

**PROPOSED HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING INCLUDING
CREATION OF TERRACING OF REAR GARDEN (PART-
RETROSPECTIVE CONSENT)**

IVY COTTAGE, WILBY ROAD, MEARS ASHBY

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)

***Alex Stevenson Building Conservation & Design* is recognized by the IHBC as a professional historic environment service provider. The IHBC is the professional body for Historic England, local authority conservation officers and heritage consultants.**



1. Proposed Development

1.1 Due to inappropriate advice having been given to the owner/applicant by his builder, the following development has been carried out without the necessary consent:

- Modification of the sloping rear cottage garden to form level terracing by construction of retaining walls and access steps; and
- Removal of two areas of brick walling, one in the side wall of the barn on the left, and the other at the gate at the top of the garden (these items part of the building operation to facilitate access for materials and machinery).

1.2 Retrospective consent is sought for this garden levelling/terracing work.

1.3 However, it is additionally proposed to:

- Reinstate the removed brick fabric from the barn and the gate-side as-was, using the original material (which has been retained), replicating the existing bond pattern and using an appropriate lime mortar;
- Lay sandstone flags as a finish at the mid-terrace level; lay brick paviours at the upper and lower patio/terrace levels;
- Replace existing brickwork to retaining walls and step-sides with alternative sympathetic Flemish-bond red brick constructed in lime mortar;
- Finish the two groups of stairs with sandstone paving;
- Attach 1.1m “estate”-style railings on top of retaining walls (upper and lower terraces);
- Underpin existing barn on left due to reduced levels;
- Doorway linking cottage with adjacent barn: lower door opening to suit new ground levels, fit new timber access gate with fixed top section and fit new timber side access panel with top-fixed fanlight.

1.4 Whilst the new terracing was original intended to work in conjunction with the development of the stone barn on the left, the applicant now no longer wishes to pursue the latter and is seeking consent independently for the terracing simply as a way of creating more usable sitting out/socializing space in the rear garden.

2. Statement of Significance

2.1 Two designated heritage assets are directly relevant to this Assessment, viz:

- the grade II listed *Ivy Cottage and Attached Barn to East*, and
- Mears Ashby Conservation Area.

Ivy Cottage

2.2 The listed building's special interest lies in its status as a good example of a mid-18th century house and the survival of many of its detailed architectural features, including regular coursed lias, slate roof, barred casement windows with wood lintels, 6-panel door with 19th century wooden porch, ashlar gable parapets and kneelers, brick and stone chimney stacks, and 18th century barn attached to left. The house interior features an open fireplace with bressumer.¹

2.3 The listed building's significance can, therefore, be expressed in terms of its individual architectural and historic interest as well as the legibility of its design vocabulary.

Mears Ashby Conservation Area (CA)

2.4 The CA's special architectural and historic interest is identified in the council's published Character Appraisal. This is summarized as deriving from the following factors:

- Structural river valley running through village centre and land east of Lady's Lane, providing complementary green space;
- Clustered settlement pattern;
- Historic materials and features include squared or regular coursed lias (ironstone or limestone), ashlar gable parapets/kneelers, gabled dormers, brick or stone chimney stacks some in ashlar with moulded cornice, wood casement windows and lintels, stone mullion windows, some cast-iron glazing bars, roofing mainly in slate or plain tile, also pantile, thatch, Collyweston and corrugated iron, red brick, brick dressings (on stone), brick detail at eaves or verges, painted render, plank or ledged/braced doors, weatherboarding, porch/porch canopies, flat-roofed or gabled dormers at eaves or on purlin, and boundary walling in stone or occasional brick;
- Buildings between 1.5 and 2.5 storeys in height and dating from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries; commonly located at rear-edge-of-highway.

2.5 The significance of the CA, therefore, relates to the distinctive sense-of-place created by the configuration and inter-relationship of the various historic buildings and structures, the consistently clear historic and architectural legibility of the built fabric, and the complementary topographical and visual relationship to the central river valley and other structural green space.

¹ HE Listing Citation, 13.5.86. UID: 1040701.

3. Justification for the Proposed Development and Impact upon the Significance of the Heritage Assets

Impact on Significance of Listed Building

3.1 As outlined above, the listed building's significance is derived from its architectural and historic interest as well as the legibility of its design vocabulary.

3.2 None of these values or characteristics is harmed or affected in any material way by the proposed development. The hard landscaping is complemented by a high-quality soft landscaping programme which, as illustrated in the accompanying graphics, together provides a pleasing and congruent backdrop to the historic fabric.

3.3 Also, from a building maintenance standpoint, it should be recognized that the broadening of the pathway immediately behind the cottage allows better provision for storm-water channelling away from the fabric.

3.4 Essentially, the effect of the proposed development on the asset's character and appearance is seen as neutral in building conservation terms.

Impact on Significance of Conservation Area

3.5 The CA's special interest, as indicated, lies in the form, appearance and inter-relationship of the constituent historic buildings creating a distinctive sense-of-place including the pleasing topographical relationship that exists between the built form and the village's central valley.

3.6 As the proposed development is not seen from any public place there can be no material detrimental effect upon the CA character or appearance. The proposed works are not considered to offend any of the elements of the asset's stated special interest.

3.7 It is considered, therefore, that the scheme will successfully preserve the significance of the CA.

4. Impact upon Setting of Neighbouring Heritage Assets

4.1 Consideration, finally, needs to be given to the setting of other nearby listed buildings: *Mears Ashby Hall, Stables Approximately 20m South of Mears Ashby Hall, Dovecote Approximately 20m East of Mears Ashby Hall, Summer House Approximately 50m South of Mears Ashby Hall and The Griffins Head Public House.*

4.2 The compatibility of the proposed development with the heritage assets already cited in this Assessment extends equally to its inter-relationship with the above listed buildings. Their respective settings are, therefore, considered to be unharmed by the proposed development.

5. Conclusion

5.1 It is considered that the proposed works remain conservation-neutral, thereby avoiding any harm in NPPF-terms to the significance of the heritage assets involved.

5.2 The scheme is, therefore, compliant with the provisions of the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 193-196 *Considering Potential Impacts* covering the issue of harm to heritage assets.

5.3 The statutory requirements concerning the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings and to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas contained in sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are also considered to be properly met.