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28 September 2026

Information in support of Householder Planning Application for

Single storey porch, entrance hall and utility room extension to

55 High Street, Buckden, St Neots, Cambridgeshire. PE19 5TA

Martélia has been appointed as consultant to the applicant to assist them in optimising their home. Please find below a design, access and heritage statement to accompany a full set of design drawings describing proposals for the improvement to their property.

Drawings attached to the application:

- *55HS_Maaa_2602_E01_ground floor plan, elevations and section as existing*
- *55HS _Maaa_2602_P01_ground floor plan and elevations as proposed*
- *55HS _Maaa_2602_P02_roof plan and sections as proposed*

Illustrations attached to the application (in this document):

- *Proposed View 1 – side elevation from High Street*
- *Proposed View 2 – view at new entrance*
- *Proposed View 3 – view from courtyard garden*
- *Proposed View 4 – aerial over view*

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Context

The applicant is the resident owner of the property known as 55 High Street, Buckden, having purchased the property in 2004. This 19th century, brick built, detached cottage has been maintained impeccably and improved considerably with recent high quality interior fit-out and decoration and is in exceptional condition. The original cottage was augmented by the addition of a single storey rear extension prior to the applicant's ownership. This existing single storey wing was not optimal spatially, nor in construction quality and performance, so it was replaced by the applicant in 2009. The greatly improved additional accommodation provides a sitting room addressing the courtyard garden, and a shower room – organised so that they can function as a guest suite or a downstairs bedroom suite should the future need arise. This wing of the existing dwelling is materially linked to the cottage by a matching slate roof (incorporating solar panels), while being differentiated by white painted render walls.

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The original accommodation in the cottage is very modest with small rooms and low ceilings. The raised, sloping ceilings of the previous extension bring very welcome space and light to the living spaces. The main entrance into the house is currently in the road facing elevation of the original cottage, on the back of pavement of High Street, and provides access directly into the dining room with no porch, hall or screening. At the heart of the home, the kitchen is open planned with the dining room and serves as the primary circulation route through the ground floor. The cottage is currently lacking storage space and has no utility room. The kitchen / dining room therefore also houses the washing machine. This inconvenient arrangement of the present accommodation is the driver for the project proposed.

The property has a small walled courtyard garden to the rear, which is accessed via a gate at the rear corner of the original cottage. This is reached by a generous gravelled driveway off High Street, that leads on to further external spaces and a detached garage at the rear of the property. The neighbouring house No.53 has use of this driveway for access. In daily use the applicant prefers to enter their home via the rear courtyard, where a double door set under a deep roof overhang in the existing extension brings them into the back of the kitchen. This route is also used by friends and family in the know, but not by visitors or delivery personnel – who logically go to the front door. In the courtyard, on the rear elevation of the original cottage there is a very small porch (less than 1sqm) that links to an inner hall cum home office. This porch has proved to be impractical as an entrance due to its diminutive size, so instead serves as a necessary coat cupboard internally.

Refer to the below photographs of the property as existing

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Photographs of 55 High Street, Buckden. Street and courtyard views as existing

55HS_Maaa_2602_DAS

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Proposals

The proposals described herein solve the applicant's current access and storage issues as simply and economically as possible while preserving the scale and appearance of the original property as much as possible. Materials and detailing have been designed 'in keeping' with the character of a period cottage while upgrading performance to current expectations. The spatial limitations of the project have prompted the use of the most dimensionally efficient method of construction – insulated timber frame with hardwood exterior cladding.

The proposed addition takes the form of simple lean-to pitched, slate roofed, timber porch across the back of the original cottage. It is contained entirely within the courtyard garden. The choice of hardwood timber as primary material for the walls of the proposed addition respects the existing context, wherein the original cottage is brick and the existing sitting room extension is white painted render. The proposal does not pretend to be a part of either element but serves to preserve the integrity of both, and the legibility of how the cottage has evolved over time and use. All 3 elements will be linked and married together by their matching slate roofs.

The intention is for the new access to function as the principal entrance to the dwelling, allowing the current door on the street elevation to remain closed (but for use to escape in an emergency situation). For the new entrance to function as the 'Front Door' it must present itself accordingly and attract visitors. It cannot be hidden away at the back. This is achieved by bringing the verge of the new lean-to roof across to the back corner of the cottage as an open porch roof overhang. This announces the location of the entrance, welcomes visitors and provides shelter prior to entering the cottage. The current gate will be removed so that the opening in the existing brick garden wall forms the porch entrance – always open. The security and privacy of the rear courtyard is re-established with a new gate below the eaves of the open porch.

The composition of the existing opening in the existing brick wall and the verge overhang of the new lean-to roof above is the only element of the project that will be visible from High Street. The appearance of the existing cottage, and therefore of High Street is otherwise unaltered.

Refer to proposed views 1 & 2 below.

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Proposed View 1 – side elevation from High Street



Proposed View 2 – view at new entrance

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Within the rear courtyard garden the new lean-to structure is enclosed to form a new entrance hall and a new utility / rear hall.

The new entrance hall replaces the old porch/store and provides a welcoming vestibule, top lit with natural light via a Velux conservation roof window. There is dedicated space for coat and shoe storage. The spatial planning provides privacy to the cottage interior, which is accessed via the existing opening in the original rear wall of the cottage.

The new utility room / rear hall opens via a new 'Back Door' into the courtyard externally, and, via a space saving sliding pocket door, into the kitchen internally. The utility room allows for the noisy washing machine and tumble dryer to be separated from the open plan kitchen / dining room and provides further coat, shoe and general pantry storage. The partition arrangement provides a location for an additional cupboard and/or refrigerator space in the kitchen. A Velux conservation roof window (matching the entrance) illuminates the space naturally from above, and the retention of the existing window in the rear wall of the cottage 'borrows' light into the back of the kitchen / dining room, preserving the feel of the existing accommodation.

The third functional element of the proposed extension is the integration of an external store cupboard / shed on the wall facing the courtyard. This provides for storage of gardening tools and firewood (for the existing fireplace in the cottage). The store is accessed via a pair of timber doors that match the timber wall cladding, reinforcing the appearance of the extension as a modest porch entirely harmonious with the existing cottage aesthetic.

Critical Parameters

As can be seen in the drawings and illustrations, the level of the new roof eaves is slightly lower than that of the sitting room wing. It is defined by standard door height.

The abutment of the new roof needs to meet the existing back wall of the cottage below the first floor window cill and, in order to be a matching slate roof, must be constructed at a minimum of 20 degrees from horizontal.

The existing sitting room wing supports an existing solar panel array. This prevents the formation of a standard valley gutter junction with the new roof. In order to leave the solar array undisturbed it is necessary to join the new and existing roofs with a small vertical abutment and gutter formed in traditional leadwork.

These 3 critical parameters define the necessary geometry of the new extension.

Refer to proposed views 3 & 4 below.

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Proposed View 3 – view from courtyard garden

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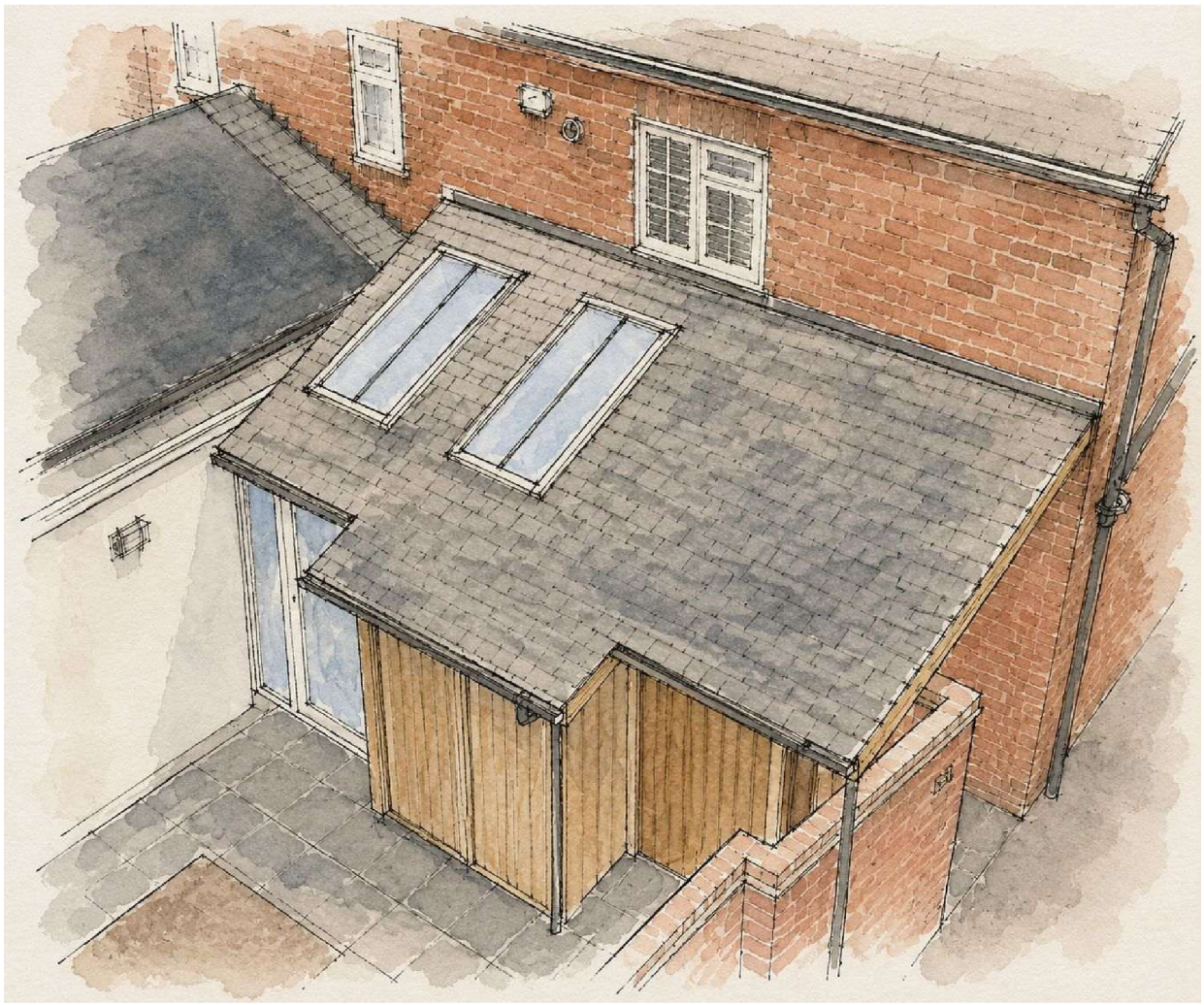

Proposed View 4 – aerial over view

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Summary

The proposed project described herein and in the enclosed drawings and illustrations has been very thoughtfully designed to coordinate with the irregular geometry of the existing cottage. The materiality and detailing are 'in keeping' with the period character and evolution of the existing dwelling. It is a modest addition that nevertheless elevates the accommodation provided to fulfil its potential as the ideal home for the applicant.

The proposals make very minimal alterations to the external appearance of the existing house – visible only from within the plot. Vehicular access into the plot remains unaltered. Pedestrian access is simply reprioritised. The street scene of High Street remains unaltered.

We believe that this project, being to the rear of the property and having a maximum height of only 3.13m, would ordinarily be allowed as permitted development had the cottage not already been extended. We trust that the planning and conservation officers will agree that the proposals are both modest in scale and wholly appropriate in design and detailing. It is the applicants desire to maintain and conserve this property as a stunning example of a 19th century cottage that has been optimised as a modern home for residents that admire and value heritage and tradition.

end

Dear Huntingdonshire District Council Planning Department,

I would be pleased to receive a phone call or email should you wish to arrange a site visit, request further information or discuss anything related to this application.

Kind Regards

[redacted]

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