Design and access statement

Conservation of wall decorations

Hunter's Moon Cottage, 8 The Street, Shoreham by Sea BN43 5NJ

Introduction

Hunter's Moon is a 16th century Grade II attached listed building in the Old Shoreham Conservation Area. Constructed originally as a timber box-framed dwelling, the historic building has been converted into two properties and adapted and extended in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The property stood in open farmland at the edge of Old Shoreham village until the early 20th century but is now surrounded by suburban developments.

Proposal

This application is to provide access to concealed historic wallpapers for investigation, recording and conservation and to display samples in situ behind conservation glass.

We have recently removed 20th century fitted cupboards and sanitary fittings in two first floor rooms.[1] Removal of these fittings revealed fragmented historic wall decorations concealed behind lath-and-plaster wall linings installed in the Victorian era. Further investigation has identified these as 18th and 19th century wall papers which are regarded as being of 'aesthetic and evidential' significance. We have been advised by a specialist from Lincoln Conservation at the University of Lincoln, and her report and recommendations are included with the application. We propose to:

- clean and secure the papers in situ where possible
- clean and store fragments that have become completely detached
- install a glass panel in place of a section of lath and plaster to display paper samples in situ and enable monitoring of their condition

Design principles

One of the overall purposes of repairs has been to reveal and restore historic features of the cottage where possible. The wallcoverings are an accidental discovery in the course of repairs which has enabled us to make a record of the fabrics and their locations. While it would not be practical or appropriate to reveal them in their entirety, we think that permanently displaying a sample of the papers provides an insight to the way the property has been decorated and altered by earlier owners and occupants. In addition to displaying the wallpapers themselves it gives a view of earlier lime-wash decoration of the original timber framework and wattle-and-daub panels. These have been preserved behind the 18th century papers and 19th century plaster walls, whereas elsewhere in the house they have been erased or covered with 20th century paint and plaster.

The proposed action minimises loss of historic fabric; conserves most of the decorations in their current state of repair and in the environment that has protected them up to now; and enables monitoring of their condition. The display panel, together with the report we have commissioned and the stored fragments, draws attention to their existence and significance for future occupiers and custodians. The alteration is reversible. The glass panel will be inserted between original wall studs and the lath-and-plaster section that has been removed could be restored if necessary.

[1] See AWDM/0677/19 *Application for Listed Building Consent for demolition of existing garage and porch and construction of single-storey rear/side extension. Also including various related and non related external and internal alterations.*

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