



Historic England

Ms Hebe Smith  
Arun District Council  
Civic Centre  
1 Maltravers Road  
Littlehampton  
West Sussex  
BN17 5LF

Our ref: L01598575

10 October 2025

Dear Ms Smith

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021  
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**BLAKES COTTAGE 1 BLAKES ROAD FELPHAM PO22 7EB  
Application Nos FP/130/25/L & FP/129/25/HH**

Introduction

Thank you for your letters of 24 September 2025 regarding the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission.

Blake's Cottage is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register as a result of its long-term vacancy and its condition. However, the new trustees have been very successful in obtaining funding for much needed repairs and progressing works to deliver the cottage with a new sustainable future. As a result, the Heritage at Risk entry now shows that a programme of repairs is underway.

Historic England provided pre-application advice on the proposals which is largely reflected in the submitted applications.

**Summary**

Blake's Cottage is primarily of significance as one of only two buildings lived in by William Blake to survive. It is this association with Blake which makes the building of more than special interest and warrants its listing at grade II\*.

Historic England is supportive of the proposals to return the form of Blake's Cottage to the appearance experienced by Catherine and William when they lived there between 1800 - 1803.



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While the proposals would result in some harm to the significance of the cottage due to the loss of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century first floor and associated fabric, this would be outweighed by the opportunity to present the cottage in a form more closely akin to how it was when Blake lived there. This would better reveal a more important aspect of its significance.

## **Historic England Advice**

### The significance of Blake's Cottage

Blake and his wife Catherine occupied this cottage between 1800 and 1803, an important phase in Blake's creative life, and he made two sketches of the building while he was there. It is this association with Blake which makes the building of more than special interest and warrants its listing at grade II\*.

The building is also of interest as an example of a modest agricultural workers cottage, probably dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Its modification over the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries helps tell the story of how living conditions for workers gradually improved over this time. This aspect of the building's significance is of much lesser importance than the association with Blake. The connection with Blake is unique, while its later development history is shared with many other cottages of this date in the area.

Within the later additions, there is a graduation of significance, starting with the 18<sup>th</sup> century works which involved the rebuilding of the west end and a single storey extension to the east. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century this eastern extension was raised to two storeys in height. These works are representative of the vernacular building tradition in this area and are of greater value than later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations, which are unremarkable.

While these later additions have considerably altered the appearance of the cottage compared with Blake's day, the detailed archaeological analysis undertaken by the Trust, along with Blakes' drawings allows the form, though not the precise details, of the building as experienced by Blake to be reconstructed with a reasonable degree of confidence.

### The proposals and their impact on significance

To return the form of the cottage to Blake's time would require the removal of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century first floor to the eastern extension. This would involve loss of mid-19<sup>th</sup>



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century fabric including a fireplace, masonry, carpentry, joinery and a small winding staircase.

The proposals would also require the removal of 20<sup>th</sup> century fabric including the main staircase. While the loss of these elements would cause some harm to the significance of the building, as they are of lesser significance, the level harm would be low.

At the same time, recreating the cottage to that of Blake's time, if undertaken authentically, using appropriate materials and methods, would better reveal a key aspect of its significance.

### Planning Policy considerations

The proposals will need to be assessed against Arun's Local Plan Policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The key policies within the NPPF to consider will be paragraphs 213 and 215, which require any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to be clearly and convincingly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

### Historic England's position on the proposals

Presentation of the form of the building to evoke Blake's time at the cottage would be of much greater public interest than maintaining the cottage in its current form. This would enhance its significance and would be a clear heritage benefit.

In our view this benefit would outweigh the harm caused by the loss of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century elements of the cottage that would be necessary to achieve this reconstruction.

However, the Trust's careful archaeological work provides a clear and convincing justification for the harm. The proposals could therefore meet the requirements of the NPPF.

Furthermore, the proposal is similar to other comparative cases where artists and writers' homes have been presented to the public as at the time the artist lived there. This proposal is therefore not without precedent.

Some examples include Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Cottage near Bridgewater in



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Somerset, William Morris' House in East London and J M W Turner's house in Twickenham.

Finally, we would be keen to ensure that the reconstruction works are as authentic as possible through the use of appropriate traditional materials and methods.

In this respect, we note that the proposed external north wall to the reconstructed eastern single storey element would need to be entirely rebuilt along with new foundations, as currently this is an internal wall.

We think there is a lack of detail contained within the submissions with regards to the appearance and how this wall would be constructed, including its foundations. We therefore recommend this is controlled by condition requiring the submission of details of the appearance, methods and materials for the proposed reconstruction of this north wall and its foundations.

We also note that the current proposals largely only cover the reconstruction of the external form of the cottage at Blake's time. There are currently no details of the proposed internal appearance. We understand that this is to be developed further, based on accurate evidence, and will form part of a further Listed Building Consent application for the re-presentation of the whole cottage.

## **Recommendation**

Historic England supports the applications on heritage grounds. We recommend conditions are applied to any consents which require:

- submission and approval of further details for the appearance, methods and materials for the reconstruction of north wall and its foundations of the proposed eastern single storey element; and
- sample panels provided and approved for any flint work wall reconstruction and samples of the proposed new windows.

Historic England would wish to be consulted on the discharge of these conditions.

In addition, an informative should be added to any decision notice that highlights a further Listed Building Consent application will be required for the internal works including wall, floor and ceiling finishes and decoration along with any altered or new



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internal partitions, fixtures and fittings.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the applications. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decisions in due course.

Yours sincerely

Alma Howell

**Alma Howell**

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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cc: Martyn White - Principal Conservation Officer



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**From:** Nicola Oktay on behalf of Planning.Responses  
**Sent:** 13 October 2025 09:42  
**To:** Planning Scanning  
**Subject:** FW: Application Nos FP/130/25/L & FP/129/25/HH\_Blakes Cottage, Felpham, West Sussex  
**Attachments:** Y\_HERef\_L01598575\_478769\_FP13025L\_Blakes Cottage\_Felpham.pdf

Historic England response

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**From:** Howell, Alma [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 10 October 2025 11:52  
**To:** Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>; Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Application Nos FP/130/25/L & FP/129/25/HH\_Blakes Cottage, Felpham, West Sussex

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Dear Hebe,

Please find attached Historic England's response to the above consultation.

Kind regards,  
Alma

**Alma Howell MSc, MRTPI**  
**Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas - Development Advice (East and West Sussex)**

London & South East | Regions Group

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