

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

In support of an application for Listed Building Consent

Property:

The Old Bull, 98-100 High Street, Codicote, Hitchin, Herts, SG4 8XE

Proposal:

Removal of modern cement-based render and non-breathable paint from the front (principal) elevation, and reinstatement of a traditional haired lime render system finished with a breathable mineral or limewash paint.

Local Planning Authority:

North Hertfordshire District Council

Applicant:

Katherine and Matthew Woodhead

Date:

04/05/2026

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for Listed Building Consent under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council.

The property at 98-100 High Street, Codicote, is a Grade II listed building (Historic England List Entry No. **1173606**). The proposal is conservation-led and seeks to reverse previous, unsympathetic alterations to the principal (front) elevation by removing a modern cement-based external render and non-breathable masonry paint, and replacing them with a traditional haired lime render system and an appropriate breathable paint finish.

The works are intended to remove harm to the listed building and to restore a finish that is appropriate to its age, fabric and character.

2. The Building and Its Significance

2.1 Description

The property is a Grade II listed building dating from approximately the 17th century. It has a plastered ground floor and whitewashed brick upper floor and historically would have been finished with a soft, lime-based render and limewash, in line with regional building tradition for buildings of this period.

The official Historic England list description is reproduced below for ease of reference:

GV II

House, formerly 2 houses. C17 timber frame, recased mid C18. Plastered ground floor, whitewashed brick upper floor. Plain tile roofs. Right side is 1 storey, 1 casement, with gabled attic dormer. Left side is 2 storeys with 2 casements. Central door with simple flat hood. Canted bow windows either side. Floor band. Large C17/.18 red brick square chimney stack on rear right side.

2.2 Heritage Significance

In accordance with Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008) and paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023), the significance of the building can be summarised under the following heritage values:

- Evidential value — the historic fabric, including the original soft brickwork and any surviving traditional bedding mortars beneath later coatings, holds evidence of historic construction techniques typical of the period and locality.
- Historical value — the building contributes to the historic character of High Street, Codicote and is of recognised special architectural and historic interest, as confirmed by its statutory listing.
- Aesthetic value — the proportions, materials and finish of the principal elevation are integral to the building's contribution to the streetscape. The current cement render and modern paint detract from this.

- Communal value — as a listed building visible from the public realm, the property contributes to local identity and is appreciated by residents and visitors alike.

The proposed works are designed to sustain and, where possible, enhance these heritage values by removing harmful modern interventions and reinstating an appropriate traditional finish.

3. Existing Condition and Justification

3.1 The Problem with the Existing Render and Paint

The front elevation is currently finished with a modern cement-based render coated with a non-breathable (typically acrylic or plastic-modified) masonry paint. Both materials are inappropriate for a historic building of this construction and have led to trapped moisture migrating inwards into the historic fabric, causing internal damp, salt crystallisation, decay of bedding mortars, and frost-driven spalling of the historic brick faces — all of which represent ongoing harm to the listed building.

Photographs of the existing condition, including evidence of cracking, damp staining, paint blistering and spalling brickwork, are included with this application as part of the supporting documentation.

3.2 Conservation Principle: “Like for Like”

Authoritative guidance from Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), and Historic Environment Scotland is consistent: historic solid-walled buildings perform best when finished with vapour-permeable, lime-based materials that are compatible with their original construction. Replacing inappropriate modern coatings with traditional lime is a widely recognised conservation gain and is routinely supported by local planning authorities.

The proposal therefore directly addresses paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2023), which requires applicants to describe the significance of the heritage asset and to demonstrate how the proposal will sustain or enhance it. By reinstating compatible materials, the proposal will halt ongoing fabric decay and restore the building's historic appearance.

4. The Proposed Works

4.1 Scope

The application seeks consent for the following works to the front (principal) elevation only:

1. Careful removal of the existing modern cement-based render and non-breathable paint coating using hand tools only.
2. Preparation of the underlying historic brickwork, including raking out of any defective pointing and sympathetic localised re-pointing where required, using a lime-based mortar matched to historic precedent.

3. Application of a new haired lime render system, comprising a haired lime scratch coat, a haired lime devil-floated second coat, and an external top coat of lime putty.
4. Once the lime has fully carbonated and dried, application of an appropriate breathable paint finish.

No structural alterations, changes to openings, or alterations to historic fabric beyond removal of the modern cement render are proposed.

4.2 Method Statement — Removal

The existing cement render and bonded paint film will be removed by hand using non-percussive hand tools (e.g. bolster chisels and wooden mallets). No power tools, angle grinders, scabblers or chemical strippers will be used on the historic substrate. This approach is intended to ensure that the soft historic brickwork beneath is not damaged during removal.

Any areas of the substrate that prove to be unexpectedly fragile or that reveal previously unknown historic detail will be reported to the Conservation Officer at North Hertfordshire District Council before continuing in that area.

4.3 Method Statement — Preparation

Once the modern coatings have been removed, the brickwork will be brushed down and dampened. Any open joints, cracked perpenders or loose bedding mortar will be raked out to a sound depth and re-pointed using a lime mortar of compatible composition. The wall will be allowed to stabilise and be brought to a suitable suction before render application.

4.4 Method Statement — Lime Render System

The lime mortars will be supplied by Ty-Mawr Lime Ltd, a specialist heritage building materials manufacturer with extensive experience in supplying lime products for listed buildings. The render system will be applied in the following sequence in accordance with the manufacturer's technical guidance:

- Coat 1 — Scratch coat: a haired lime mortar (Ty-Mawr Haired Lime Mortar) keyed by scratching to provide a mechanical bond for the following coat.
- Coat 2 — Devil-float coat: a second coat of haired lime mortar applied and finished with a devil float to provide a textured key for the final coat.
- Top coat — Lime putty: a fine lime putty top coat providing the smooth, traditional external finish characteristic of historic lime renders.

Each coat will be allowed to set, carbonate and stabilise for an appropriate period before the next is applied, in accordance with Ty-Mawr's technical advice and prevailing weather conditions. Newly applied lime will be protected from rain, frost, direct sun and drying winds using damp hessian and protective sheeting throughout the curing period.

4.5 Method Statement — Breathable Paint Finish

The final paint specification has not yet been confirmed; however, only fully vapour-permeable, lime-compatible coatings will be used. The intention is to select a finish from the following recognised options, all of which are routinely accepted on listed buildings:

- Limewash — the most traditional and authentic finish, fully compatible with lime render and offering exceptional vapour permeability.
- Mineral / silicate paint — e.g. Keim or Beeck, which bonds chemically with the lime substrate and offers excellent breathability and durability.
- Clay or casein-based natural paints — traditional, breathable alternatives appropriate for historic buildings.

4.6 Programme

The works will be carried out by Geoff Spinks from Point Builders - a contractor experienced in lime work on listed buildings. A typical programme allows for sequential coats with appropriate curing intervals, and the works will be timed to avoid the risk of frost. Suitable scaffolding, sheeting and protective materials will be in place for the full duration.

5. Heritage Impact Assessment

The proposal has been considered against the relevant statutory and policy framework, including:

- Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 — the duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting.
- Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) — conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031 — in particular Policy HE1 (Designated Heritage Assets) and associated policies on the historic environment.
- Historic England guidance, including “Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance” (2008) and “Practical Building Conservation: Mortars, Renders and Plasters”.

The proposal does not result in any loss of historic fabric. On the contrary, it removes modern, harmful materials that are causing ongoing decay, and reinstates a traditional finish that is in keeping with the building’s age, character and construction. The visual impact will be wholly positive: a soft, naturally textured, lime-finished elevation is appropriate to the building’s historic character and to its contribution to the wider streetscape.

It is therefore submitted that the proposal will sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage asset, will cause no harm, and accords with the relevant statutory duties and development plan policies. There is a clear and demonstrable public benefit in the conservation of the listed building.

6. Access Statement

The proposal is limited to external repair and refinishing of the front elevation. There are no works that affect:

- the means of access to the dwelling;
- the position, size or threshold of any door, window or other opening;
- internal layouts, levels or circulation; or
- any boundary, footpath, parking or vehicular arrangement.

Pedestrian access to the front of the property will be maintained throughout the works, with work area designed to retain a safe pedestrian route. There is therefore no adverse impact on accessibility, and no special access provisions are required by this proposal.

7. Conclusion

The works proposed in this application represent a careful, conservation-led repair of the principal elevation of a Grade II listed building. They will remove harmful modern materials that are actively damaging the historic fabric, and reinstate a traditional, breathable lime render and paint finish appropriate to the building's age, character and construction.

The proposal is consistent with national and local heritage policy, with published Historic England and SPAB guidance, and with widely accepted conservation practice. It will result in no harm to the heritage asset and will deliver a clear, demonstrable conservation benefit.

The applicant respectfully requests that North Hertfordshire District Council grant Listed Building Consent for the works described in this statement and the accompanying application drawings and supporting documents.

Appendix: Supporting Documents

The following documents are submitted in support of this application:

- Completed Listed Building Consent application form.
- Location plan at 1:1250 with the application site outlined in red.
- Site / block plan at 1:100.
- Existing front elevation drawing.
- Photographs of the existing front elevation, showing the cement render, paint condition and evidence of damp / spalling damage to the historic fabric.
- This Design and Access Statement.