

Application for Financial Assistance (Historic Buildings Grants) from the Conservation and Heritage Fund – Wall behind Hawthorn Cottages, Main Road, Betley, (Ref: 13/14005/HBG)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Working Party recommends that the Planning Committee approves a grant of £1,282 for a section of wall behind Hawthorn Cottages, Betley subject to the appropriate standard conditions.

Purpose of report

To consider an application for financial assistance towards the cost of the restoration and rebuilding of part of the garden wall of the above building of special architectural and historic interest.

Introduction

The wall marked the boundary of the former Betley New Hall (late 18th century), which was demolished in the mid 20th century. The wall now forms the boundary to many gardens and the school playing fields on the east side of Main Road, starting in the north within the Betley Hall Gardens estate where the gate piers are still in existence and can be followed down to the south of the village. A small section of wall has collapsed close to the BT exchange building and land.

It was recognised in the Conservation Area Appraisal as an important heritage structure and is now on the Councils Register of Locally Important Buildings. The wall collapsed at the end of 2012 and the Council have been working with Staffordshire County Council to reinstate the wall. Neither adjoining landowner accepts ownership of the wall. The cost of reinstatement is prohibitive to the school maintenance budget and with encouragement the residents, working with the Parish Council have set up a company whose purpose is to rebuild the wall and try to access funding.

The wall delineates the boundary of the Conservation Area on the east side and tells us about the former estate and of Betley's history and to lose the continuity of the wall is a loss to the Conservation Area and the Borough's heritage.

The cost of the work including VAT is £12,816.00 of which all is eligible work. As the structure is a historic garden wall on the local Register, the work is eligible for a grant of 10% of the cost. The group hopes to try and access funding from other sources to rebuild the wall.

Financial Implications

There is sufficient funding to meet this grant application with approximately £56,000 in the Fund, which allows for commitments.

Conclusions

The building has no economic use and the wall could be replaced by any means of enclosure. The application therefore should be supported through the Councils grant scheme in order that this important part of Betley's heritage is retained for the future. It meets the Council's criteria for the repair and restoration of a heritage asset.