

## ADDRESS

THRIFT COTTAGE, SEWARDSTONE ROAD (E), WALTHAM ABBEY

Parish WALTHAM ABBEY  
District EPPING FOREST  
County ESSEX

Case UID: 169867

Date First Listed: 22-MAR-1974

Formerly Listed As:

## RECOMMENDATION

Outcome: No, do not de-list

Recommended Grade: II

02-SEP-2010

## BACKGROUND:

After examining all the papers on this file and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the item should not be de-listed.

## CONTEXT:

English Heritage has been asked to assess Thrift Cottage for de-listing as it is claimed that the building was designated incorrectly as a building of the C17 or C18 and that it is structurally unsound. In 2005, Listed Building Consent (LBC) was granted for the conversion of the property to an office, but this was not implemented. A further LBC application (ref EPF/2122/08) for the demolition of the building was refused in 2008, in part because the structural condition of the cottage was not adequately addressed and no proposals for its reuse were provided. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has objected to the demolition, and has featured this case in its journal (2009).

The structural survey of 2009 concludes that the building is 'extremely dilapidated and significant structural movement has occurred' and that 'the condition of the building is such that the costs [of refurbishment] are significantly higher than the cost of rebuilding the property.' However another structural report from the eminent Mark Morton Partnership states that the building is capable of rescue through a more sympathetic approach. However, the Principles of Selection for Designating Buildings makes it clear that the state of repair of a building is not a relevant consideration when assessing its special architectural and historic interest.

## HISTORY:

The most detailed early map of Sewardstone Road is by Chapman and Andre of 1776 showing some dwellings a short distance to the south of the historically significant town of Waltham Abbey. These may include Thrift Hall and Thrift Cottage. The buildings are identified on the parish map of 1825 (possibly that by JJ Crawter and Sons) when they were owned by Charles Preston. They are also depicted on the Tithe Map of 1842. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1870 shows Thrift Hall and the cottage within the walled garden of the Hall on the suburban outskirts of Waltham Abbey. It appears that the cottage is either very close, or attached to a larger villa to its south known as The Limes. The sale particulars for the hall and cottage, dated 1859, state that the cottage had four bedrooms, a parlour, kitchen, scullery and larder, and gardens to the front and rear.

The date of construction is not clear. A short report by Waltham Abbey Museum following a visit in 1988 postulates that the building dates to the first quarter of the C19, but was remodelled in the

Victorian period. The cottage retains some earlier timber framing exposed in the rear wall and at the ground floor south-east corner. A door with H-L hinges suggests a C18 date in part. However, the cottage has been altered in the late C19 and C20, including remodelling on the ground floor to form a kitchen and bathroom, and the addition of a front bay and replacement of the roof structure.

Both Thrift Hall and Thrift Cottage were designated in 1974 and lie in the Waltham Abbey Conservation Area. Thrift Hall has recently been renovated, but the cottage, which was once accommodation for the Hall's caretaker, has been vacant since c1997 and has suffered from vandalism. Most of the door and window openings have been boarded over and a rear extension has been demolished. Structural reports have been undertaken on behalf of the local authority in 2006 and by the current owner in 2009.

#### DESCRIPTION:

The current list description is as follows:

'C17 or C18, altered, pebbledash, old tiled roof. 2 storeys, 2 flush 1st floor sash windows with glazing bars. Ground floor C19 bay with 2 light sash window on right, original sash with glazing bars on left. C19 gabled porch'

The recent inspection confirms that the current description of the façade is accurate, although it should be noted that a small outshot with a slated, pent roof was added to the south in the C19 or C20. The building in its current form probably dates from the late C18 or early C19, but may incorporate part of an earlier structure. The asymmetric, gable roof has a plain tile covering to the front pitch and pantiles to the rear, and there are two end stacks, both truncated. The rear elevation comprises weatherboard cladding covered with pebble-dash. Beneath the weatherboard, the timber midrail, studs and part of a door jamb are exposed. The rear extension has been removed, exposing an interior doorway into the rear kitchen and outshot. The main rear entrance lies to the right and there is an original window opening further to the right at ground-floor level, although the window itself has been removed. At first floor there are two flush sash windows flanking a central casement window.

Internally, there are boxed in bridging beams in both ground floor rooms. The fire surrounds have been removed, but the dado and picture rails, built-in cupboards and wall panelling beneath the dado rail remain in the right-hand room. The midrail of the south cross frame remains, and continues, exposed, into the kitchen to the rear. The left hand room has exposed studwork at the north gable end and picture rails. All windows have moulded timber surrounds. At the rear a steep dog-leg stair leads to the first floor. The three bedrooms are plain, and none have their fireplaces. The exposed window frames are all six-over-six sash windows without horns. There are two-panel doors, one with an 'H-L' hinge. The casement window above the stairs, said to be C20 in date, comprises two leaded lights, the top with a hopper opening, and each with 25 stained glass panes. At the centre of both are Coats of Arms with geometric stained glass patterns.

#### ASSESSMENT:

##### CONSULTATION:

The Local Planning Authority and the Ancient Monuments Society and SPAB do not support the de-listing of the property. The owner's agent responded to the initial report asking for the Waltham Abbey Museum report to be taken into account and provided a date for the stained glass in the window lighting the staircase. Where relevant, these comments have been incorporated.

##### ASSESSMENT:

Thrift Cottage was considered to have special architectural and historic interest when it was designated in 1974. Although the current list description gives a possible C17 date for its

construction, the building is mainly of early C19 date, but incorporates earlier fabric as indicated by the remnant timber framing at the south gable end and the two-panel door with 'HL' hinge. Thus this vernacular cottage dates to between 1700 and 1840. Most buildings constructed during this period are designated (DCMS, March 2010). The Selection Guide for Vernacular Houses (English Heritage, March 2007) describes them as a conspicuous and much-loved component of the English landscape, regarded as essential ingredients of local distinctiveness. Factors to be considered when assessing a building of this type include the level of alteration and the survival of original fabric. A further significant consideration in this case is the group value that Thrift Cottage has with Thrift Hall.

The current List description acknowledges that Thrift Cottage is altered and there is no evidence to hand which suggests that there have been additional alterations to the building's historic fabric since 1974. It continues to possess early C19 flush sash windows on the first floor and one on the ground floor of the façade, features which attest to its age and add interest. Although there have been later C19 alterations to the cottage, its simple two room plan-form is legible. The cottage was constructed as a humble building subservient to, and contemporary with, the Hall immediately adjacent to the north. This strong architectural, functional, and historic group value with the Hall adds considerably to the interest of the cottage and compensates for the alterations to its fabric and form. The building is in need of restoration, but its condition is not relevant to the assessment of special architectural or historic interest. Thrift Cottage was judged to satisfy the criteria in 1974 and continues to do so today. It should remain on the statutory List, but the description should be amended to correct the date of construction and clarify where the special interest of the building lies.

#### CONCLUSION:

Thrift Cottage continues to have special architectural and historic interest and should remain on the statutory List.

#### SOURCES:

Waters, D W, 'Structural report on condition of Thrift Cottage, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex' (unpublished structural report, July 2009)  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 'Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: BTR Works, Sewardstone, Waltham Abbey, Essex', (unpublished archaeological report, August 2001)  
The Morton Partnership 'Thrift Cottage, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey', (unpublished letter to Epping Forest District Council, August 2006)  
Waltham Abbey Museum, 'Thrift Cottage, Sewardstone Road, (unpublished report following site visit of 1988)

#### REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION:

Thrift Cottage, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey, a vernacular dwelling of the early C19 with some earlier fabric, should not be de-listed for the following principal reasons.

\* Architectural: It retains early C19 features and incorporates fabric of the C18. Its earliest plan-form remains legible, contributing to its special architectural interest.

\* Alterations: This humble building was noted as being altered when designated in 1974 and there have not been further alterations which have affected its special interest since that date.

\* Group Value: The building has strong historical, functional and architectural group value with Thrift Hall immediately to the north.

VISITS

12-JUL-2010 Full inspection

COUNTERSIGNING

Countersigning Comments: Agreed, no, do not de-list.

The building retains the special interest attributed to it at the time of designation. The List description has been amended to improve its accuracy and convert it to the modern format.

18 October 2010

Second Countersigning Comments:

HP Director Comments:

Proposed List Entry

22-MAR-1974

SEWARDSTONE ROAD  
(East side)  
THRIFT COTTAGE

II

Case UID: 169867

Proposed LBS UID:

A cottage of early C19, incorporating fabric of the C18, altered in the late C19 and C20.

MATERIALS:

Timber-framed, with pebble-dashed render, which at the rear is applied to weatherboard cladding.

PLAN:

Simple two room plan on ground floor with outshot to the south.

**EXTERIOR:**

The cottage has two storeys. The façade has a central, C19 gabled porch with a two light sash window on the right and the original sash with glazing bars on the left. At first floor, there are two, boarded up, flush sash windows with glazing bars, but without horns. The asymmetric, gable roof has a plain tile covering to the front pitch and pantiles to the rear and there are two end stacks, both truncated. Beneath the weatherboard on the rear elevation a timber midrail, studs and part of a door jamb are exposed. The rear extension has been removed, exposing an interior doorway into the rear kitchen and outshot. The main rear entrance lies to the right and there is an original window opening further to the right at ground floor level, although the window itself has been removed. At first floor there are two, boarded-up flush sash windows with glazing bars flanking a central casement window.

**INTERIOR:**

There are boxed in bridging beams in both ground floor rooms. The fire surrounds have been removed, but the dado and picture rails, built-in cupboards and wall panelling beneath the dado rail remain in the right-hand room. The midrail of the south cross frame remains, and continues, exposed, into the kitchen to the rear. The left hand room has exposed studwork at the north gable end and picture rails. All windows have moulded timber surrounds. At the rear a steep dog-leg stair leads to the first floor. The three bedrooms are plain, and none have their fireplaces. The exposed window frames are all six-over-six sash windows without horns. There are two, two-panel doors, one with an 'H-L' hinge. The casement window above the stairs, said to be C20 in date, comprises two leaded lights, the top with a hopper opening, and each with 25 stained glass panes. At the centre of both are Coats of Arms with geometric stained glass patterns.

**HISTORY:**

Thrift Hall and Thrift Cottage are identified on the parish map of 1825 (possibly that by JJ Crawter and Sons) when they are owned by Charles Preston. They are also depicted on the Tithe Map of 1842. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1870 shows Thrift Hall and the cottage within the walled garden of the Hall, on the suburban outskirts of Waltham Abbey. It appears that the cottage is either very close, or attached to a larger villa to its south known as The Limes. The sale particulars for the hall and cottage, dated 1859, states that the cottage had four bedrooms, a parlour, kitchen, scullery and larder and gardens to the front and rear.

Thrift Hall was renovated in the early C21, but the cottage, which was once accommodation for the hall's caretaker, has been vacant since approximately 1997. At the time of the inspection, most of the door and window openings were boarded over.

**SOURCES:**

Waters, D W, 'Structural report on condition of Thrift Cottage, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex' (unpublished structural report, July 2009)

Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 'Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: BTR Works, Sewardstone, Waltham Abbey, Essex', (unpublished archaeological report, August 2001)

The Morton Partnership 'Thrift Cottage, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey', (unpublished letter to Epping Forest District Council, August 2006)

Waltham Abbey Museum, 'Thrift Cottage, Sewardstone Road, (unpublished report following site visit of 1988)

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION:**

Thrift Cottage, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey, a vernacular dwelling of the early C19, is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons.

\* Architectural: It retains early C19 features and incorporates fabric of the C18. Its earliest plan-form remains legible, contributing to its special architectural interest.

\* Group Value: The building has strong historical, functional and architectural group value with Thrift Hall immediately to the north.