

**Heritage Statement**

**in connection with**

**Susie Cottage, Rimington, Lancashire**

Prepared by

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August 2018

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Purpose and Methodology

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared to assess the heritage values and related significances of Susie Cottage, Rimington Lane, Rimington. Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) considers the building a non-designated heritage asset as defined by the NPPF (2018), albeit the building is not registered on any formally adopted local list of heritage assets, nor has RVBC explained in detail why the building should be treated as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.2 The current owner of the property wishes to demolish Susie Cottage and build a replacement dwelling. Accordingly, and in line with the requirements of the NPPF, the significance of the building requires assessment in order to determine to what degree such demolition would constitute harm to significance (i.e. of a heritage asset), as a material consideration of the planning process.
- 1.3 The statement assesses heritage significance and guides proposals for change in a manner that conserves significance and avoids harm. The approach adheres to the principle of managing change intelligently, which lies at the heart of national planning policy for conservation of the historic built environment. The methodology employed involves the following sequential steps:
  - Establish the nature of the proposed change(s), including the overall aim of the change and any emergent design proposals
  - Identify any designated and/or non-designated heritage assets potentially affected by proposals for change
  - Evaluate the heritage values and significances of the heritage assets, placing particular focus on values and significances that might be affected by the proposed change(s)
  - Produce a statement of significance which is to be used to guide the design of changes in a manner that places conservation of significance as a priority
  - Analyse the impact of proposed changes
- 1.4 The statement has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Historic England publications 'Informed Conservation'<sup>i</sup> and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'<sup>ii</sup> and in particular responds to heritage policies outlined in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2018). The legal context is set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990. Further guidance has

been obtained from the following Historic England publications:

- GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)
- GPA3 - Setting and Views
- Local Heritage Listing - Historic England Advice Note 7

### **The Author**

1.5 Chris O'Flaherty, the author, is a Chartered Building Surveyor and professional member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS). With a background in the recording, analysis and conservation of historic buildings, the author holds a Master's Degree in Building Heritage and Conservation and specialises in heritage planning matters.

### **Methods of Research and Investigation**

1.6 Inspections of the site were carried out in May 2018 to assess its physical nature. Photographic evidence has been inspected in order to determine to what extent the building now comprises 'historic' building fabric and further background research has been conducted to ascertain all relevant contextual matters appertaining to the proposals. In accordance with the NPPF, background research has been proportionate to the nature of the building/site, the proposed change(s) and the likely impact of the change(s).

## 2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

### Location

2.1 The property is located on the south side of Rimington Lane, just west of the junction with Stoops Lane, to the east of Rimington village centre.

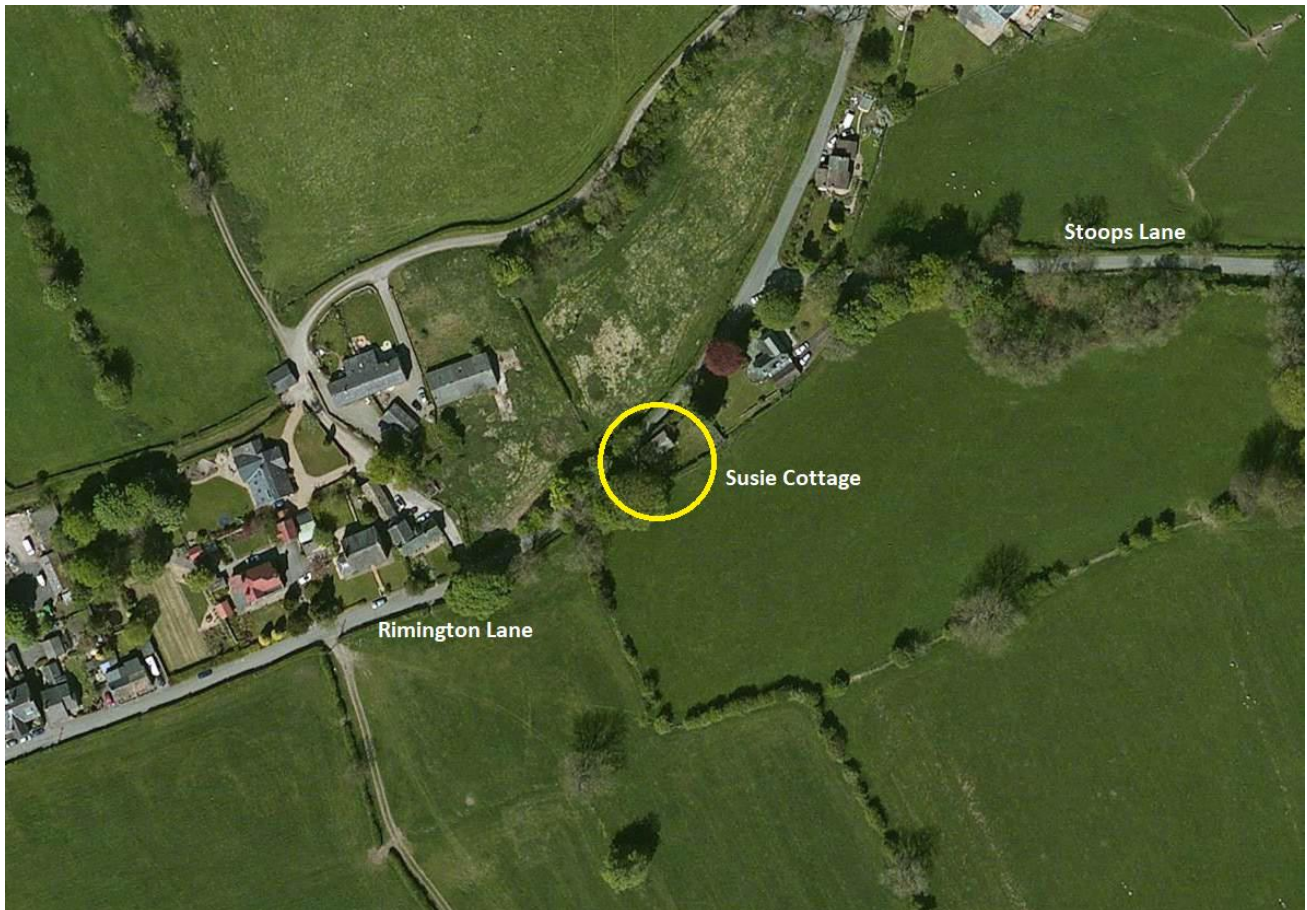


Figure 1) Site location

### Outline Description & Historical Background

2.2 Susie Cottage is a simple two-unit two-storey cottage, single pile in depth, with sandstone rubble walls (with some brick parts and concrete lintels) and a slated gabled roof. The roof structure to the eastern bay is split into two parts by a small central wooden king post truss with an irregular, hand worked tie beam. Otherwise the roof is rafter and purlin with machined timbers which appear C20th in date. The building has an entry door at the rear (south), which accesses the western bay. The ground floor has a central chimney on the west side of a full height division wall (between bays) and a further chimney on the eastern gable in the eastern bay. Stairs to the first floor rise against the central division

wall.

- 2.3 Past removal of render (see figure 8) from the external walls of the cottage revealed a number of previous alterations that show the cottage is the product of phased construction. It would appear that the western bay is an addition to the original eastern bay, and that the western bay was built in two phases, with the upper floor added to an older ground floor level. This in turn indicates that the cottage was, prior to C19th mapping, a single unit cottage.
- 2.4 The aforementioned render removal (figure 8) also revealed brick infill repairs around the window openings to the eastern bay, which in turn shows that the openings were at some time remodelled in shape and new fittings installed. The fittings are probably C20th and investigations (during repairs) have shown that most supporting lintels are concrete.
- 2.5 It is understood that the property was sold in 1929<sup>iii</sup>, possibly in state of dereliction, and at that time subject to some considerable alteration. This possibly involved raising the height of the western bay to line in with the two storey eastern bay, reconfiguring the windows and rendering the external walls to hide evidence of alteration. This evidence has subsequently been repaired (localised rebuilding) to give the property a more uniform appearance.
- 2.6 Historic mapping shows the building in 1848 (figure 4) as a small detached dwelling with rear projection (possibly a porch), planted gardens, an adjacent outbuilding to the southwest and a further smaller outbuilding to the east. At this time (1848) the building is depicted as square on to the road, however subsequent mapping from 1886 (figure 5) shows the building at a slight angle to the road and also comprising two adjoined structures. It is unclear as to whether the map of 1848 was inaccurate in its portrayal of the building, or whether perhaps the building was rebuilt between 1848 and 1886, maybe using salvaged materials. Indeed the mapping also indicates that the Lane may have been widened during the later C19th, which in part might explain the rebuilding of the cottage and also the unusual position of the principal elevation (with the entry door) which faces away from the road.
- 2.7 As with the map of 1886, the map of 1907 (figure 6) also shows the building as comprising two adjoined structures. It is unclear as to whether it was two single unit cottages at this time, or whether the dividing line on the map merely shows the building comprised parts on unequal height. As stated earlier, it is clear that the western bay has been raised in height in the past, possibly c.1929, therefore structures of unequal height seems the most likely explanation.
- 2.8 The origins of the name Susie Cottage are unclear, but it seems possible the name was derived from the nearby junction of Rimington Lane and Stoops Lane, which is known

locally as Susie Corner. The name 'Susie Cottage' does not appear on the available census returns of 1841-1911 and historic OS mapping only begins to show the name after WWII. It therefore seems likely the name was adopted relatively recently.

2.9 Tithe records of 1846<sup>iv</sup> (figures 2 and 3) register the tenant of the cottage, garden and adjacent 5 acre meadow as a William Wilkinson. The 1851 census returns include an entry for a William Wilkinson in Rimington, who is listed as living with his two sisters and father and being employed as a shoemaker's ap(prentice). However William was only aged 15 at the time, therefore it is unclear as to exactly who the tenant of the cottage was and whether the census entry actually relates to the same William Wilkinson.

2.10 In summary, there is good evidence to suggest that Susie Cottage has been subject to the following phases of historic development:

- A single unit two storey cottage was built, probably in the C18th
- At some time, probably before 1848, the cottage was extended with a single storey addition.
- It is feasible the building was entirely rebuilt, at a slight angle to the road, sometime between 1848 and 1886.
- The two adjoined parts of the building, probably of unequal height, remained in existence until 1907
- The cottage changed ownership in 1929 and after this time the single storey part was raised to two storey, windows were reconfigured and the property was rendered.

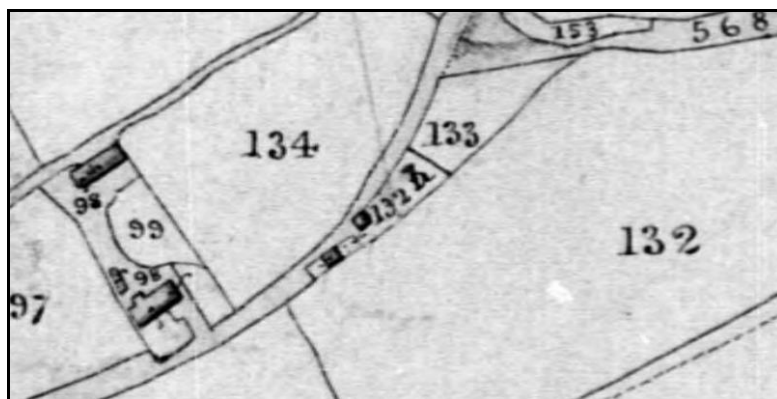


Figure 2) Tithe apportionment map of 1846 showing the cottage and garden with adjacent field numbered 132 and 132b – these are cross-referenced in the tithe catalogue below in figure 3.

<i>William Wilkinson</i>	130	<i>larks meadow</i>	<i>Meadow</i>	5	1	28
	132h	<i>Cottage &amp; garden</i>				2 1/2
	281	<i>Thistleby pasture</i>	<i>Pasture</i>	7	3	2 1/2
				13	1	36 1/2

Figure 3) Tithe catalogue extract



Figure 4) 1848 OS map with the cottage central and square on to the road

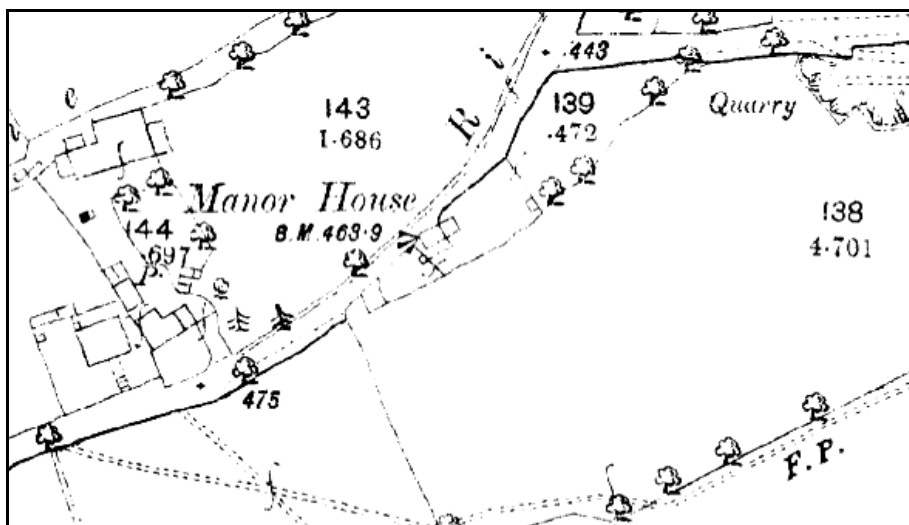


Figure 5) 1886 OS appearing to show the cottage as two dwellings and at an angle to the road

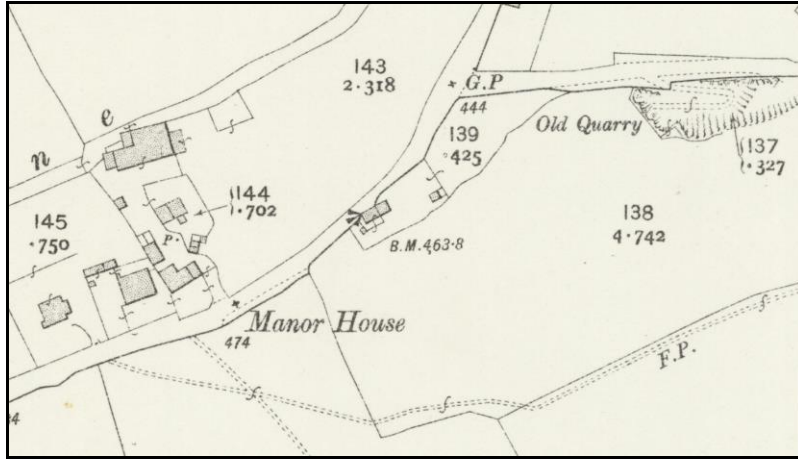


Figure 6) OS map 1907 with Susie Cottage central



Figure 7) Rear (southern) elevation prior to removal of render



Figure 8) Rear elevation during render removal showing full height joint right of doorway and partial brick walling at first floor and beneath the ground floor window.

## **Heritage Asset Designations**

2.11 Susie Cottage is considered a non-designated heritage asset by RVBC. It is not, however, contained on any local heritage lists nor has it been subject to any formal or detailed assessment as to its heritage credentials prior to the drafting of this heritage statement.

### 3 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

#### Introduction

- 3.1 The following appraisal adheres to guidance published by English Heritage (2008)<sup>v</sup> and relates specifically to the requirement contained in paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), given in extract below:
- 3.2 *"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."*
- 3.3 The appraisal begins by identifying and assessing any heritage values that might be affected by the proposals, before evaluating these values and expressing them concisely within a 'Statement of Significance'. The essential purpose of this Statement is to set priorities for conservation of significance and enable an objective assessment on the likely impact of the proposals.

#### Heritage Values

- 3.4 The heritage values explored below are distilled under the following headings: *evidential value; historic value; communal value; aesthetic value*<sup>vi</sup>. The exploration focusses specifically on those values deemed of relevance to the proposals, and is therefore not an exhaustive assessment of the relevant heritage assets.

#### Evidential Value

- 3.5 Historic England (2008) suggests that "Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity".
- 3.6 Susie Cottage provides altered evidence of a two-unit cottage (formerly single unit) possibly originating from the early to mid C18th. It seems likely that many original features of the building have been altered, including the addition of the additional western bay, and that the dwelling was subject to major alterations sometime after 1929. The evidential value of the building is very low due to a lack of authenticity and integrity, with little of the original building remaining, and general uncertainty as to how the building developed over time diminishing any appreciable sense of evidential value.

### **Historical Value**

- 3.7 Historic England (2008) suggests that - "Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative".
- 3.8 Susie Cottage holds minimal illustrative value through the manner in which it might portray historical rural lifestyles, possibly from the early to mid C18th. Owing to the extent and nature of change, however, it is very difficult to associate the building with a particular period in time or indeed to be certain as to its historical development, therefore the level of appreciable historic value is very low.

### **Communal Value**

- 3.9 Historic England (2008) suggests that: "Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory".
- 3.10 As a small private dwelling the cottage is unlikely to possess any communal heritage value worthy of note.

### **Aesthetic Value**

- 3.11 Historic England (2008) suggests that: "Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place".
- 3.12 The cottage has no aesthetic heritage value worthy of note, being a small and non-descript building. The vernacular interest (architectural) of the building lies primarily within the interior, but has been eroded due to past change, alteration and repair.

### **Statement of Significance**

- 3.13 Having assessed the heritage values associated with the site, it is now possible to take a more informed approach to the assessment of site significance. This will give specific consideration to prioritising conservation, in light of the proposals for change. In this context, a statement of significance is given below.
- 3.14 Susie Cottage is an enlarged two-unit, two-storey cottage that may date from the early to mid C18th. It has been altered and extended in the past and in the late C19th/early C20th period historic mapping shows that it comprised two adjoining structures, possibly of unequal height. The building retains very few recognisable vernacular features on the

exterior and holds minimal heritage significance. It seems likely that it underwent some radical alteration following an exchange of ownership in 1929, at which point a single storey part (the western bay) was raised to two storey, the windows were reconfigured and the external walls rendered, in part to hide signs of past change. Compelling evidence of these alterations, the exact age of which is not known, was revealed following past removal of external render and during internal repair and renovation work (including wholesale plaster removal).

- 3.15 Owing to the apparent age of the building, RVBC consider it a non-designated heritage asset. It is understood this belief stems primarily from the appearance of the building on historic mapping dating back to 1848. Whereas there is good sense in attributing significance to buildings that appear, as in this case, to have originated in the C18th, it seems very clear that map evidence provides us with only a very basic understanding of the cottage's existence, and that more accurate interpretation of the building's historical development requires the piecing together of evidence, as has been done within this heritage statement.
- 3.16 Accordingly, and through reference to various strands of evidence, there would appear very little if any reason to consider the Susie Cottage a heritage asset worthy of conservation. The building retains very little of its original form and is now the product of ongoing change, which in essence prevents any clear or appreciable interpretation of its origins. Whereas the building may now be a characterful dwelling, it is not a heritage asset *per se*. Therefore in the opinion of the author, RVBC should reconsider the non-designated heritage asset status they have ascribed to the building in full light of the archival and physical evidence.
- 3.17 Of some relevance to this case is the lack of any formal local heritage asset selection criteria or designation process in Ribble Valley. Historic England's guidance on local listings, as contained within their document 'Local Heritage Listing - Historic England Advice Note 7', stresses the importance of a formal process of selection and urges local planning authorities to establish formal procedures. This is not to say that non-designated heritage assets are irrelevant where formal procedures do not exist, but that the existence of a formal process does strengthen the case to conserve local heritage, where such local heritage has proven, through careful assessment and selection, to possess characteristics worthy of protection. In this latter regard, and as explained previously, in the opinion of the author the Susie Cottage does not possess such characteristics and should not, therefore, benefit from national policy relating to non-designated heritage assets, as summarised in paragraph 197 of the NPPF.

## 4 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This heritage statement explores the history of Susie Cottage, Rimington, and evaluates the significances of the building with reference to various sources of physical and archival evidence. The purpose of the statement is to determine whether the building is worthy of non-designated heritage asset status, and to what degree might proposals to demolish and replace the building result in harm to heritage significance.
- 4.2 The overall findings of the statement are that, whereas the building appears to include elements dating back to the C18th, such is the extent of past alteration, extension and material replacement, that the building no longer possesses sufficient heritage value to render it worthy of heritage asset status. It retains few if any discernible vernacular features of evidential value, it does not possess a definable architectural style, and it does not portray any important aspects of social/domestic history that are interpretable through inspection of its physical fabric. In essence, the building possesses none of the traits one would normally and reasonably associate with a building that has readily comprehensible heritage value.
- 4.3 Furthermore, the building is not included on a local list of heritage assets, nor have its heritage credentials been assessed in any detail by the local planning authority, in a manner that could appropriately and robustly substantiate the claim that the building is a non-designated heritage asset.
- 4.4 In summary therefore, the proposed demolition and replacement of the building would not result in any appreciable loss of heritage significance, therefore the provisions of paragraph 197 (non-designated heritage assets) of the NPPF appear irrelevant to this case.

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<sup>i</sup> Clarke, K, *Informed Conservation*, Historic England 2003

<sup>ii</sup> Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, 2008

<sup>iii</sup> Title deeds held by the owner show this change of ownership

<sup>iv</sup> Tithe Record of 1846 ref: IR 29/43/333

<sup>v</sup> Ibid

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid