

COMMITTEE: Planning Committee
DATE: 1 October 2013
SUBJECT: Motcombe Baths, Motcombe
REPORT OF: Clare Dales
Specialist Advisor – Conservation & Design

Ward(s): Old Town

Purpose: To seek recommendation of CAAG for the inclusion of The Motcombe Baths, Motcombe Road, Eastbourne, BN21 1PU in the list of Buildings of Local Interest

Contact: Clare Dales, Specialist Advisor – Conservation & Design
1 Grove Road, Eastbourne
Tel no: (01323) 415251
E-mail: clare.dales@eastbourne.gov.uk

Recommendation: Members agree to consult on the inclusion of The Baths, Motcombe, as a Building of Local Interest
Planning Committee on 1st October 2013

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to propose The Motcombe Baths, in Motcombe Conservation Area for inclusion in The Local List. A list of Buildings of Local Interest is held by The Council and comprises buildings or structures which make a special contribution to the Townscape; represent the work of an important local Architect represent a particular style of Architecture, or period in the development of the town.

2.0 The Role Of Local Heritage Listing

2.1 English Heritage in its Guidance Note, identifies that Local heritage listing is a means for a community and a local authority to jointly identify heritage assets that are valued as distinctive elements of the local historic environment. It provides clarity on the location of assets and what it is about them that is significant, guaranteeing that strategic local planning properly takes account of the desirability of their conservation.

3.0 National Planning Policy Framework And Heritage Assets

3.1 The NPPF advises LPAs to set out 'a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment' in their Local Plan. Emphasis is placed on 'sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets' and recognising that heritage assets are an 'irreplaceable resource' and should be conserved 'in a manner appropriate to their significance'. Heritage assets are defined in the NPPF as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Heritage assets not designated under statutory regimes, but recognised by the LPA as having heritage significance, do merit consideration in planning matters; with the LPA taking a balanced judgment having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

It is the intention of this proposal that the Motcombe Baths will be better protected, as set out above.

4.0 Buildings of Local Interest

4.1 Buildings of special architectural or historic interest are Listed by the Secretary of State. However the criteria for the lowest listing category - Grade II - states that the building should be of special interest. This may mean it is of National significance in architectural, technological or social means, or is designed by an important Architect. Therefore, buildings that might be considered of local importance but not of sufficient special interest do not achieve listed status. Some buildings not considered of National Importance, and therefore not listable, may be considered to be of sufficient Local importance to be included on The Local List.

4.2 Such buildings of local interest contribute to the townscape of Eastbourne do not have the statutory protection of listed buildings but, nevertheless, they should be retained and ideally enhanced. It must be stressed that like areas of high townscape value, there is no statutory control on buildings of local interest, over and above those that already exist for any building. However many of the buildings are within Conservation Areas and therefore they are automatically afforded a degree of protection against demolition. Inclusion on The Local List highlights the special qualities and contribution of a building and may reflect architectural merit, social history or development of town planning.

5.0 Local Policy and Guidance

5.1 When considering planning applications for the alteration of Buildings of Local Interest, the Council will take into account that the property is of more than ordinary significance.

The Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001-2011) contains saved policies in relation to conservation. Saved Policies relevant to this proposal are;

- UHT15 Protection of Conservation Areas
- UHT18 Buildings of Local Interest

Proposals which would adversely affect the character or appearance of Buildings of Local Interest will not be permitted. Should planning permission be granted for a major alteration, the consent will be subject to a condition to provide an opportunity for the building to be inspected and recorded.

Both Policies are within the SPG *The Townscape Guide*, a saved policy.

5.2 The Motcombe Baths is within Old Town Conservation Area

6.0 **Setting & Development of 'The Motcombe Baths'**

The land for the pool was purchased from the Compton Estate on 22nd April 1904, at a cost of £315, for the express purpose of 'providing a baths for public use'. Construction began, and once completed by Peerless Dennis & Sons, they were opened by The Mayor in January 1905. The report in the *Eastbourne Gazette* (4th January 1904), states that the pool is expected to be self-financing, and to make substantial contribution to school and club exercise, the learning of swimming and lifesaving activities.

The pool comprised a Ladies and Men's slipper baths, and central pool with poolside changing in cabins with curtains. A caretaker's cottage was built adjoining the facilities. The purpose of slipper baths was to provide personal bathing at a time when few houses had bathrooms.

The main pool was constructed for exercise and learning.

7.0 **The Motcombe Baths**

The Baths are still spring fed from the Bourne stream. The Gentlemen's and Ladies slipper baths and main pool are relatively structurally un-altered, with the removal of some fittings as the building has been updated over the years to meet the needs of bathing and safety and access arrangements. The Caretakers Cottage exists in relatively unaltered form. Although now used as administration and a day nursery for young children still exhibits original plan form, joinery, windows and fireplaces.

A full description exists as Appendix A, with Maps showing development of Motcombe as Appendices B/C/D

7.1 A full photographic schedule is held by the council, and is available to view, by contacting the Specialist Advisor Conservation & Design.

8.0 **Assessments**

8.1 The assessments were undertaken in line with the Guidelines in the 'English Heritage Good Practice Guide For Local Heritage Listing'

The recommendation from this assessment is that The Motcombe Baths be added to the local list as a Building of Local Interest.

8.2 The quality of construction of The Motcombe Baths, its contribution to the streetscape and its place within the development and history of bathing and social habits and its structural completeness as a pool and within the complex, suggest its inclusion in the Local list.

8.3 Therefore, the recommendation of this report is that The Motcombe Baths be included in the List of Buildings of Local Interest, to signify its contribution to the history of the Motcombe area of the town, and its place in the social history of bathing.

9.0 Consultation

- 9.1 After consideration of CAAG (Conservation Area Advisory Committee), on 27th August 2013, the Group praised the quality of the supporting document, appended to the report and unanimously supported the recommendation to the Planning Committee for the inclusion of Motcombe Baths as a Building of Local Interest as its meeting on 1 October 2013.

Public comments have been invited on the inclusion of The Motcombe Baths in the local list of Buildings of Local Interest for a period of 21 days between 27th August 2013 and 17th September 2013.

The report appended to this document has been made available at 1 Grove Road, and at The Town Hall.

No representations have been made, however comments relating to content, and/or to support the motion in an informal manner, have been received by the Specialist Advisor, Conservation & Design.

10.0 Financial and Staffing Implications:

- 10.1 The cost of the consultation has been met from within existing budgets and will largely consist of staff time.

11.0 Sustainability Implications

- 11.1 The conservation of heritage assets, which are a finite and diminishing resource, is an integral aspect of sustainable development. The designation as a Building of Local Interest will assist in the conservation of heritage assets.

12.0 Other Implications

- 12.1 There are no youth, anti-poverty, equality or community safety implications as a direct result of the draft documents.

13.0 Conclusion

- 13.1 The proposal for the Motcombe Baths to be added as a Building of Local Interest has been prepared following English Heritage's Guidance Note. It aims to set out, in a clear and concise manner, the special architectural and historic interest of the building and to provide information on the best approach to managing change, in order to conserve or enhance the special interest of the area.

Clare Dales
Specialist Advisor – Conservation & Design

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001 – 2011)

Eastbourne Borough Council SPG Eastbourne Townscape Guide

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR LOCAL HERITAGE LISTING; 2012
English Heritage Guidance Note

Appendix A – Description & Photographs

Appendix B – Motcombe Baths Map 1899

Appendix C – Motcombe Baths Map 1910

Appendix D – Motcombe Baths Map 1925