

## West Area Planning Committee

13th December 2016

**Application Number:** 16/01727/LBC

**Decision Due by:** 13th September 2016

**Proposal:** Demolition of existing school hall. Construction of a new hall, library and teaching accommodation and associated landscape works. Alterations to existing library comprising removal of balcony.

**Site Address:** St Edward's School Woodstock Road Oxford Oxfordshire

**Ward:** Summertown Ward

**Agent:** TSH Architects

**Applicant:** The Governors Of St Edward's School

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### Recommendation:

West Area Planning Committee is recommended to grant planning permission for the following reasons:

### Reasons for Approval

On balance, it is considered that the proposed alterations to "Big School" will not harm the special architectural significance that statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 seeks to preserve. Any harm that would result from the proposed alterations to the listed building is considered to be "less than substantial" as defined by the National Planning Policy framework and would, in line with the purpose set out in the policies contained within that document and with identified Local Plan policies, be mitigated by the careful removal of previously harmful alterations and additions to the building.

### Conditions

1. Commencement of works
2. Works as approved only
3. Details of repairs to façades
4. Sample panels
5. Details of new internal staircase
6. Details of abutments
7. Details of internal alterations

### Main Local Plan Policies

#### Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

**HE3** – Listed Buildings and their Settings

## **Core Strategy**

**CS18** – Urban design, townscape character and the historic environment

## **Other Planning Documents**

National Planning Policy Framework

- Paragraphs 131; 132 and 134.

## **Relevant Site History**

None

## **Statutory and Internal Consultees**

### Historic England Commission

“This application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of your expert conservation advice.”

## **Representations Received**

Please see report for 16/1725/FUL

## **Officers Assessment:**

St Edward’s School comprises a collection of buildings originating from the end of the C19, designed by William Wilkinson an eminent, Oxford architect (Randolph Hotel) and like many school sites has accumulated a variety of buildings throughout the C20 and early C21 in response to the demands of the institution. The principal, front part of the school which is the earliest building group comprises ranges of buildings set around a spacious, green space or quad which is used by the school for special and ceremonial occasions but provides the foreground to two, long ranges (north and south) of late Victorian neo-gothic, three-storey, red brick buildings that present a strong series of gables of varying size to the open space. Across the eastern end of the quad, opposite the Victorian lodge entrance on Woodstock Road, sits “Big School”, the two-storey, neo-gothic “hall” building that is the subject of this application. Built as a series of five bays separated by buttresses, “Big School”, in red brick with stone tracery and detailing to decorative, gothic windows in each bay at first floor over an open, arched-opening cloister repeating the bays at ground floor, currently provides an ante-space to the large, amorphous theatre building that crashes awkwardly into the rear of the listed building and that is proposed to be removed and replaced as part of the planning application currently running parallel to this LBC application. The upper floor of “Big School”, originally the school’s principal gathering space and dining hall, currently houses the school library and what was originally a single-volume space has been altered in the C20 by the insertion of a series of upper balconies and mezzanine spaces to accommodate both books and workspaces. The ground floor cloistered space is continued beyond “Big School” northward to adjoin the school Chapel a modest building in contrasting, grey stone which closes the north east corner of the square but does not dominate the space or the high, Victorian gothic architecture of the secular, school buildings. The C20 alterations to “Big School” have been unfortunate. The removal of the ancillary spaces to the rear, east façade of the building at ground floor and the removal or blocking up of ground floor windows that were the principal providers

of light into what was originally a library or staff room space has had a harmful impact on the architectural significance of this building and the re-ordering of the interior now being proposed balances or mitigates against any harm that will result from the light-touch connection between the outer, foyer spaces to the new theatre. The existing theatre building is an extremely poor neighbour to “Big School” and its careful removal will provide further benefit to weigh against any harm.

### **Planning Policy**

**Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - section 16(2)** – “duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

**National Planning Policy Framework – paragraphs 128,129, 132 and 134 -**

- “In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected..”
- “Local planning authorities should identify and assess the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.”
- “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation... Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm to or loss of a grade II listed building...should be exceptional..”
- “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal...”

### **Conclusion:**

This application proposes alterations, both internal and external to a grade II listed building which lies in the setting of a number of listed buildings originating from the same period at the end of the C19. Many of the alterations remove harmful alterations and interventions that have taken place throughout the C20 and although there are proposed to be new alterations and interventions, an internal staircase and the blocking up of doorways and windows, on balance it is considered that the benefits of the removal of harmful elements in particular to the contribution that the resultant architectural appearance that the building will make to the overall group of heritage assets as seen in views from Woodstock Road will outweigh any further harm that may result from the new work. It is therefore considered that the proposals would meet the statutory duty set out in the P(LBCA)Act1990 and the principles of relevant national and local planning policies identified in this report. It is therefore recommended that listed building consent be granted subject to the conditions identified in this report.

## Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

## Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant Listed Building Consent officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

### **Background Papers:**

16/01727/LBC

17/01725/FUL

**Contact Officer:** Gill Butter

**Extension:**

**Date:** 1st December 2016