

Cross House Heritage Statement



HERITAGE STATEMENT IN
SUPPORT OF A LISTED
BUILDING CONSENT AND
PLANNING APPLICATION
CONCERNING CROSS HOUSE, THE
GREEN, WALLSEND, NE28 7PG.

6th March 2024 v1.0

Table of Contents

- INTRODUCTION 3
- PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING THE HERITAGE ASSET 3
 - 1.1 Designations and Historic Environment Record 3
 - 1.2 Historical Development of Cross House 4
 - 1.3 The Cultural Significance of Cross House 6

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING THE HERITAGE ASSET

1.1 Designations and Historic Environment Record

Cross House is the oldest occupied property in Wallsend and received its [Grade 2 listing](#) in February 1977. Its history is a fascinating one. Situated on the north-eastern edge of Wallsend's Anglo-Saxon village green (Refer to Figure 1), it looks out across this ancient open space of mature trees and spacious grassed areas where children play and dogs are walked. It is understood to be one of only a handful of such ancient village greens in the country and is a designated [conservation area](#).

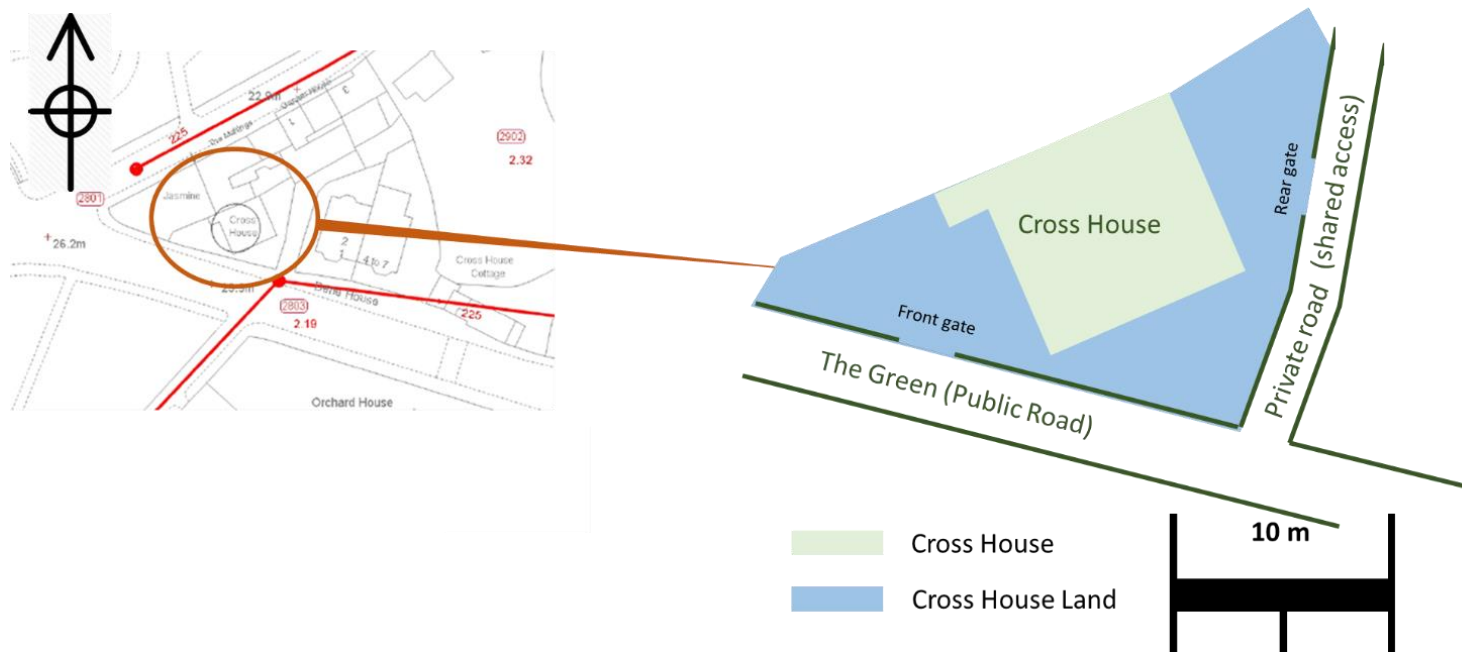


Figure 1

The oldest section of the property was built probably prior to 1670 - a beam with that date on it was discovered in the early 1980s when work was carried out on the roof - possibly as farmworker's cottage. This is the two storey structure which forms the front elevation of the property and faces south-west across The Green. This now houses the lounge on the ground floor and on the upper floor two of the four bedrooms plus a very attractive landing area which adds light and a feeling of spaciousness to the building. Refer to figures 2a and 2b.



Figure 2a

Cross House - Late 19th Century
Courtesy - William Richardson: [History of the Parish of Wallsend](#) (facing pg 82)



Figure 2b

Cross House today

1.2 Historical Development of Cross House

The original property was built using a mixture of hand-cut sandstone which formed the rear wall and hand-made brick which formed the remainder of the building. Much speculation has arisen over the years concerning the source of the sandstone blocks which now form the

interior spine wall - the original rear wall of the property - and which can be seen as a feature in the present dining room - and rear wall of the 1747 extension. Many have suggested that much (maybe all) of the stone used in the building of both the original structure and its extension was recycled blocks of masonry from the Roman fort of [Segedunum](#) and of the Wall itself. Of course, this can not be substantiated and the individual is left to form his/her own opinion on the matter!

The known history of the property begins when it was given by the Moncaster family, who owned Wallsend Hall and much of the surrounding land, to the Parish of Wallsend in 1747 to house the village school. It was then that the adjacent property, now known as Jasmine House, was erected to provide a school room at ground-floor level and walkways at first floor level joining the schoolmaster's living accommodation with the school room itself. A doorway was also created at ground floor level to connect directly to the school room and an extension built to the rear of what is now Cross House to afford adequate accommodation for the schoolmaster and his family.

The Mordue family occupied The School House from 1776 when Joseph Mordue senior was appointed schoolmaster, a position he held until his death in June 1818. He was succeeded by his son, also Joseph, who remained in the post until the school closed in 1835 due to the diminishing number of pupils. The family continued to occupy the property at least until the early 20th century - the last Mordue occupant traced so far (through the 1911 census) is Amelia Mordue, daughter of Joseph Mordue junior, then aged 86.

The impact of Joseph Mordue junior on the prosperity of Wallsend during a large part of the 19th century must have been considerable. The family owned lime kilns and brick works near the River Tyne and a micro brewery situated in premises adjacent to Cross House. Originally operating from these premises, then known as the Mixing House, the brewery supplied local inns, at least one of which was owned by the Mordues.

The [Mordue Brewery](#) has been revived within the last 20 years or so and produces some excellent local beers.

1.3 The Cultural Significance of Cross House

Cross House as a Substitute Church - Somewhere between 1789 and 1797 the ancient parish church of Holy Cross (built around 1150 and situated about half a mile from the house) fell into such disrepair that it was abandoned.



Remains of Holy Cross Church, Wallsend in 1910

Courtesy - *William Richardson: [History of the Parish of Wallsend](#)* (facing page 118)

The School House (as Cross House was then known) began to function as a church for the posting of banns, as well as for marriages and baptisms. It was only some years later that it came to the attention of the Diocese under whose jurisdiction the Parish fell that the building had never been consecrated and therefore all banns issued and marriages performed therein were illegal and all children of these marriages were consequently illegitimate. Naturally, this caused a huge public outcry and on the 8th August 1807 an Act of Parliament was passed to legitimise all marriages (and give legal status to the children born to these marriages) performed in the house and to exonerate the priest who had carried them out. At the same time it was decreed that a parish church, [St Peter's](#), should be built.

It was during this period when the house was being used as a church that [George Stephenson](#) and his wife, who were living in Willington Quay at that time, brought their son, Robert, [to be baptised](#). More recently the property has been included in the Stephenson Trail which follows the lives of the Stephenson's as railway pioneers.

Documentation Control

| Date | Description | Version | Author |
|-------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 06/03/2024 | Application for railings. | 1.0 | G Baker |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |