



Designation Consultation

This designation consultation is open for comment until 21/12/2023

Give us your comments

Historic Environment Scotland consult with those who are directly affected by designation proposals – including owners, occupiers and tenants – and with the planning authority.

We also welcome comments from interested persons or groups.

When we consult about a designation case we will have carried out research and set this out in a **report of handling**. This report is an assessment produced for consultation and it sets out our view, including a proposed decision. The assessment is not intended to be a definitive account or description of the site or place. We consider the comments received before we take a final decision.

We consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place.
- Whether sites or places meet the criteria for designation.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.
- The accuracy of our information.

You can find more guidance on providing comments and how we handle your information on our [website](#).

Information on how we treat your personal data is available on our [Privacy Notice](#).

How to make a comment

Please send your comments to designationconsultations@hes.scot and provide us with the case reference. You can also make comments through our [portal](#) by clicking on the link 'email your comments about this case'.

If you are the owner, occupier or tenant or the planning authority please email us at: designations@hes.scot.

If you are unable to email your comments please phone us on 0131 668 8914.



Case information

Case ID	300058487
Name of Site	Cumbernauld Cottage Theatre, Braehead Road, Cumbernauld
Postcode (if any)	G67 2BN

Local Authority	North Lanarkshire Council
National Grid Reference	NS 76763 75594
Designation Type	Listed Building
Designation No. and category of listing (if any)	N/A
Case Type	Designation

Received/Start Date	12/05/2022
Decision Date	Pending

1. Proposed decision

Previous Statutory Listing Address	N/A	Previous category of listing	N/A
New Statutory Listing Address	Former Cumbernauld Cottage Theatre (single-storey cottage row) excluding all later additions to rear, Braehead Road, Cumbernauld	New category of listing	C

Our assessment using the selection guidance shows that the building (row of single-storey cottages excluding later additions to rear) meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest. The proposed decision is to list the building at category C.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

This building has not been listed previously.



There are no known previous proposals for listing.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no current planning proposals (North Lanarkshire Planning Portal, October 2023). However, see sections 3.1 and 3.3 below for information about our assessment and the policy context which consider recent information about fire-damage to the site and the intention by North Lanarkshire Council to demolish the later auditorium additions to the rear of the cottage row.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

We received a proposal to designate Cumbernauld Cottage Theatre on 12/05/2022. (Designations applications are published on our portal and will be available to view during the lifetime of the case and until 3 months after the case is closed.)

The applicant provided the following information and views in their application:

- This row of cottages was actively used for farming as part of the Cumbernauld House estate until the designation of Cumbernauld New Town in 1955.
- The cottages became the 55-seat Cottage Theatre from 1960.
- The building became known as Cumbernauld Theatre with the formation of Cumbernauld Theatre Trust Ltd in 1979, with a long and successful history as a popular and treasured community asset for many years.
- North Lanarkshire Council owns the former Cumbernauld Theatre building and have declared it surplus to requirements.
- There is an active Community Asset Transfer interest however there are concerns North Lanarkshire Council could seek to progress demolition.

We informed North Lanarkshire Council about the proposal to list the building. They have provided the following comments about the proposal:

- The council planning services accept the historical link between the Braehead Cottages and Cumbernauld House, but do not consider the cottages to form part of the curtilage of Cumbernauld House due to its location outside the boundary of Cumbernauld House Park.
- The land is classed as Green Network within the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan and it is anticipated that alternative uses would be difficult to achieve.
- Following a fire (17/10/2023), the council let us know they have concerns about the condition and safety of the property and intend to partially demolish some parts of the structure to address these immediate concerns. Demolition



would likely affect the modern structures to the rear of the building. We responded on 24/10/2023 to let them know that, with the evidence gathered so far, we considered that only the cottages are likely to meet the criteria for listing.

- The council responded on 25/10/2023 saying that, as HES are not minded to list the more modern structures to the rear of the cottage row, it was their intention to undertake a demolition of this part of the structure to address the immediate concerns.
- The council will reserve their position in relation to the proposed listing of the cottage row and will respond as part of the consultation process.

We visited the former Cottage Theatre at Braehead, Cumbernauld on 23/06/2023. We saw the exterior and interior of the building.

3.2 Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

We find that the row of single-storey cottages meets the criteria for listing, both for its interest as early estate-workers' cottages associated with nearby Cumbernauld House, and for its role as a cottage theatre and significant community resource during the formative years of Cumbernauld New Town. We propose to exclude all later additions to the rear of the cottages from the listing.

We carried out an assessment using the selection guidance to decide whether a site or place is of special architectural or historic interest. See **Annex A**.

The listing criteria and selection guidance for listed buildings are published in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019), Annex 2, pp. 11-13, <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

3.3 Policy considerations

Further information about development proposals and designation is found in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (DPSG), pp. 7-8.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>. Our policy states:

“We consider the individual circumstances of each case. In deciding whether to designate a site or place or amend an existing designation while there are ongoing development proposals, we will consider:

- the implications of designation on development proposals;
- the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the site or place; and
- the extent to which plans have been developed for the site or place – where these are particularly advanced, we will not normally list or schedule.



- Where it is highly likely that a site or place no longer meets the designation criteria, we may consider removing the designation to avoid unnecessary regulatory processes.”

North Lanarkshire Council has informed us that they intend to demolish the later auditorium additions to the rear of the cottage row. In line with our policy, we have considered whether to proceed in the light of this information.

In this case, on the information currently available to us we are content that the proposed change is unlikely to affect the cultural significance of the cottage row to such an extent that it is not of special interest.

The sections of our policy noted below relate to North Lanarkshire Council’s comments about the current condition of the property and potential future use.

DPSG Annex 2 (Section 14) The extent to which a building or structure survives is a consideration when assessing it for listing. However, the present condition of the surviving fabric is not a factor when deciding whether it is of special architectural or historic interest.

DPSG Annex 2 (Section 15) Factors such as financial issues, proposed future use, or a building no longer being in its original use will not be taken into account.

We will consider all of the responses and any further information we receive as part of this consultation before we make a decision.

4. Consultation

4.1 Consultation information

Consultation period: 30/11/2023 to 21/12/2023.

We have consulted directly with the owner, the planning authority, and the Cottage Theatre Trust.

The consultation report of handling is published on our portal for comment from interested parties and can also be accessed from <https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/>.

4.2 Designation consultations

Comments we consider



We will consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place and whether it meets the criteria for designation.
- The accuracy of our information.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.

Comments we don't consider

We do not consider comments and representations on non-relevant/non-material issues, such as:

- Economic considerations
- Whether you personally like, or do not like, a proposal
- Abusive or offensive remarks

Our video about consultations explains how you can comment on our designations decisions, and what we can and can't take into account when considering your views. <https://youtu.be/ZlqU51tRA6g>.

Dara Parsons

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ANNEX A

Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

1. Building or site name

Former Cumbernauld Cottage Theatre (single-storey cottage row) excluding all later additions to rear, Braehead Road, Cumbernauld

2. Description and historical development

2.1 Description

A gabled row of three adjoining single-storey estate cottages, built in the 1700s and historically associated with nearby Cumbernauld House (1731), which is located 0.5km to the northeast. The cottages are of sandstone rubble construction with an irregular arrangement of window and door openings to the front (south) elevation. There is a part timber, part metal-frame roof structure with a grey slate roof covering and two surviving chimney stacks. There is a small piend-roofed outshot to the rear (north) elevation. The cottages were re-purposed as the Cumbernauld Cottage Theatre in 1962–63.

The interior of the cottage row reflects its conversion to a community theatre, studio and bar in 1962–63, with little of the former cottage room plan surviving. One room has a substantial sandstone rubble fireplace with a consoled mantle of 18th or early 19th century character. The roof of the easternmost cottage (known as The Brian Miller Studio) has a metal frame.

All later additions to the rear, constructed and reworked largely between 1966 and 1980, and which do not form part of the footprint of the cottage range, are excluded from the listing (see Section 6 – Exclusions).

2.2 Historical development

The row of three former estate workers' cottages at Braehead Wood were constructed as part of the extensive parkland estate of Cumbernauld House (LB24086) built in 1731 by William Adam for John Fleming, Earl of Wigton.

The cottage row is likely to have been built around the same time as Cumbernauld House. The cottages are shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1859-61). The map shows a short track, aligned with Cumbernauld House to the northeast, leading from the cottages to a sheepfold on the perimeter of the parkland.



The Cumbernauld Development Corporation (CDC) acquired Cumbernauld House and its estate grounds in 1955 through a compulsory purchase order. The house was used as the Corporation's offices during the early design and development of Cumbernauld New Town.

The Cumbernauld Theatre Group formed in 1960. Early members of the group included CDC Chief Planning Officer Derek Lyddon, Tom and Jenny Laurie, Bill Thomson, Sam Shearer, and Robert Bowie. Various cultural facilities were planned in Cumbernauld Town Centre but these either took time or never materialised. The Group converted the cottages at Braehead into a community theatre for drama, music, poetry, lectures, and art exhibitions in 1962.

Uptake in membership led the Theatre Group to seek planning permission after 1965 for the addition of a 250-seat theatre/cinema/gallery space, theatre bar and courtyard area on sloping ground to the rear of the cottages. These works were carried out in phases as funds allowed and are understood to have been completed by 1972 (Theatres Trust).

Numerous folk artists of international renown performed at the theatre in its early years including Euan McColl, Peggy Seeger, John Martyn, Bert Jansch, and Billy Connolly who also debuted his first comedic revue at the theatre, entitled 'Connolly's Glasgow Flourish', in 1972.

Following a fire in 1975, the complex to the rear was remodelled again, with changes to the auditorium, new rehearsal rooms, communication systems and other alterations, at a cost of over 30,000 pounds. The building officially re-opened as 'The Cumbernauld Theatre' in October 1979 under the direction of the newly formed Cumbernauld Theatre Trust and Theatre Company (Stage and Television Today, 1979). The theatre was known for its innovative Unemployed Youth Theatre Association projects during this period.

Further refurbishments took place in 1996. The theatre operated along increasingly commercial lines into the 2000s, supporting productions by professional theatre companies, alongside a continuing programme of community projects and events for schools and other local groups.

North Lanarkshire Council and the Cumbernauld Theatre Trust began planning for a replacement theatre in 2015, at the Cumbernauld Academy High School development. The former Cottage Theatre closed in 2019.

A Community Asset Transfer request by the Cottage Theatre Trust was rejected by North Lanarkshire Council in 2023, and the decision was upheld following an appeal in August.

3. Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

To be listed a building must be of 'special architectural or historic interest' as set out in the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#). To



decide if a building is of special interest for listing we assess its cultural significance using selection guidance which has two main headings – architectural interest and historic interest (see Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, 2019, Annex 2, pp. 11-13).

The selection guidance provides a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions. The special architectural or historic interest of a building can be demonstrated in one or more of the following ways.

3.1 Architectural interest

The architectural interest of a building may include its design, designer, interior, plan form, materials, regional traditions, and setting and the extent to which these characteristics survive. These factors are grouped under two headings:

3.1.1 Design

The cottage row / theatre retains design features that are typical of 18th century buildings of this type. These features include the overall massing, single-storey profile, and the long rectangular plan form of the gabled row. The near one metre thickness of the random rubble sandstone walls, and the survival of the substantial stone fireplace, are representative of 18th and early 19th century dwellings of this type.

The cottage row in its present form also demonstrates its re-purposing from 1962 as a community theatre, studio, public bar and exhibition space. While changes are evident in the internal alterations, and the reconfiguring of some door and window openings to the front (south) elevation, these changes are largely in keeping with the traditional form, character, and fabric of the building.

In its current form, the cottage row has special architectural interest as a representative example of 18th century estate-worker's cottages that also demonstrates, in its adapted design, its later use as a community theatre.

3.1.2 Setting

The cottage row / theatre occupies a relatively secluded site within Braehead Wood to the east of Cumbernauld Town Centre, with tree coverage to the rear and to either side of the building. It is located on the north edge of the Kildrum residential area, and to the west of the boundary of Cumbernauld House Park and Glen. Cumbernauld House itself is located 0.5km to the northeast. The line of sight between the house and the cottages is interrupted by trees. There is a car park area in front of the cottage row, accessed via a winding single-track road.

Some components of the historic estate remain evident in this modern landscape. The semi-rural woodland and parkland setting and the survival of other (listed) built features of the estate, notably Cumbernauld House (Listed Building Ref: LB24086)



and Dovecot (LB24088), contribute to the interest of the cottage row as a functional ancillary of an historic estate.

3.2 Historic interest

Historic interest is in such things as a building's age, rarity, social historical interest and associations with people or events that have had a significant impact on Scotland's cultural heritage. Historic interest is assessed under three headings:

3.2.1 Age and rarity

The cottage row at Braehead was constructed over 250 years ago and is among the earliest surviving buildings in Cumbernauld.

While adjoining rows of workers' cottages that are ancillary to an historic estate are not a rare building type, this example is unusual for its later adaptation. The cottage row at Braehead retains its elongated footprint, and its single-storey profile and massing, and retains its vernacular form, belying its rather unconventional function as a theatre.

A number of theatres were created in Scotland from the conversion of other building types during the latter 20th century. Examples include a church in Dumfries converted to the Brigend Theatre in the early 1970s; a laundry house on the Colzium Estate, Kilsyth into the Clock Theatre in 1974 (now a visitor centre and café); the East Kilbride Public Hall into the Village Theatre in 1977; and in 1994, the conversion of farm outbuildings in Whithorn into The Swallow Theatre.

The cottage row at Braehead is of interest under this heading, both for its age within its building type and for its unusual adaptation to a community theatre and bar, functioning as such for a period of more than 50 years.

3.2.2 Social historical interest

Social historical interest is the way a building contributes to our understanding of how people lived in the past, and how our social and economic history is shown in a building and/or in its setting.

Theatres are an important part of Scotland's social history and as venues they have played a key role in the development of our performing artists, theatrical professions, and the cultural life of our communities.

The Cumbernauld Cottage Theatre has strong social-historical associations as an important part of the developing identity of Cumbernauld New Town in its formative years. It was the principal outlet for the arts in the town during its ambitious and rapid early phases of development, helping to bring the newly established community together, with plays and performances programmed to appeal to a broad demographic of residents and age groups. In 1965 the Cumbernauld Theatre Group



noted that artistic nourishment was as necessary for a healthy town as shelter and drainage (The Scotsman, 1965).

The cultural value and contribution to the social history of Cumbernauld attributed to the building by residents and former residents of the town is evidenced through more than 3000 individual comments submitted to online petitions in 2016 and in 2023, seeking to save the cottage theatre (change.org).

The social-historical associations between the cottage theatre and the identity of Cumbernauld New Town in its formative years (and well beyond) is of special interest.

3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance

There are some associations with people both of national and local importance (See 7. Other Information below). However, the significance of those associations are not considered to be of national importance.

While the performing artists noted above have had a significant impact on Scotland's cultural heritage, performances by their nature were fleeting, and the associations are not shown in the fabric or design of the building.

4. Summary of assessment

The former Cumbernauld Cottage Theatre meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest for the following reasons:

- as a representative example of 18th century estate cottages that also demonstrates in its adapted design its later use as a community theatre.
- as an early and relatively uncommon example of its building type in the Cumbernauld area.
- for its semi-rural woodland setting which contributes to understanding of its function as an ancillary of the former Cumbernauld House estate.
- for its pioneering role as a community theatre associated with the developing identity of Cumbernauld New Town during its formative years and beyond.

In accordance with Section 1 (4A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the following are excluded from the listing: all additions to rear.

5. Category of listing



Once a building is found to be of special architectural or historic interest, it is then classified under one of three categories (A, B or C) according to its relative importance. While the listing itself has legal weight and gives statutory protection, the categories have no legal status and are advisory. They affect how a building is managed in the planning system.

Category definitions are found at Annex 2 of Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019) <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

5.1 Level of importance

The building's level of importance is category C.

Buildings listed at category C are defined as 'buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are representative examples of a particular period, style or type.

Taking account of the modest architectural interest of the cottage building type, category C is the most appropriate level of listing.

6. Legal exclusions

In accordance with Section 1 (4A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the following are excluded from the listing: all later additions to the rear.

The various additions on the sloping ground to the rear (dating largely from between 1967 and 1979) include a 300-seat auditorium, theatre bar and foyer. These interlinked, modular components are visually modest and discreet with few windows or openings. The additions are simply constructed of standard mass-produced building materials including cinderblock and red brick. While the additions to the rear evidence the incremental development of this theatre complex over time, they do not represent an exceptional example of 20th century theatre design.

All later theatre additions to the rear of the cottage row are therefore excluded from the listing.

7. Other Information

The Cumbernauld Theatre Group's first director and chairman was Tom Laurie OBE (1938-2020). Laurie has been described as a towering figure who helped transform Scotland's cultural landscape, both physically and creatively (The Scotsman, 2021). He went on to become involved in many organisations in Scotland, including the Scottish Arts Council, the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, the Tron Theatre and Piping Centre in Glasgow, a trustee of the Scottish Civic Trust, and establishing



Workshop and Artists' Studio Provision Scotland (WASPS), specialising in 'finding new uses for existing buildings, usually in a community focused way' (The Scotsman, 2021).

Another early member of the Group was 'Town Artist' Brian Miller (1934-2011). Appointed by the Cumbernauld Development Corporation in 1962, Miller was involved with the Cottage Theatre for around 20 years, producing promotional material, branding, and writing and occasionally directing more than 30 plays. He was arguably the world's first 'Town Artist', employed to influence the artistic direction and cultural identity of the newly established New Town of Cumbernauld as it grew. The concept was adopted by many New Town development corporations, in Scotland and abroad. The performance space within the cottage row (the location of the original cottage theatre) is known as the Brian Miller Studio. Miller's work is also recognised in the listing of his concrete totem sculpture in the Carbrain area of the town (LB52419).

Individuals with an association through performance include folk artists Euan McColl, Peggy Seeger, John Martyn and Bert Jansch. Billy Connolly, who debuted his first comic revue at the theatre in 1972, achieved national and international renown as an actor, writer, comedian and artist in the late 20th century. He was knighted in 2017 for services to comedy and was presented with the Bafta lifetime achievement award in 2022.

8. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 348729 - [Cumbernauld, Wilderness Brae, Cumbernauld Theatre | Canmore](#)

Maps

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1859, published 1862) Map Sheet - Dumbartonshire (Det.) XXVI.1 (Cumbernauld), 1st Edition, 25 inches to 1 mile, Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1946, published 1952) Map Sheet - Dumbartonshire nXXIX.SW, 5th Edition, 6 inches to 1 mile, Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

Printed Sources

Scotsman (18/06/1965) *Cumbernauld Plans Arts Centre - £50,000 Project*, p.8.

Scotsman (02/10/1965) Norman Thomson - *Cumbernauld Cottages Which Became a Theatre Club*, p.13.



Stage and Television Today (25/10/1979) *Modern Theatre Complex in the Former Cottage Theatre*, p.15.

Online Sources

Change.org (2015/16) [Petition - Save Cumbernauld Theatre](#) [accessed September 2023]

Change.org (June 2023) [Petition - Save the Cottage: We Need a Community Hub - Change.org](#) [accessed September 2023]

Cumbernauld Cottage - [History of the Cottages \(cumbernauld cottage.co.uk\)](http://cumbernauld cottage.co.uk) [accessed August 2023]

The Scotsman (31/01/2021) Obituary – Tom Laurie OBE - [Tom Laurie, towering figure who transformed the cultural landscape](#). [accessed September 2023]

Theatretrust.org Database: [Cumbernauld Theatre | Theatres Trust](#) [accessed September 2023]

9. Indicative Map

A map of the proposed listed building is attached separately.