

## Decision Summary

**This building has been assessed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. The asset currently does not meet the criteria for listing. It is not listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended.**

**Name:** Wesley House

**Reference Number:** 1483878

### Location

Wesley House, North Street, South Molton, South Molton, EX36 3AW

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

**County:** Devon

**District:** North Devon

**District Type:** District Authority

**Parish:** South Molton

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

**Decision Date:** 14-Sep-2022

### Description

#### Reasons for currently not Listing the Building

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND We have received an application requesting that we consider Wesley House for listing. The building is the subject of a planning application for demolition and replacement. The target date for determination of the planning application is 3 October 2022, so there is a degree of urgency in the listing assessment.

The building stands within the South Molton Conservation Area, whose boundary we understand was lately amended to include Wesley House, which is a Methodist manse, and the adjacent Methodist Chapel which it serves. The buildings are not locally listed, but the house is considered a non-designated heritage asset.

HISTORY AND DETAILS Wesley House was built in the early years of the C20; it is

not depicted on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1904 but is understood to have been constructed shortly after this date. It was built as a manse for the adjacent Methodist Chapel, a floridly Gothic building which was constructed in 1887 to designs by Alexander Lauder (1836-1921), a local architect from Barnstaple who was also a Wesleyan preacher and undertook other commissions for the Methodist circuit. Wesley House is a substantial house of two storeys and attic, built of stone in a broadly Tudor revival style. It has been suggested that Lauder was also the designer of Wesley House, but there is no corroborating evidence available in accessible sources. The building is gabled, with stone-mullioned window openings, now housing uPVC top-hung casements. There are later extensions to two elevations at the rear. No information about the interior is included in the application or available in readily accessible sources.

DISCUSSION Buildings are considered for listing in accordance with the Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (DCMS, November 2018); they are therefore considered on the basis of their architectural and historic special interest. Before 1700, all buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest; from 1700 to 1850, most buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest, though some selection is necessary; from 1850 to 1945, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary.

With reference to the Principles of Selection, and based on the information currently available, Wesley House, a Methodist manse of the first quarter of the C20 is not recommended for listing, for the following principal reasons:

Degree of Architectural interest:

\* although a substantial house, and well-made, the design is competent but unremarkable, and its massing and composition are rather stolid; \* the elevational treatment is very plain, and lacks the variety, detailing and lightness of touch of better designs of the period; \* there is no evidence currently available to confirm that the architect Alexander Lauder was involved in the design, and it lacks his typical flair, historicist design, and close attention to detail.

Degree of Historic interest:

\* the house was a later addition to the group of the chapel and associated hall, so lacks the historic interest of a contemporary group; \* its style is typical of its period, rather than exceptional, and it does not add significantly to our understanding.

CONCLUSION Wesley House falls short of the level of architectural and historic interest which would merit listing in the national context, though it may be of some local interest for its part in the history of Methodism on this site, which can be traced back to 1821. Its inclusion within the South Molton Conservation Area reflects its local interest.

National Grid Reference: SS7144826017, SS7146026032, SS7146126037,  
SS7147726027, SS7147726041