

Meeting date: 1st November 2021

Report to: CPH Climate Change,
Planning and Housing

Subject/report title: The Cottage
932 Warwick Road
Solihull

Report from: Mark Andrews
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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To request the addition of The Cottage, 932 Warwick Road, Solihull, to the Council's Local List of Heritage Assets.

2. Decision recommended

- 2.1 To agree the addition of The Cottage, 932 Warwick Road, Solihull to the Local List of Heritage Assets.

3. Matters for Consideration

- 3.1 The report recommends the addition of this historic building to the Local List of Heritage Assets to provide it with some additional protection following Historic England's decision not to add it to the national Heritage List.

- 3.2 The interest found in heritage assets can be one or more of Historic, Architectural, Artistic and Archaeological. Designated heritage assets of national significance are included on the statutory list maintained by Historic England. The demolition or alteration of designated heritage assets on that list requires consent from the local planning authority and, in some instances, Historic England. Unauthorised works to them are a criminal offence. Heritage assets that do not meet the exacting standards for inclusion in the statutory list can nevertheless be of significant local architectural or historic interest and often contribute much to the local character and distinctiveness. Whilst designated heritage assets are of the highest significance, the loss or degradation of locally important heritage assets can produce a cumulative negative impact upon the experience of their locality and upon the overall character of the Borough.
- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that local planning authorities recognize heritage assets (whether designated or undesignated) as “*an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance*”. The accompanying Planning Practice Guidance notes that non-designated heritage assets have a degree of significance that merits consideration during planning decisions, and that some authorities “*..identify some non-designated heritage assets as locally listed*”. In accordance with the NPPF, the Council maintains a list of such buildings, the Local List, to encourage their preservation.

The Cottage, 932 Warwick Road, Solihull

- 3.4 The 2020 sale particulars for this cottage with clear architectural and historic interest include details and photographs that led the Local History Society to request Historic England to consider its addition to the statutory list. This addition was declined. During the assessment for listing the owner provided Historic England with additional photographs of the building, and discussed the significant degree of alteration to the building with them. In its representation the Council supported the listing request because of the architectural and historic significance of the building. In addition, it was emphasised that although the site is not within a conservation area, the cottage is considered to form a positive element in the setting of the adjacent grade 1 listed Gatehouse built for the Greswoldes of Malvern Hall by Sir John Soane. Historic England were not able to visit the site, and so used submitted material and their Listing Selection Guide for Vernacular Houses (December 2017) to assess this building. The detail below summarises their report.
- 3.5 There is currently a presumption to list all pre-1700 vernacular houses that retain significant early fabric; extensive losses of fabric will usually weaken the case. The Cottage is thought to have been built during the 16th or 17th century. Evidence of this is described at Appendix A, along with other features and characteristics of the cottage. In summary, extensive alterations have diluted the interest of the building.
- 3.6 The Cottage appears to pre-date the Grade I listed Gatehouse (c.1798) to its south-east, which John Constable may have sketched during a visit to Malvern Hall. The proximity of the two gives a degree of visual group value, but not enough to strengthen the listing case.
- 3.7 Although an interesting example of a local vernacular dwelling, The Cottage has been subject to cumulative alterations and its degree of survival is less than is required for

listing. Historic England noted its '*clear local interest*', but consider that it falls just short of the level of special interest to merit national listing. The association with the gatehouse (936) and Constable's visit are not strong enough to alter this.

3.8 The above is all considered to support the addition to the Local List instead.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

4.1 An alternative option to statutory listing is to add the building to the Local List to give its heritage significance greater weight in the planning process. There is also an option to 'do nothing', which would make proposals to demolish or alter the building more difficult to resist or satisfactorily revise. Proposals at the house and site would fall within the setting of the grade 1 listed gatehouse and that would be an important consideration when determining planning applications at The Cottage. Harm to its significance (including through changes in its setting) should be avoided. Proposals would also need to comply with Local Plan policy P16 and other NPPF requirements for Cultural Heritage. However, these would be unlikely to moderate proposals for some alterations and additions to the building that might harm its architectural and historic interest and its contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

5.1 Controls over the demolition or alteration of buildings on the Local List are not as extensive as for buildings on the Statutory List. Formal consent is not necessarily required for alterations and addition to the list does not automatically reduce permitted development rights. However, inclusion on the Local List does provide some degree of protection - it is a material consideration when determining relevant planning applications, and recognizes the special architectural and/ or historic character of a building, structure or place.

5.2 The principal criteria for inclusion by the Secretary of State of a building on the statutory list are: architectural interest; historic interest; close historical association with nationally important people or events; and group value. Not all will necessarily be relevant to every case. Similar criteria apply to the inclusion of a heritage asset on a Local List. Criteria for additions are based upon those used by Historic England for considering additions to the Statutory List and have previously been agreed. In this case, following assessment against these criteria, Historic England have acknowledged the clear local significance of the buildings and site.

5.3 The addition to the Local List would help to maintain the positive contribution of the building to the setting of the grade 1 listed Gatehouse at 936, and to local character and distinctiveness. The Warwick Road outside the house is relatively busy as it serves many dwellings and traffic for Brueton Park. The Cottage is therefore seen to the right of the grade 1 listed gate house by substantial numbers of people each year. Together with some good inter war houses in extensive plots to the south, it lends some historic continuity to the setting of the highly significant listed building. The Cottage is also part of the tangible built heritage resulting from several centuries of the Malvern Hall estate and maintaining its contribution to that story will allow it to be more fully understood and appreciated in the future.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revitalising our towns and local centres. 2. Deliver UK Central (UKC) and maximise the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply, quality and energy efficiency of housing, especially affordable and social housing. 	<p>The addition to the Local List would help to maintain local character and distinctiveness at the edge of a key town centre park, adding to the visitor appeal for the town centre</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Enhance Solihull's natural and physical environment. 5. Improve Solihull's air quality. 6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions. 	<p>The retention of historic buildings of clear local value supports policies to conserve and enhance the historic environment, maintain local character and distinctiveness, and retain and make active use of the embodied energy within traditional buildings</p>
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 8. Enable communities to thrive. 9. Sustainable, quality care and support for adults & children with complex needs. 	<p>Retaining historic buildings preserves local character and can help to ensure a sense of local pride and well-being within communities</p>
<p>10. Promote employee wellbeing</p>	<p>None</p>

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 The process of requesting addition to the statutory list involved Historic England liaising with the building owner and discussing the implications. The owner has been notified of the proposed addition to the Local List, is aware of this report and the process, has the opportunity to comment on the addition, and will be formally advised of the outcome.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 None

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 None

6.5 Risk implications:

- 6.5.1 If the building is not added to the Local List, it would be more difficult to ensure its retention and carefully managed change, and secure its continuing contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Subject to the development of technologies and methods, the site may reveal more about past human activities and patterns of settlement in the future.

6.6 Equality implications:

- 6.6.1 None

6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), the Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

- 6.7.1 Encouraging the conservation and active use of heritage assets reflects the WMCA recognition of the value of heritage to the character of the region and the character and distinctiveness of the individual local authority areas.

7. List of appendices referred to

- 7.1 Appendix A - Assessment of building to address request for listing by Historic England.
- 7.2 Appendix B – Location Plan
- 7.3 Appendix C - Photographs

8. Background papers used to compile this report

- 8.1 Historic England Listing Selection Guidance –

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-vernacular-houses/>

9. List of other relevant documents

- 9.1 None