



**Chris Butler MfA  
Archaeological Services Ltd**



**An Assessment of Significance  
of St Margarets, West Street,  
Ditchling, West Sussex**

TQ 32478 15205

by  
Keith Butler PIFA

March 2012

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Appendix 1: Grade II Listing Description

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1** Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd (CBAS) was commissioned by Mr R Maclaren (The Client) to carry out an Assessment of Significance at St Margarets, West Street, Ditchling, West Sussex, with specific reference to a boxed-in staircase.
- 1.2** The property is located in the Ditchling Conservation Area, on the south side of West Street, opposite the village green and St Margarets Church on the north side.
- 1.3** St Margarets is a Grade II listed building (Ref. No.292861), assigned on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1965. The property was originally two flint built cottages built in approximately 1705<sup>1</sup>. These were converted into a single dwelling in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (possibly between 1800 to 1832)<sup>2</sup>, at the time that the building became the Vicarage in 1926.
- 1.4** The building is of two storeys with a third floor housing two rooms in the roof space. To the north of the house there is a small building, with the western part being a garage and the eastern a general storeroom.
- 1.5** The brief walk through survey was conducted by the author on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012. The specific aim of the survey was to assess the importance and relevance of the boxed-in staircase in the central part of the house. The project was managed for CBAS by Chris Butler MifA.

## **2.0 Methodology**

- 2.1** The survey of the building comprised a visual inspection of the building. Written notes were made with digital photographs also being taken for reference. No measurements were taken during this brief survey.
- 2.2** The survey was only of the ground floor, with special attention being paid to the boxed-in staircase adjacent to the southern wall of the dining room on the eastern side of the building. The basement was also briefly inspected. The observations and description of the remainder of the building are intended to put the staircase into context with the remainder of the house.

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<sup>1</sup> Per Com. Current owner of the property

<sup>2</sup> Listing description ref 292861

### 3.0 General External Description

- 3.1 Externally there is no evidence of the original two flint cottages, with all of the walls have a rendered finish, which has been painted white. There is a small single storey projecting from the southern end of western elevation, which has a flat roof. There are five sash windows in the western elevation, all having Venetian shutters excepting the southernmost window of the ground floor. The sash windows of the first floor on the southern elevation also have the same type shutters (these appear to be a later addition). The southern elevation has three fluted pilasters with Ionic Capitals (**Plate 2**). The pilasters on the eastern elevation are much plainer and do not date to the original pair of flint cottages, but they are Georgian features (c.1800 – 1832) and most likely date to the conversion of the cottages into a single house at that time. Also projecting from the western end of the southern elevation there is a later extension with angled sides, with a sash window in the south and western walls. There is a door with eight glazed panels in the eastern wall.



**Plate 2:** St Margarets Southern elevation

- 3.2 The roof hipped roof has a covering is of slate. There are two chimney stacks, both with rendered finish. The main chimney stack is located at the southern end of the ridge of the roof; the second smaller chimney stack is on the outside of southern end of the western wall. There is a single dormer window inserted in the west and eastern sides of the roof.

## 4.0 Survey

- 4.1** The staircase is located adjacent to the southern wall of the dining room, with the original dividing wall of the two cottages to the west. The staircase is now boxed-in, with this space being used as two cupboards. The lower cupboard to the west contains the lower four stairs, with the upper cupboard having another four. The lower part of the staircase is of wooden panelling following the line of the staircase, with upper part and the lower boxing-in of vertical tongue and groove planks (**Plate 3**). It is difficult to be precise about the dating of the boxing-in as there are no significant features, however the style and workmanship would be typical of the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both of the cupboards have doors constructed of narrower vertical wooden planks, with the upper cupboard having a band of decorative moulding above the door.



**Plate 3:** St Margarets The boxed-in staircase

- 4.2** The stairs are of plain wooden construction, with a band of moulded beading running horizontally at the top of the risers (**Plate 4**). The northern and southern edges of each stair have been painted, leaving the bare wood exposed in the centre. Running up the southern side of the staircase is a wooden skirting board with a moulded three grooves decoration on their upper part. The underside of the staircase viewed from the access stairs to the basement has been blocked in with lathes and plaster (**Plate 5**). During the survey the bathroom above the staircase was visually inspected for any evidence for the upper part of the staircase, or the access to the staircase from the first floor; none was evident.



**Plate 4:** St Margarets Detail of stairs



**Plate 5:** St Margarets Lathes and plaster

**4.3** The only access to the first floor is a staircase located in the north-western corner of the reception hall. This is located in the original western cottage of which due to the many later alterations to the original room layout is only suggested by the boxed in sections of the upper part of the wall that can be seen below the current ceiling. These appear to describe the dividing wall between the two cottages and the original room divisions. The two cottages were mirror images of each other, but no evidence remains of the staircase to the first floor of the western cottage as this wall has been completely removed.

**4.4** Both of the original cottages had cellars located under their southern end, both of these remain. This the only place noted during the survey were the original flint construction of the walls of the cottages is visible. There is only access to the cellar of the eastern cottage. This is currently accessed by a flight of brick built steps under the boxed-in staircase. This is a later entrance as originally the cellar was reached by a trap door in what is now the kitchen<sup>3</sup>. The only current access to the cellar of the western cottage is through an opening in the northern end of the west wall of the other cottage. The cellars are mirror images of each other, with the supports for the main chimney being in the centre of the dividing wall between them (**Plate 7**).



**Plate 6:** St Margarets Flint walls of Cellar



**Plate 7:** St Margarets Chimney support

<sup>3</sup> Per. Com Current owner of property

## **5.0 Discussion**

**5.1** There is very little visible remaining of the two original flint cottages, with only the cellars remaining, and most likely the boxed-in staircase, which does appear to be original. There appeared to be no features remaining of the western cottage above the cellar, due to the alterations when they were converted into a single dwelling during the Georgian period and on later occasions. The later alterations appear to be the addition of at least two extensions, the single storey on the western elevation and the projection on the eastern end of the southern wall of the drawing room. The alterations over the life of the building also include the removal in part or completely of the internal dividing walls, and the access to the cellars being re-located.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

**6.1** It is my opinion that although the boxed-in staircase is most likely one of the few visible features remaining of the original pair of flint cottages, it has no particular architectural or archaeological interest or merit. Combined with this it now serves no purpose as it is in complete isolation, and therefore there seems to be no real purpose to its retention.

**6.2** If the staircase is to be removed, it is recommended that it is recorded as part of an English Heritage Level 3 survey of the entire building<sup>4</sup>. This might possibly reveal more information of the earlier phases and the subsequent development of the building, and allows an opportunity to record the later Georgian house, whilst ensuring a full record of the staircase is preserved within its context before it is removed.

## **7.0 Acknowledgements**

**7.1** I would like to thank Mr R. Maclaren for commissioning this Assessment of Significance survey, and the current owners of St Margarets for their hospitality and information about the property. The project was managed for CBAS by Chris Butler MifA.

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<sup>4</sup> *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* – English Heritage 2006.

## Appendix 1 Grade II Listing

**DesigUID:** DES2225      **Type:** Listed Building      **Status:**  
Active

**Preferred Ref**      **LBSUID**      **Volume/Map/Item**  
292861      292861      946, 20, 310

**Name:** THE VICARAGE

**Grade:** II      **Date Assigned:** 20/08/1965      **Amended:**      **Revoked:**

### Legal Description

DITCHLING      WEST STREET 1. 5206      (south side)

The Vicarage TQ 3215 20/310      20.8.65. II      GV

2. Originally a pair of flint cottages. Converted into one house in the early C19 and the Vicarage since 1926. Two

storeys. Two windows facing south, these windows facing west. Stuccoed. Wide eaves cornice. Hipped slate

roof. Windows with Venetian shutters and glazing bars intact. Each window-bay of south front is flanked by fluted

ionic pilasters. Later bay on ground floor of westernmost window-bay.

Listing NGR: TQ3247815205

### Curatorial Notes

Type and date: Early C19 HOUSE. Date: from 1800 to 1832

Type and date: Earlier HOUSE.

Type and date: Since 1926 VICARAGE. Date: from 1926

Main material: flint

Main material: stucco

Covering material: slate

### Designating Organisation:

#### Location

**Grid Reference:** TQ 32478 15205 (point)

**Map sheet:** TQ31NW      **Area (Ha):**

**Administrative Areas - None recorded**

#### Postal Addresses

24 West Street, Ditchling, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8TS

#### Listed Building Addresses

Statutory

THE VICARAGE

#### Sources - None recorded

#### Associated Monuments - None

#### Additional Information

**List Locality:**

**List Parish:** DITCHLING

**List District:** LEWES

**List County:** EAST SUSSEX

DesignationFullRpt      Report generated by HBSMR from exeGesIS SDM Ltd



## **Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd**

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp.

**Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd** is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

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