EDGARS

Historic Environment Record Report

17 Craven Road – Detached Garage
Prepared for: Royal Berkshire Hospital
April 2024

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1 Introduction

1.1. This report provides a descriptive report of the site – Detached Garage at 17 Craven Road, Reading, Berkshire – hereafter referenced as the subject site. The report has been produced in line with Historic England guidance *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice.*

1.2. The objective of the descriptive report is to secure an understanding of a building and its significance to inform the preparation of a scheme of conservation, repair or alteration. Our understanding is that the building is to be repaired and internally refurbished to include the removal, repair and reinstatement of the façade detailing, underpinning of the main structure, and general minor repairs to brickwork, mortars, roofing, timbers and replacement of rainwater goods.

1.3. A visual inspection was undertaken on 9th April 2024 at midday of both the interior and exterior of the subject site in order to take accurate notes of the current condition, arrangement and use. Inaccessible interior spaces included the roof void, and inaccessible exterior spaces included a visual of the north elevation. All other areas were accessible during the visit. Photographs were taken of significant features. A limited number of historical sources were consulted to provide context to the descriptive record.

1.4. This report should be read in conjunction with accompanying architectural drawings provided by GBS Architects.

2 Location and Development History

2.1 The detached garage is located adjacent to the Grade II listed building *Headmasters Lodge* (NHLE Ref: 1113460), also registered as 17 Craven Road, Reading. The current arrangement of buildings, verified during the visit, can be seen in figure 1.

Figure 1: Location of the site highlighted in red. Source: ESRI World Topo 2024 (top), Google Earth Pro (bottom)

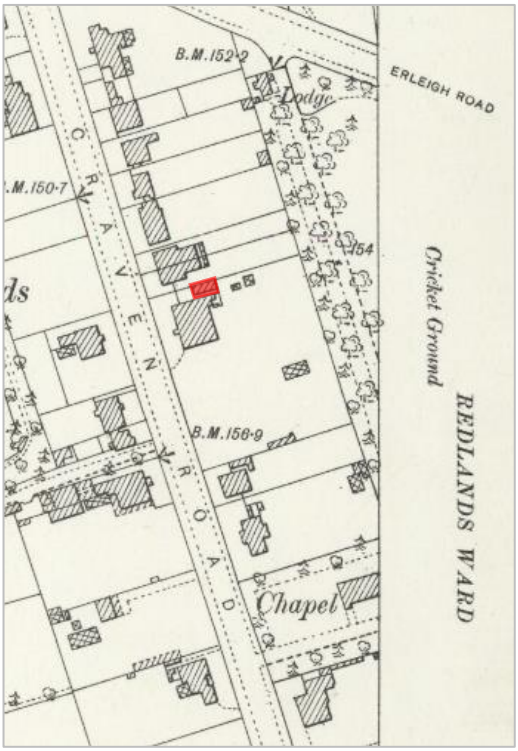
2.2 The subject site occupies a position to the north of the principal building, Headmasters Lodge, positioned around 20m from the eastern edge of Craven Road. The rear of the subject site backs onto gardens and open lawns leading onto the adjoining Reading School playing field.

2.3 Ordnance Survey maps provide a record of the position of buildings along Craven Road, the earliest record dating from 1879. The principal building was constructed in 1840 at the junction of Kings and Queens roads in London, it was thereafter deconstructed and relocated to Craven Road. The architect for the reconstruction was Joseph Greenaway (Senior).[1] It is likely that the relocation to Craven Road was accompanied by the construction of domestic outbuildings including the subject building. At the date of construction 1878, the term garage was not in popular use and the function of the domestic garage for cars was not popularised until the turn of the century. [2] Based on this, the original use of the building is likely to have been a workshop and was later repurposed as a garage for domestic vehicles.

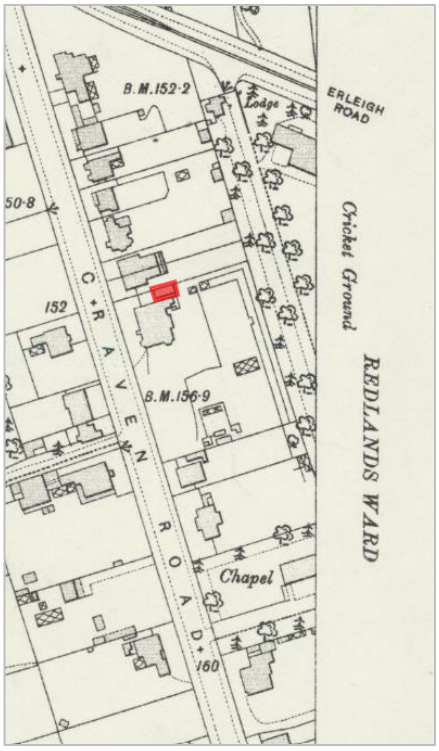
2.4 The principal building, originally named Penrhyn Lodge and constructed as a domestic residence for Mr John Oakey Taylor, at some stage the building was renamed 'Cravenhurst',[3] and in 1919 the building was purchased by Reading School as a residence for the new headmaster, when it was renamed Head Master's Lodge.[4]

2.5 Table 1 highlights the development history of the subject site and adjoining sites on Craven Road.

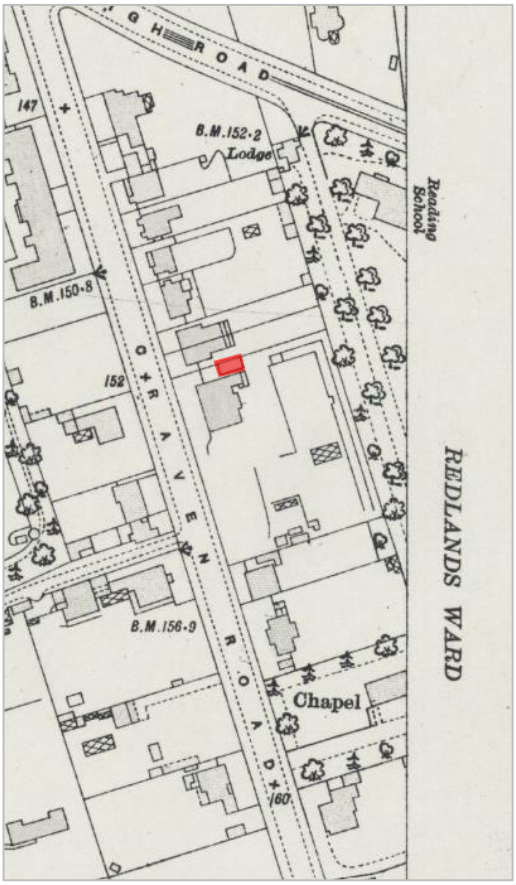
[1] Directory of Reading Architects
[2] Historic England (2013). *Buildings and Infrastructure for the Motor Car: Introductions to Heritage Assets*
[3] Reading Street Directory, 1900
[4] Ken Brown, *The Headmasters Lodge*, Reading School



1898



1909



1931

Table 1. OS 25” records of the subject site showing no notable alterations to the footprint of the garage building.

3 Existing records

There are no records within the Berkshire Built Environment Record of the garage.

4 Descriptive Record

4.1 Composition of External Elevations

The elevations are of red brick in an irregular bond, coated with whitewash. The bricks are of standard stretchers and headers, with moulded curved corner bricks at the junction of the side entrance. Each elevation is comprised of two brick skins with the exception of a section of the northern elevation which is only a single skin thick.

4.2 West Elevation

The West elevation is the principal elevation facing Craven Road and the gable forms the vehicular entrance into the garage. The gable eaves cornice is adorned with a lime render formed around a brick arrangement with moulded cap along the pediment ridge. Below the pediment apex there is an arrangement of open brickwork presumably for ventilation purposes. A large two-leaf garage access door with supporting full-span timber lintel forms the bulk of the ground floor area of the elevation.

Ventilation gaps by removed bricks above access hatch lintel. Lintel appears to be of sandstone. Access hatch recessed by one brick skin.

4.3 North Elevation

The north elevation was not accessible due to the position facing No.15 Craven Road beyond a secure gated access driveway. It is understood that there are no penetrations across the elevation.

4.4 South Elevation

Functioning as a side access, the elevation has two timber framed windows and a side entrance stable-style timber door. A timber fascia sits under the eaves of the terminal slates along the roof ridge. A contemporary steel support has been affixed as a brace between the principal house and the garage south elevation.

There is a protruding stone capped pilaster to the rear of the elevation, presumably part of an older wall or gate system. The pilaster near the rear of the building has a curved ‘walled garden’ style curved brick cap which terminates at the end of the building which is an odd feature and suggests the wall would have continued in the past.

Ventilation bricks located near to the side entrance door of the garage and located along the north elevation of the principal house indicate a correlation between the construction dates of both the house and garage.

4.5 East Elevation

An unadorned gable end facing into the house grounds. Brick form gable pediment terminating in a hip-roofed apex. Predominantly brick arrangement with two large penetrations; a 20th century ventilation pipe and surround, and a single centre-hinged timber framed window immediately below the upper storey pediment line.

4.6 Roof

The roof system is predominantly Welsh slate with a designed pattern of decorative tiles, hexagonal cut light grey slates abutting each other in three bands with spearheaded Welsh slates siting above and standard rectangular Welsh slates sited below. Along the roof ridge there is a ridge style moulded cap, presumably concrete and bonded with a clumsily executed mortar to bond it in place.

4.7 Internal Walls

Internally the walls have been coated in multiple paint layers including a dark tan, blue and beige. Where the single skin wall has failed on the north elevation, a partial intervention of a single skin of bonded engineering bricks has been

erected, presumably in the mid-late 20th century, to support where the lintel and wall have failed. This intervention has also failed, separating at the lower third due to compressive pull. There are protruding brick corbels along the north internal wall designed to support the internal timber lintel. It is here where the wall becomes a single skin and has required intervention.

4.8 Floors

The floor is a single surface, uninclined, and constructed predominantly of concrete but now comprising of a patchwork of repairs. There is a historic open cavity in the centre – presumably by previous owners to allow for car or bicycle repairs – which has now been boarded over with plain timber panels.

The upper floor storage area is currently inaccessible due to the hazards caused by the failing front elevation. As viewed from penetrations and gaps caused by deterioration to ceiling boarding at ground floor, it is possible to ascertain that the upper floor has had some timber joist replacements and planks above. The floor structure is of single span joists and an identified form of floor panelling.

4.9 Windows and Doors

The two south facing windows are 12 pane sliding (sideways) sash with Georgian style rails and transoms, single glazed and recessed. There is a timber frame around the interior of the window. Panes look to have been bonded with a glue or tape, possibly a mid-20th century repair.

The side door is a barn style four-hinged timber door. The principal double doors are simple braced vertical slat garage timber doors with two major hinges and support hinge affixed to the timber lintel. Ironmongery (hinges) appear original.

The rear window is a centre-hinged three vertical pane casement with timber frame. All windows are supported by an arched header brick lintel. These lintels are replicated on the main house further indicating a correlation of construction dates. The window sills are of a hipped brick, again seen on the main house.

4.10 Plan Form

Internally the garage is open plan at ground floor. The roof storage void is presumed to be open also. Within the ground floor space there is a protruding angled wall around 1.2m into the interior space, penetrated with a single window reveal with glass pane. This is an unusual arrangement and indicates a potential previous alteration. Steel lintel across span of centre of interior tied to both walls.

5 Condition Notes

The west elevation has suffered severe structural issues with a large section of the pediment and north wall separating from the main body of the building. There is a lateral pull on the north elevation exacerbated by extensive vegetation growth. Vegetation growth has affected the rear gable also but to a much lesser extent. The decorative render has fractured, with the brick pediment structure failing in several places. Rainwater ingress has caused the external timber fascia to deteriorate, and this has led to some internal water ingress. Internally the ingress has caused a major deterioration of a supporting timber lintel between brick corbels, contributing the wall's structural failure.

The whitewash coating across the external walls has almost entirely eroded from the east and west elevations and has deteriorated across the south elevation where exposed to the rear. The corridor formed between the house and garage has provided some protection to the elevation from the weather.

There are multiple iron ties protruding from the rear wall implying a historic lean-to greenhouse or other temporary ancillary structure. This is likely to be mid-20th century. The remaining ties are unsightly and as they rust may cause affected brickwork to blow.

The timber fascia across the elevations are rotten and require repair. General repointing of walls would help prevent additional water ingress from capillary action.

Internally the presence of the failed intervention wall is unsightly and provides very limited structural relief for the pulling external wall. Removal of this wall and replacement with a more secure structure would provide greater structural integrity for the continued preservation of the building.

Unpinning of the north and western walls is of the utmost importance for the continued preservation of the building, alongside a repair programme and reinstatement of the decorative render and cap of the western gable pediment.

6 Summary of Significance

The building is a curtilage listed ancillary building located in the grounds of the Grade II listed Headmaster's Lodge. Cartographic records indicate the presence of the building from 1898 and reflective detailing across the gable cornices indicate a level of contemporary design intent.

The above report is a Level 2 descriptive building record, produced in line with Historic England's best practice on the recording of historic buildings.

The interests of the building as a heritage asset are principally architectural; the western gable includes a rendered eaves cornice of classical revival style, the inclusion of which contrasts with the building's intended function as a domestic workshop. The building's orientation towards Craven Road forms part of its distinctiveness as a statement of grandeur, rather than a hidden ancillary structure. In this regard it is a positive contributor to the street scene, however views of the façade are obscured by a large set of modern gates which are regularly closed to prevent unauthorised access (see Appendix 1).

The building exhibits limited detailing which contributes to its architectural interest, specifically being of squat brick structure with decorative tiling across the roof structure reflecting the patterns across the roof of the main house, arched window headers, hipped brick sills and 19th century air bricks. The simple plan form also contributes to the building's legibility as a workshop/garage. The building positively contributes to the setting of the adjacent listed building through the replication of those architectural features noted above, its retention as a subsidiary ancillary structure and the visual quality of the western gable.

Appendix 1. Photographic Record

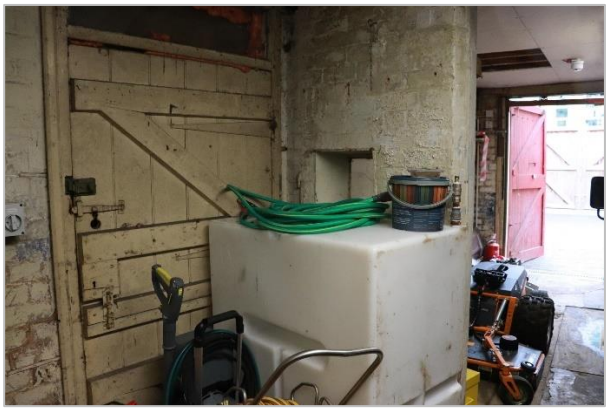
Western Elevation

Eastern Elevation

Southern Elevation

Roof detailing

Interior

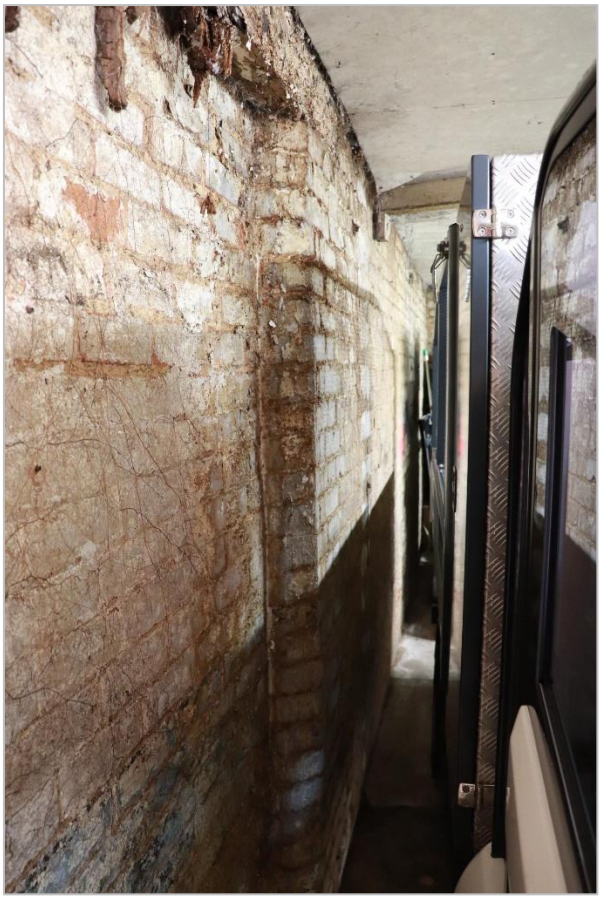


Interior view of side access door

Southern Elevation window detailing

Western Elevation detail – ventilation design, sandstone lintel, vegetation growth and render fracture

Capped Pilaster at south-east junction



Interior northern wall, deteriorated supporting timber lintel and evidence of single skin across western end of elevation.

The garage and north elevation of the Headmasters Lodge as viewed from Craven Road

Appendix 2. National Heritage Listing for England

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1113460**

Date first listed: **14-Dec-1978**

List Entry Name: **HEADMASTER'S LODGE**

Statutory Address 1: **HEADMASTER'S LODGE, 17, CRAVEN ROAD**

Statutory Address: **HEADMASTER'S LODGE, 17, CRAVEN ROAD**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.
District: **Reading (Unitary Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **SU 72598 72805**

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 12/05/2015

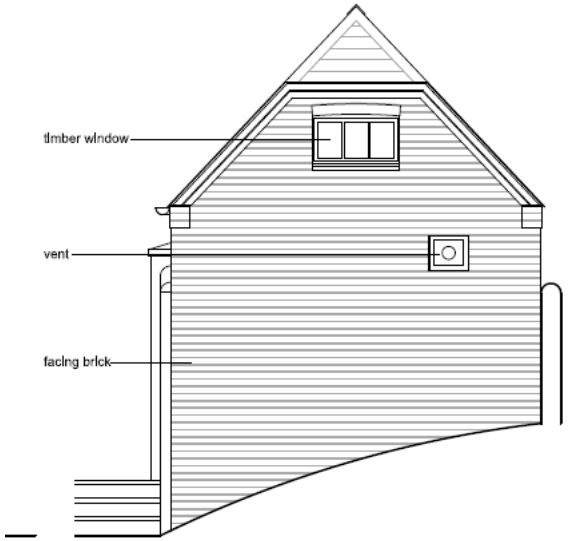
SU 7272 9/457

CRAVEN ROAD No 17 (Headmaster's Lodge)

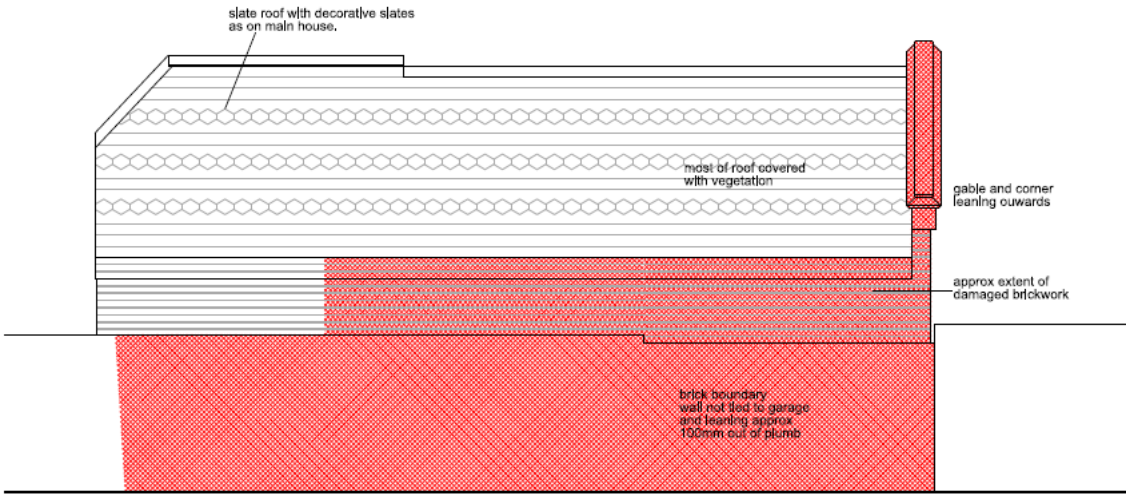
II Headmaster's lodge for Reading School. Built 1840 as Penrhyn Lodge at the junction of King's Road and Queen's Road by Henry Briant. Moved to Craven Road probably 1878, architect Joshua Greenaway. Assymmetrical detached villa. 2 storeys, coursed dressed stone. 3 bays, mullion and transom windows with hoodmoulds. Slate roof with lozenge bands. Corbels to parapet continued up 3 gables to west - the left hand gable breaks forward; the centre gable is small for a badge and a projecting gabled porch with chamfered shafted corners; the right hand gable has parapetted angled bay. Lower 2 storey extension with gabled return to left. South front has oriel on grotesque corbel and has head stops to 1st floor right hand window. Steps to east entrance with carved eagle on top of flight.

Listing NGR: SU7259872805

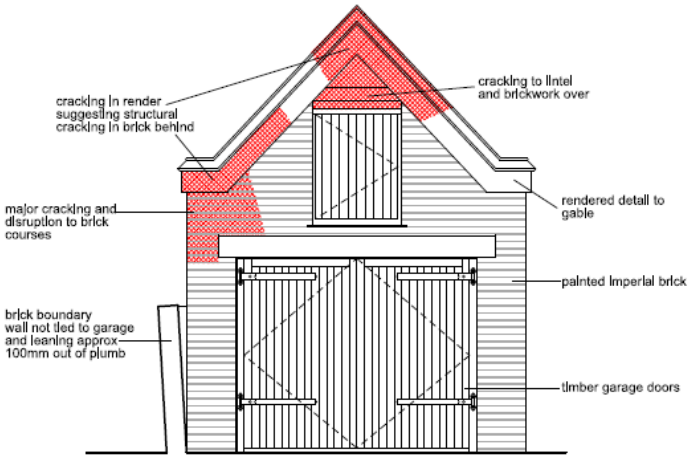
Appendix 3. Architectural Drawings



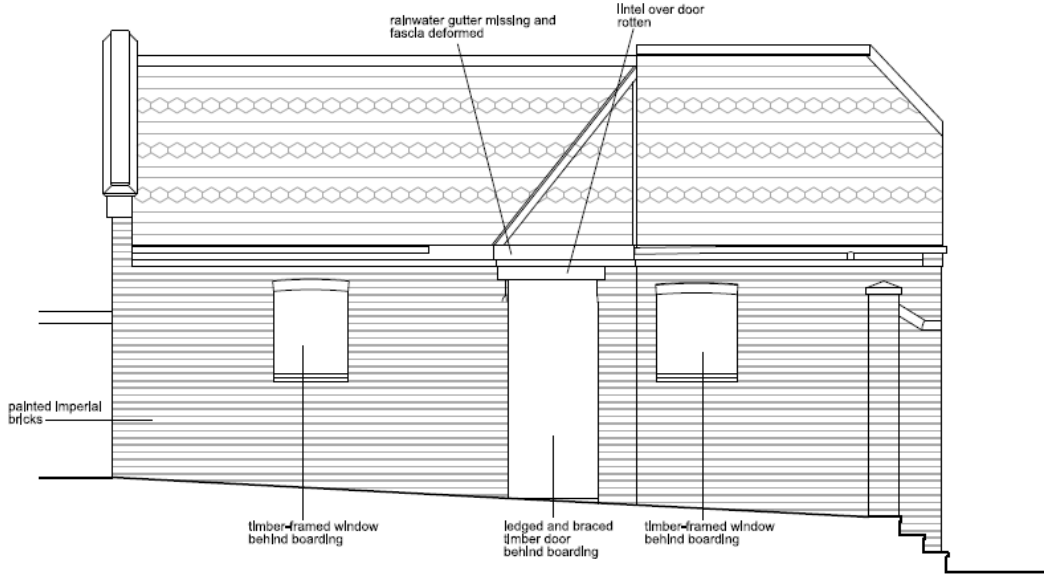
REAR (EAST) ELEVATION



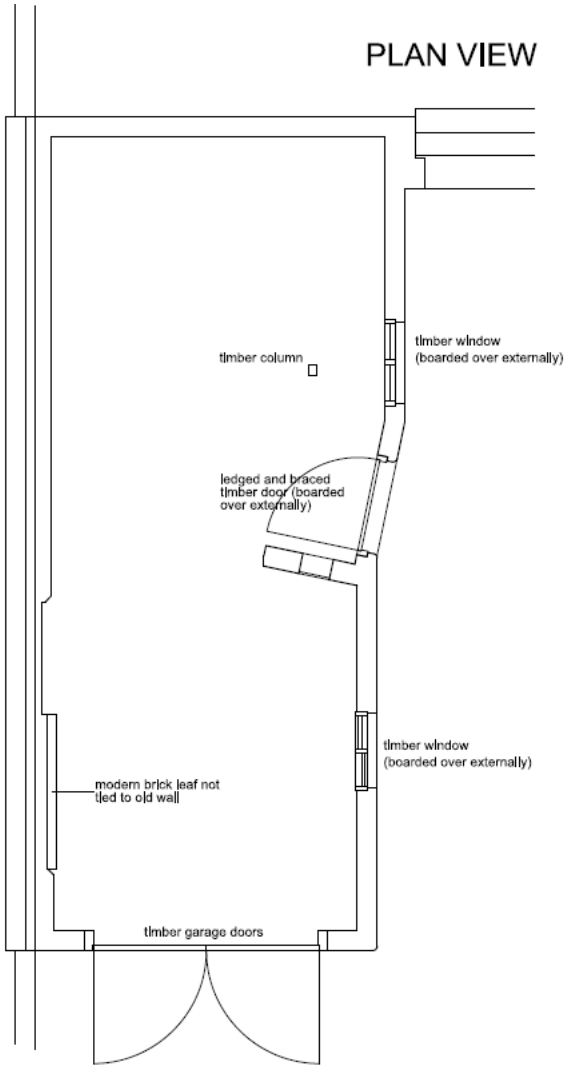
SIDE (WEST) ELEVATION

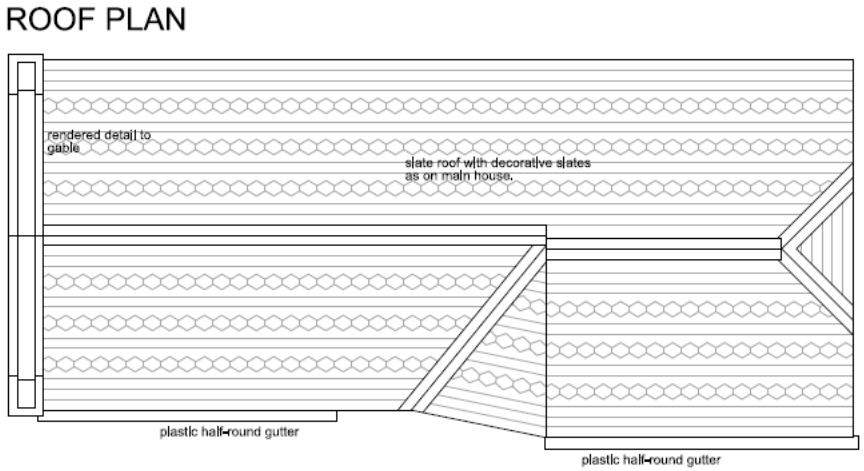


FRONT (WEST) ELEVATION



SIDE (SOUTH) ELEVATION


PLAN VIEW
timber column
timber window
(boarded over externally)
ledged and braced
timber door (boarded
over externally)
timber window
(boarded over externally)
modern brick leaf not
tied to old wall
timber garage doors


ROOF PLAN
rendered detail to
gable
slate roof with decorative slates
as on main house.
plastic half-round gutter
plastic half-round gutter