

PROPOSED WORKS AT 1 AND 2
SPRING BANK COTTAGES (FORMER
KNOTT END SEA SCHOOL)

KNOTT END, BOROUGH OF WYRE

ADDITIONAL HERITAGE STATEMENT

OCTOBER 2022

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1. *Designation*

In planning terms, the application properties are considered to be an undesignated heritage asset.

2. *Proposed development*

Proposals have been submitted to Wyre Borough Council for the erection of a front balcony to 1 and 2 Spring Bank Cottages, along with changes to external finishes and window openings (22/00976/FUL).

3. *Heritage impact*

The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the undesignated asset.

4. *Background to this report*

The current proposal is a resubmission of a previous scheme (22/00510/FUL) which was refused at committee in September 2022 owing to what was perceived as a detrimental impact upon the significance of the non-designated buildings. This was despite the scheme being supported by Wyre Borough Council's conservation officer, along with a heritage assessment produced by Garry Miller Heritage Consultancy in July 2022 which demonstrated that the proposals sustained the significance of the buildings.

5. *Purpose of this report*

This report supports the resubmitted application, re-iterating and emphasising that the proposal will have no adverse effect upon the non-designated heritage asset and rebutting the specific reasons for refusal.

6. *Summary of the buildings*

The application properties were probably originally fishermen's dwellings and are likely to be of early 19th century date. By the 1960s they had been acquired by Lancashire County Council for use as the Knott End Sea Centre, after which extensive alteration took place. Both buildings are now covered with ugly pebbledash render that was probably applied in the mid/late 20th century. They have a single-storey open porches which probably also belong to this date, as do the vertical casement front windows. As early 19th century fishermen's cottages, they were likely to have had horizontal casements originally. Windows of this type are indeed present on the neighbouring cottages to the south, although their frames have been renewed. The interiors have been altered, with little of interest remaining.

7. Their significance

The significance of the application building was summarised as follows in the original heritage assessment by Garry Miller Heritage Consultancy:

As an undesignated asset, the significance of the properties extends to the strictly local context (i.e. Knott End) as a pair of altered fishermen's cottages built alongside the river probably in the early 19th century. Given the extensive alteration of the fabric, both internally and externally, this significance now derives from their historical function, and later communal role as the Sea Centre, rather than their architectural merits.

8. Conservation officer's response

Wyre's conservation officer supported the proposals in his consultation response dated June 14, 2022:

The current application follows comments made on the previous scheme, submitted by the same agent. My previous comments, and those of the heritage specialist, have been taken into account and the current application design is the result.

As a result it is considered that the proposed development would preserve the essential character of the heritage assets and would therefore be acceptable. It is also recognised that the accommodation, as it stands currently, requires considerable adaptation and updating to allow current ways of living to be accommodated. It is considered therefore that the current proposal would provide the buildings with a secure and sustainable future.

The application is therefore considered to be acceptable.

9. Rebuttal of reasons for refusal

The reason for refusal, as worded in the decision notice, was given as follows:

The development proposed would by reason of its design and size of the balcony and windows and the removal of the storm porches have a detrimental impact on the significance of the non-designated heritage asset and would not comply with the provisions of Policy of CDMP5 of the Wyre Local Plan 2011-2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

This decision appears to have been based upon an incomplete understanding of the building and its significance. To clarify:

- 1. The porches are not original.** Although porches appear to be shown on the 1890 and 1909-1910 OS maps (reproduced in the heritage assessment), the present structures have a mid/late 20th century appearance. They were probably built when the premises were in use as the Sea Centre. The significance of the present porches is therefore low. Their removal cannot therefore be considered in all fairness to be harmful.

2. **The present windows are not original.** The existing vertical windows are also believed to date from the mid/late 20th century. The proposed horizontal casement windows have been selected as being more appropriate to the true age and vernacular character of the building. They therefore represent a clear enhancement over what currently exists.
3. **The balcony was not recognised as harmful either by Wyre's conservation officer or by the original heritage assessment.** The latter acknowledged that while this has no historic precedent in a building of this type, given the altered nature of the cottages and the fact that their significance is more historic rather than architectural, it is considered the effect of the balcony will not be adverse.

10. Concluding statement

National planning guidance (NPPF, paragraph 203) requires a balanced planning judgment on applications affecting non-designated assets. The significance of the application property resides in its historical role and associations rather than the interest of its altered fabric. In this planning balance, the current application is favourable as it preserves this historical significance while allowing the building to be adapted to meet current living requirements. This view is shared by Wyre's council's own heritage specialist. There is hence no reason why the proposal should be refused on heritage grounds. Planning approval ought therefore to be awarded without delay.