

Conservation Officer comments for: 23/00676/FUL

Proposal: Demolition of existing mobile classroom and replace with a new modular building

Site: Richmond County Primary School, Towers Drive

Date Submitted: 11/08/2023

This is a proposal for the demolition of an existing mobile classroom and replacement with a new modular building. The classroom is located to the east of the main primary school building, known as block A, which is a grade II listed building, and therefore the existing and proposed building is considered to be situated within the setting of the listed building.

The National Heritage List Entry (ref 1440485) identifies that the listed building dates from 1968-70 and is the simplest and most dramatic example of a mature primary school designed to the Leicestershire Plan. The architectural and historic interest of the primary school is identified in the list entry and such interest is inherent within its built form.

The application building sits within the wider setting of the main listed school building and is considered to be a building of typical appearance within the periphery of a primary school, with it being a neutral presence within its setting.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on the local planning authority when determining applications for development which affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural and historic interest which it possesses.

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the national policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraphs 199-202 of the NPPF require great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets when considering the impact of a proposed development on its significance, for any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to have clear and convincing justification, and for that harm to be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.

Policies DM11 and DM12 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD seek to protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets. Policy DM12 requires all development proposals to accord with Policy DM10: Development and Design. Policy DM12 also states that all proposals for development affecting the setting of listed buildings will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the proposals are compatible with the significance of the building and its setting.

The proposed replacement building is sited in the same position as the existing, has a slightly smaller footprint, and has a similar form and appearance. Therefore, it is considered that the replacement building would continue to be a neutral presence within the setting of the main primary school building, and it would have no adverse impact upon its significance as a grade II listed building. The proposal is therefore compatible with the significance of the listed building and consequently it accords with Policies DM11 and DM12 of the SADMP, section 16 of the NPPF and the statutory duty of Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.