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Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

19<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities – Cllr Naeem Akhtar

**Director approving submission of the report:**

Director of City Services and Commercial

**Ward(s) affected:**

Whoberley Ward

**Title:**

Local Listing Nomination and Recommendation (Post Public Consultation) - The Hearsall Church, Queensland Avenue

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive summary:**

Nomination for a new local listing to be included on Coventry's Local List of Heritage Assets was received by Council, which if approved, would introduce additional considerations in the planning assessment of any future applications.

Local List of Heritage Assets, and additional information for public nominations is available to the public via the authority's website at

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/heritage-ecology-trees/listed-buildings/8>

Further to officers' assessment, the nomination was found to be valid and approved for a six-week public consultation between 8<sup>th</sup> July and 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to further inform decision making post public consultation, and the recommendation is now being made.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

1. Note the contents of the ePetition appended at Appendix 2 of this report.
2. Endorse the nomination for the Hearsall Church Hall (original building) for inclusion on Coventry's Local List of Heritage Assets, for the reasons set out in the report.

3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Lead for Planning, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, to finalise the details of the designation.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix One: The Hearsall Church Local Listing Nomination - Officer Report. V3.

Appendix Two: The ePetition – Save Hearsall Baptist Church Christmas Star.

**Background papers:**

City of Coventry Local List of Heritage Assets – criteria

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/heritage-ecology-trees/listed-buildings/8>

Cabinet Reports

[Agenda for Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities on Monday, 17th June, 2024, 1.00 pm - Coventry City Council](#)

**Other useful documents**

Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage, Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition)

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag301-local-heritage-listing/>

**Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?**

The role of Locally Listed Heritage assets in the planning system was presented to Scrutiny Panel 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?**

The Local Listing Nominations – Process Review was considered and endorsed by cabinet on 24th February 2023.

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:** The Hearsall Church (Hall) Local Listing Nomination-Post Public Consultation

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 A public nomination for the Hearsall Church to be considered for inclusion onto the Local List of Heritage assets was received by the Local Authority in 2024.
- 1.2 This report makes recommendation to the Cabinet Member regarding the proposed addition to the local list, further to examination of the findings from public consultation, review of heritage and planning context, and local research findings. The case for nomination was presented as the officer review for public consultation, this has now been revised, updated and included as appendix one of this report.
- 1.3 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 1 and the National Planning Policy Framework emphasize the importance of approving a 'list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest' as a guide to Local Authorities as part of their planning functions. These are known as Designated Heritage Assets i.e. Statutory Listed Buildings, graded by significance based on a national criteria set out by Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
- 1.4 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Planning Act 1990, further states that a building which have been designated because of its special architectural or historic interest and includes not only the building itself, but also:
  - any object or structure fixed to the building
  - any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948.
- 1.5 Locally listed buildings are buildings within the local planning authority's area which make a positive contribution to its local character and sense of place because of their heritage value. The Local Listing of the non-designated heritage asset of local interest by their local planning authorities is a complementary process identified in the government guidance and follows the same assessment criteria.
- 1.6 The creation and maintenance of a Local List is a way to identify and celebrate historic buildings and sites which enrich the area, this identification and publication of designations also contributes to the Coventry Plan in the promotion of Coventry as a visitor destination and centre for the arts and culture.
- 1.7 A subject matter officer report on listing of the nomination was presented to Cabinet Member on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, which upon consideration from Members progressed to public consultation for six weeks between 8<sup>th</sup> July and 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to further inform local decision making.
- 1.8 Further to the findings of the public consultation, overview of planning, and planning policy context and review of the submitted information, the addition to the local list of heritage assets of the nomination is being recommended.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

### **2.1 Decline the nomination**

Based entirely on the findings from public consultation, the council could consider declining the nomination, however this is not recommended in the interests of promoting and respecting the local heritage of the city and the alignment with the Coventry Plan.

### **2.2 Endorse the nomination**

Members may choose to progress the nomination based on a balanced and objective view, as the 'Hall' relates to the historical significance of being perceived as a source of local identity, landmark value, social interaction and contributes to the collective memory of a place, encompassing of the 'Star of Hope' moveable fixture.

The listing could make it eligible for Listed Building consent in the future for any major repairs or works which incurs no planning fee.

### **2.3 Do nothing**

However, this is not recommended action in the interests of promoting and respecting the local heritage of the city and the alignment with the Coventry Plan.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 The council received 59 public responses, of which six were in favour of the local listing, four abstained and the rest were largely unsupportive of the listing yet strongly recommended retention of the Christmas "fixture" i.e. Star of Hope mounted on the Hall annually as being of high communal and historical value to the local community.

3.2 Of the representations received in favour of the local listing nomination, considerations were made for a positive contribution the original buildings (Hall) to the city's heritage. Officers concur with the recognition of the artistic and architectural value alone which is considered to be medium to high for the Hall (with/without the temporary fixture) and assigns weight in support of the nomination accordingly.

3.3 The overall findings from public consultation predominantly relate to local interest in gaining continuity for the 'star of hope' fixture to the Hall however does not fully demonstrate the weight of opinion in favour for the Hall's rarity, architectural and artistic local value within its setting and wider community.

3.4 Largely the objections were found to be invalid in planning legislative terms as these were based on perceived risks associated with current and future ownerships, functionality of the building as a church, risk to the 'star of hope' amidst pending sale of the building, implications of its inclusion which is of non-material consideration in heritage matters as such.

3.5 Of the representations received opposing the local listing nomination, the following topics were raised for consideration of officers and are responded to as below:

- The importance associated with the communal and historical value of the 'temporary' Christmas fixture to the building was diligently considered by the

officers and found to be within the current planning legislation, which refers to any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1 July 1948 to be valid and applicable, in this case as the original building was completed in 1930s for use as Sunday School.

- Amidst the consultation process the council was made aware of the commitment received from the new owners of the church to ensure the 'star of hope' continues to be a monument within the community.

- 3.6 A petition has been received and attached at appendix two. The ePetition ran from 16<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and contains 1033 signatures. The petition is in favour to Locally List and protect this section of Hearsall Baptist Church, including the spire and the Christmas Star from any future demolition and for the Council to work with partners to secure community use of the building. It should be noted that the proposal is to locally list the building itself and not specifically the Christmas Star. The star is a moveable structure and not something that can be specifically included within the local list. It should also be noted that adding a building to the Local List does not afford the same protection as a statutory Listed Building and cannot prevent demolition if required but it would recognise its heritage value through the local list and any demolition of a locally listed building would require consent through prior notification or a planning application. It would not require Listed Building Consent for demolition. This petition has not yet been formally considered at committee and is included as part of the recommendation for Local Listing.

#### **4 Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 The decision will be implemented and updated on the council's records at the earliest opportunity.

#### **5 Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance**

5.1 Financial Implications

The recommendation will have no budgetary impact.

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

#### **6 Other implications**

**6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))?**

Local List nominations contribute to the Coventry Local Plan Policy HE2: Conservation and Heritage Assets, by identifying and protecting heritage assets of local significance, influencing planning decisions to conserve and enhance the city's character and heritage strategy.

## **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

There is no risk identified associated with the recommendation

## **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

There is no identified impact associated with the recommendation

## **6.4 Equalities / EIA?**

A full Equality and Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken as part of developing the Local Plan. As part of that analysis, the Council had due regard to its public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act (2010).

## **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

There is no direct impact from the recommendations of the report.

## **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None

**Report author(s):**

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