

Item No. 07

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/16/03189/LB
LOCATION	Ashton Middle School, High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1NH
PROPOSAL	Full Planning and Listed Building Applications: Conversion and refurbishment of Grade II listed former school building and associated curtilage listed buildings to form apartments comprising: Main School - 7No.1-bedroom and 12No. 2-bedroom apartments; Science Block - 4No.2-bedroom and 2No.1-Bedroom; Gymnasium - 5No. dwellings. Associated refuse, cycle storage, open space and landscaping proposals. Demolition of other modern curtilage listed buildings and extensions. Erection of new dwellings and apartments including: 3No. 4-bed houses fronting Ashton Road; 17No 3-bedroom houses; 23No. 1-Bedroom and 40No. 2-bedroom apartments. Vehicular and pedestrian access via High Street North and further pedestrian access via Ashton Road and Dog Kennel Path
PARISH	Dunstable
WARD	Dunstable Northfields
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Freeman & Warren
CASE OFFICER	Debbie Willcox
DATE REGISTERED	18 July 2016
EXPIRY DATE	17 October 2016
APPLICANT	Trustees of the Ashton Foundation
AGENT	
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	This is a Major Application which has received objections from the Town Council
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Listed Building - Recommended for Approval

Summary of Recommendation

The proposal would secure the optimum viable use of the Grade II Listed Building and result in positive enhancements to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building and its setting by the removal of unsympathetic modern additions and outbuildings and the restoration of original features. These benefits would outweigh the less than substantial harm that would result to the significance of the building and its setting as a result of the conversion works and the development of the grounds. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review and Design Supplement 3 of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

Site Location:

The application site comprises the former Ashton Middle School site, located on the north east side of High Street South in Dunstable. The site lies just outside the designated Dunstable Town Centre Boundary, and the south eastern section of the site is within the designated Conservation Area. The main school building is Grade II Listed and the other buildings on the site are considered to be curtilage listed.

The site is bounded to the south east by Dog Kennel Walk, a designated right of way which runs up to Dog Kennel Down; beyond the footpath is Grove Park. To the north east are dwellings in Printers Way and Crabtree Way and to the North West is Ashton Road and the Wheatsheaf public house on High Street North.

The List description for the Grade II Listed building is as follows:

1887-94 by E R Robson. Free Tudor style. Built of red brick with stone dressings, tile-hanging and red tiled roof. Above the entrance is an octagonal tower surmounted by an octagonal bell turret. To left of entrance is hall with large mullion and transom windows and central octagonal fleche on roof. To right of entrance is 2 storey wing, ground floor of brick and stone, first floor tile-hung. Timber framed dormer.

The Grade II Listed building sits close to the front boundary of the site and is a key feature within the streetscene of High Street North. It is visually imposing and of high quality architecturally. With the exception of modern extensions to the rear and side, the fabric is predominantly original, which enhances the historical significance of the building.

Internally, the most significant rooms are the school hall and the library. The school hall is a double height room in a neo-Tudor style, with a hammer-beam ceiling; vertically extended tripartite lancet windows; oriel windows in the north eastern and north western corners and the original timber flooring. Timber plaques are displayed to the upper sections of the walls showing the name of yearly awardees of the Frances Ashton Trophy from the year of the schools' foundation.

The library comprises a War Memorial, which was established to commemorate former pupils who died within the First World War and is registered as a War Memorial with the Imperial War Museum. The room also includes a panel commemorating those former pupils who died in the Second World War. The room is lined with panels and shelves and has a Victorian hammerbeam roof and stylistic entrance doors.

Many other rooms within the building retain original features, including staircases, flooring, doors, skirting boards, ornamental carvings.

The immediate setting of the Grade II Listed Building comprises the ancillary curtilage buildings, playing fields, playgrounds and car parking existing on the site, with the wider setting including Grove Park and the Grade II Listed Grove House, Victorian and Edwardian development on High Street North and Ashton Road and the more modern housing developments to the rear of the site.

The Application:

The application seeks Listed Building Consent to convert the Grade II Listed

Building and the two early 20th century buildings (the former science block and gymnasium) into flats and to demolish the remaining structures on the site, including some post war additions to the buildings which are to be retained. Within the grounds a further four blocks of flats and 20 houses would be erected with associated roads, parking, open space and gardens.

The new blocks of flats would be located along the rear, eastern and front boundaries of the site. The blocks in the north western corner of the site and the south eastern corner of the site would be three storey, the block in the north eastern corner would be four storey and would include a lift. The fourth block would be two storey, comprising garages on the ground floor and two units on the first floor.

The houses would be located in the central and western portions of the site, with three of them fronting onto Ashton Road. The houses would be two or two and a half storeys in height and would all have private gardens.

A formal garden would be established immediately behind the Grade II Listed Building. An area of more informal open space would be created in the eastern section of the site, measuring approximately 0.125 hectares. The existing mature trees and memorial garden in this section of the site would be retained and incorporated into this space.

With the exception of the library comprising the War Memorial, all parts of the Grade II Listed Building (including the basement) and the two curtilage listed buildings to be retained would be converted into flats.

The library would be maintained as a library, to be accessible to residents of the development and members of the public on request. With the exception of the removal of some recent, modern bookcases which obscure original panelling, and the restoration of the parquet floor, no alterations are proposed to the library.

The conversion works would necessitate a certain amount of subdivision of existing rooms and spaces and the creation of new internal openings. In some places, including the double height school hall, it is proposed to insert mezzanine flooring. The school hall would be subdivided into two units. A single conservation rooflight would be inserted into the rear roof slope of the Listed Building. An existing internal, modern staircase would be replaced.

Some of the existing windows in the school hall would have opening panes inserted within them. The mezzanine floor in the school hall would be set well back from the windows, and contained in the rear part of the room. The oriel windows and hammer-beam ceiling would be retained and restored, as would the parquet flooring. The wall plaques to either end of the hall would be relocated to communal spaces within the Grade II Listed Building and the former Science block.

The plaques on the rear wall of the room are painted on stone and are unstable and many are deteriorating or have been re-touched. These will either be directly conserved (where possible) or replica plaques will be produced on timber and arranged around the proposed party wall.

The proposed conversion works would include the demolition of a number of small post-war additions to the Grade II Listed building and ancillary curtilage listed

buildings and the restoration of the original fabric in these locations.

The conversion works to the ancillary, curtilage listed buildings (former science block and gymnasium) would include some alterations to the fenestration to create doors. A new staircase is proposed to the former science block to allow the creation of units within the ceiling voids.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

BE8 Design Considerations

(Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, the age of the plan and the general consistency with the NPPF, policy BE8 is still given significant weight.)

Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire (June 2014)

At the meeting of Full Council on 19th November it was resolved to withdraw the Development Strategy. Preparation of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has begun. A substantial volume of evidence gathered over a number of years will help support this document. These technical papers are consistent with the spirit of the NPPF and therefore will remain on our web site as material considerations which may inform further development management decisions.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide: A Guide for Development:
Design Supplement 3: The Historic Environment, 2014

Relevant Planning History:

Application Number CB/16/01388/FULL

Description Conversion and refurbishment of Grade II listed former school building and associated curtilage listed buildings to form apartments comprising: Main School - 7No.1-bedroom and 12No. 2-bedroom apartments; Science Block - 4No.2-bedroom and 2No.1-Bedroom; Gymnasium - 5No. dwellings. Associated refuse, cycle storage, open space and landscaping proposals. Demolition of other modern curtilage listed buildings and extensions. Erection of new dwellings and apartments including: 3No. 4-bed houses fronting Ashton Road; 17No 3-bedroom houses; 23No. 1-Bedroom and 40No. 2-bedroom apartments. Vehicular and pedestrian access via High Street North and further pedestrian access via Ashton Road and Dog Kennel Path.

Decision Pending on this committee.

Decision Date N/A

Consultees:

Dunstable Town Council That Central Bedfordshire Council be advised that the Town Council has no objection in principle to the proposed development but is concerned that it constitutes overdevelopment of the site. The Town Council, having

heard strong representations from residents of neighbouring streets and given full consideration to the application, do object to the inadequate parking allocation within the development and are concerned that the design layout will encourage non-resident parking with ease of pedestrian access to those surrounding streets which currently suffer from a shortage of parking provision.

Conservation Officer

Development impacting upon a grade II listed building in a designated Conservation Area location, with extended grounds forming immediate listed building and Conservation Area setting.

This is a well-designed Scheme of site redevelopment following site vacancy, fully satisfying key criteria set out in paragraph 131 of the NPPF, which incorporates a significant historic and 'landmark' town centre building and associated (curtilage listed) buildings.

I consider that the developed Scheme secures the optimum viable use of these buildings, and on this basis, and on the basis of the above, I lend full support to the application with the supplied Conditions applied.

Historic England

To be reported on the Late Sheet.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

To be reported on the Late Sheet.

The Ancient Monuments Society

To be reported on the Late Sheet.

The Council for British Archaeology

To be reported on the Late Sheet.

The Georgian Group

To be reported on the Late Sheet.

The Victorian Society

To be reported on the Late Sheet.

The Twentieth Century Society

To be reported on the Late Sheet.

Other Representations:

Neighbours and General Public
(1 & 5 Printers Way, 5 Ashton Road, 286 West Street, 16 Richard Street, 3 Bunhill Close,

Object to the proposal for the following reasons:

- The trees along Ashton Road should be retained as they enhance the streetscape of Ashton Road and the setting of the Grade II Listed Building
- All the trees on the site should be retained and protected;

Dunstable, 100
Westminster Gardens,
Houghton Regis,
Plymouth Close, Luton

- Proposed Block 1 would be too large to be appropriate for the setting of a Grade II Listed Building;
- The school should not be closed, it is part of the heritage of Dunstable;
- The building should be converted into something for the town, like a museum;
- Object to alterations to the fabric of the Listed Building;
- The alterations to the interior of the Listed Building would be unsympathetic;
- The plaques in the main hall of the Listed Building should be retained, they may be very fragile;
- The setting of the Listed Building should be undeveloped;

Determining Issues:

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Impact on the Historical Significance of the Grade II Listed Building and its Setting
2. Other Issues

Considerations

1. **Impact on the Historical Significance of the Grade II Listed Building and its Setting**
 - 1.1 This application solely considers the impact of the proposal on the historical significance of the Grade II Listed Building and its setting, with all other issues being considered as part of the accompanying planning application, CB/16/01388/FULL.
 - 1.2 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that, in determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should take into account:
 - the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
 - 1.3 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that 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, including securing its optimum viable use.
 - 1.4 In this case, the Grade II Listed Building is vacant and there is little realistic prospect of it being utilised for its former use. As such, it is vital that the optimum viable use of the building be secured as this is the best opportunity for preserving the historic significance of the building.

- 1.5 It is considered by officers that the optimum viable use for the building and the wider site is that of residential development.
- 1.6 Furthermore, the proposal would result in some positive enhancements to the historical significance of the building and the wider site, including the restoration of the main school building, which is in poor repair in places, and also the removal of modern and inappropriate internal and external additions which conceal original features. The restoration and retention of the library and making this available to the public is also considered to be a benefit of the scheme.
- 1.7 However, it is acknowledged that the proposal would result in some less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building, including the alteration to its use, the sub-division of original spaces, the insertion of a roof light and alterations to the front windows to allow them to open, the insertion of new internal openings and the insertion of mezzanine floors.
- 1.8 Both the general approach and the details of the proposed conversion works have been developed in close consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer and it is considered that the resulting proposal represents the most sensitive and respectful approach possible, while achieving the objective of securing the optimum viable use.
- 1.9 The former school hall is considered to be one of the most historically significant and sensitive rooms in the building, both in terms of its character and features and in regards to the wall plaques which have a high social history value. The greatest level of harm to the significance of the building as a result of the proposal would be the subdivision (both horizontally and vertically) of this space. However, the key features of the room are all to be retained, with the exception of the timber plaques, which are to be relocated to more public spaces. The stone based plaques (the oldest within the room) are to be restored and retained or replicated and kept in situ as it was considered that retaining these in context was the most appropriate solution. Having regards to the benefits of the scheme as a whole, it is considered that the level of harm that would result from the alterations to the hall would be outweighed by the scheme.
- 1.10 In terms of the impact on setting, the retention of the two most important, older curtilage listed buildings, the retention of the mature trees along the front and rear boundaries of the site and within the eastern section of the site, the retention of the boundary wall along the front of the site and the creation of open spaces around and near the building are all considered to be positive. It is considered that the impact of new residential development within the grounds would, in principle, have a limited harmful impact on significance, however, this would also be categorised as being less than substantial harm, particularly in regards to the campus style layout to the rear of the main building. The public benefits of the new residential development is that it would act as enabling development to the restoration and conversion of the Grade II Listed Building, and would provide a new community in the heart of Dunstable, providing much need housing and regeneration benefits to the wider community.

- 1.11 Having due regard to Section 12 of the NPPF, it is considered that the proposal would secure the optimum viable use for the Grade II Listed Building and the wider application site and bring positive benefits to the historic significance of the Grade II Listed Building, its setting and the Conservation Area. These benefits would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the historic significance of these heritage assets and the proposal is therefore considered to accord with Section 12 of the NPPF.

2. Other Issues

- 2.1 The comments of Dunstable Town Council do not concern the impact of the proposal on the Grade II Listed Building and its setting and are addressed within the accompanying report for planning application CB/16/03188/FULL, which seeks planning permission for the same proposal.

Recommendation:

Subject to consideration of any materially new comments received from the outstanding consultees, it is recommended that Listed Building Consent be APPROVED subject to the following:

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 1 The works shall begin not later than three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, no works shall take place on any external modifications to the buildings to be retained until samples of materials to be used in the proposed external modifications to the retained buildings have been made available on site for inspection and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part. (Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 3 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to the commencement of any external alterations to the buildings to be retained, a full external finishes Schedule for the existing buildings to be retained, including colours expressed as RAL nos. or demonstrated by colour swatches, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed

buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 4 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of any works of demolition or alteration to the buildings to be retained, details and the proposed specification/method of any 'making good' to the internal fabric of the retained buildings required as a result of the development hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved works shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 5 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of any works to the exterior of the buildings to be retained, full details of works of external making-good and exterior stonework/brickwork cleaning to be undertaken in respect of the retained buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 6 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of any external works to the buildings to be retained, full details of the windows and external doors (including depth of reveal), conservation rooflights and roof lantern proposed to be installed in respect of the retained buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 7 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of any alterations to the windows of the Grade II Listed Building hereby approved, full details of the refurbishment/modification of windows of the former school hall, to incorporate opening window sections, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 8 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of any works to the former school library / war memorial room, full details of the making good of the wall panelling of the retained former school library/war memorial room following removal of book cases hereby approved, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 9 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of any internal works to the former school hall and retained former library / war memorial room, a full internal finishes Schedule for the former school hall and retained former library/war memorial room, with colours expressed as RAL nos. or demonstrated by colour swatches, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 10 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of any works to the former school hall, full details of the proposed retention in situ of the School Award name plaques established across the north wall of the former school hall, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 11 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of any works to the roofs of the retained buildings, full details of any proposed roof repairs/refurbishment in respect of the retained

buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved development shall be undertaken thereafter strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 12 Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, and prior to commencement of internal works to the buildings to be retained, drawn section details at a scale between 1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate clearly demonstrating the following, in respect of the retained buildings, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

- new/replacement staircases to be installed
- new ceilings to be installed
- new floors to be installed.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in a manner that safeguards the historic significance and traditional character of the listed buildings of the site and to safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting of which the site is part.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 12, NPPF)

- 13 This consent relates only to the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers WH182/16/P/05.01, WH182/16/P/05.02, WH182/16/P/10.01 Ref B, WH182/16/P/10.03 Ref B, WH182/16/P/10.04 Ref B, WH182/16/P/25.01, WH182/16/P/25.01 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.02, WH182/16/P/25.03 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.05 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.06 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.07 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.08, WH182/16/P/25.09, WH182/16/P/25.10 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.11, WH182/16/P/25.12, WH182/16/P/25.13, WH182/16/P/25.14 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.15, WH182/16/P/25.16, WH182/16/P/25.17, WH182/16/P/25.18 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.19 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.20, WH182/16/P/25.21, WH182/16/P/25.22, WH182/16/P/25.23, WH182/16/P/25.24, WH182/16/P/25.25, WH182/16/P/25.26 Rev A, WH182/16/P/25.27, WH182/16/P/55.01 Rev A, WH182/16/P/55.02 Rev A, WH182/16/P/55.03 Rev A, WH182/16/P/55.03 Rev A.

Reason: To identify the approved plans and to avoid doubt.

INFORMATIVE NOTES TO APPLICANT

1. This consent relates only to that required under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.

2. In accordance with Article 35 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the reason for any condition above relates to the Policies as referred to in the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (SBLPR) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 5, Article 35

The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage and during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

DECISION

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