



Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2024/0639
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	St Michaels School, North Road, Hornsey, London, N6 4BG
Proposal:	Proposed change of use of the existing caretakers house from residential (Use C3) to education use (Use Class F1) in order to provide a new school office and reception area, the reordering of the nursery and reception year classrooms to provide additional nursery spaces, two new door openings in the front elevation of the caretakers house and main hall, the demolition and removal of partition walls in halls 1 and 2, and landscape works including new ramp access and new secure fences and gate. (See linked application for listed building consent (Ref: HGY/2024/0707).
Case Officer:	Neil McClellan
Valid Date:	08/03/2024
Applicant:	Mrs Geraldine Gallagher
Agent:	Mr John Buckingham

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposal

Proposed change of use of the existing caretakers house from residential (Use C3) to education use (Use Class F1) in order to provide a new school office and reception area, the reordering of the nursery and reception year classrooms to provide additional nursery spaces, two new door openings in the front elevation of the caretakers house and main

hall, the demolition and removal of partition walls in halls 1 and 2, and landscape works including new ramp access and new secure fences and gate. (See linked application for listed building consent (Ref: HGY/2024/0707).

Site Description

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is a Grade II Listed building built in the 1850s in the Gothic style. Located on the western side of North Road, opposite the junction with Castle Yard, approximately 250 metres north of Highgate High Street. The site is also located in the Highgate Conservation Area.

Planning History & Enforcement History

There is a considerable amount of planning history related to the school comprising permissions and listed building consents for various alterations to the school over the years. The most recent are set out below. The only ones of any potential relevance to the current application are the planning permission and listed building consent granted in 2011 for various upgrades to the caretaker's house, and planning permission and listed building consent granted in 2017 for the change of use of a three-bedroom maisonette located within the grounds of a school to educational use, which has some similarities to the current application.

HGY/2023/1938 - Application for tree works to these trees in a conservation area. No objections raised. 23/12/2020.

LBW/2020/00703 - Enforcement investigation into the alleged removal of a boundary wall. Further action not considered expedient, and the case closed.

CON/2022/0441 - Five Day Notice to fell T1 small Sycamore (70% dead) and T2 large Sycamore (50% dead) as they overhang Highgate School Playing Fields and present a hazard to schoolchildren. No objections raised.

CON/2022/ 0260 - Application for tree works to these trees in a conservation area.. No objections raised.

HGY/2020/1159 - Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of temporary hoarding to playground and creation of new opening in playground wall with gate. Application withdrawn.

HGY/2017/0761 - Listed Building Consent granted for the change of use of a three-bedroom maisonette located within the grounds of a school to educational use.

HGY/2017/0760 - Planning permission granted for the change of use of a three-bedroom maisonette located within the grounds of a school to educational use.

HGY/2016/2620 - 3-year temporary planning permission granted for proposed weekly food market in the top playground of school. Proposed opening hours of every Saturday from 11am - 3pm, with set up and pack up times before and after.

HGY/2011/2128 - Listed building consent granted for the upgrade of the existing caretaker's house, including new windows, doors, roofing, brick courses and stone coping, stainless steel caps to existing chimney flues, and general improvements

HGY/2011/2127 - Planning permission granted for the upgrade of the existing caretaker's house, including new windows, doors, roofing, brick courses and stone coping, stainless steel caps to existing chimney flues, and general improvements.

2. REPRESENTATIONS

External

The application was publicised by a site notice displayed near the school's main entrance, by a press notice and by letters and emails to residents and groups.

One comment has been received from a **local resident** raising the following issues:

- Residents of Northfield Hall closest to St Michael's School are increasingly affected by noise outside normal school hours. It might be a good idea to set a condition on any planning permission restricting the hours of use to no more than at present, or possibly less.
- Concerned that the school may be planning works in the playground close to the boundary with homes at 57-67 North Road and Firestation Flats/Cottage.
- Tree and other planting should be considered along the boundary close to 57-67 North Road and Firestation Flats/Cottage.
- The architect has informed residents that the metal gate beside the former caretaker's house is to be retained. They hope this is correct, as it is a positive feature.

- We have noticed more parents picking up children from the lane between Highpoint's garages and 57-67 North Road and wonder whether St Michael's still bans parents from waiting and parking here.

An objection has been received from the **Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee**, raising the following issues:

- The heritage statement provides little analysis of the heritage impact of the proposed new openings in the eastern, public facing side of the building. The assertion that the "less than substantial" harm resulting from the new openings would be outweighed by the needs of the school, does not appear to be fully justified. The Conservation Officer should consider carefully whether this judgement is correct.
- Submitted drawings are not particularly clear, difficult to understand and may contain inaccuracies. possibly incorrect.
- The demand for additional nursery and primary school places in the Highgate area needs to be evaluated, especially given the daily influx of cars. The proposal implies more car journeys in a road which is often gridlocked. A travel plan should be provided.
- The two large hedges and other greenery which would be removed from in front of the caretaker's house should be replaced elsewhere within the school.
- The loss of the caretakers (key worker) residence should be considered in assessing the balance of harm caused by these proposals.
- Neighbours' amenity should be considered.

Internal

LBH Conservation
LBH Education

Responses

LBH Conservation: Acceptable subject to clarifications and conditions.

4. MATERAIL CONSIDERATIONS

Background

St Michael's Primary School covers infant and junior academic years, with a small nursery intake and is rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

The nursery and infant school are located within the original grade II listed building, with a central assembly hall addition dating from the post war years and later infills and additions including the rear classroom block added in the 1970's/ 1980's.

The junior school is located on the southern part of the site in a separate complex block constructed in 1972 of modernist post war aesthetic. The junior school block is not listed.

In recent years, there has been an increased demand for nursery places at the school and requests for longer hours of care/provision.

In order to allow the school to provide a dedicated and expanded nursery offering the school is proposing the relocation of the main school office and the reordering of classrooms to improve educational teaching spaces. At the same the school is seeking to improve pupil safety and site access through the reordering of the school's exterior spaces and the introduction of new internal fencing. The proposals will increase the school's nursery capacity from 37 to 55 pupils.

Summary of works and their justification

- Conversion of the existing gatehouse at the front of the main school building from a self-contained residential property to a school office use. This will include the removal of the small residential self-enclosed garden attached to gatehouse residential unit and the creation of a new door in its front elevation. The school office is currently located to the rear of the site, requiring visitors to travel through the school to reach it. The proposal will improve pupil safety, allow for natural surveillance of the front entrance and improve legibility for visitors.
- Immediately adjacent to the new school office will be the expanded nursery, created out of the existing school space and involving the removal of partitions. This will provide improved teaching facilities and increased nursery numbers.
- Adjacent to the nursery accommodation two new classrooms will be created through the reordering of existing rooms, for the infant school's reception year. This element of the proposal includes the creation of another new door to provide the infant school secure playground access. All the newly configured educational space includes improved WC provision and other ancillary facilities and meets current Ofsted space standards and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) access requirements.
- A new DDA compliant ramp with railing is proposed to the side (south façade) elevation, situated behind the gatehouse/proposed school office. No other external

changes are proposed to this façade with the existing door accessed by the ramp to be retained. This element of the scheme will address current DDA failings.

- A new dwarf wall, planting, fence and gates are proposed separating the nursery school playground located in front of the main school building from the rest of the school site, including the front parking area, and is required, along with the other proposed changes to address existing pupil safeguarding requirements.
- New security fence to the rear of the gatehouse/proposed new school office, separating a carparking area from rest of school. Required to address existing security failings and to improve pupil safeguarding.

Material Planning Considerations

The main planning consideration raised by the proposal is its impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Listed building & conservation area.

As noted above the subject property is a Grade II listed building and as such, there is a legal requirement for its protection. The primary legislation relating to the conservation of historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The 1990 (LBCA) Act requires local planning authorities to “have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest” (Sections 16 (2) and 66(1)), and to pay “special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas” (Section 72).

London Plan Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that development proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, should conserve their significance. This policy applies to designated and non-designated heritage assets. Local Plan Policy SP12 and DPD Policy DM9 set out the Council’s approach to the management, conservation and enhancement of the Borough’s historic environment.

Development Management DPD Policy DM9 states that proposals affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset will be assessed against the significance of the asset and its setting, and the impact of the proposals on that significance.

With regard to Listed and Locally Listed Buildings, Policy DM9 states that the Council will seek opportunities to secure the future of listed buildings provided they do not lead

to substantial harm or total loss of their significance; retain and repair existing features and fabric, or, if missing, replace them in a sympathetic manner; do not harm the structural integrity or stability of the building or that of adjoining buildings or structures; and, extensions are restricted to less significant parts of the building, relate sensitively to the original building and do not adversely affect the internal or external appearance or character of the listed building, curtilage or its setting.

Highgate Neighbourhood Plan Core Objective 5: Development and Heritage, seeks to preserve and enhance Highgate's unique character.

The main proposed intervention is the introduction of two new external doors in the front elevation of the building.

Both new doorways are sensitively located beneath original first floor windows, maintaining the front façade's symmetry. The doors themselves and their surrounds are to be detailed to match the detailing of the original building. The doors are intended to match the size, proportions, and design of the existing door in the front central gable. The new door into the proposed new school office involves the loss of an original window. While the loss of original fabric would be regrettable, given the relatively modest scale of the change and sympathetic design of the new openings, it is considered that the special significance and character of the Listed Building would be preserved. While there would be some harm, officers considered it would "of less than substantial harm" to the listed buildings significance.

Further details of the new opening and their surrounds will be secure by condition to ensure they correctly match and compliment the original buildings design and fabric.

The removal of existing garden area (attached to the gatehouse) allows for the full width of the school facade to be viewed on arrival, akin to the original design. This will result in the loss of a small area of green space which would be partly compensated for by new planting around the proposed new infants school playground.

A new DDA complaint ramp with railing is proposed to the side (south façade) elevation, situated behind the gatehouse/proposed school office. No other external changes are proposed to this façade with the existing door accessed by the ramp to be retained. The ramp will not obscure or replace any significant elements of the original building. Subject to the use of appropriate materials (to be secured by condition) this element of the proposal is considered to preserve the special significance and character of the Listed Building.

A new brick dwarf wall, planting, fence and gates are proposed around the perimeter of the infants and pre-school playground located in front of the main school building. The boundary of the playground is set well back from the front of the site and from the side boundaries and so would not be particularly visible from outside the site. Subject to the use of appropriate materials and a suitable railing design (to be secured by condition), the element of the scheme is also considered to preserve the special significance and character of the Listed Building.

New security fence to the rear of the gatehouse/proposed new school office, separating a carparking area from rest of school. This will consist of a dwarf brick wall and a 1.8-metre-high railing style fence. Again, this is well set back into the site and would not be particularly visible from outside the site. Subject to the use of appropriate materials and a suitable railing design, the element of the scheme is also considered to preserve the special significance and character of the Listed Building.

The internal changes required for the proposed conversion of the gate house to a new school office are minimal, with no changes to the internal layout. The existing rooms are to be refurbished and repurposed for the proposed use.

The internal changes required for the proposed reconfiguration of the rest of the frontage block to provide new and improved nursery and infant school classes involves the removal of all existing previous sub-divisions and partitions to create larger open plan classrooms with improved ancillary facilities. The infant's provision would be two classrooms defined by a lightweight partition while the nursery would have an open classroom with a low partition at the entrance end for cloaks. Set in a central zone between the infants and nursery accommodation would be W C. provision, a kitchenette and storage.

The internal alterations to the classrooms retain the internal spaces closely to the original openness while meeting current educational needs. The proposed lightweight partitions are low impact on the heritage fabric and easily reversible. The proposed internal changes are considered to preserve the special significance and character of the Listed Building.

Public benefits.

The proposal will result in improvements to the school, improving pupil safety, maintaining its high Ofsted rating, increasing nursery capacity and helping to secure its optimum viable use and long-term future. This in line with Policy SP16 (Community Facilities) of Haringey's Local Plan DPD (2017) and Policy DM49 (Managing the Provision

and Quality of Community Infrastructure) of its Development Management DPD (2017), which both seek to ensure that appropriate improvement, enhancements, and protection of community facilities and services, such as education provision, for Haringey's communities. These objectives are supported by Policy S3 (Education and Childcare Facilities) of the London Plan (2021) seeks to ensure there is a sufficient supply of good quality education and childcare facilities to meet demand and offer educational choice.

The Highgate Neighbourhood Plan's Core Objective 1: Social and Community Needs, seeks to help Highgate develop and maintain a strong and sustainable community which works to minimise social deprivation and exclusion. The provision of good quality education and childcare facilities is key to developing and maintaining a strong and sustainable community.

Other matters

The proposed small increase in pupil numbers is not expected to numbers is not considered significant enough to result in a noticeable increase in activity likely to result in materially harmful impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers or on local transport or highway conditions.

Concerns have been raised by local residents over possible development closer to the school's boundary with homes in North Road and in Firestation Flats, however this is not part of this current planning application and no discussions over future development has been held with planning officers. It has also been suggested that an hours of use restriction could be placed on the school to control after school activities, however given that no additional floor space is being created and that the proposal only results in a relatively small increase in pupil numbers, it is not considered appropriate to impose such a condition on this planning application.

No trees are to be removed as part of this proposal. A small area of garden would be removed but this is offset to a degree by the additional planting proposed around the new playground boundary.

The small increase in hardstanding is not expected to result in any noticeable drainage issues.

The applicant has confirmed that not mechanical or electrical plant is proposed as part of this application.

Conclusion & planning balance

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. 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.

In this case, and as set out in the report above, the proposal is considered to preserve the special significance and character of the Listed Building and the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area. The degree of harm would be considered less than substantial and would be outweighed by the benefits that would arise from the improvements to the school, improving pupil safety, maintaining its high Ofsted rating, increasing nursery capacity and helping to secure its optimum viable use and long-term future.

It would not result in any materially significant harm to the amenities of the adjoining occupiers living conditions.

The proposal would also not give rise to any adverse transport impact or excessive demand for on-street parking.

All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account. Planning permission should be granted for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION.

5. CIL

N/A

6. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION subject to conditions.

Conditions:

1	The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years from the date of this decision notice, failing which the permission shall be of no effect. Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.
2	The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed in this decision notice, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission. Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3	Prior to the installation of the relevant elements of the approved scheme, further details, including detailed drawings, sections, material specification, including samples where necessary, to confirm the detailed design and materials of the: a) New external doors (including plan, elevation and section drawings indicating jamb, head, cill, reveal and surrounds of all external doors at an appropriate scale; b) The proposed ramp stair and associated railing; c) All new fencing, walls and gates; d) Any other external materials to be used; and e) A method statement specifying works to mend the fabric of the listed building affected by demolitions and removal of existing fixtures and building fabric. Shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out solely in accordance with the approved details. Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in accordance with Haringey Local Plan 2017 policy DM9, Policy HC1 of the London Plan 2021 and NPPF 2023.
Informatives:	
	INFORMATIVE: Hours of Construction Work

The applicant is advised that under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, construction work which will be audible at the site boundary will be restricted to the following hours: -

8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday

8.00am - 1.00pm Saturday

and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.