

Item No 02:-

20/04148/LBC

**Coln House School
Horcott Road
Fairford
Gloucestershire
GL7 4DB**

Item No 02:-

Conversion of existing Grade II Listed Coln House into 7no residential units (C3) and associated works at Coln House School Horcott Road Fairford Gloucestershire GL7 4DB

Listed Building Consent 20/04148/LBC	
Applicant:	Gloucestershire County Council
Agent:	Quattro Design Architects Ltd
Case Officer:	Martin Perks
Ward Member(s):	Councillor Steve Trotter Councillor Stephen Andrews
Committee Date:	10th November 2021
RECOMMENDATION:	PERMIT

1. OFFICER UPDATE

1.1 This application was originally heard by Planning and Licensing Committee at the meeting held on the 7th July 2021. Members voted to defer the application in order that the applicant could provide further information regarding other development options it has considered for the site. In particular, Members were seeking to establish whether other community uses had been considered. In addition, Members asked the applicant to provide further information regarding energy efficiency and details of how the scheme would address the issue of climate change.

1.2 The applicant has now provided additional information in response to the request by Members. The submitted information is attached to this report (email from Andy Carr (i. GCC Senior Planning Coordinator, Asset Management & Property Services), dated 21.10.21; ii. 'Sustainability Statement' by Energist UK Ltd, dated 15.10.21).

1.3 Subsequent to the meeting held in July, the Government has issued an updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The new document results in changes to NPPF paragraph numbers referred to in the original Officer report. The principal changes are that paragraph 193 is now paragraph 199 and paragraph 196 is now paragraph 202. The content of the aforementioned paragraphs in the new NPPF has not changed.

1.4 The report presented to the 7th July meeting was as follows:

2. Main Issues:

(a) Design and Impact on the Special Architectural and Historic Interest of a Listed Building

3. Reasons for Referral:

3.1 This application accompanies planning application 20/04147/FUL. Cllr Andrews has requested that the applications be referred to Planning and Licensing Committee. See reason attached to application 20/04147/FUL.

4. Site Description:

4.1 This application relates to a parcel of land measuring approximately 0.95 hectares in size located in the western part of the town of Fairford. The site is located within Fairford Development Boundary.

4.2 The application site is occupied by a Grade II listed building and an associated range of post war modular buildings, hard surfaces and grassed areas. The site is presently vacant. However, it was last used by Gloucestershire County Council as a school providing county wide residential and day places for children and young people aged 9-16 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). The school closed in March 2017.

4.3 The majority of the north-western boundary of the site adjoins Milton Street which is one of the main roads running through the centre of Fairford. The aforementioned boundary measures approximately 110m in length and is defined by the principal elevation of Coln House, stone boundary walls and a bus shelter. A playground area located adjacent to Milton Street and to the north-east of Coln House is elevated approximately 1m above Milton Street. A further section of the north-western boundary of the site measuring approximately 43m in length is set back approximately 37m from Milton Street. The aforementioned boundary extends along the rear of residential properties and Fairford United Church. The aforementioned church and two of the dwellings (Annerley and The Manse) are designated as Grade II listed buildings.

4.4 The south-west boundary of the site adjoins Horcott Road. It measures approximately 75m in length and is defined by the side elevation of Coln House and high and low level stone walls. A car parking area is located adjacent to the south-western boundary and is visible from Horcott Road.

4.5 The south-eastern boundary of the site adjoins playing fields and is relatively open. The northern eastern boundaries of the application site adjoin residential properties.

4.6 The site is located partly within Fairford Conservation Area (CA). Coln House School and the land to its rear (south-east) are located within the CA. The modular buildings and playgrounds to the north-east are located outside the CA. The boundary of the CA extends along the north-western and north-eastern edges of the application site.

4.7 A Group Tree Preservation Order covers a section of the south-western part of the application. An Area Tree Preservation Order extends along the northern boundary of the application site.

4.8 The site is located within a Flood Zone 1.

5. Relevant Planning History:

5.1 Application Site

CT.0056/F Erection of 1 No. Elliott demountable classroom. Permitted 1985

CT.0056/G Provision of Elliott-Medway hall. Permitted 1995

CT.0056/H LBC upgrading and replacement of doors and screens for fire precautions. Permitted 1997

CT.0056/J Construction of replacement school buildings and associated works. Refused 1999
Glos County Council Application Withdrawn 2000

CT.0056/L Alterations to boundary walls. Permitted 2001

CT.0056/M Alterations to boundary walls. Permitted 2001

CT.0056/P Internal alterations to science laboratory. Permitted 2001

08/00348/CPO Provision of replacement Elliott classroom accommodation. Permitted 2008

08/01756/CPO Provision of replacement Elliott classroom block. Permitted 2008

09/01586/LBC Stonework repairs to porch. Permitted 2009

16/02149/LBC Re-building of section of stone wall to Milton Street. Permitted 2016

5.2 Applestone Court to south-west

20/03972/FUL Conversion of former school building to 4no residential (C3) units with stair core extension and associated hard and soft landscaping. Permitted. February 2021

6. Planning Policies:

TNPPF The National Planning Policy Framework

7. Observations of Consultees:

7.1 Historic England: No comments

7.2 Conservation Officer: No objection

8. View of Town/Parish Council:

8.1 No response received to LBC application. Response received to accompanying planning application 20/04147/FUL

9. Other Representations:

1 objection received.

9.1 'We agree with the objections raised by the Fairford Town Council with regard to:

- Loss of community infrastructure.
- Design.
- Impact on heritage and landscape / townscape.
- Lack of local need for planned housing.

9.2 We acknowledge that the site should be developed in some form and believe strongly that the needs and views of neighbouring residents should be listened to, specifically regarding traffic and parking on Milton Street and rear access to a handful of properties (including our own) to allow off-street parking and the possibility of electric car charging.

9.3 Milton Street has already become a much busier road since other Fairford housing developments with insufficient room for vehicles to pass each other safely and inadequate parking for local homes. In our opinion, any development of the Coln House site should definitely not exacerbate these problems. New residents and their visitors must have enough parking within the development not to have to try to use Milton Street.

9.4 We are currently unable to consider electric vehicles as we have to park on the opposite side of Milton Street to our house, making it impossible to charge them. However, if a Coln House site development included a road along the back of our property and adjoining ones, we and our neighbours would be able to gain rear access. This would have the double benefit of reducing the pressure on local on-road parking and making it possible for us to charge (and, therefore, run) electric vehicles.

9.5 We understand that this final point is in line with the Cotswold District Council's recent Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (mentioned in the Cabinet Meeting Notes of the meeting on January 4th 2021), which is designed to be the first step in the development of a comprehensive Sustainable Transport Strategy for the district.

10. Applicant's Supporting Information:

Technical Report: Historic Building Survey
Heritage Statement

11. Officer's Assessment:

Background and Proposed Development

11.1 The application site was used previously for education purposes in connection with the adjacent Applestone Court which is located to the south-west of the application site. Both school sites were closed by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in 2017 with the result that this application site and the Applestone Court site are now vacant.

11.2 By way of background, the applicant's Planning Statement states

'Coln House, with next-door Applestone Court, is part of the former Coln House School. The school provided countywide residential and day places for children and young people aged 9-16 with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). Coln House School formally closed on 31 March 2017 following a statutory process carried out by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) which began in 2016; both the location of the school and its buildings were not suitable for meeting the more complex needs of the children.

11.3 Since Coln House School was closed GCC has been developing options to look at focussing on more bespoke provision to meet the needs of children and young people (CYP) with SEMH in Gloucestershire, with a focus on offering more local provision to where they live. A key part of this strategy is the construction of a bespoke 75 place free school designed specifically to meet SEMH

needs with a more therapeutic and holistic approach (rather than purely academic as was previously offered by Coln House School). The School will open in 2022 and will be more readily accessible to where the greatest area of need is located across Cheltenham and Gloucester. The new school will complement the existing additional multi agency support for mainstream schools and independent providers in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEMH needs.'

11.4 GCC is now looking to convert this building and the adjacent Applestone Court site into residential use. A separate planning application (20/03972/FUL) has been approved for the conversion of Applestone Court to 4 dwellings. This application relates solely to the conversion of Coln House School.

11.5 The applicant is seeking to convert the Grade II listed Coln House into 7 dwellings. The proposed dwellings will comprise 1 x one bed apartment, 2 x two bed apartments, 1 x two bed house, 1 x three bed maisonette, 1 x five bed house and 1 x six bed house. It is also proposed to erect 17 new build dwellings in the grounds of the school in place of existing modular buildings. However, the aforementioned new build dwellings do not require Listed Building Consent as they will not be attached to a listed building. Planning permission for the new build dwellings is covered by accompanying application 20/04147/FUL.

11.6 With regard to the principal listed building, the proposed conversion will primarily involve internal alterations to the building. External alterations primarily consist of the removal of external fire escape staircases, the re-instatement of a door to give access to a cycle store, the re-roofing of a conservatory and the replacement of a second storey fire escape door with a sash window to match existing. With regard to internal changes, the applicant is seeking to retain historic features. A number of new internal partitions are proposed, in addition to the removal of modern partitions. A new staircase will be introduced to access the second floor.

(a) Design and Impact on the Special Architectural and Historic Interest of a Listed Building

11.7 This application involves the conversion of a Grade II listed building and the erection of development within its curtilage.

11.8 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that when considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall 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. Considerable weight and importance must be given to the aforementioned legislation.

11.9 Paragraph 193 states '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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'

11.10 Paragraph 196 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.'

11.11 The principal listed building predominantly dates from the early 19th Century, although part of the building dates from the 18th Century. The building is located in the northern part of the site adjacent to the A417. The building is 2-3 storeys in height and has a formal, institutional appearance. It is constructed in natural stone and is characterised by hipped roofs and sash windows. The area of the site around the building reflects its previous educational use and consists of hard/grassed surfaces, parking areas and modular school buildings.

11.12 The submitted scheme seeks to convert the listed building to 7 dwellings consisting of a mix of dwellinghouses and apartments. The scheme has sought to utilise much of the internal layout of the building and to retain historic features and room layouts where possible. A number of modern partitions are to be removed and new partitions introduced in certain areas. An internal staircase will be installed in the western part of the building to facilitate access from the first floor to the second floor of the building. The applicant has agreed to retain a historic partition on the ground floor following discussions with the Conservation Officer. With regard to external changes, the applicant is proposing to remove two external fire escapes, to replace a second floor fire escape door with a sash window and to add slate to the roof of a conservatory building.

11.13 It is considered that the proposed alterations respect the historic character and appearance of the building. The floor layout of the building means that it is capable of conversion without having an adverse impact on features of historic or architectural importance. The removal of the fire escapes and fire door are also considered to enhance the appearance of the building. Land to the rear of the building will be landscaped and turned into private and communal garden space. The landscaping will replace existing hard surfaced areas and is considered to represent a betterment in terms of the building's setting.

11.14 The proposed scheme incorporates green space and new landscaping within the development which are considered to enhance the appearance of the site.

11.15 The Council's Conservation Officer and Historic England have not raised any adverse comments to the proposal.

11.16 It is considered that the proposed scheme will sustain and enhance the character and setting of the listed building and secure the long term viable use of the building as a heritage asset. The proposal is considered to accord with guidance in Section 16 of the NPPF.

11.17 The comments of the objector regarding vehicular access and electric vehicle charging are noted. However, they are not matters which fall within the remit of this Listed Building Consent application. The comments will be addressed as part of planning application 20/04147/FUL.

12. Conclusion:

12.1 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will preserve the character and appearance of the listed building and will not have an adverse impact on its special architectural or historic interest. It is therefore recommended that consent is granted.

13. Proposed conditions:

1. The development shall be started by 3 years from the date of this decision notice.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby granted consent shall be implemented in accordance with the following drawing number(s):

5875-P-130 A, 5875-P-131, 5875-P-132, 5875-P-175, 5875-P-176

Reason: For purposes of clarity and for the avoidance of doubt, in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Prior to the construction of any external wall of the development hereby approved, samples of the proposed walling and roofing materials shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and only the approved materials shall be used and shall be permanently retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development will be constructed of materials that are appropriate to the building which is listed as being of architectural or historic interest, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Prior to the construction of any external wall of the development hereby approved, a sample panel of walling of at least one metre square in size showing the proposed stone colour, coursing, bonding, treatment of corners, method of pointing and mix and colour of mortar has been erected on the site and subsequently approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the walls shall be constructed only in the same way as the approved panel and shall be permanently retained as such thereafter. The panel shall be retained on site until the completion of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the development will be constructed of materials of a type, colour, texture and quality and in a manner appropriate to the building which is listed as being of architectural or historic interest, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in the light of advice within Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework. Retention of the sample panel on site during the work will help to ensure consistency.

5. No new external windows and doors including finish, head and cill treatments where applicable shall be installed/inserted in the development hereby approved until its/their design have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The design and details shall be accompanied by drawings to a minimum scale of 1:5 with cross section profiles, elevations and sections. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such at all times.

Reason: To ensure that the design of the aforementioned details are appropriate to the character of the building, which is listed as being of architectural or historic interest, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework. These are important details which need to be undertaken in a manner which ensures that they serve to preserve the special merit of the building.

6. Notwithstanding the details shown in drawing 5875-P-175, the roof of the conservatory shall not be covered in 'slate effect tiles'.

Reason: To ensure that the development will be constructed of materials of a type, colour, texture and quality and in a manner appropriate to the building which is listed as being of architectural or historic interest, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in the light of advice within Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives:

1. Unless otherwise specifically described on the submitted plans, external and internal architectural structures, including roof timbers, floors, beams, other features and fittings shall not be removed from the building and shall be retained in their present locations unless the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority is obtained.