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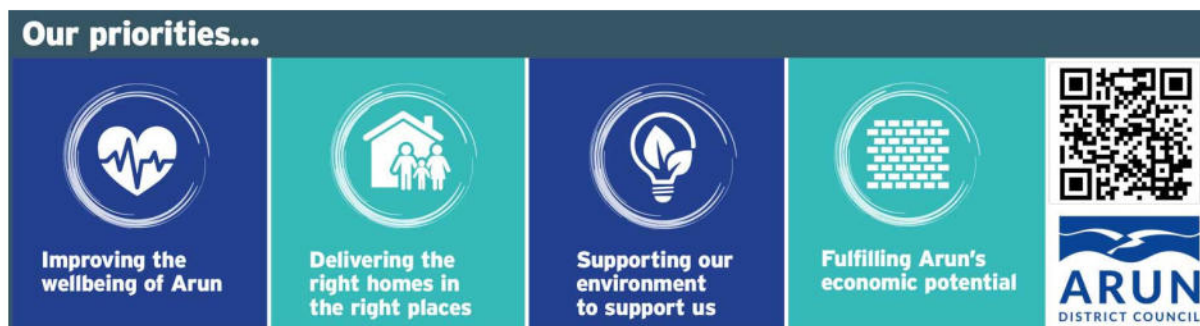
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From: Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk> **On Behalf Of** Conservation Officer
Sent: 15 October 2025 16:47
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Cc: Hebe Smith <Hebe.Smith@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: FP/129/25/HH

FP/129/25/HH

Blakes Cottage 1 Blakes Road Felpham PO22 7EB

Replacement of first floor masonry and thatched roof, minor masonry works including erection of a new pitch, thatched, roof with hips to the east and internal alterations including relocating walls and removal of two east chimney stacks.

A comprehensive Historic Buildings Assessment has been prepared and submitted which has been helpful in assessing this application.

Blakes Cottage

Designation and Location

Blake's Cottage is a Grade II* listed building located within the Felpham Conservation Area. It was the home of the poet, artist, and visionary William Blake and his wife Catherine from 1800 to 1803, during which time Blake wrote the words to the hymn Jerusalem. The cottage and its garden are referenced in Blake's poem Milton: A Poem in Two Books, which he began writing while living there. A sketch by Blake, described as "Blake's Cottage at Felpham", appears on a page of the final publication, providing a rare visual record of the building's historic form.

Architectural Description

The cottage dates from the mid-18th century, with later 19th- and 20th-century alterations and extensions. Excluding the 20th-century single-storey extension to the east, the building is two storeys in height, with flint and brick elevations and brick chimney stacks. The flints are laid in courses in the 17th-century part of the building and randomly in the early 19th-century extension.

Of particular note are the lime mortar joints in the original building, which contain small flint gallets inserted between the cobblestones, an artisanal detail not present in the later extension. Additionally, the south-facing front elevation features three courses of neatly knapped flints between the base of the first-floor windows, adding architectural interest and texture.

The cottage includes a mixture of timber sliding sash windows with brick quoin surrounds, alongside more recent metal-framed casements. The roofing material on the two-storey element is thatch, while the later 20th-century extension features a mix of tiles and felt. The roof has just been rethatched which has had a significance positive impact upon its appearance and significance.

Development Phases

The building's evolution can be understood in distinct phases:

- Late 18th century: Rebuilding of the west end and addition of a single-storey extension to the east.
- Mid-19th century: Raising of the eastern extension to two storeys.
- 20th century: Further utilitarian alterations, including the addition of a single-storey extension with mixed roofing materials.

These changes are representative of local vernacular traditions and are of greater heritage value than the more utilitarian alterations of the later 19th and 20th centuries, which are architecturally unremarkable.

While these later additions have altered the cottage's appearance since Blake's time, detailed archaeological analysis undertaken by the Trust—alongside Blake's own drawings—enables a reasonably confident reconstruction of the building's form as he would have experienced it.

Significance Assessment

The significance of Blake's Cottage derives from both its architectural and historical interest. It is of high to exceptional historical and communal significance due to its association with William and Catherine Blake. It is one of only two surviving residences linked to Blake, and the only one they

occupied exclusively. The original 18th-century structure retains much of its historic fabric and is of high architectural value. This direct and personal association with Blake is unique and underpins the building's designation at Grade II*, elevating its significance beyond that of a typical vernacular dwelling.

The cottage is a modest example of an 18th-century agricultural worker's dwelling, and its subsequent modifications reflect broader patterns of rural domestic improvement and adaptation. While this aspect contributes to its historic interest, it is secondary to the Blake connection.

Later additions, Phase 2 and 2a (19th century), have been reassessed as being of neutral to negative significance, as they obscure the original form and misrepresent the modest living conditions of the Blakes. Phase 3 (20th-century alterations) is considered to be of negative significance.

Garden Wall

A roadside garden wall with archway links Blake's Cottage to the surrounding historic streetscape. The wall is located on Blake's Road and forms a continuous boundary line from 12 Vicarage Lane at the northern end, past Blake's Cottage, and onward to No. 3 Blake's Road on the south side.

Description and Materials

The wall dates from the 18th century or early 19th century and is constructed of coursed flint cobblestones with orange-red brick quoins, and features a rounded top.

Quoins are present at both ends of the wall, flanking a near-central entrance. At the left (north) end, a later flint cobblestone wall rises over a round archway, linking the roadside wall directly to the cottage. This archway is a distinctive feature.

Significance

The wall derives its significance from its architectural and historical interest as a characteristic example of flint and brick construction, typical of the local vernacular. Its materials, form, and alignment contribute to the historic setting and visual coherence of Blake's Cottage and the wider Felpham Conservation Area.

As a continuous boundary feature, the wall plays an important role in defining the spatial relationship between the cottage and its surroundings. It enhances the legibility of the historic plot, reinforces the semi-rural character of the area.

The Felpham Conservation Area

Felpham conservation area is a compact historic area, developed at the core of the village. The village developed slowly until the early 20th century where development grew exponentially. The area contains an informal street layout with unfolding views, with the majority of properties being located close to the carriage way which creates a sense of enclosure.

The Proposals

The proposal is described as the replacement of the first floor masonry and thatched roof, minor masonry works including erection of a new pitch, thatched, roof with hips to the east and internal alterations including relocating walls and removal of two east chimney stacks. Essentially this

application is removing the first floor 19th century element (with pitched roof) and replacing it with a new thatched roof over the ground floor.

The cottage's primary significance lies in its unique association with William Blake, who lived here between 1800 and 1803. Although later additions have altered its appearance, archaeological analysis and Blake's own sketches provide a reasonably accurate basis for reconstructing its early 19th-century form.

The proposed removal of the mid-19th-century first floor and associated pitched roof will result in the loss of historic fabric, including masonry, joinery, chimney stacks, and a small winding staircase. This intervention represents a degree of harm to the building's layered history and material authenticity.

Reinstating the cottage to its early 19th-century form, as experienced by William Blake, using historically appropriate materials and construction techniques, would significantly enhance the legibility of its primary significance. This approach would allow the building's unique cultural and artistic associations to be more clearly understood and appreciated, while also reinforcing its architectural integrity.

Such restoration would offer valuable interpretive opportunities, enabling visitors and researchers to better understand the domestic context in which Blake lived and worked. It would also correct longstanding misconceptions about the Blakes' lifestyle and improve public understanding of vernacular architecture of the period.

Presenting the cottage in a form that evokes Blake's time would be of greater public interest than retaining its current configuration. This would enhance its overall significance and constitute a clear heritage benefit.

While any intervention must be carefully balanced against the building's cumulative historic value, a sensitive and well-researched restoration could reinforce its cultural significance and support its continued protection at Grade II*. It is clear that extensive research has been undertaken as part of the assessment of the current proposals. The Trust's careful archaeological and archival research provides a clear and convincing justification for the proposed changes.

Presenting the cottage in a form that evokes Blake's time would be of greater public interest than retaining its current configuration. This would enhance its overall significance and constitute a clear heritage benefit.

Furthermore, the proposal aligns with established precedents, where the homes of artists and writers have been sensitively restored to reflect the period of their most significant occupation—such as Dove Cottage (Wordsworth) and Keats House. This reinforces the appropriateness of the approach and its potential to contribute meaningfully to public heritage interpretation.

Therefore, the harm is considered to be justified and outweighed by the heritage benefits of restoring the cottage to its Blake-era form. These benefits include:

- Enhanced public understanding of vernacular architecture.
- Improved interpretive and educational value.
- Correction of misconceptions about the Blakes' domestic life.
- Clearer presentation of the most significant phase of the building's history.

The proposals are therefore considered to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly in relation to paragraphs 200 and 202, which support heritage-led approaches where harm is outweighed by public benefit.

Conclusion

Therefore, whilst some harm has been identified, it is considered to be justified and outweighed by the heritage benefits of restoring the cottage to its Blake-era form. Therefore, on balance, the proposal is acceptable and should be determined in accordance with the relevant policies within the Development Plan, along with these comments. You will also need to take into account the contents of section 16/66/72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

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