

REPLACEMENT PORCH AT 62 ROBY ROAD

ROBY, METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF KNOWSLEY



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER
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APRIL 2023

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GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

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

The proposal building is situated in the centre of Roby village, part of the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley, Merseyside. Number 62 Roby Road is a semi-detached cottage which is itself undesignated but stands within Roby Conservation Area.

Proposals have been submitted to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council for a replacement single-storey porch at the application property. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value to this and future generations) of the conservation area. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and to assess how it would be affected by the proposal.

The significance of the conservation area essentially derives from its character and appearance as the historic core of Roby village. This character is derived from its buildings and their relationship to each other amid its historic pattern of roads and spaces, where 18th and 19th century cottages testify to its rural origins and its railway station and Victorian villas represent its later transition to a commuter dormitory. The significance of the conservation area extends primarily to the borough-wide context, although a number of its buildings are listed as being of national importance.

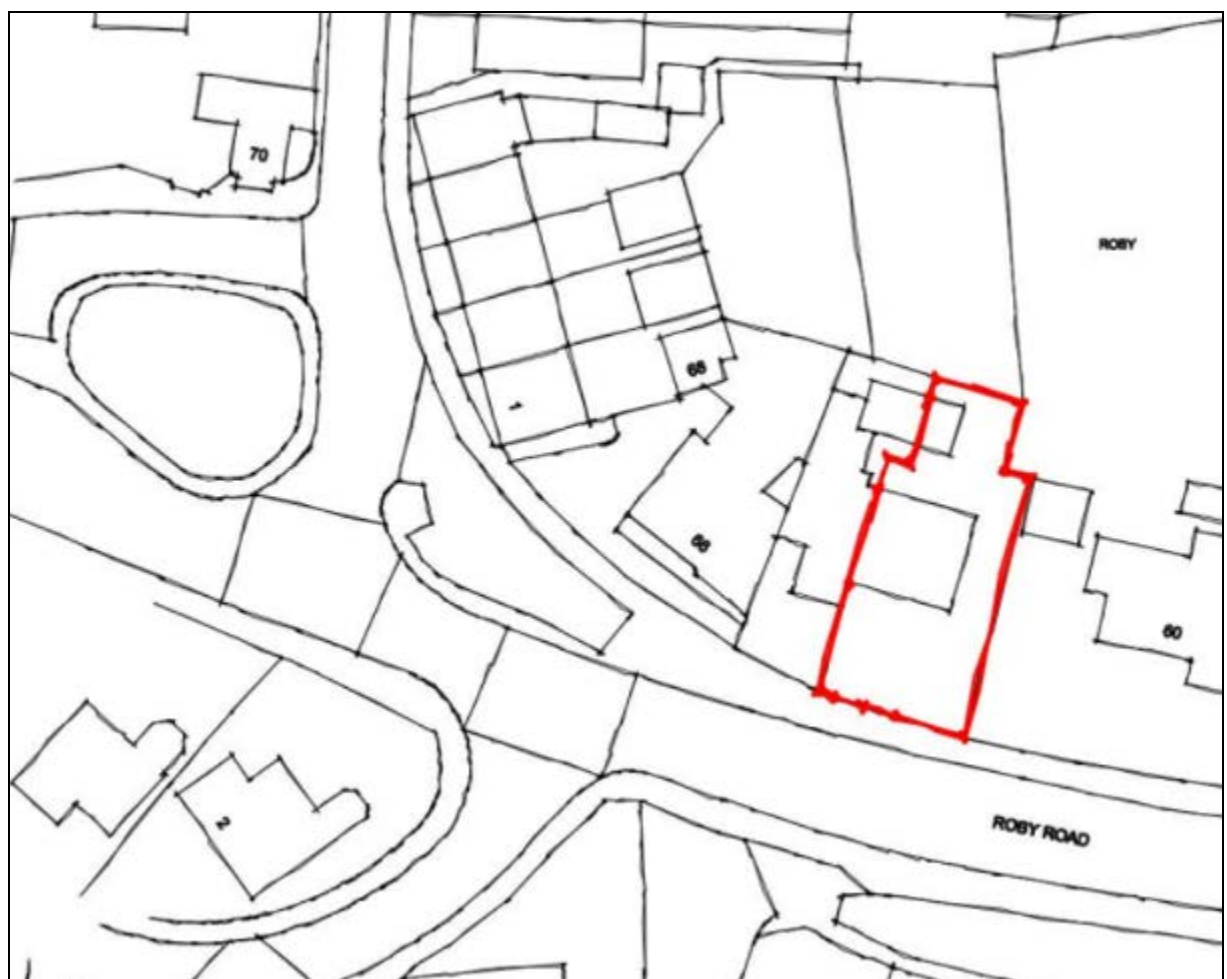
The application property forms the main range of a T-shaped property of likely early-mid 19th century date. As a non-designated building, it is primarily of local significance for the positive contribution it makes to the conservation area as one of the 18th-19th century cottages located at the heart of the settlement close to its village green, and which represent the legacy of its rural past. This significance therefore resides in its group value rather than its own intrinsic qualities.

The proposal seeks consent for the addition of a small single-storey porch on the front elevation, whose appearance and materials match the traditional vernacular of the main building. The porch is therefore entirely in keeping with the character of the host property and will not adversely affect its positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Furthermore in the extent of the conservation area as a whole it is a minor development whose visual presence will hardly be noticeable.

The special interest, character and appearance that embodies the significance of the conservation area as the historic core of Roby village and its later commuter housing will be entirely sustained by the proposal. The application is thereby compliant with national guidance and relevant local development plan policy, and hence merits approval without delay.

2: THE SITE

The proposal building is situated at in the centre of Roby village in the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley, Merseyside. Number 62 Roby Road is a semi-detached cottage that stands on the north side of Roby Road, west of its junction with Station Road, where it forms part of a nucleus of modest properties of 18th-19th century date that form the historic core of the settlement adjoining its village green. Its wider surroundings are that of a 19th-20th century suburbia that represents Roby's later role as an outer suburb of Liverpool.



Map 1. Location of the application property



1. The application property, viewed from Roby Road



2. The property is the easternmost of a two semi-detached cottages

3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

3.1 Proposed development

Proposals have been submitted to Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council for a replacement single-storey porch at the application property.

3.2 Designation

The property is itself undesignated, but lies within Roby Conservation Area.

3.3 Heritage impacts

The heritage issue arising from the proposal is its impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value to this and future generations) of the conservation area.

3.4 Scope and purpose of this report

Paragraph 194 of 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 assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to identify the significance of the conservation area, along with the contribution made by the application property, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. The level of detail is considered proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset, in accordance with paragraph 194, and no more than necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation supporting the application.

3.5 Report structure

This is as follows:

1. A brief description of the conservation area (Section 4) and of the contribution made by the application building (Section 5)

2. A summary of their heritage significance (Section 6)
3. A summary of the planning policy context in which the application will be determined (Section 7)
4. Evaluation within this context of the proposal's impact upon the significance of the conservation area (Section 8).

4: THE CONSERVATION AREA

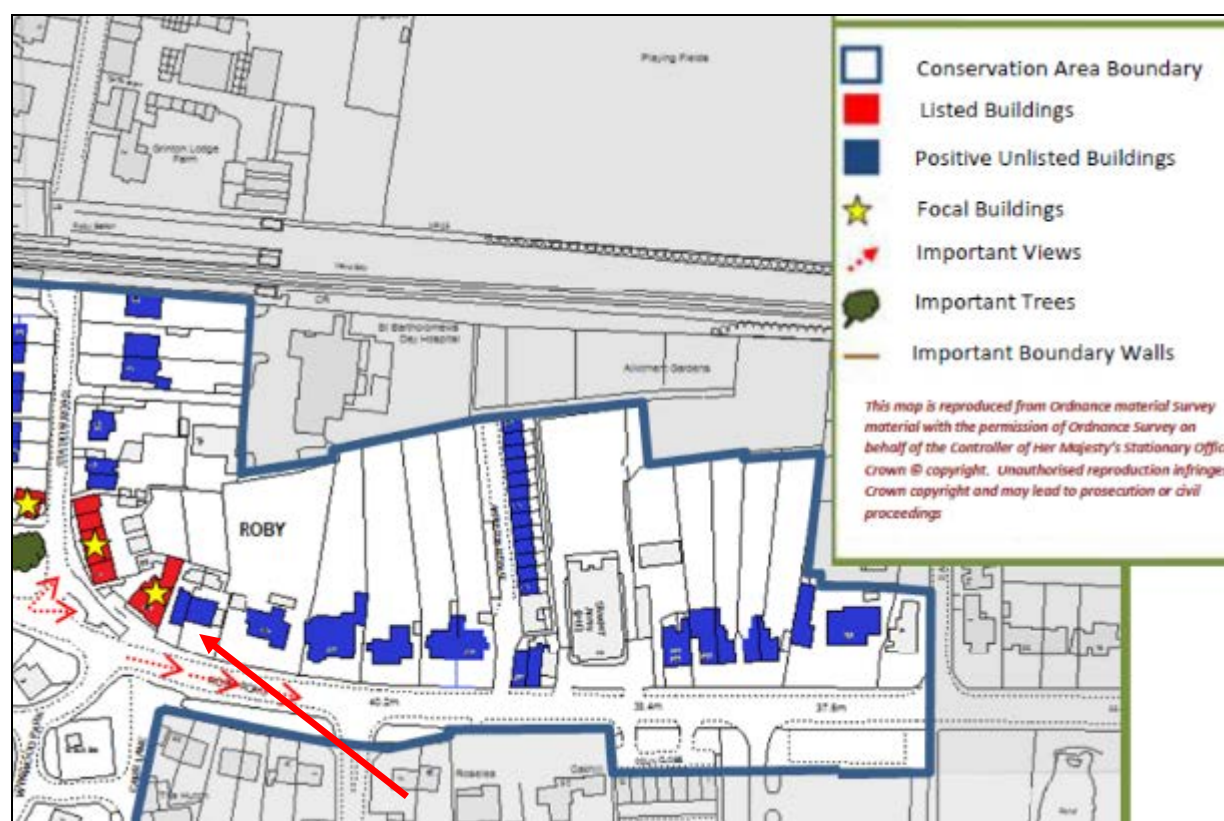
Roby Conservation Area was first designated by Knowsley MBC in 1978 and essentially covers the ancient core of Roby, whose focus is the village green at its junction with Roby Road and Station Road. Roby is a pre-conquest settlement that was granted a market and fair charter in 1304 but ultimately failed to grow. It remained a small village until the arrival of the Liverpool-Manchester Railway in 1830, which acted as a catalyst for future commuter development and which over time transformed Roby into an outer suburb of Liverpool. The character appraisal of the conservation area adopted by Knowsley MBC in 2015 states it retains a high number of attractive and locally distinctive buildings that reflect this historic development. Its character is essentially that of a settlement which grew in the railway era and its principal characteristics are its villas and the railway station that belong to this time, along with the cottages on Roby Road that pre-date them.



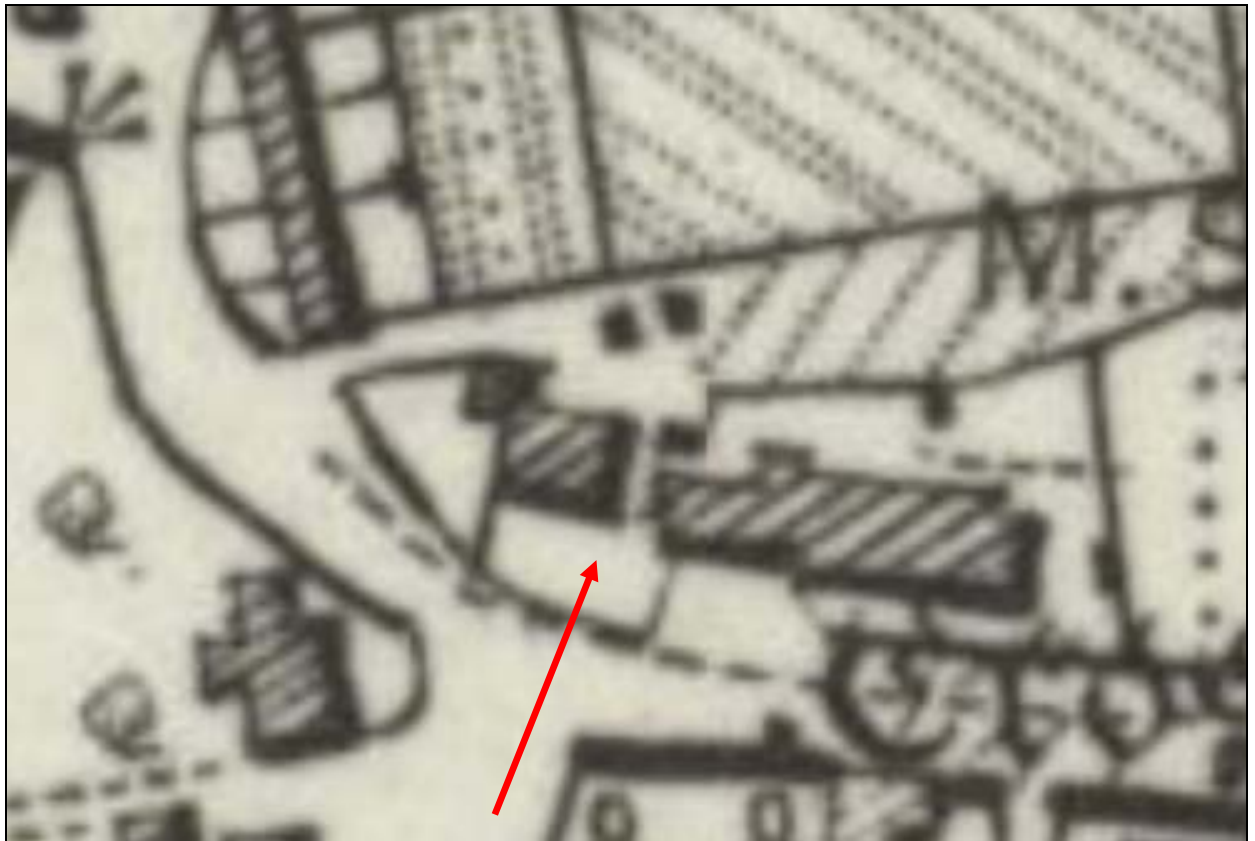
Map 2. Conservation area boundary, with the application property indicated

5: CONTRIBUTION OF THE APPLICATION PROPERTY

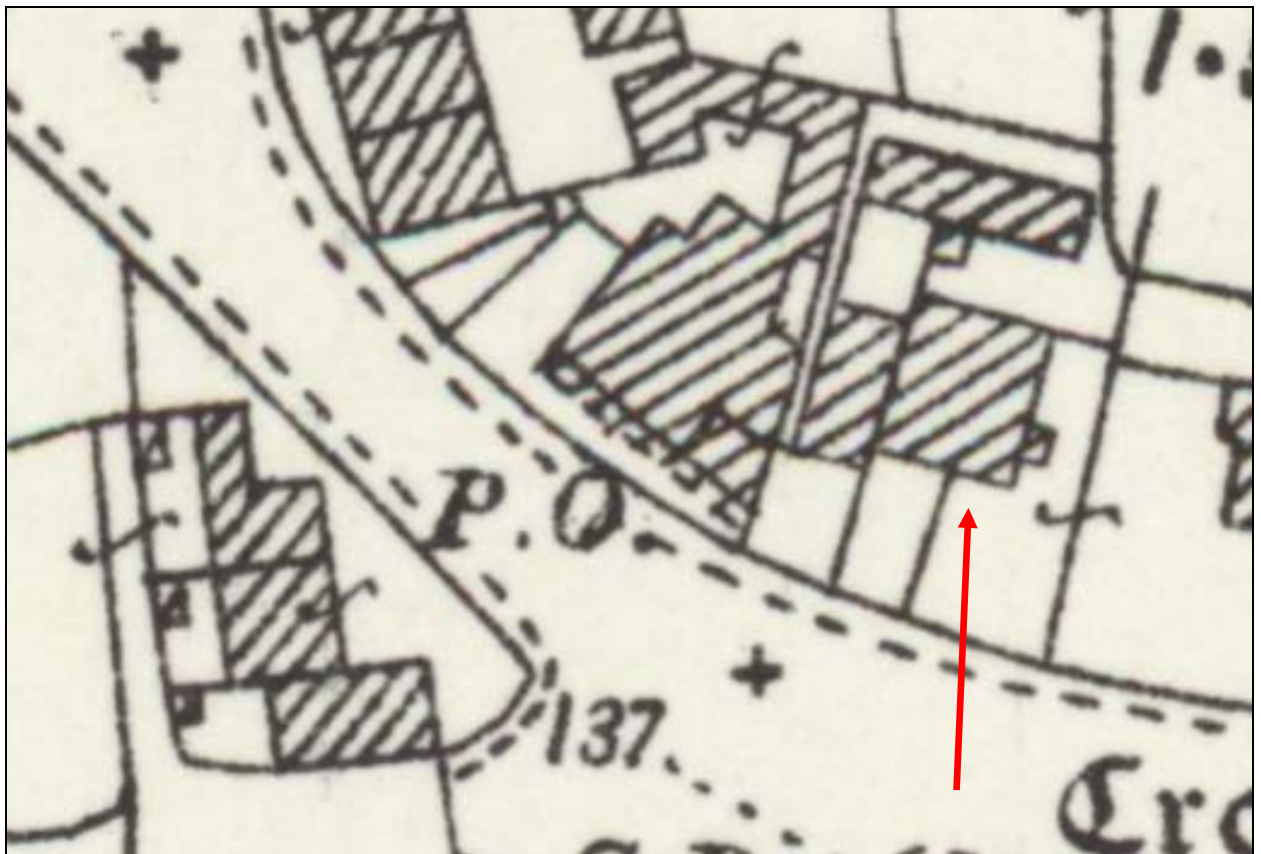
The application property is one of the 18th-19th century cottages that define the historic core of the pre-railway era Roby village. As such it is denoted as a positive unlisted building in the 2015 character appraisal. The property comprises the main range of an T-shaped property, the other element of which is a gabled projecting wing to the left in separate occupation. It is a modest structure with brick walling and timber casement windows with wedge-shaped brick lintels. The date is probably the early-mid 19th century, as it appears to be shown, albeit with somewhat different footprint, upon the six-inch OS map of the mid-1840s (Map 4, following page). The property stands behind a front garden bounded by a sandstone wall and trees which restrict views of it from the public realm.



Map 3. The application property is identified as one of the conservation area's positive unlisted buildings in the 2015 appraisal



Map 4. The property is probably the building shown on the six-inch OS map surveyed in 1845-1847



Map 5. The application building as depicted on the 25-inch OS map of 1927



3. The application property is one of a number of cottages which define the character of the historic village centre and as such makes a positive contribution to the conservation area

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 minimise 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 The conservation area

The significance of the conservation area essentially derives from its character and appearance as the historic core of Roby village. This character is derived from its buildings and their relationship to each other amid its historic pattern of roads and spaces, where 18th and 19th century cottages testify to its rural origins and its railway station and Victorian villas represent its later transition to a commuter dormitory. The significance of the conservation area extends primarily to the borough-wide context, although a number of its buildings are listed as being of national importance.

6.3 The application property

The application property is a building of local significance for the positive contribution it makes to the conservation area as one of the 18th-19th century cottages located at the heart of the settlement close to its village green, and are the legacy of its rural past. This significance therefore resides in its group value rather than its own intrinsic qualities.

7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 Statutory duty

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area.

7.2 Relevant policies

Section 16 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how the statutory duty is to be put into practice. 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 designated heritage assets, paragraph 199 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be.

The guidance is reflected by policies of the local development plan, principal of which is CS20 (*Managing the Borough's Historic Environment*) of the Knowsley Core Strategy. This requires development proposals to preserve or enhance the borough's historic and architectural assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas.

8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

8.1 Assessment

The proposal seeks consent for a small replacement single-storey porch on the front elevation, whose appearance and materials match the traditional vernacular of the main building. The porch is therefore entirely in keeping with the character of the host property and will not adversely affect its positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Furthermore, in the extent of the conservation area as a whole it is a minor development whose visual presence will hardly be noticeable.



4. Front elevation as proposed

8.2 Conclusion

The special interest, character and appearance that embodies the significance of the conservation area as the historic village core along with its later commuter housing will be entirely sustained by the proposal. The application is thereby compliant with national guidance and relevant local development plan policy, and hence merits approval without delay.