

Heswall Police Station

The Police Station in Heswall was put up for sale recently by the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. The Heswall Society was alerted by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Jane Kennedy, some time ago that this was their intention. As a result, the Society prepared documentation to apply for listing of the building with Historic England. Unfortunately at that time, we could not submit the application as having a building 'up for sale' was not deemed to be 'at risk'. Hence our application would not be considered by Heritage England.

This situation has now changed. On 'Design', the current Planning Appraisal says:

"3.18 Although the existing building is not listed or in a conservation area, it is of architectural merit and makes a positive contribution to the street scene. Demolition of the building would form part of the application proposals for redevelopment of the site and so from a design perspective, the impact of the loss of this building would be weighed against the benefits that the proposals deliver, one of which would be whether a high standard of design quality is achieved."

The Society therefore judged that the building was now at risk and therefore submitted an application to Historic England for it to be listed.

Unfortunately however, although the building for us in Heswall is considered iconic, of real architectural merit and making a positive contribution to the street scene, it would appear that, after a cursory desk exercise, Historic England are currently not prepared to list it as it doesn't appear to them to satisfy their listing criteria. The Society is now considering how best to proceed. Essentially, it seems there are two options:

Option 1 - we could choose to proceed with a no charge listing option which is a desk based appraisal. However, unless we can strengthen our case, Historic England have already indicated that it will not list the building.

Option 2 - we could choose a fast track listing approach. This has the advantage of requiring an Historic England expert to visit the building. However, fast track listing would cost an estimated £2000-£4000 and it is uncertain whether this would be successful either.

Currently, the Society is looking to see how the case for listing might be strengthened. In addition, we are exploring the use of a consultant to help us (again at a cost).

If any member has information about the history of the building or its architect Harry Beswick, or indeed has experience with listing applications, then we would be very pleased to hear from them.

One good thing about us applying for listing is that we understand that the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office has suspended marketing of the building whilst listing is being discussed.

Once any further facts pertinent to the listing have been gathered, your Committee will then decide whether to go for the fast track listing route or not. This decision will be based on whether we believe the final application justifies the cost. If the fast track route is chosen then we would try to offset some of the cost through a crowd funding appeal.

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