

# Case Name: Gower Street School House (Former hospital), Telford

**Case Number: 1418158**

## Background

English Heritage has been asked to assess this building for statutory designation as the building is threatened with demolition and comprehensive redevelopment of the site.

## Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	EH Recommendation
1	1418616	Gower Street School (Former Cottage Hospital), Telford	Listing	Add to List

## Visits

Date	Visit Type
18 December 2013	Partial inspection

## Context

The local authority achieved planning consent for a residential conversion of the building in 2007 (now lapsed), a residential conversion for the site is now financially unviable. Another planning application was considered in 2013 for demolition with provision of a new affordable housing and a convenience store. This has now been withdrawn.

The building does not stand in a conservation area. It is recorded as a 'building of local interest' on the local plan.

## Assessment

### CONSULTATION

Our consultation report was issued on 8 January 2014 to the Applicant, the Owner, the Local Planning Authority and the Owner's Representative. From the Applicant it was then passed to a local interest group who are campaigning for the retention and listing of the building.

We received a response from the applicant, giving further source references for the early history of the building. The St George's Community Group also responded with the same source information and sent through regular e-mailed updates from their campaign to save the building.

A response was also received from a research student, who had read of the building on the website of the Shropshire Star. They believed the ironwork embellishments on the skyline were a similar pattern to those which appeared in a catalogue of the Glasgow firm of iron founders, Walter MacFarlane and Co. whose work also appears at Ditherington flax mill.

A planning officer for Telford and Wrekin Council responded, saying that they had no specific comments to add to the report.

No further responses were received.

## ASSESSMENT

Although the Gower Street building functioned as a school and then as a youth centre, its fabric primarily reflects its design and initial use as a hospital, and it is judged as such in this context.

The Revised Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings (March 2010) state that buildings of pre-1700 date that contain a significant proportion of their original fabric are listed. Also, that most buildings of pre-1840 date are listed. After 1840, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary. The Principles of Selection are amplified by the Selection Guide for Health and Welfare buildings, published by English Heritage in April 2011, which outlines the history of the cottage hospital as a local hospital, close to people's homes and often run on a subscription basis. There were about 300 such buildings by 1895, but they went into a sharp decline with changes in health provision in the later C20 and, as a result, many became redundant or else were greatly enlarged by extensions, and this has rendered them unlistable.

Cottage hospitals first appeared in England in 1859 with the conversion of a genuine cottage at Cranleigh, Surrey to form a small, local hospital. Early examples of the type tended to be in areas where transport was poor, or where no general hospital existed. The type of building spread rapidly, and by 1870 there were 60 examples around the country with 300 by 1895. Books describing the design and management of cottage hospitals started to appear with Waring's 'Cottage Hospitals' of 1867 followed by Horace Sweet's 'Handy Book of Cottage Hospitals' of 1870. This latter contained detailed guidance on the building and founding of such a hospital, and included plans, one of which is very similar to the Gower Street building, with a central, two-storey block at either side of which are ward wings.

There was no one formula for the layout or style of cottage hospitals, or even of the size, and some have as few as four beds. Provision was almost always made for a medical staff that slept in and, in addition to wards, the rooms might often include a surgery, a dispensary and an operating theatre, as well as a kitchen.

Although there was no set type of design, other cottage hospitals shared the features seen here of a central, two-storey pavilion with single-storey ward wings at either side. Photographs show that St Leonard's Hospital, Sudbury, Suffolk was originally like this, before the wings were raised to two storeys in 1906 and 1927. St Leonard's seems to have inspired the 'plan for a hospital containing 12 beds' in Horace Sweet's book, referred to above, and it contained another element which was also present at Gower Street; pavilion wings. These first appeared in England from France in the 1850s and featured cross-ventilation through opposed windows.

The building has a handsome architectural appearance to its road front, and the effect is well judged, with iron work cresting to the top of the central, two-storey block. Internally, the ward rooms remain largely as they were built and the conversion to classrooms has caused very little disruption to the original fabric and appearance. Externally, the chimneys to the ward fireplaces have been decapitated, but internally the hearths of the two generous fireplaces in each ward room, with their chamfered stone surrounds, survive intact. The boarded ceiling in the southern ward room has been masked by a suspended ceiling, but there is no reason to believe that it is not similar to that seen in the northern room, which has a boarded roof and chamfered braces to the trusses, which are supported by stone corbels. This treatment of the ceiling, together with the band of quatrefoils at the top of the wall, give the rooms a decorative appearance, beyond the expectation of a hospital ward.

The addition of classrooms at either end does not seriously harm the original layout, and their design is very much in keeping with the earlier fabric of the building and indicate the evolution of the building as part of its history. The conversion of the treatment rooms and accommodation to teacher's housing has similarly called for little alteration to the original building and any additions have been handled with care, and are largely imperceptible. In the vicinity of the former hospital also lies an outbuilding which was not internally inspected during the site visit.

The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments published a book on hospitals in 1998 which contained a chapter on cottage hospitals. Two of the authors of that work, one of whom was the supervising editor, have been approached about this building, of which they were previously unaware. Both said that the combination of its early date and little-altered state made this a rare and impressive survival of the building type, and, had they known about it at the time of writing the book, it would have ranked as a particularly fine example.

In recommending the extent of designation, we have considered whether powers of exclusion under s.1 (5A) of the 1990 Act are appropriate, and consider that they are not, which is clear in the proposed List entry.

## CONCLUSION

After examining all the records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are fulfilled. The Gower Street School House (Former Cottage Hospital) should be listed at Grade II.

#### REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The Gower Street School House is recommended for listing at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- \* **Survival:** a cottage hospital, dating from 1873, the building which has suffered comparatively few alterations to its original fabric, despite the conversion of its function to a school and then a youth centre. In addition to ward rooms, it retains the dispensary, staff accommodation and service rooms of the hospital, which were converted to teacher's housing;
- \* **Rarity:** although a considerable number of cottage hospitals were built throughout the C19, many have been demolished or considerably extended and this is a rare example of a building which survives in largely original condition;
- \* **Architectural quality:** the building has a street frontage of quality, which clearly reflects its history, firstly as a cottage hospital and then as a school;
- \* **Local interest:** the hospital was built for the factory workers at the Lilleshall Works, a major local employer.

#### **Countersigning comments:**

Agreed. The Gower Street School House, a former cottage hospital of 1873, fully merits listing as a relatively rare example of a little altered cottage hospital with clear architectural interest in its principal facade. It should be listed at Grade II.

Deborah Williams  
31st March 2014

**Annex 1****List Entry****List Entry Summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

**Name:** Gower Street School (Former Cottage Hospital), Telford

**List Entry Number:** 1418616

**Location**

Gower School House, Gower Street, St Georges, Telford, TF2 9BE

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Telford and Wrekin	Unitary Authority	St. Georges and Priorslee

**National Park:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Grade:** II

**Date first listed:**

**Date of most recent amendment:**

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**Legacy System Information**

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

**Legacy System:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Legacy Number:** Not applicable to this List entry.

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**Asset Groupings**

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

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**List Entry Description****Summary of Building**

A former cottage hospital, opened in 1873. The function of the building changed to a school c.1879 and the ward ranges were subsequently extended between 1882 and 1902.

**Reasons for Designation**

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- \* **Architectural quality:** the building has a street frontage of architectural quality, which clearly reflects its history, firstly as a cottage hospital and then as a school;
- \* **Local interest:** the hospital was built for the factory workers at the Lilleshall Works, a major local employer.

## History

The building was erected in 1873 as a cottage hospital for workers of the local Lilleshall Company of iron smelters. The company had been founded by the Second Earl Gower in 1802. His descendants, the Dukes of Sutherland, continued to own the land and commissioned the church of St George from GE Street in 1861-2 as a memorial to the Second Duke Of Sutherland. The hospital was apparently built by John Millington of Ketley and known as Granville Hospital. The building proved to be too large for its original purpose and by 1879 it had been converted to use as the Wrockwardine Wood Girls and Infants Board School. It continued to be known locally as the 'Hospital School'. A smaller hospital was built by the Lilleshall Company in Albion Street with eight beds, a matron, nursing sister and female attendant.

The Ordnance Survey map published in 1882 shows the original building, marked 'School (Girls & infants)', with its original footprint. Extensions to the northern and southern ends of the principal range are shown on the OS map published in 1902.

The building continued to function as a school and was renamed Gower Street Girls' and Infants' Council Schools until it was closed in the late 1950s. It re-opened as the Oakengate and District Youth Centre in 1963 and continued in similar community use until its closure in 2006.

Other than two small lean-to additions to the rear the building appears to have been little altered since the additions recorded on the map of 1902.

## Details

A former cottage hospital, opened in 1873. The function of the building changed to a school c.1879 and the ward ranges were subsequently extended between 1882 and 1902.

**MATERIALS:** Red brick walling, laid in Flemish bond, with stone dressings and a tiled roof with lead flashings.

**PLAN:** the projecting, central portion is two storied and the north and south pavilion wings are single storied.

**EXTERIOR:** the eastern, road front is symmetrical with the two-storied, three-bay portion at the centre. This has a projecting entrance porch with arched portal, flanked by buttresses with offsets, stone dressings and tumbled brickwork. Above is a gabled dormer with a two-light, mullioned window and stone dressings. A plinth with offset and a cogged band below the eaves circle the building. To either side are sash windows with stone surrounds at ground floor level and above are hipped dormer windows with casements. The hipped roof has cast-iron cresting to its ridge and there is a bellcote, which was presumably added when the building became a school, above the central gable. At either side are ranges of four mullioned and transomed windows and beyond these are paired gables, each of which contains a pair of tall lancet lights. To the roof are triangular vents with cusped, timber surrounds. The north and south ends each have half-hipped roofs and three lancet lights. The rear has the two-storey projecting pavilion at the centre, from which an L-shaped single-storey wing projects at right angles. This has bargeboards, a porthole window and an iron finial to the gable end, and a projecting square bay window to its south side. Projecting at either side, the ward/classroom wings have three bays with mullioned and transomed windows. Between these are the projecting square flues of the chimney stacks, which have been decapitated. The later classroom extensions, continue this pattern. To either end are small lean-to additions, which appear to be entrance lobbies. A chimneystack at the north end survives to near full height. In the vicinity lies an outbuilding of which its use is unclear and which has not been internally inspected (2013).

INTERIOR: the northern ward survives largely intact. This has timber trusses with arched braces and wrought-iron ties, which rise from stone corbels. The roof is panelled with central octagonal ventilation outlets to the centre of each bay. There is a deep frieze to the top of the wall with carved quatrefoils. The lower walls are covered with vertical, pine boarding and the west wall has two fireplaces with deeply-chamfered stone surrounds. The south ward appears to be largely similar, but the roof is largely hidden by a suspended ceiling. The corbels and lower timbers are visible, as are the stone fire surrounds. The added classrooms at the far north and south ends continue the overall pattern of the ward interiors, with similar timber roof trusses, iron ties and chamfered stone fire surrounds and mullioned and transomed windows. The central pavilion, which housed the treatment rooms and quarters for the medical staff, appears little altered following the conversion of the building to a school. At the time of survey (December 2013) recent vandalism had included theft of lead from the roof which had caused water to penetrate and ceilings at the upper level had collapsed. Joinery, including the staircase balustrade, doors and windows, have also been damaged.

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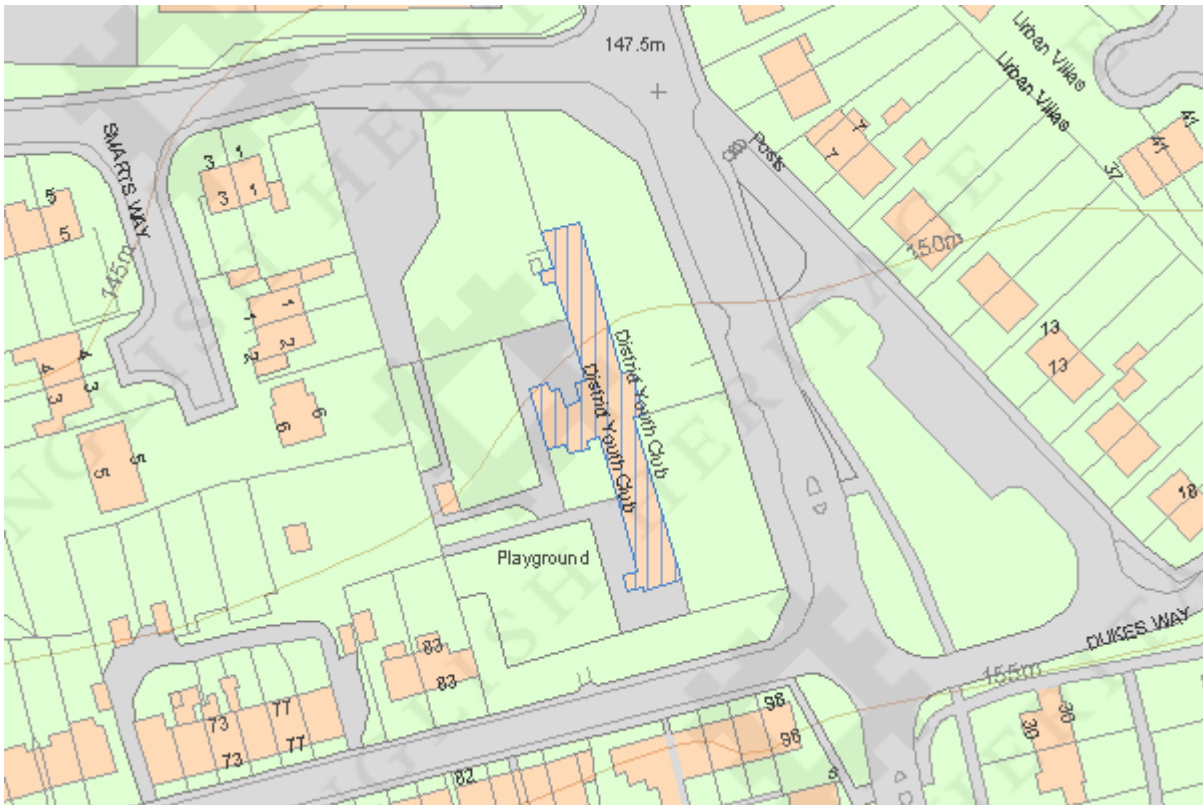
### **Selected Sources**

Richardson, H, English Hospitals 1660-1948: A Survey of their Architecture and Design, 1998

Granville Heritage Trail Pamphlet

**Map**

**National Grid Reference: SJ7055511133**



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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1418616\_1.pdf