OUTBUILDINGS AT HULLETTS FARM, PILGRIMS HATCH, BRENTWOOD

WORKS REQUIRED TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Hulletts Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building of 15th-16th century date. Within its curtilage, and forming an approach to the farmhouse, are two historic outbuildings, which are an important part of its setting, and witness to the historic farmyard group. There are other outbuildings in close proximity, but they are of more recent date and are less substantial. The two principal outbuildings should be retained in any future redevelopment, and are capable of re-use, either for residential or commercial purposes. It is the aim of this report to identify those works needed to make the outbuildings structurally sound and weathertight ready for future re-use, not to propose a conversion scheme.

1. 18th CENTURY BYRE AND HAYLOFT

DESCRIPTION

This a long, narrow, two-storey building of 230mm yellow stock brick with a 45° pitched corrugated-iron roof. Formerly the cattle byre was on the lower storey with a hayloft above. The south elevation has five doorways giving access to the lower storey, with a continuous oak lintel, except for the fifth opening, where it has been replaced by a concrete lintel. The lower storey external brickwork has been painted with bitumen. The ground floor is slightly below ground level with a central drainage channel, and the space is divided into three by brick partitions, with one space accessed from the two left-hand doors, one from the centre door only, and one from the two right-hand doors.

There were formerly linking doorways in each brick partition, but these have been blocked in timber studwork. Original mangers, stalls and low partitions are still in place, and there is a frequent series of vents in the north-facing external wall.

The upper storey is one unobstructed space from end to end, and is open to the rafters. It has two windows and an upper-storey door on the south elevation, three windows on the north, and a door on the western gable end reached by a brick staircase.

All doors are of painted weatherboarding, as are top-hung shutters to the upper-storey south elevation windows. Those on the north elevation are glazed without shutters. Ground floor doors on the south elevation are two-thirds height stable doors with the top part left open.

STRUCTURE

Subsidence has occurred at both ends of the building. At the east end the sagging of the longitudinal walls has caused a fracture with the gable end which is particularly severe on the south-east corner. The sagging longitudinal walls need to be underpinned and the fractured brickwork repaired.

Whilst underpinning, the opportunity should be taken of lowering the ground floor to increase the headroom of the lower storey. As the ground floor will then be below external ground level, tanking, damp-proof membrane and floor insulation should be carried out to facilitate future conversion to residential or commercial use.

Though the corrugated roof covering has a number of holes, the roof timbers appear to be largely in good condition. The corrugated covering should be removed and replaced with clay pantiles on sarking felt. It may be considered opportune whilst so doing to install roof insulation within the roof plane, but if so, care should be taken not to increase the thickness of the roof at the eaves, which would have a major impact on the external appearance of the building. The fascias and gutters at the eaves survive only in piecemeal fashion, and require replacement on a like for like basis.

The roof structure consists of rafters tied at intervals by A-frame collars above head height. However, a number of substantial tie beams have been inserted at eaves level to reduce thrust on to the external walls, and these are below head height. For the space to be usable, these will have to be either incorporated in partitions or replaced by more frequent collars to prevent outward thrust from the rafters.

Floorboards are in poor condition, but the floor joists appear largely sound. The external brickwork is mainly sound, but suffering from damp where gutters are missing.

As part of the future conversion of the building, an insulated inner skin will have to be provided to external walls. Also, future conversion will probably require additional window openings. Meanwhile, there is no need to replace existing doors and windows, which have the merit of maintaining plenty of ventilation to keep damp at bay.

2. 19th CENTURY STABLES

DESCRIPTION

The stable building is L-shaped, with two wings with lower eaves joined together by an element with higher eaves. Each is a separate internal space. The whole building is of 230mm soft red brick with 30° pitched slate roofs. The walls of the south, lower-eaves wing and the higher-eaves element are buttressed to carry roof trusses. There is no upper storey.

The west, lower-eaves wing has two windows and a central, boarded stable door on its south elevation, a high-level window in its gable, and a central timber louvred vent on its roof apex. Inside it retains its stalls and mangers. Its roof intersects with that of the higher-eaves linking element.

The higher-eaves element has a large, undivided internal space with a single central roof truss. It is accessed by facing sets of double doors in the east and west elevations and would be lit by a large high-level and small low-level window in its north elevation, except that these are boarded up.

The southern, lower-eaves wing continues the roof direction of this element, to which it is linked by a door. On its west elevation are two doors and two windows, one pair giving access and light to the main space and the other to a tack room partitioned out of it. The main space is spanned by two roof trusses, and there are two timber louvred vents on the roof apex. There are a central door and high-level window in the south-facing gable, and three windows on the east elevation. Internally there are some low partitions forming stalls.

Fascias, bargeboards, gutters and downpipes have all been recently renewed, and are in good condition. Doors and window shutters where fitted are of weatherboarding.

STRUCTURE

The stable building is of more recent date than the byre and has been in more recent use, so is in better condition structurally. Brickwork is generally sound, but suffering from rising damp, so a damp proof course should be installed. The slate roof has holes in some places, and recently an area on the east slope of the south wing had to be replaced wholesale, but not before a number of rafters had rotted. Otherwise roof timbers are in good condition.

The rotten rafters should be replaced and all the slate roofs replaced on sarking felt, and possibly roof-plane insulation. The recent bargeboards and fascias require soffits to be fitted, but it should be ensured that ventilation is not blocked. As with the byre, an internal inner skin will be required to external walls as part of any future conversion, and additional doors and windows may be required. It would probably be possible to insert an upper floor in the south wing and linking block, lit by dormers, but unlikely in the west wing which is narrower and has less roof space.