

Ref: 162/NorthHerts/140725

Planning Department
North Hertfordshire Council
PO Box 10613
Nottingham
NG6 6DW

14 July 2025



Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Little Green Cottage, 4 Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Herts. SG5 3PX
Application Ref. 16/2905/1LB
Re-rendering gable end; sole plate repair and removal of cement plinth
Discharge of Condition No. 2

This discharge of condition application relates to Condition 2 of a Listed Building Consent (LBC) approval from 2017 (Ref. 16/2905/1LB).

The LBC approved the removal of a modern cementitious render to the north gable end of the property and its replacement with a lime render.

Condition 2 related to inspection of the timber sole plate following removal of the modern cementitious render. The work was undertaken in 2017, however unfortunately, the condition was overlooked at the time.

The rendering work was undertaken by an experienced, conservation building contractor called Between Time, who I have worked with on other listed buildings over the years. They recently ceased trading due to retirement of the company directors.

I have recently liaised with Mark Simmons, the LPA's Conservation Officer, regarding a way to regularise the current position.

He enquired whether there was any further information that would evidence and document any findings and/or repair work. The property owner has provided me with a number of photographs taken during the repair works, which are included in the enclosed photographic schedule.

It is understood by the property owner that the wording of Condition 2 may limit the extent of regularisation that is possible by the LPA.

Based on my evaluation of the property owner's photographs, I conclude the following:

1. The removal of the cementitious render appears to have been done carefully and with limited damage to the historic substrate.
2. A short section of the rear (NE) corner plinth looks to have already been rebuilt and the corner post and a short section of sole plate replaced, before

the 2017 work was undertaken; this may have been done prior to the application of the cementitious render.

3. The timber frame is load bearing and the contractor used precautionary temporary props to support the main tie beam at first floor level (Plate 1).
4. The area of timber frame adjacent to the NE corner looks to have been in a particularly poor condition (Plate 2).
5. One section of the sole plate appears to have completely decayed leaving a void (Plate 3).
6. Some of the wattle and daub infill panels look in particularly poor condition. The impervious nature of cementitious renders can accelerate decay, particularly in less durable timber, such as typically used for wattles. This may also have been affected by the previous modern repair works in this corner (NE).
7. One area of soft red brick infill, looks extremely friable and I suspect that cementitious render may have been holding some parts of the wall in place (Plate 4).
8. I conclude that alongside some of the intermediate studs, the sole plate was found to be in a poor condition more generally. On studying an internal photograph, it appears that the majority of the sole plate and 3No. stud sections were replaced (Plate 5).
9. The timber repairs look to use oak and traditional carpentry repair techniques, in line with recognised conservation best practice. I also note that, where possible, the infill panels adjacent to the timber repairs appear to have been retained (Plate 5).
10. The sole plate repair would have necessitated the partial removal of the brick plinth, sections of which also seem to have been in a poor condition. Soft red bricks can be particularly prone to damage from strong cementitious renders.
11. Based on my knowledge and experience of Between Time, I would expect the plinth's reconstruction to have also followed conservation best practice (e.g. using lime based mortars and a mixture of retained and compatible new bricks).
12. I note that there is a small stack of soft red bricks in the foreground of one of the photos (Plate 6). They have the appearance of hand-made bricks and are most likely to have been used for the reinstatement works. Notably, this image also shows traditional timber laths, fitted to the gable end ready for lime rendering.
13. The images of the scratch coat and completed render show the new lime render running straight down to ground level over the brick plinth. This is probably, in part, due to the additional lath build-up (Plate 7 & Plate 8).
14. In my opinion, this is a much more robust render detail than the render step that existed previously (Plate 9) and will be better for the long term conservation of the building.

The property owner has confirmed that the description of work above is an accurate account of the repairs undertaken to the north gable end by Between Time.

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Should you have any queries or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



**Peter Hayes BSc (Hons) MSc (Conservation of the Historic Environment) MRICS Historic Building Consultant & Chartered Building Surveyor
RICS Conservation Accredited Surveyor**

Enc. Photographic schedule