting with historic structure (see 'flooring')
First-floor en-suite ventilation duct (previously approved)	Neutral	Grille termination required on short height of west elevation first-floor wall. Part of previously approved works.
Rear Bathroom ventilation fan	Neutral	Ventilation fan to lead to a lap tile located on the north elevation where it will not be visible from the church. Considered a betterment of the previously approved first-floor en-suite ventilation duct.
Garden:		
Remove grey concrete paving slabs and Install new stone paving	Minor beneficial	
Reduce garden level	Neutral	There is no effect on significance; the work will alleviate damp within the north wall
Rebuild the upper parts of the drystone garden wall	Neutral	Considered a repair of those areas that lean. An opportunity to replace the concrete capping with lime mortar.
Impact on the Listed Building – Summary **Harmful modern interventions will be reversed where possible. Proposed methods and materials are beneficial for building's future conservation, breathability, structural integrity and thermal performance. Proposal will secure optimum viable use and in its entirety is vastly beneficial delivering public benefits.**		



Part of the front elevation as is now

Analysis of the Proposals

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

There are three critical paragraphs within the Planning (LB&CA) Act:

Regarding listed building consent, section 16(2) states:

In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority…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.

Regarding planning permission, Section 66 of the Listed Building Act states:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority…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.

And Section 72 states:

In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area,…special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The conclusion of the heritage impact assessment is that there is no harm caused to the building, its setting (and that of other listed buildings in the vicinity) or to the Castle Combe conservation area. This is not surprising: the proposals have been formulated to significantly improve the external appearance of the building by undoing c.1950's works and to reinstate stone tiled roof slopes and hipped dormer windows. Leaded windows will be retained with new leaded windows installed within the dormers. Works to replace only modern materials are proposed within the building too.

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2012) considers heritage planning and identifies the following key drivers in the decision making process (paragraph 190):

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

NPPF Policy 132

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states: "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The NPPF then progresses to explain the justification required to substantial differing degrees of harm, from total loss to less than substantial harm.

In the case of the application now put forward, there is no harm caused to Church Cottage and there is a markedly 'positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness'.





View looking south down the street from the centre of Castle Combe

Wiltshire Planning Policy

The overarching planning policy framework for Wiltshire is the Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan (as adopted January 2015). The relevant core policies, and relevant extracts within each policy, are:

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Applications for new development must be accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through:

i. enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment'
…
iii. responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and roof lines to effectively integrate the building into its setting
…
iv. being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes
…
xii. the use of high standards of building materials, fi nishes and landscaping, including the provision of street furniture and the integration of art and design in the public realm

Core Policy 58 - Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment

The guidance that accompanies the core policy has a few useful paragraphs. These are:

6.135 - Core Policy 58 aims to ensure that Wiltshire's important monuments, sites and landscapes and areas of historic and built heritage significance are protected and enhanced in order that they continue to make an important contribution to Wiltshire's environment and quality of life.

6.137 - Within the context of the specific characteristics of Wiltshire, development will be required to be sensitive to all heritage assets including:

- the individual and distinctive character and appearance of Wiltshire's historic market towns and villages

- ecclesiastical sites including churches, chapels and monuments

- opportunities to enhance Wiltshire's historic public realm by ensuring that all development, including transport and infrastructure work, is sensitive to the historic environment.

6.138 - Designation of a conservation area, listed building, or scheduled ancient monument does not preclude the possibility of new development and the council is committed to working pragmatically with owners to find positive solutions which will allow adaptation of such buildings to reflect modern living aspirations. Such alterations will only be acceptable where they are consistent with the conservation of a heritage asset's significance. Consequently, it is expected that development will be of the highest standard in order to maintain and enhance the quality of the area or building, and be sensitive to its character and appearance. In considering applications for new development in such areas, the council will seek to ensure that the form, scale, design and materials of new buildings are complementary to the historic context.

The relevant parts of the core policy itself are:

Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

i. nationally significant archaeological remains
…
iii. buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest
iv. the special character or appearance of conservation areas
…
vi. important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.

Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping).

Heritage assets at risk will be monitored and development proposals that improve their condition will be encouraged. The advice of statutory and local consultees will be sought in consideration of such applications.

For each of these core policies, the proposals put forward conform to all requirements. The materiality of Castle Combe is derived from the local building stone and the vernacular detailing that accompanies it. The existing clay tile roof and timber dormer windows are incongruous; the application put forward seeks to remedy this and strengthen the character of the area and its sense of place. The proposals do not seek to increase the mass or height of Church Cottage, only to improve its outwards appearance and to undo unsympathetic work.

Archaeology

Since there are very limited ground works proposed, there will not be any affect any underlying archaeology. The removal of concrete flooring and the cutting back of ground adjacent to the north elevation will not hinder any future investigation.



Front elevation for Church Cottage

Conclusion

Church Cottage originated c1600 and has always been, principally, a dwelling house. Its domestic use will be retained, albeit as a holiday let - this is the best way to conserve the simplicity of this vernacular building. The plan form will not be altered, there will be repairs undertaken where necessary and in matching materials, and there will be significant improvement of the roof. Crucially, this is to the enhancement of both the house and of Castle Combe.

The desire to bring the property to future-proofed standards of energy efficiency is balanced with the necessity to retain original intent and authenticity. It has been shown that the significant values of the building will not be harmed - historic building fabric, and those interventions made prior to the C20th, will be kept. Damaging late C20th elements will be removed. It is recognised that care will need to be taken to ensure the provision of new services and thermal interventions are kept low-key and unobtrusive.

Overall, we find that the proposals will amount to no harm to the heritage values of Church Cottage itself and an improvement to the setting.

Since no harm is caused, we can say with certainty that the proposals comply with S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and with the requirements of the NPPF.

"Conservation is about the care and continuing development of a place in such a way that its significance is retained or revealed, and its future made secure"

James Semple Kerr, 'The Conservation Plan', National Trust of Australia (NSW), 1982-1996.



Appendix One:
Officer's delegated report from May 2022.

Image: 1948 britainfromabove.org.uk ref: EAW014926



Appendix Two:
Production stills / Film Stills

Image: Still from Warhorse (2010)



Stills showing Church Cottage from Dr Doolittle (1967)

Church Cottage can be seen in multiple stills from film and production. Images from Dr Doolittle (1989) and Warhorse are shown here, but the house also featured in other films, such as Stardust (2007) and TV programmes such as Poirot (1989).









Stills showing Church Cottage from Warhorse (2010)

Then Now When

Conservation + Architecture + Sustainability