

MEESDEN CORNER COTTAGE  
BRENT PELHAM, SG9 OAR

HERITAGE STATEMENT



Ref: 2111.981 | 28 September 2022

# Contents

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1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
2.0	SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT	2
3.0	IDENTIFIED HERITAGE ASSETS	8
4.0	PLANNING LEGISLATION AND POLICIES	14
5.0	ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE	21
6.0	PROPOSED WORKS AND ASSESSMENT	26
7.0	CONCLUSION	29
8.0	SOURCES	31

# Appendices

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HS1 LISTING DESCRIPTION

REVISION SCHEDULE					
Rev	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	28/09/2022	For Submission	Shaun Moger Heritage Consultant	Paul Clarke Director	Client
2					



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Heritage Statement has been produced by **heritage** unlimited to support a planning application at Meesden Corner Cottage, Brent Pelham.
- 1.2. The property is a grade II listed building and also located within the Brent Pelham Conservation Area.
- 1.3. Listed buildings and conservation areas are defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) as designated heritage assets. As the proposed development affects one or more heritage assets, paragraph 194 of the NPPF requires a Heritage Statement to support a planning application. This document has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.
- 1.4. The purpose of a Heritage Statement is to identify the significance of any heritage asset affected by the proposed development, the impact the proposed development will have upon the identified significance and justification for the proposed development. The Heritage Statement also needs to assess the proposed work in accordance with the statutory tests provided in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 1.5. This Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with architectural plans and other supporting documents, which form this planning application.
- 1.6. This report has been compiled by Shaun Moger MSC Historic Building Cons and is based on a site visit and desk-based research carried out in August 2022.



## 2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. Meesden Corner Cottage is located in a fork in the road towards the northwest end of the village of Brent Pelham. The area is rural, surrounded by farmland and wooded areas with the village itself largely consisting of linear development along the road.
- 2.2. The property is situated within the centre of its own plot, which is slightly elevated relative to the roads beside it and is encircled along its borders by mature trees and hedges.
- 2.3. Meesden Corner Cottage is one of a number of similarly aged and constructed historic cottages in the village. The historic original dwelling is two storeys/one plus attic and in the vernacular style, it is of timber frame construction and finished in render and with a thatch roof. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century additions to the north elevation (single storey) and west elevation (two storey) are weatherboarded and feature roofs with slates or plain clay tiles respectively.
- 2.4. The windows of the property comprise of timber casement units with glazing bars. The ground floor of the front (east) elevation has three windows with a further three to the first floor, intersecting the bottom of the thatch roof.
- 2.5. Located to the northeast of the property, sitting between the weatherboarded additions and the road is a detached single storey studio of a modern design, built in 2017 and clad in natural finish timber.

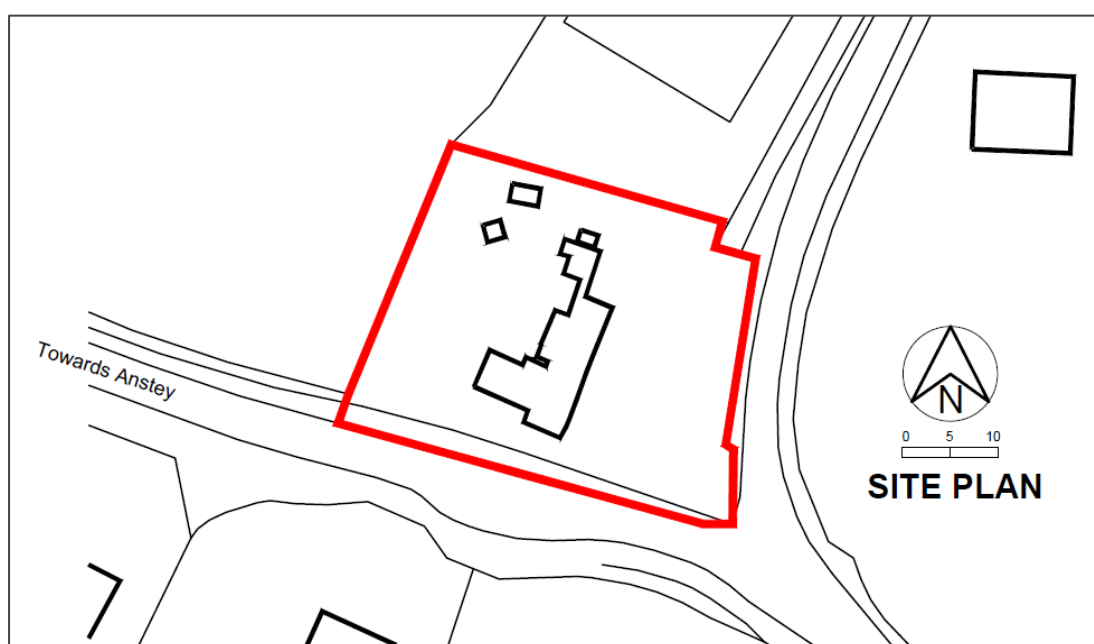


Fig.1: Site location shown in red.



Fig.2: The east elevation of the property is the oldest part of the property and is of timber frame construction, finished in white render. The thatch roof is a style once common in Brent Pelham, however many other properties in the village were reroofed with slate or tile in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The single storey timber clad structure seen to the right of the house is a detached studio.



Fig.3: The post construction additions to the north elevation are clad in weatherboard with slate roofs, the modern detached studio can be seen to the right of the image.



Fig.4: The west elevation with two storey rear projections with a clay tile roof.



Fig.5: The north elevation of the rear addition.



Fig.6: The weatherboarded single storey additions to the north elevation are traditional in style but are late 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig.7: The ground floor utility room located within the first modern weatherboarded structure adjoining the north elevation of the historic building.





Fig.8: A bathroom is located within the far northern end of the weatherboarded additions.



Fig.9: The ground floor of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century two storey rear projection. The wall with the small window is to be removed and opened up into a conservatory.



Fig.10: The first floor bedroom which has doors to the adjoining bedroom (right of image) and to the landing and bathroom (behind camera).

## 3.0 IDENTIFIED HERITAGE ASSETS

- 3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that all heritage assets affected by the proposed development are identified and their significance, which includes setting, are described. The level of 'harm' the proposed works will have to the identified heritage assets also needs to be determined within the context of a Heritage Statement.
- 3.2. As identified in the introduction, the site is a grade II listed building and is situated within Brent Pelham Conservation Area.

### Meesden Corner Cottage

- 3.3. Meesden Corner Cottage is a vernacular dwelling which dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was listed in 1985, quoted as being a good example of its type.
- 3.4. The property is first shown on the 1837 Tithe Map where it appears to consist of a north-south range with a slight projection to the rear (west) elevation. These make up the present thatch roof sections of the building, the main range being half hipped and the projection featuring a catslide.
- 3.5. Later mapping shows the cottage with additions to either end, rear projections, a new outbuilding to the north, and subdivided into multiple properties. The property remained in this or similar forms from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, when a large rear projection and other additions were constructed.
- 3.6. The weatherboard addition currently serving as a utility room was added prior to designation in 1985 and is mentioned in the listing description. This element of the building was then itself added to in 1996 a matching style with weatherboarding and slate roof to form a bathroom.



Fig.11: Tithe Map, 1837, showing the house in an earlier simpler plan form (marked by the arrow) and the plot subdivided with an additional smaller property fronting the road to the east.

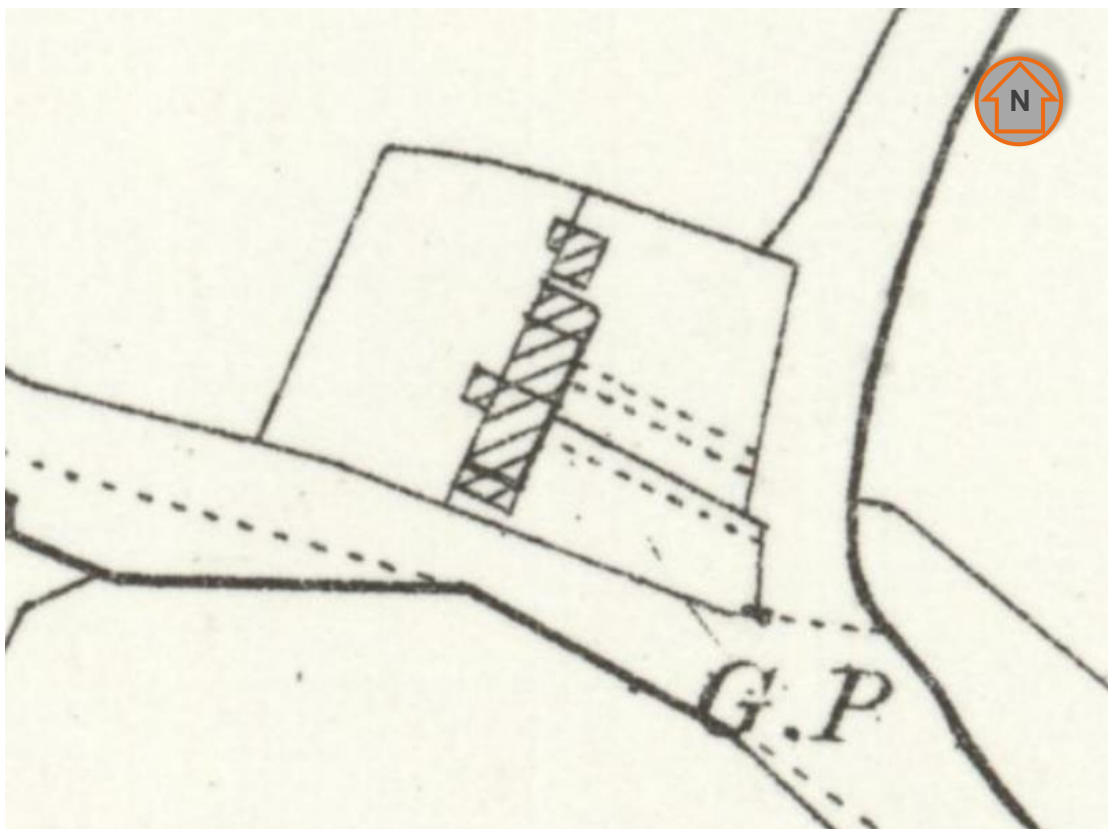


Fig.12: Ordnance Survey map, revised 1896, published 1897.

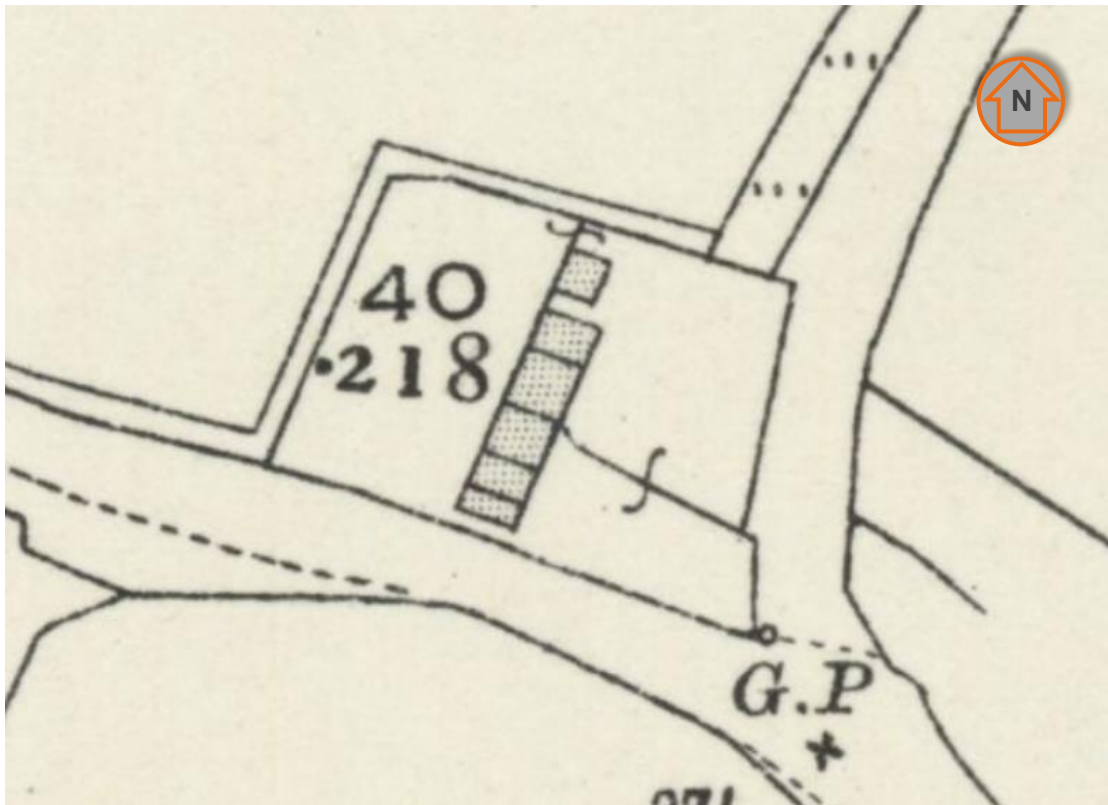


Fig.13: Ordnance Survey map, revised 1919, published 1921.



Fig.14: Ordnance Survey map, revised 1959, published 1960.

## Brent Pelham Conservation Area

- 3.7. Brent Pelham Conservation Area was designated in 1977 and an appraisal document was published in July 2018.
- 3.8. Brent Pelham contains 19 listed buildings spanning the 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, of which development from the 17<sup>th</sup> century accounts for nine of such assets. The architectural character of the village is vernacular and comprises of a variety of construction materials including timber frames, brick, and weatherboarding. The roof types are also diverse, on the topic of which Victoria County History, published 1914, stated that “many of the cottages are thatched”, so it was not until the inter-war years that many cottages were reroofed with slate or clay tile. This change drastically and permanently altered the character and appearance of the village.
- 3.9. The patchiness of the historic development is notable, with a number of fields mixed into the heart of the village.
- 3.10. Although there is only one Pelham cited in the 1086 Domesday Book, held by the Bishop of London, there are seven separate sub-entries for dispersed settlements which combine to form the area and from these three distinct populations would later emerge; Stocking Pelham, Furneux Pelham, and Brent Pelham.
- 3.11. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century The Bury and Bridge Cottage were erected, and in either the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> Church Cottage and the Barn to the south-west of The Bury were erected. Most importantly by 1556 the original timber-framed Brent Pelham Hall was built, and Queen Elizabeth I spent two nights here in 1571. Brent Pelham Hall was rebuilt in a new architectural style in 1608, with various alterations later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.12. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many recognisable aspects of the present village emerged, such as the Barn to the south-east of The Bury, Down Hall Farmhouse, Pumhill Cottage, Meesden Corner Cottage, Bythorne Cottage, The Old Forge, parts of The Black Horse Pub, and the stocks and whipping post outside the church. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Mill Cottage was erected along with The Old Windmill in 1826, and the school was built in 1840.
- 3.13. In the 50 year period from 1851 to 1901, the parish of Brent Pelham suffered the same decline as many and the population dropped by 30.5%. However the early-20<sup>th</sup> century brought about a building boom associated with the Barclay family, namely Edward

Exton Barclay, whose initials EEB feature on quite a few buildings in the village, such as the Village Hall and Club Room, erected in 1901 and used for parish and social meetings. The Kennels were also built in 1901 for the use of the Puckeridge Hunt, and the associated Huntman's House, and 1 and 2 Kennel Cottages followed soon afterwards. Other buildings erected by the Barclay family in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century include Cole Green Farmhouse, The Lodge at Brent Pelham Hall, 4 and 5 Lower Cottages, 3 and 4 Pump Hill, 1 and 2 Farm Cottages, Stocks View in 1901, and 1 and 2 Pump Hill in 1905. The Old Forge had by this time been converted to residential use, and a new replacement blacksmiths was built opposite Meesden Corner Cottage.

- 3.14. By the 1970s, Brent Pelham as it exists today was mostly in place, with some modern development on various sites around the village, including south of Down Hall Farmhouse, and next to Meesden Corner Cottage. The 'new' Blacksmiths that had been built opposite Meesden Corner Cottage had been demolished and redeveloped.





Fig.15: Brent Pelham Conservation Area Character Analysis map (Source: East Herts Council), the property is shown by the orange arrow.



## 4.0 PLANNING LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

### Legislation

- 4.1. The legislative framework for the preservation and enhancement of listed buildings and conservation areas are set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Historic England, defines preservation in this context, as not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.
- 4.2. In 2014, a ruling by the Court of Appeal (Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northants District Council, English Heritage and the National Trust) made clear that to discharge this responsibility, decision makers must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings (and by implication other heritage assets) when carrying out the balancing exercise of judging harm against other planning considerations, as required under the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3. Another ruling made in May 2017 by the Court of Appeal (Barwood Strategic Land II LLP v East Staffordshire Borough Council and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government), upheld a High Court ruling, that subordinates National Planning Policy Framework development presumptions to the statutory authority of an up-to-date local plan, as the NPPF is no more than ‘guidance for decision-makers, without the force of statute behind it. Paragraph 13 of the decision states, *‘The NPPF is the Government’s planning policy for England. It does not have the force of statute, and, ought not to be treated as if it did. Indeed, as one might expect, it acknowledges and reinforces the statutory presumption in favour of the development plan, and it also explicitly recognizes and emphasizes its own place in the plan-led system of development control. Its “Introduction” acknowledges that “[planning] law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”, and that “[the NPPF] must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions”. Paragraph 12 recognizes that the NPPF “does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making”. Paragraph 13 describes the NPPF, correctly, as “guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers”, which, in the context of development control decision-making, is “a material consideration in determining applications”. Paragraph 215, in “Annex 1: Implementation”, says that “due weight should be given*

*to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with [the NPPF] (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in [the NPPF], the greater the weight that may be given)", but this too is guidance for decision-makers, without the force of statute behind it'.*

- 4.4. Therefore, by implication, this judgment again emphasises the relative importance of sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in making planning decisions in relation to development that affects listed buildings and conservation areas.
- 4.5. Section 16(2) relates to an LBC application and states, 'In considering whether to grant listed building consent/ for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.
- 4.6. Section 66(1) relates to planning applications and states, 'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.
- 4.7. Section 72(1) relates to development affecting conservation areas and states, "In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area...'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".
- 4.8. As a minimum, the tests provided in require the works to preserve the listed building or its setting and preserve the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 4.9. Historic England defines preservation in this context as not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged.

## National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 4.10. As mentioned above, there is a need to carry out a balancing exercise of judging harm against other planning considerations as required under the NPPF. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. The guiding principle of the document is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the protection and enhancement of the historic environment is embedded in this approach.

- 4.11. Sustainable development is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF breaks down this definition into three objectives: economic, social, and environmental. Within the environmental objective, sustainable development needs to contribute to 'protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment'.
- 4.12. Paragraph 20 of the NPPF contains Strategic Policies, which provide an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development and make sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built, and historic environment.
- 4.13. Section 16 of the NPPF contains policies relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Within this section (paragraph 194), the Local Planning Authority requires the applicant to describe the significance of any affected heritage asset including any contribution made by their setting as part of an application.
- 4.14. Significance is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF, as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historical interest. Significance also derives not only from the asset's physical presence but also from its setting. Setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced, the extent of which is not fixed and can change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to significance of an asset.
- 4.15. Impact from a proposed development to the significance of a designated heritage asset needs to be evaluated, NPPF paragraph 199, states, 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. NPPF paragraph 200 identifies that alteration, destruction, or development within the setting of a designated heritage asset can result in harm to, or loss of, the significance of the asset and that such loss requires a clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional and substantial harm or loss of grade I and grade II\* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.
- 4.16. NPPF Paragraphs 201 and 202 define the levels of harm as substantial or less than substantial. The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides useful guidance on assessing harm in relation to these definitions and gives the following example, 'In

determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting'. The PPG quantifies substantial harm (NPPF paragraph 201) as total destruction while partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all. Anything less than total destruction needs to be evaluated on its own merits, for example, the removal of elements to an asset which themselves impact on its significance may therefore not be harmful to the asset. The PPG advises works that 'are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm (NPPF paragraph 202) or no harm at all'. However, it is important to consider each development in its own context as the PPG also identifies that minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm to the significance of an asset.

4.17. Paragraphs 201 and 202 refer to 'public benefit' as a means to outweigh the loss of or harm to a designated heritage asset. The PPG identifies that public benefit may follow many developments and as such this benefit could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress which are the dimensions to sustainable development defined by NPPF Paragraph 8. The PPG states, 'Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefit'. Public benefits may include heritage benefits such as:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting.
- Reducing or removing risk to heritage asset.
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation.

4.18. The three points above relate to NPPF Paragraph 197, which requires the Local Planning Authority to take these points into account when determining applications. Although, there is no defined list of public benefits, examples of public benefit for a designated heritage asset may include:



- The restoration of a listed building.
- The improved setting of a listed building.
- The enhancement of a conservation area.

## Local Planning Policy

4.19. As well as legislation and national planning policies, East Herts District Plan (2018) contains policies relating to the historic environment, including:

### Policy HA1 Designated Heritage Assets

- I. Development proposals should preserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment of East Herts.
- II. Development proposals that would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- III. Where there is evidence of neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset will not be taken into account in any decision.
- IV. The Council will, as part of a positive strategy, pursue opportunities for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment recognising its role and contribution in achieving sustainable development.

### Policy HA4 Conservation Areas

- I. New development, extensions and alterations to existing buildings in Conservation Areas will be permitted provided that they preserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the area. Development proposals outside a Conservation Area which affect its setting will be considered likewise. Proposals will be expected to:

- a) Respect established building lines, layouts and patterns;
- b) Use materials and adopt design details which reinforce local character and are traditional to the area;
- c) Be of a scale, proportion, form, height, design and overall character that accords with and complements the surrounding area;
- d) In the case of alterations and extensions, be complementary and sympathetic to the parent building; and
- e) Have regard to any 'Conservation Area Character Appraisals' prepared by the District Council and safeguard all aspects which contribute to the area's special interest and significance, including important views and green spaces.
- f) Where development proposals relate to Conservation Area Management Proposals the duty to preserve or enhance will be applied. Development proposals, including minor development under an Article 4 direction, will be expected to 'preserve' surviving architectural features identified as being significant to the character or appearance of the area or, where previously lost, to 'enhance' that character and appearance through the authentic restoration of those lost features.

#### Policy HA7 Listed Buildings

- I. The Council will actively seek opportunities to sustain and enhance the significance of Listed Buildings and ensure that they are in viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- II. In considering applications the Council will ensure that proposals involving the alteration, extension, or change of use of a Listed Building will only be permitted where:
  - a) The proposal would not have any adverse effect on the architectural and historic character or appearance of the interior or exterior of the building or its setting; and

- b) The proposal respects the scale, design, materials and finishes of the existing building(s), and preserves its historic fabric.
- III. Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where the setting of the building is preserved.

Policy VILL3 Group 3 Villages

- I. Those villages/settlements not identified as either Group 1 or Group 2 Villages are identified as Group 3 Villages.
- II. Within Group 3 Villages, limited infill development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan will be permitted.
- III. All development should:
  - a) Relate well to the village in terms of location, layout and connectivity;
  - b) Be of a scale appropriate to the size of the village having regard to the potential cumulative impact of development in the locality;
  - c) Be well designed and in keeping with the character of the village;
  - d) Not represent the loss of a significant open space or gap important to the form and/or setting of the village;
  - e) Not represent an extension of ribbon development or an addition to an isolated group of buildings;
  - f) Not unacceptably block important views or vistas and/or detract from the openness of the countryside;
  - g) Not be significantly detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.



## 5.0 ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.1. To a certain extent the significance of the heritage assets identified in Section 3 have already been recognised by their inclusion on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE). Therefore, as defined in government policy, grade II listed buildings are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them.
- 5.2. Significance of a heritage asset is defined by the NPPF as the value of a heritage asset placed on it by current and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological; architectural; artistic or historical. The setting of a heritage asset also contributes to its significance and is defined by the NPPF as the surrounding in which a heritage asset is experienced. In comparison, Historic England's Conservation Principles (2008) uses evidential; aesthetic; historical and communal values to define significance. These different set of values have been combined for the purpose of this report.
- 5.3. Part 4 of British Standard 7913:2013 Guide to Conservation of Historic Buildings provides information on heritage values and significance. In context, this document states, 'A wide range of factors can contribute to the significance of a historic building. As well as physical components, significance includes factors such as immediate and wider setting, use and association (e.g., with a particular event, family, community or artist and those involved in design and construction)'.
- 5.4. Identifying the values of an asset allow us to understand the degree of significance and inform us of the potential impact the proposed works will have the heritage asset and its setting. These values may be tangible, the physical fabric of the building, capable of being touched, or view such as its landscape. Also, the value may be intangible through a past event or an association with a person.
- **Evidential (archaeological) value** relates to physical aspects of the site which provide evidence from the past. This can be with built form or below ground archaeology.
  - **Historical value** is the extent to which the asset is associated with or illustrative of historic events or people.
  - **Aesthetic (architectural/artistic) value** includes design, visual, landscape and architectural qualities.



- **Communal value** includes social, commemorative, or spiritual value, local identity, and the meaning of place for people.

5.5. The assessment of significance considers the importance of each heritage asset and the magnitude of impact in order to appraise the potential impact of the proposed redevelopment. The importance of a heritage asset is determined by its statutory designation and is the sum of its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values as identified above. Also contributing to an asset’s importance is its setting, which is an integral part of an asset’s significance. Taking these criteria into account, each identified asset can be assigned a level of importance in accordance with a four-point scale (see Table 1).

Level of Significance	Definition of Heritage Asset
High	Remains of inscribed international importance, such as World Heritage Sites Grade I and II* listed buildings Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens Registered Battlefields Scheduled Monuments Non-designated archaeological assets of schedulable quality and importance
Medium	Grade II listed buildings Grade II listed Registered Parks and Gardens Conservation Areas Non-designated buildings which contribute to regional importance
Low	Locally listed buildings Parks and gardens of some local interest Non-designated buildings, monuments or sites of local importance or of modest quality including those historic townscapes with historic integrity
No Significance	Assets identified as being of no archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic value Assets whose values are compromised by poor preservation or survival or of contextual associations to justify inclusion into a higher grade.

Table 1: Establishing the level of significance of a heritage asset (Source: Seeing the History in the View (2011)).

## Assessing Setting

- 5.6. The primary guiding document for assessing setting is The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 (2017), produced by Historic England is the primary guiding document for assessing setting.
- 5.7. Setting varies from asset to asset and cannot be generically defined. Changes to the setting of heritage assets may be positive such as replacing poor development which has compromised the assets setting. It is likely that the setting of an asset has changed over time from the dynamics of human activity and natural occurrences such as weather.
- 5.8. The importance setting makes to the contribution to the significance of the heritage asset is often related to how the heritage asset is seen in views. This can include views looking towards the heritage asset or from the heritage asset looking outwards and may include relationships between the asset and other heritage assets, natural or topographical features. Assets may also be intended to be seen from one another in designed landscapes for aesthetic reasons.
- 5.9. Historic England's Good Practice Advice 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017), notes a staged approach to proportionate decision-taking, with relevant NPPF paragraphs along with guidance contained in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for their implementation, providing the framework for the consideration of changes affecting the setting of heritage assets which should be assessed proportionately and based on the nature, extent, and level of the heritage asset's significance.
- 5.10. The Guidance recommends a five-step approach to the assessment of the effect of development on the setting of heritage assets as follows:
- Step 1:** identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
  - Step 2:** assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
  - Step 3:** assess the effects of the proposed development whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;

**Step 4:** explore ways of maximising enhancement and avoiding or minimising harm;

**Step 5:** make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

## Assessing Impact

- 5.11. In order to assess and quantify the level harm to the significance of a heritage asset in context with the relevant Paragraphs in the NPPF, the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), a web-based resource provides up-to-date guidance on NPPF policies. The PPG provides useful guidance on assessing harm in relation to Paragraphs 193 and 194 of the NPPF. The PPG states, *'in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting'*.
- 5.12. In defining what constitutes substantial harm, the PPG identifies that the impact of total destruction is obviously substantial harm while partial destruction is likely to have a considerable *impact* but, depending on the circumstances, may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all. Anything less than total destruction needs to be evaluated on its own merits, for example, the removal of elements to an asset which themselves impact on its significance may not be harmful to the asset.
- 5.13. The PPG advises works that *'are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all'*. However, it is important to consider each development in its own context as the PPG identifies that minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm to the significance of an asset. This would be so if for example the works removed an element which contributed to the assets special architectural or historic interest.
- 5.14. Table 1 identifies the significance level of a heritage asset; therefore, the next stage is to assess the level of impact the proposed development will have on the heritage asset. Table 2 provides a descriptive context of the level of change on the heritage asset in terms of its character, fabric or setting.

Change Rating	Description of Impact
High	Change to key elements affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest are lost or destroyed, or the significance of the asset's setting is extensively changed.
Medium	Change too many key elements affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest are significantly modified or the significance of the asset's setting is noticeably different.
Low	Change to key elements are slightly altered affecting the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest, or the asset's setting is slightly altered
Minimal	Change to key elements hardly affect the significance of the asset's special architectural or historic interest, or the asset's setting is hardly affected.
No change	The development does not affect asset's special architectural or historic interest or change the asset's setting.

Table 2: Factors for assessing the level of change on a heritage asset.

- 5.15. By establishing the asset's significance (Table 1) and the level of change (Table 2) to the asset from the proposed development, the impact on the significance of each asset from the proposed development can be identified. This can be Negligible, Minor, Moderate or Major. Impact from the development to an asset is considered to be significant if it is Major or Moderate.

Significance of Asset	Level of Change				
	No Change	Minimal	Low	Medium	High
High	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Major
Medium	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Moderate	Major
Low	Negligible	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Moderate
Not significant	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Table 3: Matrix for establishing level of impact against the asset's significance (Source: Seeing the History in the View (2011)).

## Significance of Brent Pelham Conservation Area

- 5.16. The significance of Brent Pelham Conservation Area is derived from the historic development which covers the 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and includes nineteen listed properties, amongst which are a manor house, Brent Pelham Hall, a church, and a number of cottages and converted residential dwellings. The dominant architectural style of the village is vernacular and encompasses a range of constructions materials and methods including, but not limited to, timber framing, brick, weatherboarding, and a variety of roof forms and coverings.
- 5.17. Brent Pelham Conservation Area is a heritage asset considered to be of **medium significance**.

## Significance of Meesden Corner Cottage

- 5.18. The significance of Meesden Corner Cottage is derived from its age, location, and vernacular architectural style. The property is distinctive for its white external render and thatched roof, of which it is one of notably few in the area to have retained the thatch to its historic range, resisting a trend for most in the area to have been reroofed with slate or clay tile around the interwar period. Later additions, of weatherboarded or brick construction, add to the morphology and character of the property and make a neutral contribution to its significance.
- 5.19. As a grade II listed building, Meesden Corner Cottage is a heritage asset considered to be of **medium significance**.



## 6.0 PROPOSED WORKS AND ASSESSMENT

### Proposed Works

- 6.1. The proposed works are similar in part to the approved 2015 application (3/15/0638/HH) which included a single storey rear extension to the kitchen and small front porch of a comparable size and style. In the current application, the kitchen extension is an oak and glass orangery style conservatory with French doors, a code 4 lead roof, and reclaimed brick plinth and retaining wall enclosing a sunken terrace.
- 6.2. The existing post-construction late 20<sup>th</sup> century addition to the north elevation is to be replaced with a new single storey extension to create a new master bedroom with walk-in wardrobe and ensuite. The new extension will be accessed via an oak framed entrance porch connecting the existing utility room. The link will feature a code 4 lead roof whilst the bedroom addition will have a reclaimed slate pitched roof and shiplap external cladding to match existing. The bedroom will also be fitted with bifold doors to the west elevation.
- 6.3. A studwork partition and door are to be added to the ground floor utility room to form a new family bathroom. A new plasterboard faced timber studwork partition is also proposed to the middle bedroom of the first floor to improve the privacy of the room relative to the adjoining bedroom and landing.

### Impact

- 6.4. It should be noted that a previous similar scheme was approved in 2015 and it is considered that this aspect of the proposal, the kitchen extension, continues to cause **no harm** to the building as it does not adjoin the historic part of the building, rather a late 20<sup>th</sup> century addition. Furthermore, the oak framed orangery form is an acceptable traditional style for the asset and neither it nor the sunken terrace can be seen from the public realm, therefore having **no impact** on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.5. The proposed bedroom extension to the north of the property replaces another 20<sup>th</sup> century post-construction addition and is of a high quality design which utilises construction materials and finishes to match existing. Its position, height, and form, accessed via an oak framed link, also ensures that the addition does not appear dominant or detract from the historic form of the property or does not adjoin historic fabric, therefore having **no impact** on the special interest in the building.

- 6.6. The internal works use lightweight studwork partitions which will cause **no harm** to any historic fabric to which they affix, nor does their installation impact upon the historic circulation patterns of the property.
- 6.7. Historic map regression also highlights that the property has been extended and subdivided multiple times, including both additions to the building itself and outbuildings within the plot. The proposal is a continuation of this process, adapting the property to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century living standards, whilst employing creative design solutions which **do not harm** the significant historic fabric or architectural significance of the building.
- 6.8. The proposal utilises both materials to match existing and sympathetic alternatives to produce an external appearance which is harmonious with the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area. Similarly, the design of the scheme uses traditional construction techniques to preserve the vernacular architectural style.
- 6.9. The elevations of the property to be added to in the proposal are well screened from view from the public realm by mature trees and hedges, topography, and the form and position of the existing structures on the site, such as the taller historic house itself and the modern detached studio situated between to the east of the property. Consequently the proposed additions will have **no impact** on the views through the conservation area or of the listed building.
- 6.10. In summary, the proposed works are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and have **no impact** on the significance of the listed building or its setting.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1. Paragraph 195 of the NPPF advises Local Planning Authorities that the particular significance, including setting of any heritage asset is assessed. This document has concisely described the heritage assets affected by the proposed works and their significance.
- 7.2. It is found that the proposed works do not harm the significance of either the listed building or conservation area as the proposal is a high quality design which accounts for the special interest and features of the property and the character and appearance of Brent Pelham Conservation Area.
- 7.3. Aspects of the current proposal were previously approved in 2015 and it is considered that these and the new elements continue to satisfy the criteria for approval as described by national and local planning policy.
- 7.4. With regards to the test provided by 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is required as a minimum for development to preserve the character or appearance of a conservation area. In this context the proposed works preserve the character and appearance of Brent Pelham Conservation Area.
- 7.5. With regards to the development meeting the statutory test provided by Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the minimum aim is to preserve the setting; building; features of special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings. In this context the proposal preserves the setting and significance of the listed buildings.
- 7.6. It should be remembered that Historic England defines preservation in this context as not harming the interest in the heritage assets, as opposed to keeping them utterly unchanged.
- 7.7. With regards to NPPF paragraphs 199 to 202, as no harm will be caused to the designated assets, no public benefit is required.
- 7.8. In regard to local policies HA1, HA4, HA7, and VILL3, as discussed above, the proposal preserves the setting and significance of the heritage assets. Important architectural features, namely the historic thatched roof range of the building, will not be affected by the proposal. The proposed works instead adjoin 20<sup>th</sup> century additions which do not contribute to the building's significance and are not visible from the street.



7.9. In conclusion, the proposed development meets the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990, the NPPF and local planning policies. It is therefore, requested that the proposed development be approved.



## 8.0 SOURCES

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021), *National Planning Policy Framework*.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990

Ordnance Survey Maps (various dates)

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018) <http://planning.guidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment> / National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019 revision) / National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 2019) / National Design Guide (2019)

Historic England (2017) *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 (Second Edition)*

Historic England (2008) *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*

Brent Pelham Conservation Area Appraisal (2018)

East Herts District Plan (2018)

# HS1

## Listing Description

Listed Building Name	MEESDEN CORNER COTTAGE
Address	MEESDEN CORNER COTTAGE, THE VILLAGE
List Entry Number	1101917
Grade	II
Date First Listed	14 January 1985
Date Amended	NA
National Grid Reference	TL4316131136

### Listing Description

BRENT PELHAM THE VILLAGE (West side) Meesden Corner Cottage

II

C17 cottage, timber framed, plastered and weatherboarded, half hipped thatched roof. One storey and attics, three bays, small casement windows, three dormers, axial brick chimney stack, outshut at rear, small weatherboarded addition with slate roof at northern end. Interior largely unrestored. Good example of type.



heritage  
something  
special