

3 Gravel Hill Cottages, Caversham, RG4 7DY

Repairs and Alterations to Existing Cottage & New Garage Building

Planning, Design & Access Statement

April 2022

Ref: 2212



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1.1 Introduction

This Design & Access statement accompanies a "householder planning and listed building" application to Reading Borough Council.

This document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying planning application drawings and separate Heritage Statement.

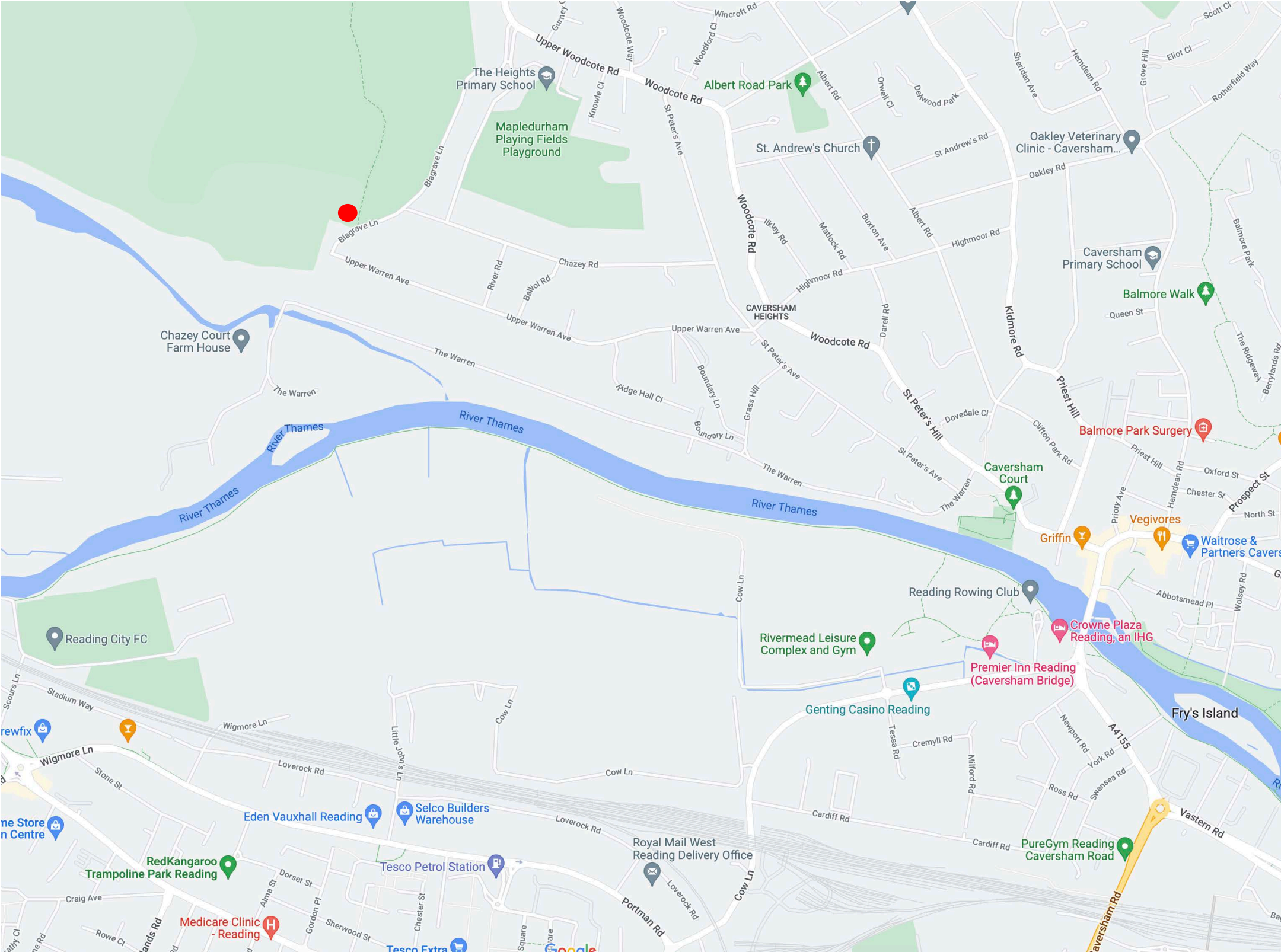
The description of development is as follows:

1. Repairs and alterations to the existing listed cottage, as described in greater detail later in this document.
2. Demolition of the existing concrete panel garage.
3. Construction of new detached garage and log store.

2.0 Site & Context Study

This section looks at the position, context, and character of the site and its immediate surroundings. This combines with the planning context set out within the following section to provide the baseline conditions for the current proposal. Key aspects of this section include:

- Site Location and Aerial Photographs
- Photographic Survey of Site and Surroundings



Site identified by red dot. Source : © Google Earth

2.0 Site & Context Study

2.1 Location & Brief Description

The existing property is a detached cottage on the Western edge of Caversham Heights, on the North-Western side of Reading.

It is a grade II listed property, dating to the 17th century. The historic nature of the building is considered together with its significance in the accompanying Heritage Statement.

The surrounding built fabric has developed along the North bank of the Thames to the point where it has reached 3 Gravel Hill Cottages, which was formerly located in open countryside. This now represents the urban edge, beyond which to the West is open countryside.



2.0 Site & Context Study

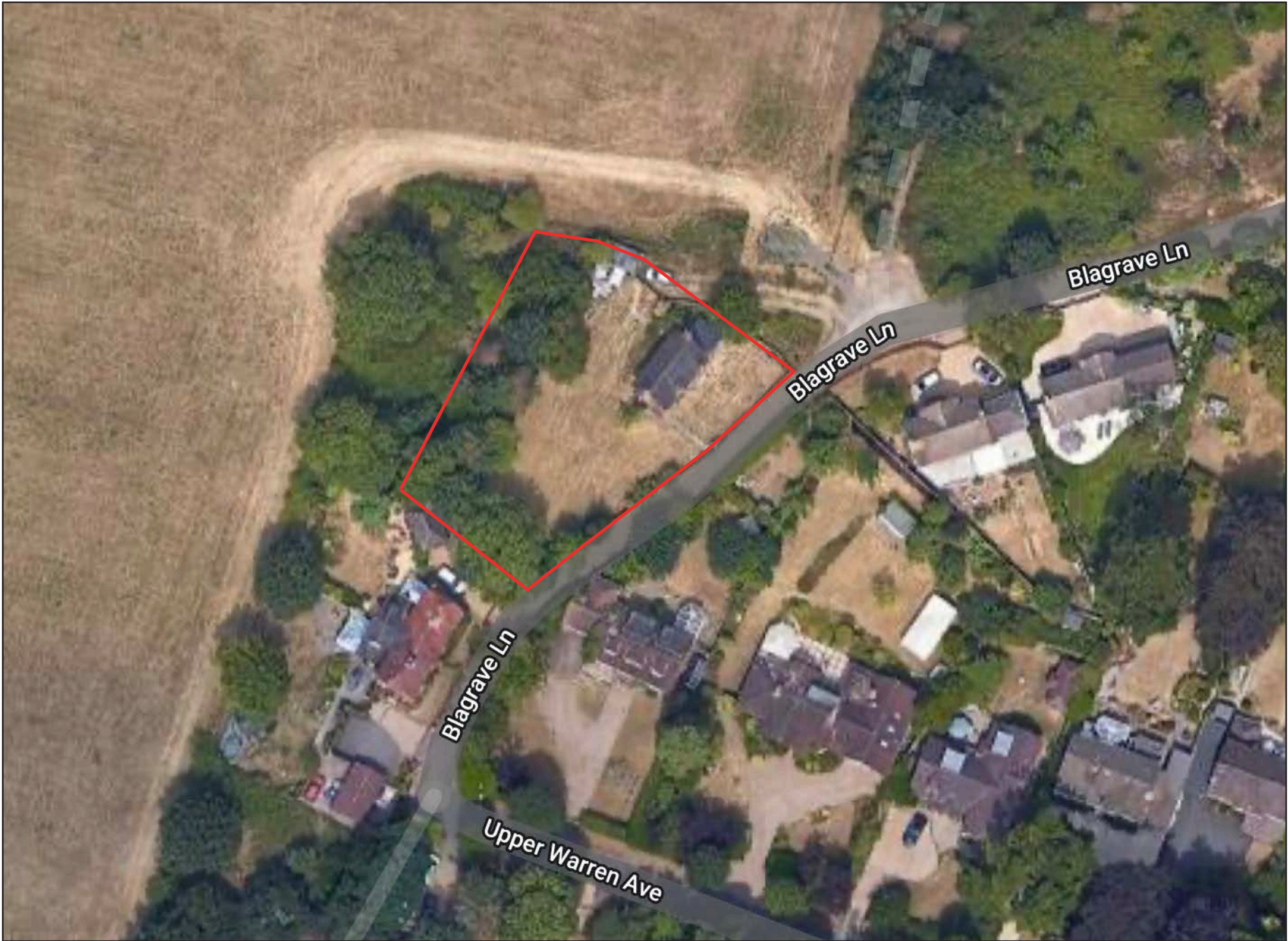
2.2 - Aerial Photographs



Source: Google Earth

2.0 Site & Context Study

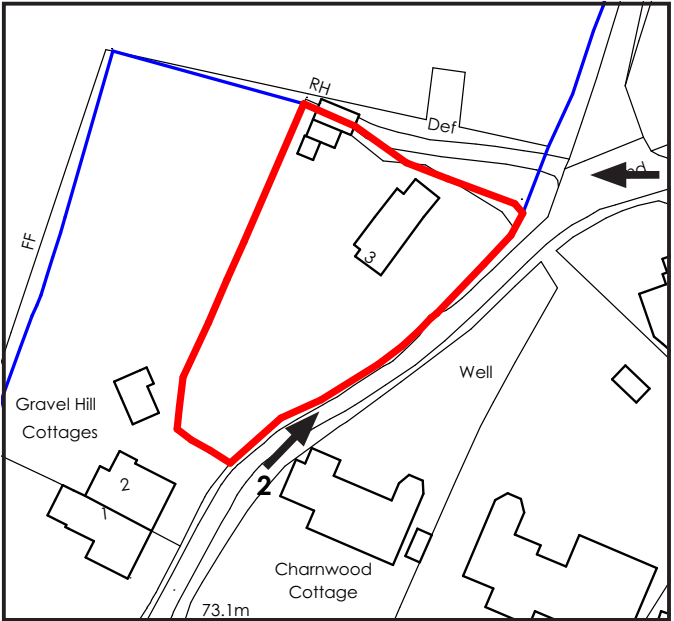
2.2 - Aerial Photographs



Source: Google Earth

2.0 Site & Context Study

2.3 - Context Photographs
Existing Views From Blagrove Lane



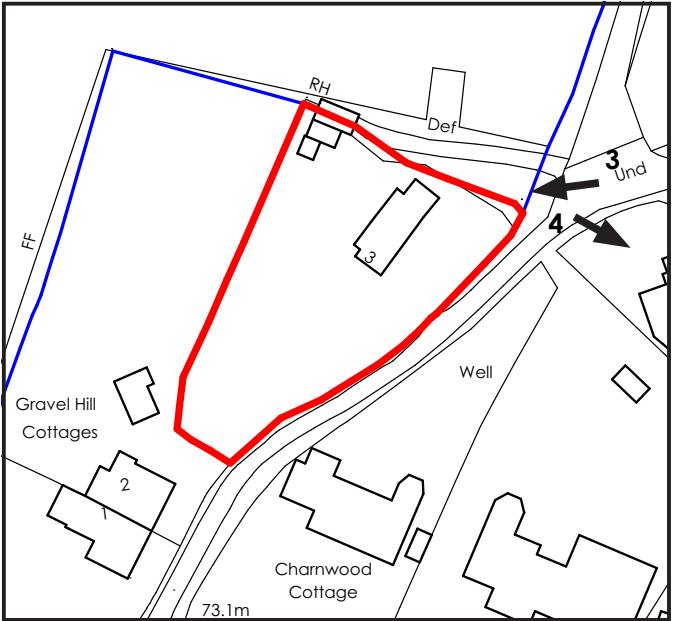
Existing view showing 3 Gravel Hill Cottages (on the right), and the modern houses on opposite side of Blagrove Lane. Source: Google Street View.



Existing view showing 3 Gravel Hill Cottages from Blagrove Lane, looking North-East. Source: Google Street View.

2.0 Site & Context Study

2.3 - Context Photographs
Views of wider context



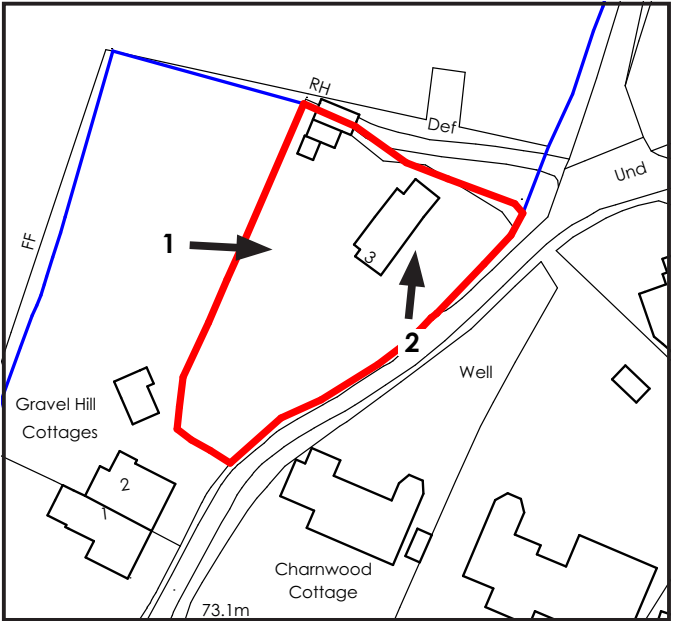
Existing view of 3 Gravel Hill Cottages with fields beyond to West. Source: Google Street View.



View of modern properties to opposite side of Blagrove Lane. Source: Google Street View.

2.0 Site & Context Study

2.3 - Context Photographs
Views of side & rear of Cottage



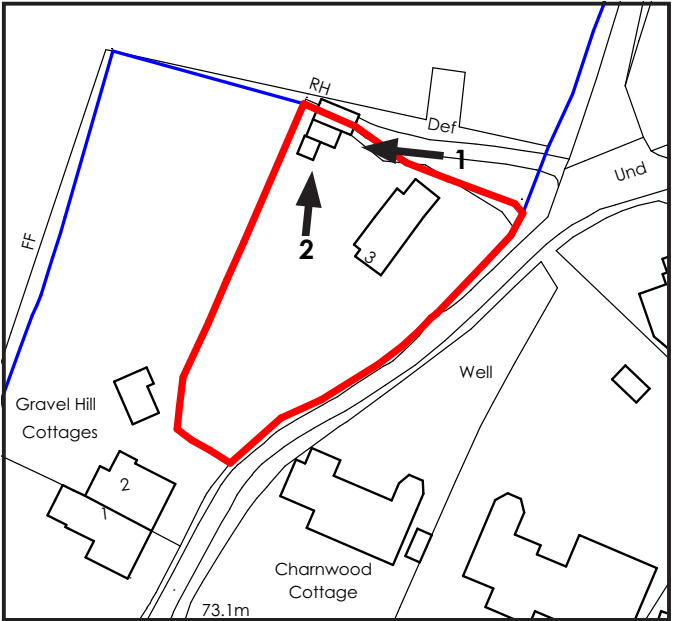
View of rear (North-West) elevation of 3 Gravel Hill Cottages.



View of front and end elevations of 3 Gravel Hill Cottages, looking North.

2.0 Site & Context Study

2.3 - Context Photographs
Views of side & rear of Cottage



View of front of concrete garage and dilapidated storage structures to North of cottage, looking East.



View of side of concrete garage and open end of dilapidated storage structure, looking North.

3.0 Planning Context

3.1 Planning Context & History

This section provides an overview of the relevant planning policy context.

3 Gravel Hill Cottages is located on the boundary of Reading Borough Council's area, as demonstrated by the line on the map excerpt shown. This also corresponds with the line of the boundary of the AONB, which is to the North and West of the site, but does not include the site.

The site does not include any other policy areas although there are several designations on the ground to the South, as shown on the map. None of these are affected by works at 3 Gravel Hill Cottages.

The only previous application at the site discoverable on the local authority planning website was made in 1993 under application number 930060. This was for the installation of a half-glazed door to the front elevation.

The pre-application response details a further previous consent, as consented in 1954, to alter the cottage to provide the bathroom and toilet.

3.2 Pre-Application Advice

A pre-application submission was made to Reading Borough Council for the proposed works, and a site visit was attended by Mr David Brett (Planning Officer) and Mr Bruce Edgar (Conservation and Urban Design Officer) on the 24th January 2022.

A pre-application response was provided to the applicant under reference 210393/PREAPP on the 26th January 2022.

This advice dealt with the proposals as included in this application and was supportive of them. It concluded that whilst further information, as provided with this application, was required, it was unlikely that the works envisaged would be contentious.

With regard to the works to the listed building, it was stated that "Overall, the works proposed to 3 Gravel Hill Cottages are considered to enhance the character and significance of [the] Grade II Listed Building, providing the above advice is incorporated."



Source: Reading Borough Council Local Plan map.

4.0 Summary of Proposals

4.1 Use & Amount

Use
The proposals are summarised as follows;

- Internal alterations to the listed cottage, comprising:
 - Lowering of the Kitchen floor to increase headroom.
 - Removal of the modern brickwork wall between the Kitchen and Dining Room.
 - Alterations to the internal layout of the 20th century lean-to in order to improve the sanitary accommodation.
 - Removal of the unsightly late 20th century fireplace to the Living Room, opening up of fireplace, and installation of wood burner to the existing chimney.
 - Removal of modern partition to first floor Bedrooms so as to return the two spaces to one larger room.
 - Removal of modern poor quality cupboard to Master Bedroom.
 - Strengthening of the first floor as detailed by the Structural Engineer.
 - Window repairs (generally to casements)
 - Provision of secondary glazing to improve thermal performance.
 - Updating of services to provide safer, modern, lighting, power, and plumbing.

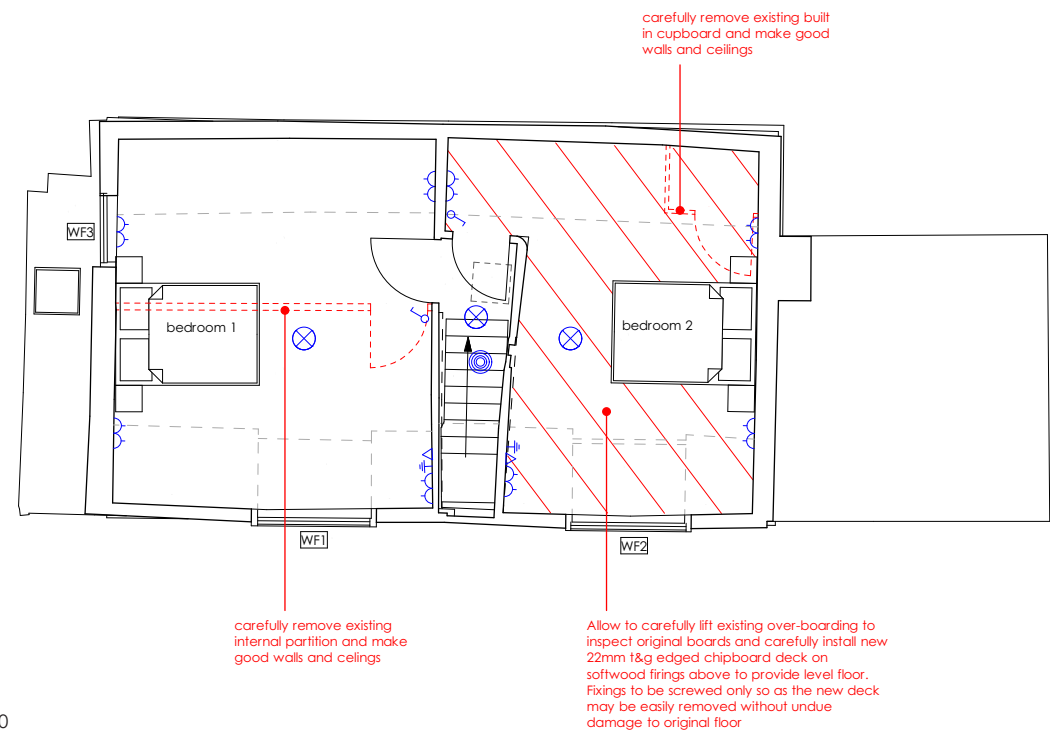
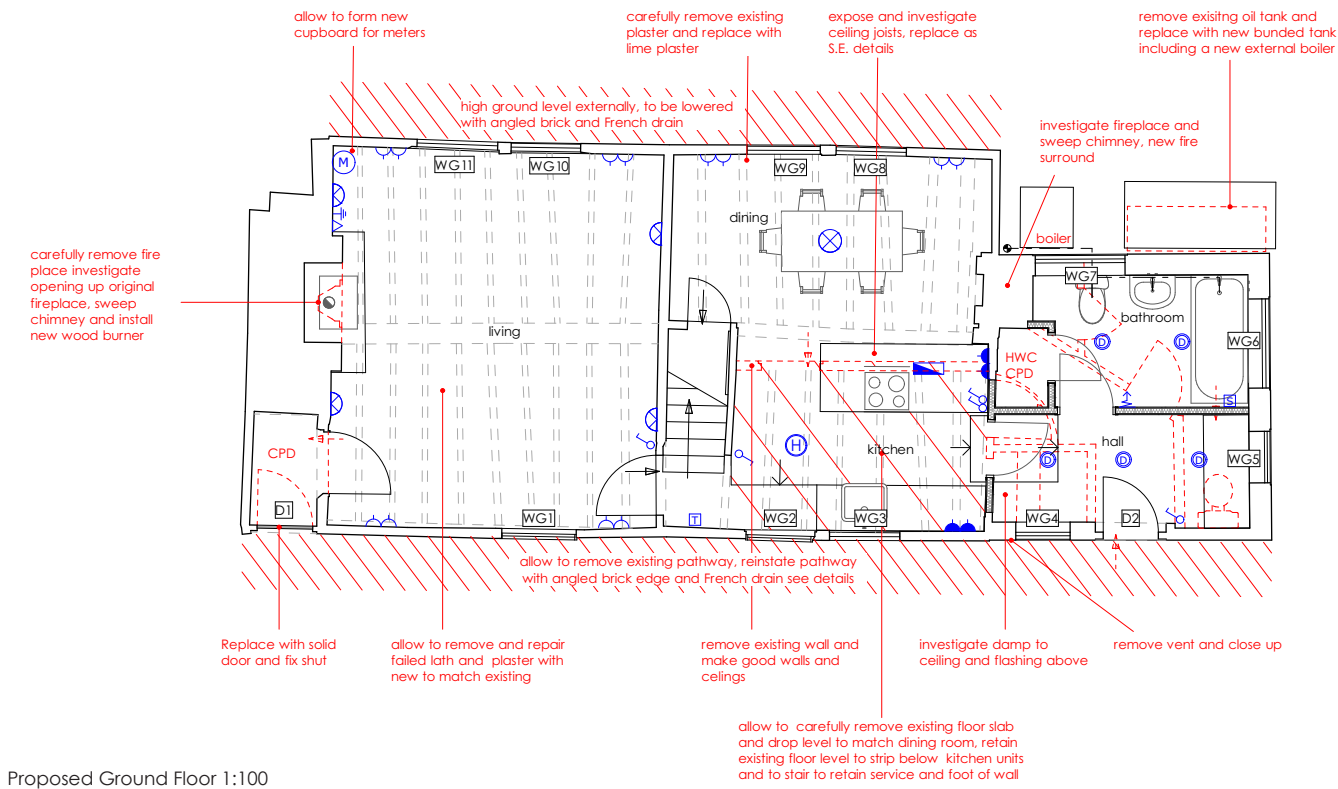
- External works around the listed cottage, comprising:
 - Removal of concrete path against the building and installation of new french drain to reduce damp.
 - New paths and paving areas at a lower level.
 - Renewal of drains where required to provide a well functioning system.
 - Repair of damaged fencing to provide secure boundaries.

- The demolition of the existing concrete garage and adjacent dilapidated storage structures, and their replacement with a new timber framed garage and car port, with integral wood store.

Amount
The Gross Internal Area (GIA) of the existing dwelling is approximately 96 sq.m.
This will not change.

The GIA of the existing garage and stores is approximately 29 sq.m.

The GIA of the proposed new garage and woodstore is approximately 44 sq.m.



4.0 Summary of Proposals

4.2 Layout

The layout is illustrated on the plans submitted with this application.

The layout will remain largely as existing, with improvements to the internal spaces by virtue of the revision of the Bathroom and Hall/Utility in the lean-to, the removal of the wall between the Kitchen and Dining Rooms, and the removal of the poor quality modern partition to the two smaller Bedrooms.

4.3 Access & Movement

Pedestrian access

The alterations will have no impact to existing pedestrian accesses.

Vehicle access and parking

The alterations will have no impact to existing vehicle accesses, maintaining the generous existing off-road parking.

4.4 Scale

There will be no alteration to the existing cottage externally.

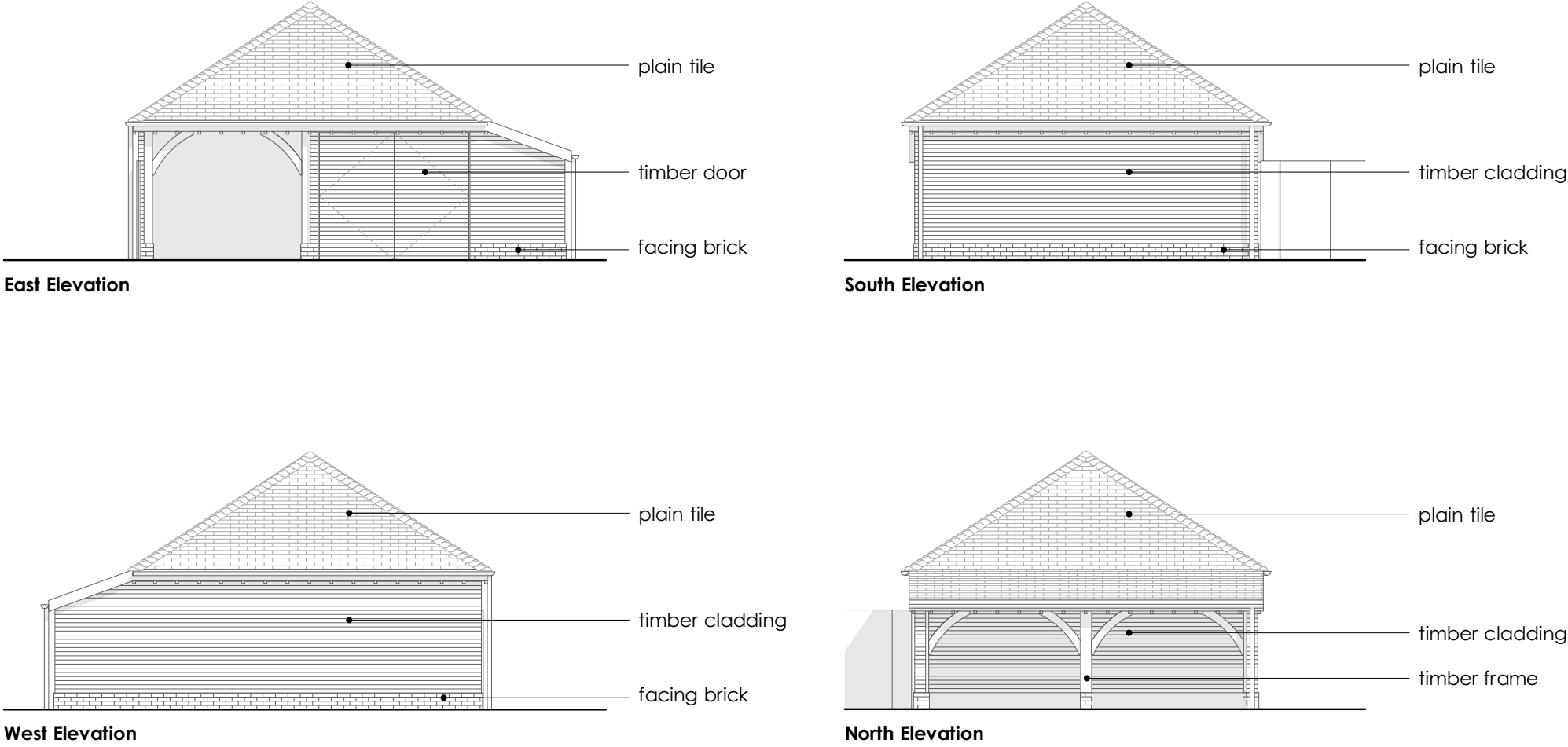
The new garage and log store will be slightly larger than the existing garage and stores, predominantly by virtue of it having a traditional roof form, rather than the unsympathetic low-pitched form of the existing. It is suggested that this is an improvement and more in-keeping with the character of the listed building.

4.0 Summary of Proposals

4.5 Appearance

The appearance of the listed cottage will not change.

The appearance of the new garage building and log store will be of traditional materials, such as timber clad walls with a low brick plinth, and a clay tile roof.



Proposed elevations of the garage and log store building.



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