

# HERITAGE STATEMENT

Replacing damaged Garden Retaining Wall

East Elevation bordering Low Grange Road green  
space

SPENNYMOOR SETTLEMENT

SPENNYMOOR



**March 2024**

## **The Heritage Statement**

This statement is prepared in support of a planning application for the erection of a retaining wall to replace the one which has collapsed on the Low Grange Wall side of the East facing Garden of the grade II Spennymoor Settlement Everyman Theatre Building. The application site borders the self-contained landscape garden space and consists of a partially collapsed boundary wall and railings.

The report is prepared in line with the Durham County Council guidance on Heritage Statements of May 2014 and the current NPPF guidance of December 2021, notably section 16, Paragraphs 194 to 214 regarding the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. In accordance with this guidance the statement will provide a "...level of detail (should be) proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance." (NPPF, Para 189.)

It will identify the application site and its heritage status, describe the heritage assets affected by the proposal briefly and set out the extent of the assets and their context. A comment on the statutory heritage protection will be included.

## The Application Site – Location and Description

The site takes the form of a single building within an enclosed landscape setting accessed via adjacent residential development from the highway network

It is located in the centre of the town and adjacent to a major traffic junction. The site is raised above the land to the east with **a retaining wall to Low Grange Road** affording open views of the side elevation.



Site Location

Retaining Wall



The above picture shows the retaining wall and security fencing, prior to its collapse, built circa. 1938 its direct replacement would not meet current standards for a structure to hold approximately one meter of garden soil.

## Heritage Assets

Spennymoor Settlement is an individual grade II listed building (List Entry Number: 1390830) dating from the mid twentieth century making it a relatively rare example of such a building in County Durham. It is located in an otherwise unremarkable built environment. It is described as follows in the statutory list description:

*Theatre, still in use, built in 1938-9, designed by C Elgey. Red brick, in stretcher bond, with three different levels of flat roof behind parapets. Main entrance to south of double doors under a concrete canopy, flanked by decorative horizontal strips of concrete, to left hand end of facade. One metal-framed oblong window to left of entrance, with dark red brick string course from the top towards the door, and three string courses to left to corner of building. Three high metal-framed oblong windows to right of entrance, with carved frieze (?sandstone) by Tisa Hess above. This shows two head-and-shoulders figures holding up masks of comedy and tragedy. The relief is quite badly weathered, but the main components can be clearly seen. Three dark red brick string courses run between windows and along right return where there is a line of similar windows along east side of building. West side of building has line of smaller metal-framed windows and a side entrance. North side has one metal-framed window at western end, otherwise blank (this is back of stage. INTERIOR: Main hall - small auditorium with low raised stage at one end. Small entrance hall, with boiler room and corridor off, to side of auditorium. Mens and Ladies dressing rooms and kitchen alongside. Original pipework for central heating, and original*

*electrical circuit board (no longer in use) in boiler room. Original lighting board on stage left wall.*



*Current state of retaining was after collapse*

## **The Proposed Works**

The proposed works include demolition of the remaining retaining wall, removal of debris, drilling of 8 No. holes to a depth of 1.5 -1.8 meters to enable Steel 'H' section girders to be concreted in with 1.2 metres above ground level ,into which seven precast reinforced concrete slabs are lowered to provide safe retention of the garden material. To ensure an acceptable finish to compliment the Grade 2 listing of the Theatre building, a single brick wall would be built on a suitable foundation to face the concrete pane, when viewed from Low grange Road and tied to the retaining structure. The existing palisade security fencing would then be re-erected on the garden side to complete, returning the site to both its appearance, and level of security which existed before the wall collapse.

## **Heritage Impact**

The site itself is relatively well contained and the only impact associated with the proposal relates to a minor change of appearance, in the bricks used as part of the wall construction

The proposed replacement wall will both retain the garden space and provide some security to the Spennymoor Settlement site in line with the current building standard. It is concluded that the impact will be positive and be of public benefit in terms of visual enhancement to Low Grange Road, public safety, and returning the setting of the Grade 2 listed building to its former appearance. The age of the existing wall has not been established, however it did not form part of the original construction of Spennymoor Settlement in 1938/9, notably by out of work miners.

Therefore, the removal of the existing wall is not considered to result in the loss of any historic fabric. Overall, the works are considered to be a minor change to the setting of Spennymoor Settlement and are not considered to affect its historic or architectural interest as a designated heritage asset.

## **Conclusion**

Careful consideration has been given to the approach of these works to minimise the impact on the designated asset. Whilst the proposal will bring about minor visual changes, this is intentional and positive change. The effects of the proposed works on the Grade 2 listed building have been evaluated in line with the paragraph 209 of the NPPF. The proposals are considered to be in accordance with the guidance offered in the NPPF and local policy.