

## Barker-Mills Conservation

# Heritage Statement

Walnut Tree Cottage

Itchenor Road

West Itchenor

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## **1.0 Introduction and purpose of report**

- 1.1 Barker-Mills Conservation is an independent, expert consultancy advising on the historic environment. Nigel Barker-Mills, the author of this report, trained as an architectural historian and has an honours degree and doctorate awarded by the University of Reading. Following appointment as a Fieldworker for the Accelerated Resurvey of the Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for the county of Surrey, he was employed by Surrey County Council as a specialist historic environment officer advising on all aspects of the management of historic buildings and areas. He founded and subsequently chaired the Surrey Conservation Officers' Group and commissioned the first Buildings at Risk survey for the county. During his time in Surrey, he obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Building Conservation from the Architectural Association of London, which included preparing a thesis on the issues around education of construction professionals working on historic buildings.
- 1.2 In 2000 he joined the south-east region of English Heritage in the role of Historic Areas Adviser during which time he advised on new development and regeneration issues across Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Oxfordshire. He provided expert monitoring for the Heritage Lottery Fund on area grant schemes and was the national lead for English Heritage in Developing the "Building in Context Toolkit". This training programme, delivered by the national network of Architecture Centres in collaboration with the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), won a national planning award in 2008.
- 1.3 In 2009 Nigel joined the London Region of English Heritage (later Historic England) as Head of Partnerships and subsequently Head of Development Management, with responsibility for strategic relationships with the Greater London Authority and managing the London Historic Environment Record. In 2011-2 he was appointed Planning Director for the London Region, leading a team of 40 specialist Inspectors and advisers, including architects, planners and surveyors providing the statutory advice and grant assistance across the capital. He retired from Historic England in 2016.
- 1.4 Nigel is a full, founder, member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and has served on both the south-east branch, as Chairman and Secretary, and also the national committee. He was Chairman of the Editorial Board of "Context" the Journal of the IHBC for 6 years to which he has contributed several articles. In 2014 he was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. In 2017 he was appointed Chair of the Heritage Advisory Group of the Canals and Rivers Trust.

- I.5 Nigel has been a member of several expert design panels, including those in Oxford and the London Borough of Haringey and has also published on architectural history and conservation. In 2015 he presented a paper at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Oxford Joint Planning Law Conference, an annual event organised by the Law Society, the Bar Council, the RTPI and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The paper on “Heritage Assets and their Setting” has been published in the Journal of Planning and Environment Law: Occasional Papers No 43 (*pub Sweet & Maxwell*)
- I.6 Barker-Mills Conservation has worked with clients across both public and private sectors including the Greater London Authority; Guildford Borough Council; Hart District Council and Historic England in both the south-east and the north-west. Private sector clients include the Gascoyne Cecil Estate and JCB and recently Nigel prepared the draft Historic England Guidance on the Conservation of Georgian and Victorian Terraced Housing issued in July 2020.
- I.7 This report has been commissioned by Mr M Wombwell and its purpose is to set out the heritage significance of Walnut Tree Cottage, West Itchenor. The Statement enables the applicant to demonstrate the potential impact of their proposals upon that significance in accordance with paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework, as amended 2021 (NPPF) and is intended to assist Chichester District Council in its determination of the application for development. The Statement has been informed by the Historic England advice note on statements of heritage significance published 2019.<sup>1</sup>
- I.8 The statement is based upon information in the Historic Environment Record, the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) and secondary, published, sources (see Appendices). The views expressed in the report are the true and professional judgement of the author and provided in accordance with the Code of Practice of his professional Institute; the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)

## 2.0 Significance

- 2.1 Significance is a term used in “*Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*” published by English Heritage in April 2008. Significance is the sum of an asset’s cultural and natural heritage values and only through understanding the significance of a place is it possible to assess how the qualities that people value are vulnerable to harm and loss. *Conservation Principles* were primarily produced to help ensure consistency of approach by English Heritage (now Historic England) in carrying out their role as the Government’s statutory

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<sup>1</sup> Historic England 2019 *Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12*. Swindon. Historic England.

advisor and leading expert body on the historic environment in England. It was hoped that the *Principles* would be read and used by local authorities, property owners, developers and their advisers, and this has become the case across the heritage sector.

- 2.2 *Conservation Principles* are being updated and revised so that when describing significance, the language is more closely aligned with the terms used in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and those used in designation and planning legislation. These proposed terms are *archaeological*; *architectural*; *artistic* and *historic* and it is intended that they will be described as ‘interests’ rather than values. However, the interests and previous heritage values cover the same ground. In this report the new interests will be used with the former value, provided in parenthesis.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.3 People may value a place for many reasons beyond utility or personal association: for its distinctive architecture or landscape, the story it can tell about its past, its connection with notable people and events; its landform, flora and fauna, because they find it beautiful or inspiring, or for its role as a focus of a community. The heritage interests that provide the framework for a structured, comprehensive understanding of the heritage importance of a place are currently identified as: *Archaeological Interest (Evidential Value)* *Historic Interest (Historical value and Communal Value)*; and *Architectural and Artistic interest (Aesthetic Value)*.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.4 Any building, monument, site, place, area or landscape has the potential to be a heritage asset and as sites and society evolves over time, their value and interest will also evolve. All heritage assets have significance but this is on a sliding scale. It is the degree and nature of the significance that will determine the level and type of protection which will be appropriate under law and policy, including national or local designation, and which should inform future management. Where the identified heritage or cultural interest of a site meets defined criteria, it will then be eligible for designation, which at a national level includes Scheduling and Listing.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.5 Walnut Tree Cottage is a building of little architectural or historic interest but it is located within the West Itchenor Conservation Area, which is a Designated Heritage Asset.

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<sup>2</sup> At time of writing this report the consultation has concluded but no formal response or amended document has been issued. Historic England website

<sup>3</sup> Conservation Principles pages 28-32 paragraphs 30-60;

<sup>4</sup> Designated Heritage Asset comprise World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation. NPPF Annex 2 Glossary p66.

*The significance of West Itchenor Conservation Area*

- 2.6 West Itchenor is a small village on the Manhood Peninsula which overlooks Bosham Hoe across the Chichester Channel. The village lies within the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), designated in 1964 for its unique blend of open water and more intimate creeks, surrounded by attractive landscape. The existing conservation area is modestly sized and linear in form, stretching along The Street, a cul-de-sac which ends in the Hard, a boat storage and launching area which overlooks the water to the north.
- 2.7 The West Itchenor Conservation Area was first designated on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1976 and the most recent Character appraisal and Management Proposals were developed with Community involvement and subsequently adopted by the Council in 2010. At this time the original conservation area boundary was reconsidered and a large extension to the south was recommended for inclusion. This extension was from Walnut Tree Cottage and continued as far as Goose Barn.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.8 The village has Saxon origins and is recorded in the Domesday Survey and was established adjacent to the then shoreline. The parish church has origins from the 13<sup>th</sup> century but was remodelled in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Its principal activities were trading and agriculture as well as ship building, especially by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The wealth brought by this economic activity is reflected in the survival of several 18<sup>th</sup> century houses and cottages. Subsequent development by the Duke of Richmond in the later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries brought further prosperity and expansion. 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion in the form of houses in a picturesque vernacular influenced style by local builders Stearns and dating from the 1920's and 1930's is a particular feature to the south of the village.
- 2.9 The key characteristics of the conservation area include:
- A strong marine character with long standing relationship with the estuary and the sea giving a bustling character;
  - Outstanding views from the Hard over Bosham Hoe;
  - Pleasing mixture of cars, boats and modern houses;
  - Buildings closer to the Hard lie close to the pavement and are mainly arranged in groups, whilst further away there is more dispersed development with detached houses set in larger plots with boundaries to the road;
  - Most of the older properties, many of which are listed, lie close to the Hard, with a mixture of mainly 20<sup>th</sup> century houses and bungalows between this area and St Nicholas' Church;

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<sup>5</sup> West Itchenor conservation Area appraisal and Management Proposals September 2010 Section 3: Recommended Actions para 3.1.2

- Use of red and blue brick or painted stucco with limited exposed timber framing;
- Flint or brick walls of varying heights, or hedges, are the traditional boundaries;
- A number of 1920s or 1930s houses with attractive details; and
- The village pond, the river Haven, and associated trees and green spaces.

2.10 Walnut Tree cottage is located in the central part of the conservation area and is one of a number of larger houses in larger gardens set back from the road which are described as being of no special interest.<sup>6</sup> It is not identified as either locally listed, a positive contributor to the conservation area or a negative feature. The property was built in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century and is constructed of brick with tile hanging and has hipped clay tile roofs. It has been extended in the past, probably in the later 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the fenestration is modern, Upvc, and somewhat unsympathetic, particularly on the ground floor at the rear. Whilst the building maintains the general scale and height of residential development that is characteristic of the conservation area, the modest architecture and subsequent degree of alteration erode its potential contribution. The contribution made by the building to the special character and appearance of the conservation area is therefore neutral.

### 3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 The proposals under this application are for the demolition and rebuilding of the property. The new building will maintain the design and appearance of a recently permitted application for alteration and extension of the current building (*Application ref 21/02065/FUL and 21/03672/DOM*). The form of the proposal, its detailed design and materials were considered to be positive in terms of the conservation area in the assessment of impact within the Delegated Report by officers of the council. However, the extent of the alterations and additions are such that little, if any, of the original building will be left unaltered and therefore demolition and rebuilding is preferred.
- 3.2 This revised approach enables a slight adjustment of the position of the building on the site. It is proposed to relocate the new property approximately a metre to the north of its current position, moving it away from the boundary of the plot. This will enable easier access for future maintenance. There is a small increase in the proposed footprint of 0.5m to the east, or entrance, elevation. In all other respects the proposal remains as previously permitted.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. page 15 Section 5: Building types paras 5.1

## **4.0 Impact of proposals upon significance**

- 4.1 The proposal has the potential to have an impact upon two designated heritage assets. The first is impact upon the special character and appearance of the conservation area and the second is the potential for impact upon the contribution made by setting to the significance or ability to appreciate the significance of Emmets, a Grade II listed building adjacent to the development site.
- 4.2 The potential for impact upon the special character and appearance of the conservation area arises from the loss of the existing building and the proposed use and design of any replacement. The existing building makes a neutral contribution to the special character and appearance of the conservation area. In principle demolition of the building will therefore not cause harm. Replacement of the building has the potential to have an impact but as the use is maintained as a single-family dwelling, there is no change to the character of the area. The scale, height and general plan of the replacement building is similar to the existing and virtually identical to the proposal already granted permission in the very recent past. The minor revision to the position and the line of the east elevation will not be readily appreciable from the Street and is not significant in terms of the experience of the site.
- 4.3 Walnut Tree Cottage falls within the wider setting of Emmets, a Grade II listed building located to the north-east. Emmets is an 18<sup>th</sup> Century house, first listed in 1986, which addresses the street from behind a traditional boundary wall. The entry to the Walnut Tree Cottage site is immediately to the south and screened by existing hedges and trees. These will be maintained and provide screening that was deemed acceptable previously. The minor re-positioning will not be appreciable from Emmets and the impact upon the contribution made by the setting to the appreciation of the listed building remains unaltered.

## **5.0 Historic Environment Legislation and Policy**

- 5.1 Where any development has the potential to affect the historic environment and its heritage assets the legislative framework includes the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In particular Section 16 which requires a local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses when considering applications for listed building consent. Section 66 of the 1990 Act also states that in the exercise of their planning functions a local planning authority shall have the same special regard.



- 5.2 The application of this statutory duty informs the approach to the Historic Environment set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance. In the NPPF it is recognised that protection and enhancement of our built and historic environment is an essential element of the environmental role of sustainable development and the Government's objective is the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.<sup>7</sup>
- 5.3 The principles and policies set out in Section 16 of the NPPF are explicitly linked to the responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities under the heritage related consent regimes of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990<sup>8</sup>. It is made clear that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and therefore their significance should be sustained and enhanced. The starting point is a good understanding of the significance of an asset and that understanding should be used to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage assets' conservation and any aspect of the proposal.<sup>9</sup> If harm cannot be avoided it has to be clearly and convincingly justified. The greater the extent of harm the greater the justification required and the more significant the heritage asset the greater the weight to be given to its conservation.<sup>10</sup>
- 5.4 The proposals for the rebuilding of Walnut Tree Cottage involves the demolition of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century house that has been altered and extended and is a building that has been identified as having no special interest in the conservation area appraisal. Its contribution to the conservation area is neutral and demolition in isolation would not harm the conservation area. The proposed replacement building is relocated slightly and has a marginal increase in footprint and these amendments do not alter the earlier identified impacts of the proposal to extend the existing house which have been found to be acceptable.

## 7.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposal to replace a residential building with another residential building does not cause any harm to the character of the conservation area. The principle of extending the house has also been accepted in the very recent past.

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<sup>7</sup> NPPF paragraph 189 page 55,

<sup>8</sup> NPPF paragraph 189 page 55, footnote 67

<sup>9</sup> NPPF paragraphs 195, page 56

<sup>10</sup> NPPF paragraph 199, page 57

- 7.2 The application replicates the previously accepted height, scale and detailed design of the earlier proposals for extension and alteration to the building. The minor re-positioning and extension of the footprint do not have any impact upon the significance of the conservation area or the adjacent listed building.
- 7.3 The proposals therefore raise no heritage issues.