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Heritage Statement



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Gas Cottage is a small late 19th century cottage that was built as part of an estate gas works to serve Tidworth House which stands within parkland to the north-east (Figure 1). The cottage is unlisted and is not within a conservation area. The owner of the site is seeking planning permission to develop the site, retaining the cottage and an associated ancillary building to form a single, larger residential dwelling.



Figure 1 Site location plan. The Gas Cottage lies on the southern edge of the former Home Farm group south-west of Tidworth House.

- 1.2 Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned to make an assessment of the heritage significance of the house and the potential impact of the proposals upon that significance and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services, visited the property in December 2025 and subsequently prepared this report.

1.3

This report will present:

- A brief background history to the site
- A description of the house with a focus on the areas of proposed alterations
- Policy and guidance background
- An assessment of the significance of the unlisted buildings following Historic England's Statements of Heritage Significance Assessing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019)
- An assessment of the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the unlisted buildings
- Conclusions

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The parish of Tidworth has existed only since 1992; prior to this, North Tidworth was in Wiltshire and South Tidworth (or Tedworth) was in Hampshire. The Tedworth estate, centred on Tedworth House and park in South Tidworth, was purchased by Thomas Smith in 1650 and it remained in the family until 1858; the Assheton Smiths of the 18th and 19th centuries were keen sportsmen and created a large sporting estate by 1830; the Tedworth hunt was founded in 1826 and by 1845 there were 400 foxhounds and a stable for 50 horses. This was the time of Thomas Assheton III (nicknamed Nimrod), who was one of the country's leading foxhunters; he also demolished and rebuilt Tedworth House between 1828 and 1830. The Home Farm of the estate, also sometime known as Lower Farm, is located to the west of the park, south-west of Tedworth House.
- 2.2 The celebrated engineer, Sir John Kelk, owned the estate during the 1870s and 1880s and he extensively rebuilt Tedworth House and the church. Kelk also constructed a gasworks in c.1875 (after 1873 as the plot is vacant on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" map) adjacent to Home Farm to serve Tedworth House (Figure 2). It originally comprised of a retort house and attached coal store, a gas holder and an attendant's cottage, all surrounded by a boundary wall. The gasometer and associated buildings can be clearly seen on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1896 (Figure 3).
- 2.3 Kelk sold the whole estate to the War Office for military training in 1897. Considerable areas of land were built on for a garrison attached to Southern Military Command, with the Commanding Officer in residence at Tedworth House. The gas holder was removed in the early 20th century (from map evidence) and the retort house was demolished, with only the coal store, the boundary wall and the attendant's cottage surviving. Home Farm remained in the ownership of the MOD until its sale in 2011.



Figure 2
Ordnance Survey 1st
edition 25" map, 1873.

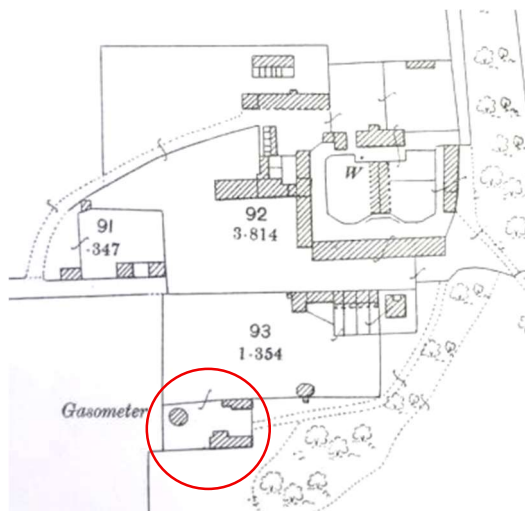


Figure 3
Ordnance Survey 2nd
edition 25" map, 1896.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 Gas Cottage is a relatively tall but thin two-storey house with rendered walls and a gabled slate roof (Figure 4). The house has a central gabled porch to the front door with two windows to each storey, the windows having two-light casements below bottom hinged lights above.



Figure 4 Gas Cottage, front and west elevations.

- 3.2 The east and rear elevations are blank but rising from the eaves on the rear elevation there are two brick chimney stacks (Figure 5). The west gable wall has a small single-storey addition set towards the rear part of the gable with the remains of a small 'conservatory' structure to the front, this structure having a brick plinth wall.
- 3.3 The interior of the building has not been examined for this assessment.



Figure 5 The rear elevation of Gas Cottage.

- 3.4 Opposite Gas Cottage is a single-storey building with rendered cob walls and a pitched slate roof with coped gables at each end (Figures 6 – 8). There is a single door opening in the north elevation and a casement window in the east gable. There was no access to the interior of the building at the date of survey.



Figure 6 The front, north elevation of the ancillary building.



Figure 7 Ancillary building, south and east elevations.



Figure 8 Ancillary building, west and south elevations.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

4.1 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) states that:

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.

4.2 Paragraph 216 in relation to considering proposals for non-designated heritage assets states that:

'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'

4.3 The government's Planning Practice Guidance confirms that local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets but clearly states that:

'A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets.'

recognising that significance is not black and white and that some buildings will have a little (i.e. not no) heritage significance but:

'Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process.'

4.4 The policy approach set out in the NPPF in relation to non-designated heritage assets is reflected in Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation

and enhancement of the historic environment which has 'weight' following submission to the Secretary of State in late October 2024. The supporting text of Policy 99 states:

'Any harm to the significance of undesignated assets which will result from development proposals must be carefully balanced considering the significance of the asset and the harm caused.'

'Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.'

- 4.5 Historic England's *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (March 2015) states that understanding the nature of significance is important for understanding the need for and best means of conservation. Understanding the extent of that significance leads to a better understanding of how adaptable a heritage asset may be and provides the essential guide as to how policies should be applied. The following descriptive appraisal will evaluate the building against Historic England's criteria for heritage values set out in *Statements of Heritage Significance Assessing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019):

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can rise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and the creation of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

- 4.6 The selection of buildings for addition to the statutory *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* is informed by a set of criteria set out in the revised Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings, (DCMS, 2018). These criteria have also been considered in this assessment.

5.0 ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designations

- 5.1 The Gas House is not designated as a listed building and it is not located within a conservation area.

Assessment of Significance

Archaeological interest

- 5.2 As late 19th century structures built on a previously undeveloped area of land, these buildings are considered to have no notable archaeological interest, and it is unlikely that their fabric will hold significant evidence related to the date, development or function.

Architectural interest

- 5.3 Gas Cottage is a simple building of characteristic late 19th century form, although, given the apparent lack of restrictions on the site, its relatively slight depth in comparison to its height is perhaps unusual. The presence of the fireplaces heating the two rooms either side of the entrance on the rear elevation rather than, as is more typical, at the gable ends is also slightly unusual. The windows in their present form are unlikely to reflect the original arrangement which, given their proportions, and the date of the building, are likely to have been sash windows. Whilst Gas Cottage is, architecturally, a building of relatively typical character for the late 19th century, it is considered that the architectural interest of the is at the lower end of medium in the local context.
- 5.4 The associated building which may have been a fuel store is a modest, simple building, but which is given a slightly higher level of architectural treatment with the use of coped gables whereas typically a cob-walled building would have the roof covering the wall tops. The use of the coped gables moves this building away from a vernacular character to being a slightly more formal character which would seem

to relate to its original estate ownership. It is considered that the architectural interest is at the lower end of medium in a local context.

Historic interest

- 5.5 Gas Cottage and its associated building form part of the former gas works built to supply gas to Tidworth House. The gas works was built close to Home Farm, which helps to convey the understanding that these buildings form part of the Tidworth House estate. Whilst the building which would have identified this site has the gasworks, the circular gasholder and the retort building where the coal was burnt to create gas have been demolished, meaning that there are no features surviving which clearly illustrate the original function of this site. However, combined with the historic evidence which records the development and use of this site, it is considered that there is a moderate level of historic interest in a local context, and its association with the estate of Tidworth House.

Summary of Significance

- 5.6 Gas Cottage and its ancillary building, probably originally a fuel store, are not of sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit designation as listed buildings. However, as these buildings were associated with Tidworth House, being built in the late 19th century to generate coal gas for the house, these buildings have local historic interest and a moderate level of architectural interest in a local context. As such, these buildings merit being regarded as non-designated heritage assets.

6.0 PROPOSALS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

- 6.1 Gas Cottage is unoccupied, and the site has become overgrown. It is proposed to bring the house back into residential use with the construction of a new range at right angles to the house and linked to the house with a lower two-storey element (Figures 9 and 10). The ancillary building will be retained, and will be restored to serve as a studio/home office space.



Figure 9 Proposed plans.



Figure 10 Proposed east elevation.

- 6.2 The proposal to retain the two historic buildings and bring them back into a viable use is considered a positive change which will retain these historic buildings associated with Tidworth House, and will serve as a tangible link to the production of gas to light the main house. Securing the long-term future of these heritage assets is a public benefit.
- 6.3 Whilst the retention of the cottage in residential use is positive, the cottage is a very small building which does not have the capacity to offer a suitable level of accommodation, and so it is proposed to enlarge the building by creating a link-

attached block, divided into single storey and two storey elements, which will provide the principal areas of living accommodation. This new block has been designed to have an industrial character, having brick to the lower parts of the walls and vertical timber boarding above and large, generally non-domestic style windows with metal-frames. The existing cottage, with its rendered walls and clearly domestic form will still be clearly readable as the principal domestic building, albeit the proposed range will be a larger building in footprint, its form and materials will indicate that it is a secondary and subservient building in the architectural hierarchy on the site.

- 6.4 The ancillary building will be converted to form a studio. A larger glazed opening will be formed in the front elevation, the new opening also having an industrial character. A new doorway will be formed to provide access to an attached element to the west. The relatively limited impacts on the fabric of the building are considered to be balanced by the positive use that will secure the future of the building.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Gas Cottage and the ancillary building were built as part of a private gas works providing coal gas to Tidworth House in the late 19th century. The retort house and gasholder have been demolished leaving the attendant's house and a probable fuel store. These buildings, located close to the Home Farm, have local historical and architectural interest sufficient to merit being regarded as non-designated heritage assets.
- 7.2 The proposed development will retain these two historic structures, ensuring their long-term future, with the new-build element presenting an industrial character which is considered to be appropriate for this site. Whilst the new building is larger than the historic cottage, it is architecturally subservient and maintains the architectural hierarchy of the site.
- 7.3 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development satisfies National Policy in the NPPF, Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and conclude that the application should be allowed.