

Proposed WORKSAT 1 and 2 springbank cottages

KNOTT END, borough of WYRE, LANCASHIRE



HERITAGE assessment

GARRY MILLER
Heritage Consultancy

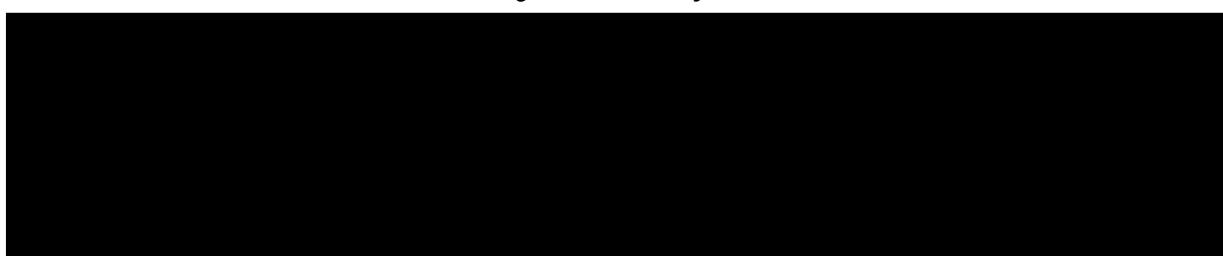
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JULY 2022

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Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 40 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as 'scholarship as its best' by *Country Life* (June 2003), and 'well analysed and presented' in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

THIS REPORT

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed works at 1 and 2 Springbank Cottages, Knott End, in the borough of Wyre, Lancashire. The properties are a pair of modest former fishermen's cottages which directly face the estuary of the River Wyre. In planning terms, they are an undesignated heritage asset.

Proposals have been submitted to Wyre Borough Council for internal and external alterations to the proposal building. The heritage consideration arising is therefore the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the undesignated asset. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and assess how the proposal will affect it.

The cottages are likely to be of early 19th century date, as they are shown on the OS mapping of the mid-1840s. By the 1960s they had been acquired by Lancashire County Council for use as the Knott End Sea Centre. Extensive alteration subsequently took place, resulting in their present appearance, which has institutional rather than domestic overtones. The exterior has been pebbledashed, windows have been altered and an extension built along the rear, while the interior has also undergone change.

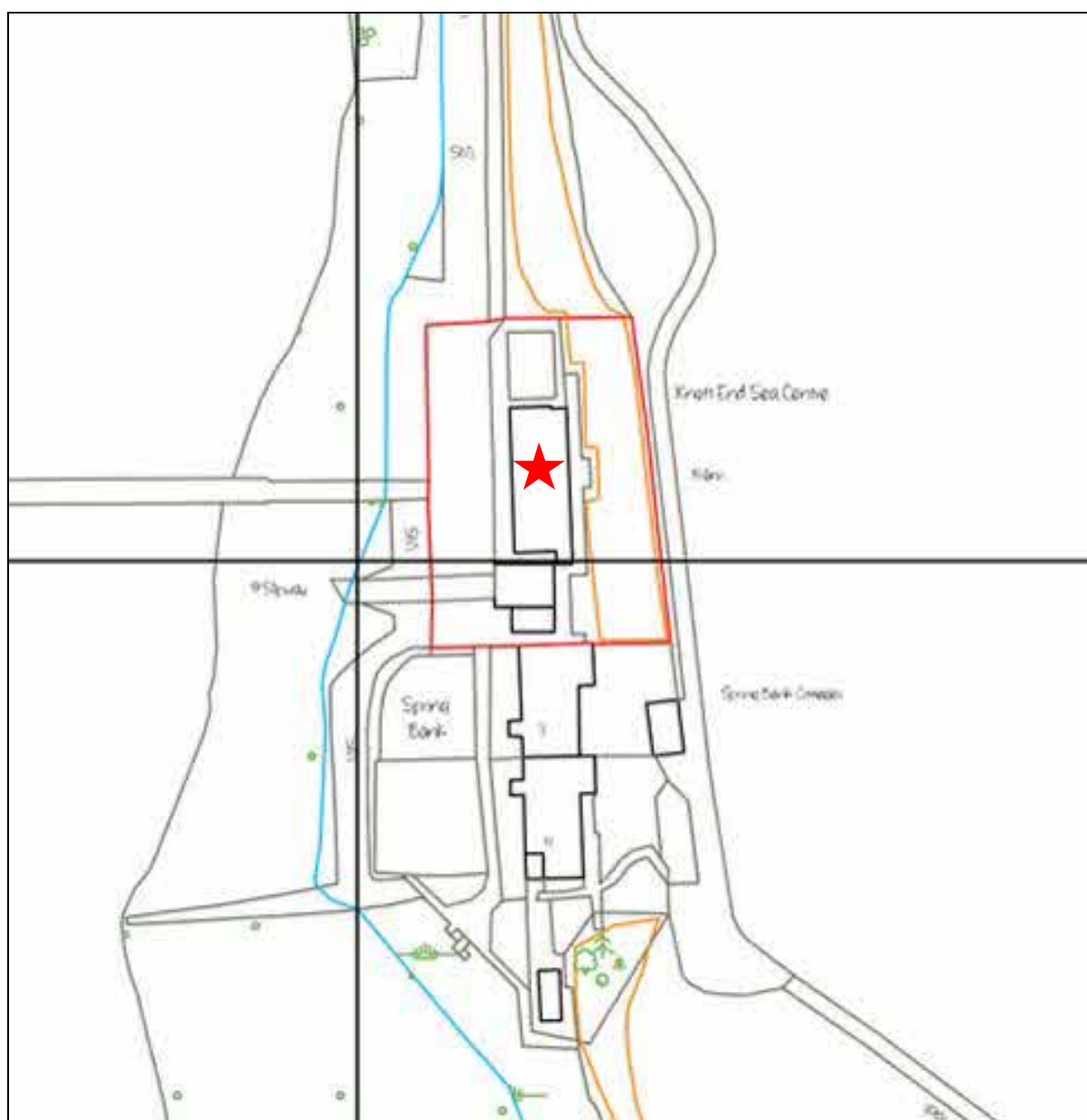
As an undesignated asset, the significance of the cottages extends to the strictly local context (i.e. Knott End) as a pair of altered fishermen's cottages built alongside the river probably in the early 19th century. Given the extensive alteration of the fabric, both internally and externally, this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

The proposal involves mainly external changes; the internal works are minor and affect the mid-late 20th century rear extension only. The external works comprise a whitewashed render finish, new horizontal casement windows and a first floor balcony. The proposed whitewashed textured rendered is more in keeping with a building in a coastal location than the present pebbledash. The present windows are likely to be mid-late 20th century, and the casements as proposed are more appropriate for a vernacular building of the early 19th century. While the balcony has no historic precedent in a building of this type, it is considered on balance that its effect will not be adverse.

Where heritage assets are undesignated, national guidance requires simply a balanced planning judgement: one that weighs the significance of the asset against any harm or loss. This report demonstrates that the significance of the cottages resides in their historical attributes rather than the devalued interest and qualities of their fabric. The proposals will sustain this significance, while making some improvements to the exterior appearance of the cottages. It is concluded therefore that the proposal satisfies the requirements of the guidance and hence merits approval.

2: THE SITE

The application site is located at Knott End, one of the communities within the borough of Wyre, Lancashire. 1 and 2 Springbank Cottages are a pair of modest semi-detached cottages that lie around 500 metres southwest of the village, where they stand above the estuary of the River Wyre and Morecambe Bay beyond.



Map 1. The application site



1. The application site comprises a pair of semi-detached cottages



2. The properties directly face the Wyre estuary

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Designations

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

3.2 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Wyre Borough Council for internal and external alterations to the proposal buildings. It is resubmission of an earlier scheme (21/01407/FUL), which was withdrawn for revisions.

3.3 Heritage impact

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

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised, July 2021) states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the particular significance of the heritage asset, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the application building, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. In accordance with paragraph 194, the level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. The report is to be read in conjunction with other submitted documentation.

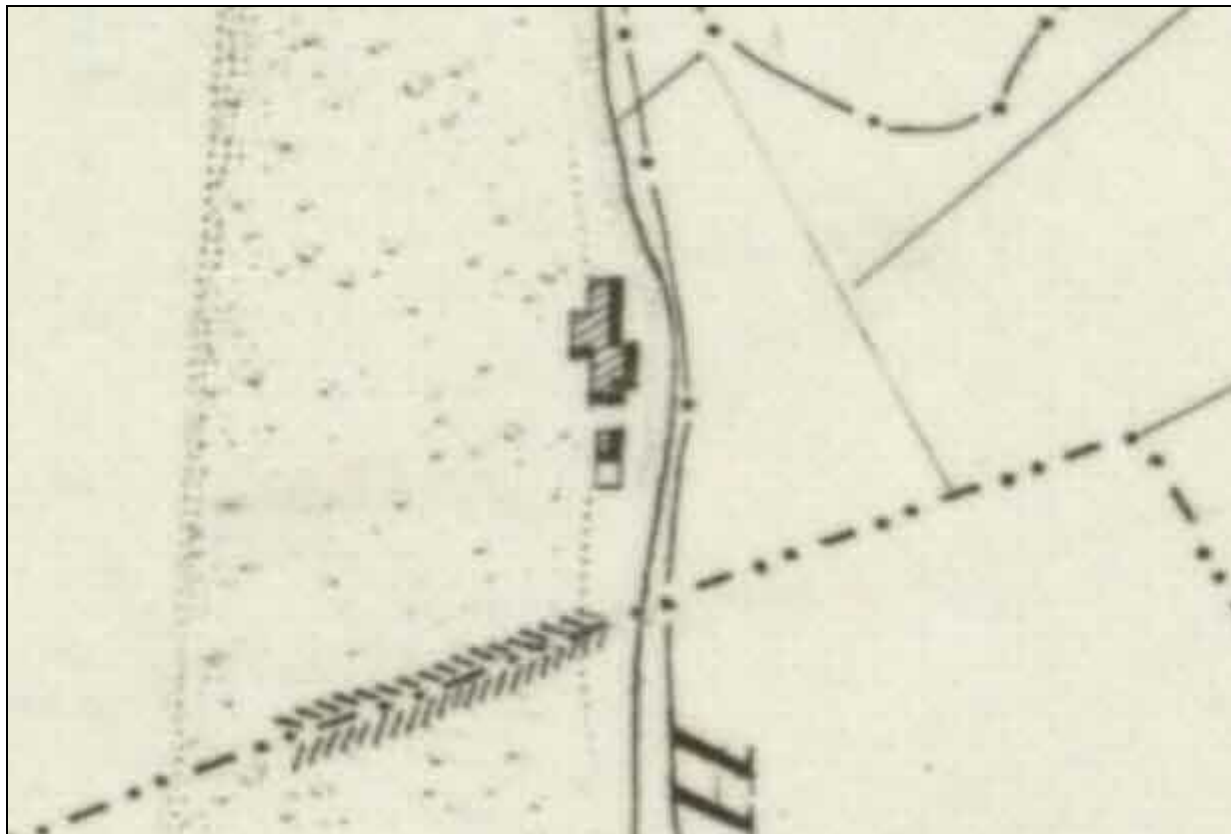
3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

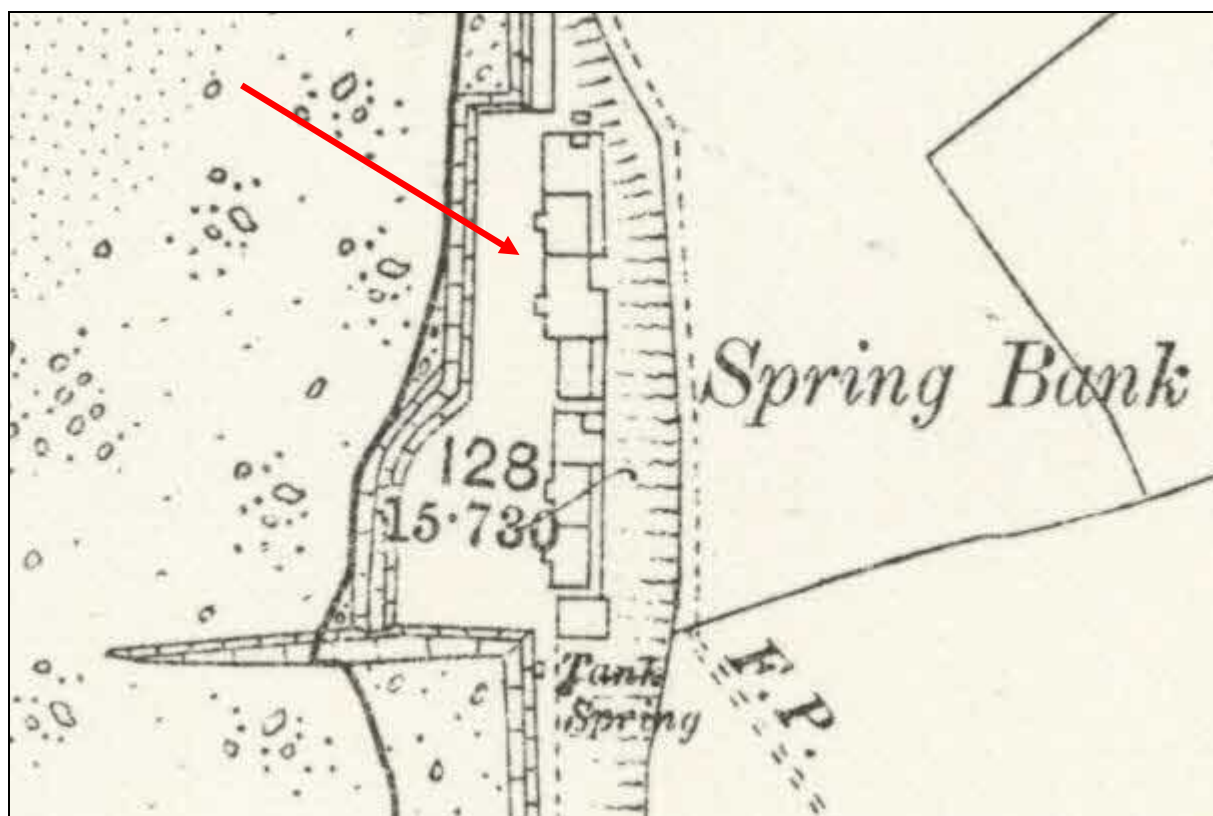
- 1.** A summary of the historical background relating to the site (Section 4)
- 2.** A description of the cottages (Section 5)
- 3.** A summary of their heritage significance (Section 6)
- 4.** A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
- 5.** Evaluation within this context of the impact of the proposal upon the significance of the proposal buildings (Section 8).

4: HISTORICAL summary

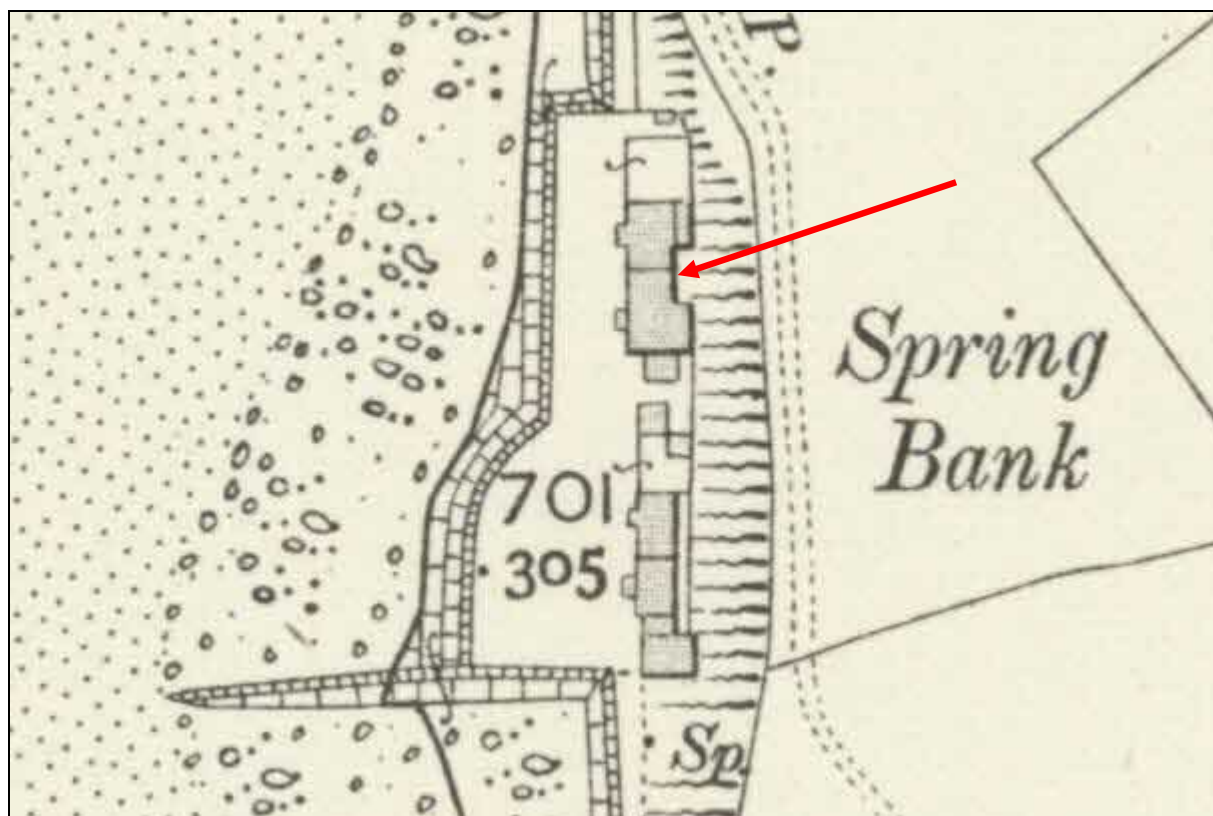
The application properties belong to a small group of cottages named Spring Bank, built directly facing the estuary of the River Wyre. They were probably originally fishermen's dwellings and are likely to be of early 19th century date, as they are shown on the OS mapping of the mid-1840s (Map 2, below). The OS edition of 1890 records they were the northernmost of two rows of cottages. At this date, the southern (number 2) cottage also comprised a short outrigger to the rear and by 1909-1910 (Map 3) one had also been added to the rear of number 1. They probably thereafter changed little until the 1960s, by which time the properties had been acquired by Lancashire County Council for use as the Knott End Sea Centre. Extensive alteration subsequently took place.



Map 2. Properties in this location are recorded by the six-inch OS map surveyed 1844-1845



Map 2. The application building is one of two rows of cottages recorded by the 25-inch OS map of 1890



Map 3. The edition of 1909-1910 shows both cottages had been extended to the rear

5: the proposal building

5.1 Overview

Pair of probably early 19th century cottages, greatly altered in the mid/late 20th century.

5.2 Form

The two cottages are both two-storeyed but of differing footprint, the northern one of two bays, the southern of three. A continuous extension was added across the rear of both in the mid/late 20th century, adding to or replacing the earlier outriggers shown on the 1909-1910 map.



Figure 1. Existing ground (top) and first floor plans

5.3 Exterior

Both buildings are covered with ugly pebbledash render that is likely to have been applied in the mid/late 20th century. Both have single storey open porches which again are suggestive of this date, although porches are shown on the historic maps of 1890 and 1909-1910. The front windows are all vertical casements, again of similar date, with some difference of proportion between numbers 1 and 2. It seems likely that these windows date from the mid-late 20th century also, as horizontal casements would seem more appropriate in early 19th century fishermen's cottages. Horizontal casements (frames renewed however) are indeed present on the neighbouring cottages. The rear extension is largely blank apart from small windows.

5.4 Interior

Each cottage contains principal rooms to the front and small ancillary rooms and staircases in the rear extension. Considerable works also took place during the mid-later 20th century. Number 2 was primarily affected, with the first and second bays opened up on each floor. Number 1 retains an institutional appearance dating from its sea centre era, with changing rooms and showers still remaining on the ground floor. Surviving features are relatively minor: principally simple fireplaces on the ground floor of each cottage and some thin ceiling beams. A kingpost roof truss is exposed on the first floor of the southern cottage, but its slender timbers and purlins set on edge suggest it is early 20th rather than early 19th century.



3. *Appearance of the cottages is now mid-late 20th century rather than 19th century*



4. Porches are probably mid-late 20th century



5. Windows also date from this period



6. Rear view showing the extension



7. Extension is largely blank and has an institutional appearance



8. Number 2 has been opened up between first and second bays



9. First floor also opened up; truss probably early 20th century



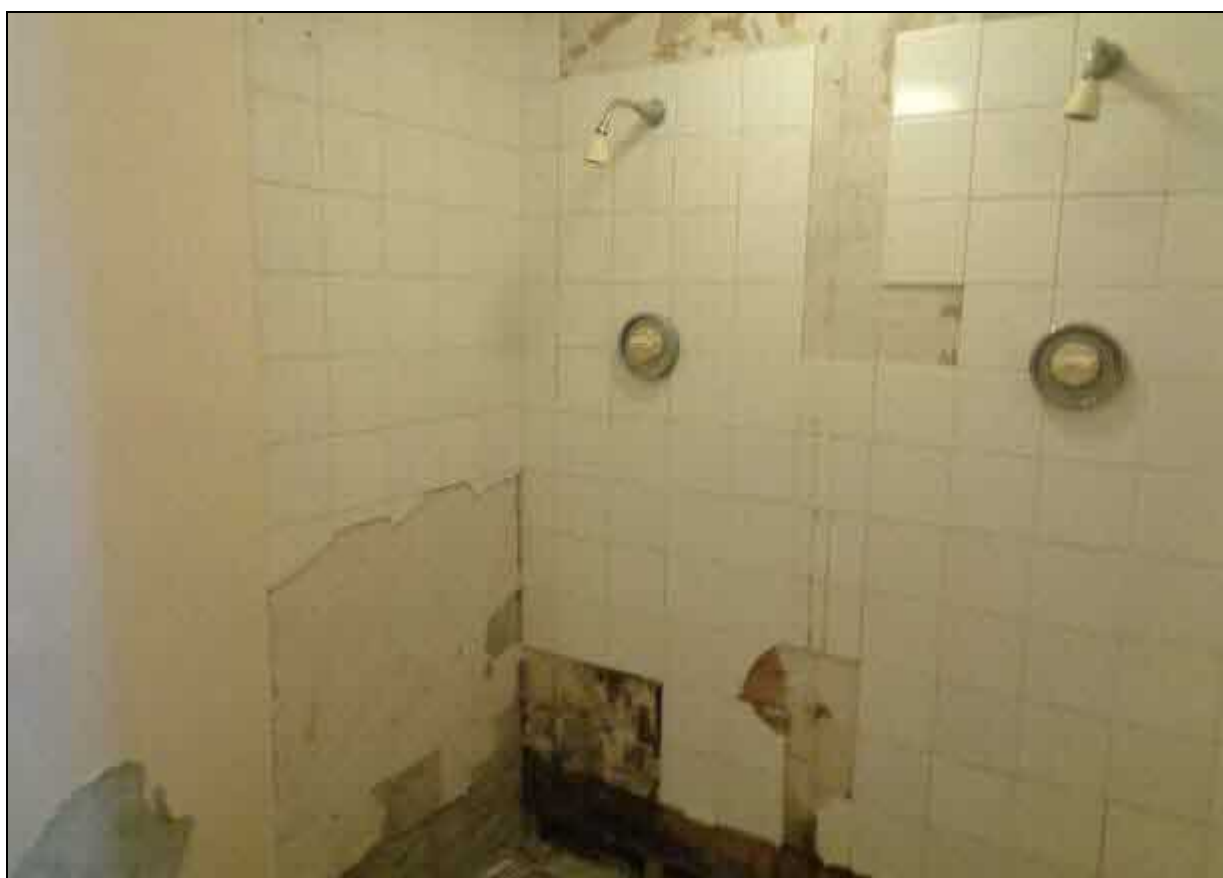
10. Fireplace in number 1



11. Exposed brickwork in number 2 appears early 19th century



12. Late 20th century door and window to number 1



13. Showers remaining within

6: SUMMARY OF significance

6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

6.2 Summary

As 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.

7: planning policy context

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how applications affecting the historic environment are to be determined. Paragraph 197 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation
The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and
The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Regarding undesignated heritage assets, paragraph 203 specifically applies:

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

In the local planning context, the relevant policy is CDMP5 (*Historic Environment*) of the Wyre Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted February 2019. This echoes national guidance, and the portions relevant to the present application state:

- 1. The Council's overall objective in relation to the historic environment is for designated and non-designated heritage assets to be protected, conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their aesthetic and cultural value and their contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place.*
- 2. New development will be required to protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment, through high standards of design. Proposals for new development should identify and take advantage of opportunities to integrate with and promote the Borough's heritage assets.*
- 3. Development with the potential to affect the significance of any designated or non-designated heritage asset, either directly or indirectly including its setting, will be required to sustain or enhance the significance of the asset where appropriate.*

8: Impact of the proposal

8.1 Summary of the scheme

The proposal involves mainly external changes; the internal works are minor and affect the mid-late 20th century rear extension only. The external works comprise a whitewashed render finish, new horizontal casement windows and a first floor balcony.

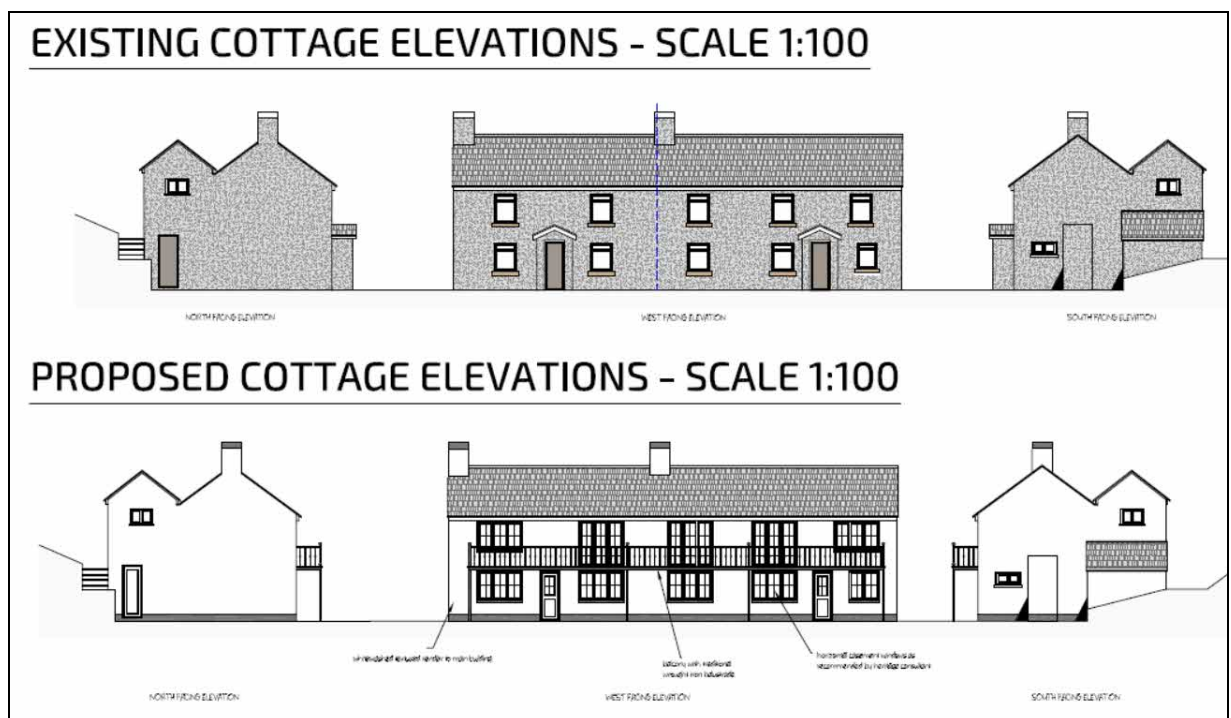


Figure 2. Existing and proposed elevations

8.2 Effect of the proposal

- a. **Render.** The present pebbledash render is mid-late 20th century and unattractive. The proposed whitewashed render is more in keeping with a building in a coastal location.
- b. **Windows.** The present vertical windows are likely to be mid-late 20th century. Horizontal casements as proposed are more appropriate for a vernacular building of the early 19th century.
- c. **Balcony.** 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.

8.3 Conclusion

Where heritage assets are undesignated, national guidance requires simply a balanced planning judgement: one that weighs the significance of the asset against any harm or loss. It has been demonstrated in this report that the significance of the application property resides in its historical attributes rather than the devalued interest and qualities of its fabric. The proposals will sustain this significance, while making some improvements to the exterior appearance of the cottages. It is concluded therefore that the proposal satisfies the requirements of the guidance and therefore merits approval.