

Case Name: 45 Cliff Street, Whitby

Case Number: 1494376

Background

Historic England has been asked to assess 45 Cliff Street, Whitby for listing.

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	HE Recommendation
1	1494480	45 Cliff Street	Listing	Add to List

Visits

Date	Visit Type
03 July 2025	Full inspection

Assessment

CONSULTATION

Reports were sent to the applicant/owner, the Local Planning Authority, and the Historic Environment Record. The Historic Environment Record acknowledge receipt. The owner responded to point out that the mapping had incorrectly excluded the through passage on the north side of the property. The mapping was thus amended and re-sent out for consultation. There were no other comments received.

DISCUSSION

The statutory criteria for listing are the special architectural or historic interest of a building, as set out in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (November 2018). To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration, or craftsmanship, and to be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history or have closely substantiated historical associations with nationally important individual, groups, or events. All buildings pre-dating 1700 that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest. For those dating between 1700 to 1850, most buildings that retain a significant amount of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest, though some selection is necessary.

The statutory criteria and Principles of Selection are supported by Historic England's Listing Selection Guides (2017). These guides are not listing criteria but are pointers to what may be relevant considerations, they are not prescriptive. In this instance, the Selection Guide for Vernacular Houses (2017) is most appropriate.

The renovation of 45 Cliff Street has revealed a cottage that is probably pre-1700 in origin – the survival of a cruck frame suggesting a potential construction date in the early C17 or earlier. Further adding to the interest of the building is the evidence for the extensive late C18 alterations and refurbishment, particularly expressed by the timber partitions dividing the interior. The creation of a first-floor reception room, with care taken over the design of panelling to provide symmetry, is a good example of modest late C18 gentrification of a simple

vernacular cottage. The building also retains at least four reused ships' timbers, positively identified as former futtock timbers. Although there is a popular perception of the widespread reuse of ships' timbers in historic buildings, confirmed examples are actually relatively uncommon. The reuse of ships' timbers in a cottage in a former timber ship-building port is a good example of local vernacular construction.

Overall, as a building that retains a significant amount of pre-1850 fabric, some pre-dating 1700, 45 Cliff Street clearly meets the criteria for listing. It is thus recommended for addition to the List at Grade II.

Consideration was given to the use of Section 1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in defining formal exclusions from the listing, but in this case, this was not deemed appropriate.

CONCLUSION

After examining all the available records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the special architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are fulfilled and 45 Cliff Street is recommended for addition to the List.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION:

Number 45 Cliff Street, Whitby is recommended for addition to the List at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

- * as a vernacular cottage of likely pre-1700 origins, still retaining a cruck frame as evidence of its original single-storey form, heightened and extensively refurbished in the late C18;
- * for the positive identification of re-used ships' timbers within the building, which is relatively uncommon and is a clear link to Whitby's history of timber shipbuilding;

Historic interest:

- * for the timber boarded and panelled first floor reception room which is a good example of modest late C18 gentrification of a simple vernacular cottage.

Countersigning comments:

Agree. 11 May 2026.

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: 45 Cliff Street

List Entry Number: 1494480

Location

45 Cliff Street, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO21 3DD

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

County	District	District Type	Parish
	North Yorkshire	Unitary Authority	Whitby

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed:

Date of most recent amendment:

Legacy System Information

This section only relates to older records, created before the introduction of the National Heritage List for England in 2011.

Legacy System: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy Number: Not applicable to this List entry.

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.

List Entry Description**Summary of Building**

Small vernacular cottage. Originated as a pre-eighteenth century, single-storey cruck-framed cottage, which was then heightened and modestly gentrified in the late eighteenth century.

Reasons for Designation

Number 45 Cliff Street, Whitby is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

- * as a vernacular cottage of likely pre-1700 origins, still retaining a cruck frame as evidence of its original single-storey form, heightened and extensively refurbished in the late C18;
- * for the positive identification of re-used ships' timbers within the building, which is relatively uncommon and is a clear link to Whitby's history of timber shipbuilding;

Historic interest:

- * for the timber boarded and panelled first floor reception room which is a good example of modest late C18 gentrification of a simple vernacular cottage.

History

Number 45 Cliff Street is clearly mapped on the Ordnance Survey town plan surveyed 1849. It is also considered to be marked on both Woller's circa 1740 and Charlton's 1778 plans of Whitby. Structural features of the building indicate that it is pre-C18 in origin, initially being a single-celled, single-storey cottage, either open to the rafters or with an attic storey, beneath a steeply-pitched cruck-framed roof. This is mainly indicated by the relic roof structure embedded in the north gable wall: the early eaves line being marked on the west elevation by a narrow course of stonework just above the first-floor windowsill above which there is a clear building break with the neighbouring property. This former eaves line is also immediately above a cruck spur, a horizontal timber that ties the cruck blade to the wall internally: such timbers are typically set just below the eaves course.

The eaves line was subsequently raised twice, firstly to provide a first-floor, and then again with thin-C18 brickwork. This final heightening, sometime in the C18, probably coincided with a wider refurbishment of the cottage which saw a significant improvement of the first-floor accommodation, with its ceiling height increased by slightly lowering its floor deck as well as raising the eaves. This remodelling was part of a series of improvements including the insertion of a new front entrance and the creation of a through passage probably using the original entrance, the upgrading of a ladder stairs to a proper staircase, the replacement of a timber firehood with a brick flue, a second flue then added for a new first-floor fireplace, with stairs up to unheated accommodation in the attic. Both the ground and first floors were subdivided into rooms with timber partitions, the style of the panelling and ironmongery for the first-floor reception room suggesting that this was undertaken in the late C18.

Information from title deeds suggest that the status of the property declined in the C19, probably being divided into two, possibly even three tenements. Ordnance Survey 1:2500 mapping shows that the brick-built outside toilet and washhouse were probably added sometime between 1892 and 1910.

Number 45 Cliff Street was renovated and restored from the late C20, with photographs taken to record constructional details exposed during the removal of earlier C20 finishes and alterations. This included the replacement of earlier C20 external joinery with more appropriately detailed doors and windows, the lime rendering of the east wall, and the uncovering and minor repair of timber panelling internally. During the course of the renovation, four reused ships' timbers were identified as part of the structure, all being sections of futtocks (curving timbers used in the framing of carvel-built ships). These timbers have many characteristic trunnel holes (large fixing holes for timber rivets) and lack evidence for iron fixings indicating that they are pre-C19 (when iron fixings became more typical in both ship and housebuilding).

Details

Cottage, probably pre-C18 in origin, heightened and refurbished probably late C18, renovated from late C20 onwards.

MATERIALS: east elevation of coursed, dressed local sandstone. Slim, hand-made brick to eaves. Clear evidence of a unifying former lime coating. The west elevation is lime rendered, the now concealed walling being mainly stone to the ground floor and mainly C18 brickwork above. External joinery consists of modern replacements generally in timber with small paned glazing to the front and large paned to the rear. Pantile roofing.

PLAN: originally a single-cell building, accessed via a through passage on the north side. C18 alterations introduced a new front door opening onto a small stair lobby formed to the side of the chimney stack to the south gable, with timber partitions introduced to ground and first floors forming rooms.

EXTERIOR: Street (west) elevation: there is a clear butt joint to the brick-built property to the south. The coursing of the stonework on the ground floor is continuous with the property to the north, but discontinuous

above the original eaves line (just above the first-floor window sill). To the left (north) is the gated access to the through passage, the C18 inserted front door is at the other end of the elevation, now with a recent gabled timber hood and a partly-glazed door. There is a single large window to each floor off-set to the left of centre, the lintels being concrete. There is a large roof dormer to the centre, and a large, square brick ridge stack to the south gable topped with two tall pots.

Rear (east) elevation: this has relatively large ground and first-floor windows (which beneath the render have segmental relieving arches of C18 brick headers) off-set to the left (south) of centre. Just to the right of centre is the back door, which opens onto the dog-legged end of the through passage. To the right, projecting, is the early-C20 washhouse. Above this, to the first floor is an inserted square window. The attic has a pair of roof dormers.

INTERIOR: Ground floor: The through-passage runs along the north gable with a dog leg at the east end to form a small lobby between the door to the rear yard and the door into the cottage. At the east end of this passage there are two futtocks (ships' timbers) reused as lintels. The current front door opens onto a small stair hall adjacent to the south gable, the eastern side of this gable being occupied by a large inglenook fireplace. The fireplace has a chamfered bressumer, which supports two timbers within the smoke bay from which an C18 brick flue rises, one of the timbers being another reused futtock. The brickwork enclosure for the fireplace below these timbers has been reconstructed. Within the understairs cupboard to the right of the inglenook, are the stringers for an earlier ladder stair considered to be in their original location. The western side of the ground floor, extending north from the small stair hall, is separated off by an C18 close-boarded timber partition, now forming a kitchen. There is a blocked doorway between this room and the cross passage; the wall forming the south side of the cross passage being early brickwork. The ground-floor ceiling is supported on six simply chamfered beams that span east-west that are set one course of stonework below a former joist ledge preserved in the south gable wall suggesting that earlier joists spanned north-south.

First floor: this is divided into rooms with C18 timber boarded and panelled partitions fitted with four-panelled doors. This includes a square reception room with a central fireplace on the south side flanked by four-panelled doors (one at the head of the stairs, one a cupboard). The north wall mirrors the south wall with two panelled doors formerly to large closets, now combined to form a bathroom. The timber fire surround on the south wall is a recent reconstruction based on a ghost marking on the timber wall lining. Arris (edges) of the ceiling joists are lightly moulded. On the west side, the partitioning also forms a bedroom and a small stair hall to the attic, the boarding of the stair hall including cupboard doors on butterfly hinges. Exposed in the north gable wall within the bedroom and the closet/bathroom are parts of a cruck frame consisting of a pair of cruck blades linked by a tie beam; its soffit being approximately level with the former joist ledge in the south gable wall. The cruck blades are tied to the side walls with tapering dovetailed spur timbers.

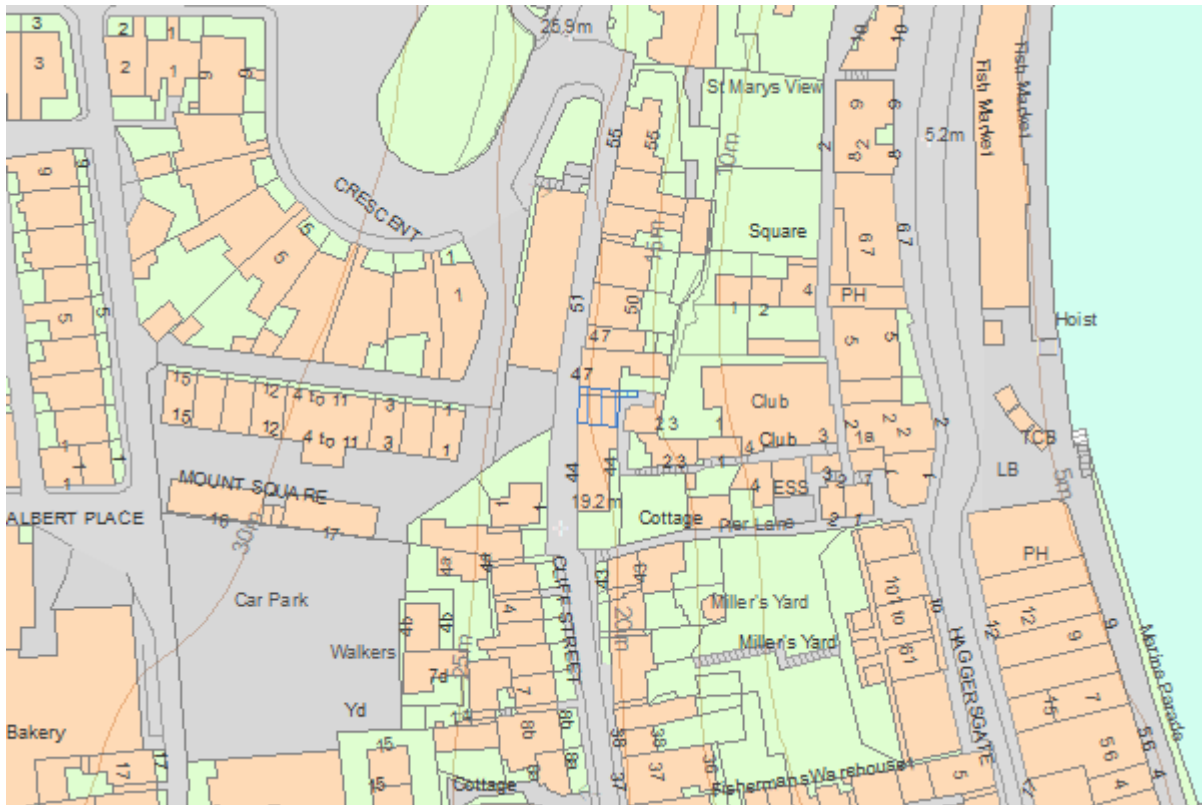
Attic: the upper part of the cruck frame is exposed in the attic, including a collar beam that projects beyond the cruck blades, and a yoke or saddle piece tying the tops of the cruck blades together. The collar beam is identified as another reused futtock. This cruck frame appears to have ceased to function as part of the roof structure after the building was heightened to two storeys. The current roof structure uses the masonry gables and a near-central pair of principal rafters to support two sets of purlins that are offset and through-tenoned, fixed with wedges. The west dormer window respects these purlins and may be contemporary in origin (though joinery is replaced). The two east-facing dormers are later insertions, cutting through the purlins. Jack rafters are later replacements, as is the room partitioning.

Selected Sources

Other

Historic Building Assessment, Dr James Wright, Triskele Heritage (July 2023)

Photographs taken during restoration work by the owner.

Map**National Grid Reference:** NZ8976711213

© Crown Copyright and database right 2015. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.

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 - 1494480_1.pdf