

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT: RETENTION OF FRONT WALL 222 KNOWSLEY LANE.



Heritage Asset:

SCHOOL COTTAGES, 224 AND 226, KNOWSLEY LANE

District: **Knowsley (Metropolitan Authority)**

Parish: **Knowsley**

Heritage Category: **Grade II Listed Building**

Grade II Entry Number: **1261766**

Date first listed: **03-Aug-1981**

List Entry Name: **SCHOOL COTTAGES**

Statutory Address: **SCHOOL COTTAGES, 224 AND 226, KNOWSLEY LANE, L34 4AH**

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 16/07/2014

Description

KNOWSLEY, KNOWSLEY LANE, Nos. 224 and 226 (School Cottages)

Probably late C18. Originally Knowsley Boys School, erected by Lord Derby and later converted to a detached pair of cottages. Good brickwork. Symmetrical. 2 storeys. 2 wide-spaced casement windows, 3-light above and 4-light below. Hipped brick porch with studded door under depressed cusped head. Single-storey lean-to porches at end of front. Slate roofs. Tall, chamfered gabled stacks.

Listing National Grid Reference: SJ4427692738

Introduction.

The application address 222 Knowsley Lane is a late C19c semi-detached 2 storey family cottage - situated within its own grounds, curtailed with high boundaries including extended frontage, driveway / parking and moderately sized rear garden for private amenity. The property is owner / occupied by Mr Chris O'Hare, his wife and two young children. 222 Knowsley Lane is situated alongside the Grade II Listed School Cottages known as 224 – 226 Knowsley Lane, Prescott. The properties are aligned at a slight angle and share a front building line; each property enjoys a long independent driveway with identifiable high boundary enclosures of varying significance.

The location is not within a Conservation Area and primarily, is an urban residential district.

The settings of 222 and 224 - 226 Knowsley Lane differ slightly – all having morphed over time, the gardens and landscape play an important role with strong verdant hedgerows that 'frame' each property with identifiable ownership. It is assumed the later semi-detached cottages at 220 and 222 Knowsley Lane are situated on land originally used by the former schoolhouse although this may be conjecture. The street scene along Knowsley Lane has dramatically evolved over time with varying changes responding to an evolving society – across from both listed cottages is a large school / playground with high 2m steel palisade fences erected for security purpose.

Knowsley Borough Council have raised concern regarding construction in June 2022 of a front boundary wall at 222 Knowsley Lane. The wall design is traditional constructed with heritage clay facing brick with lime mortar, composite cross panels and matching sliding gate. The structure is 1.6m high and provides suitable security to the family home, its height aligns with the adjoining 1.6m high hedgerow that separates the interface with 224 Knowsley Lane. We understand the local authority have not received public complaints - with unexpected concern raised by a planning officer visiting 222 Knowsley Lane to assess the erection of a future garage.

We understand Knowsley Planners have recently approved a large extension to the application property (see plan attached) positioned 5.5m from the Grade II Listed Cottage 224 Knowsley Lane. This design did not raise concern with the local authority regarding impact upon the neighbouring listed building and nor did the LA request a Heritage Impact Statement.

The process of wielding enforcement on a relatively modest front wall and against a young family who are owner / occupiers of 222 Knowsley Lane appears heavy handed, considering the wider community have not raised complaint.

The O'Hare family enjoy outdoor pursuits and own a 4 wheel off road vehicle and camper van, both vehicles have been vulnerable to theft and damage, and for this reason the front protective line was erected. The wall is constructed using modest brick piers with lightweight composite panels between to create a visual and defensible line to deter observation.

The property is not situated within a conservation area but is, unfortunately within a high crime postal area where forced and opportune theft occurs.

Government NPPF Guideline:

The NPPF reinforces the need to carefully consider the impact of development on heritage assets and to ensure that any potential harm is appropriately mitigated and justified. It also promotes the importance of recording and sharing information about these assets for future generations.

The NPPF identifies varying levels of harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset and its setting.

- Total Loss
- Substantial Harm
- Less Than Substantial Harm
- No Harm

Assessment of Heritage Asset:

Consideration of the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage assets, and how it can enable that significance to be appreciated, will almost always include the consideration of views. The staged approach to taking decisions on setting given here can also be used to assess the contribution of a view, or views, to the significance of heritage assets and the ability to appreciate that significance.

School Cottages 224 – 226 Knowsley Lane were originally constructed during the late 1780's as a school that formed part of the Lord Derby Estate. The architectural style is a simple rural aesthetic commonly adopted by the estate architects to form social cohesion. The schoolhouse was later converted to semi-detached cottages assumingly for workers tied to the Lord Derby Estate.

The listed cottages are constructed from local clay facings under a Welsh slate roof, matching end gables with shaped decorative chimney stacks and yellow pots. Sandstone sills and heads noted to window apertures with a simple slated 'lean to' entrance porch to 226 and hipped slate central front entrance porch to 224 with numerous outbuildings concealed to the property rear. The schoolhouse enjoys a 2m high high flanking stone boundary wall alongside the westerly flank to 226 with a low stone front wall with potential 'cast railings' along the road frontage unfortunately now lost. It is thought that the application site 220 – 222 Knowsley Lane may have formed part of the original school grounds before being sub divided in the 19c enabling the construction of one pair of semi-detached cottages of similar height and scale to the school cottages. 222 Knowsley Lane is of a different architectural style with projected gable fronts – grander window proportion / style with more elaborate brick reliefs and arching to its fenestration.

Impact Assessment of Heritage:

Development impacting a listed building's setting can result in harm to the building's significance and character. The setting of a listed building is crucial for its appreciation and understanding, development can negatively affect this through visual intrusion, changes in the surrounding environment (incl. noise, smell) or by altering views including the historical relationship between the building and its surroundings can impact upon the heritage asset.

Both listed cottages enjoy high enclosures to their curtilage, which define them – both cottages are set back providing recessed views, a 2m high stone wall is recorded to the lefthand boundary viewed from Knowsley Lane with a strong 1600mm high mature hedgerow to the right-hand boundary interface with 222 Knowsley Lane.

Whilst the frontage garden to 226 Knowsley Lane is relatively open and lawned, 224 enjoys significant greenery and trees that detract public views – there are substantial hedgerows between both listed cottages that purposefully sub divide the central space and create an asymmetrical setting. The landscape frontage at 224 is interspersed with grass lawns and foliage which is particularly striking - including the high outer hedgerow that 'frames the property' and enhances its long linear driveway. The replica cast frontage gates and the listed cottage front wall can be measured at distance of 27.5m which is substantial. Both 224 and 226 Knowsley Lane are grouped assets and should be read within this context, 222 Knowsley is wholly and historically separate to the school cottages with high defined boundaries – indeed it is this defined separation that visually exemplifies the school cottages as one setting and without distraction to the viewer.

Conclusion:

It is submitted that the recessed school cottages viewed roadside form a recessed and visually attractive open vista, it is this aspect which provides their individuality of setting – as such the setting is subtly framed with high boundary flanks east and west of the school cottages that in the writer's opinion concentrates focus. The high shared boundary height with 222 Knowsley and its new gated enclosure only exemplifies the setting and inadvertently heightens the setting's prominence.

It is therefore our opinion that the brick pier and panel wall constructed at 222 Knowsley Lane has negligible impact upon the setting of listed school cottages and affords them no harm in terms of impact or reduction in visual setting.





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