

Eunice Huang

From: Elisabetta Tonazzi
Sent: 12 July 2024 15:02
To: Eunice Huang
Subject: HGY/2024/0989_Channing School, Highgate Hill, Hornsey, London, N6 5HF

Dear Eunice,

Site

the wider development site is bound by the grade II listed princess Elizabeth Court site to the north, the deep rear garden of grade II listed property at 112 Highgate Hill to the east, by Highgate Hill to the south, and by Cholmely Park to the west and sits within Highgate Conservation Area, and predominantly sits within the Highgate Conservation Area.

The main building at Channing School includes the grade II listed Channing house, grade II listed Singley and Westview house, Haigh House, all fronting Highgate Hill and providing access into the school campus. The locally listed Channing Cottage' decorative gatehouse' sits along the side elevation of Changing House along Cholmeley Park.

Proposal

It is proposed to create a two-storey rear extension to the main school, to both basement and ground level, to restore the principal rooms on the ground floor of Singly and Westview House, creation of new circulation space on the ground floor and basement link along the northeast rear elevation. One new classroom will be created on the top floor of Channing House this entailing the proposal for a single storey rear dormer; it is also proposed to install a new lift to all levels. Restoration works are proposed within the main school, and a single storey rear dormer is proposed at Channing House. The proposal also involves landscaping alterations to the front and rear of the main school.

The proposed works stem from the school need to improve circulation and accessibility throughout the constrained and partially altered historic Main School Building, whilst restoring its fabric where possible. At present, only the ground floor has disabled access, due to the many half levels of the building.

Comments

The application is supported, among the other information, by a comprehensive set of drawings, survey of the building, Planning Statement and Heritage Statement. The proposed works were discussed with officers and on-site at pre-application stage and the need to provide universal access into and throughout the historic building is understood and supported in principle such as the proposed works to unveil the original spatial configuration and decorative features of the main rooms located especially at ground level of the grade II listed Singley and Westview Houses.

It is understood that the proposed reconfiguration of the visitors 'access into the school from the Westview House frontage will replace the steeply stepped access from Haigh House, and this will provide a safe and accessible route from the road to the main school visitor entrance while allowing for larger soft landscaped gardens than currently existing to the front of both Singley and Westview Houses with a resulting reinforcement of the original character of the front gardens of the listed buildings.

However, the proposed works will also involve the loss of the historic railing and access gates to Westview House and this would obscure the historic design of the boundary treatment to this property that would become uncharacteristically open and incongruous with the design and character of the host building and its group, as well as being incongruous with the design of the boundary treatment of Singley House and of the rest of the historic school frontage along a major thoroughfare of the Highgate Conservation Area.

Also, the proposed landscape design from the external social space to the rear of the listed buildings is not very clear and includes, to both front garden and rear amenity space, concrete and timber benches that are not supported in principle due to their design inconsistency with the age and architectural language of the host building their heavy materiality and bulk, more suited to large and contemporary landscape spaces, and also due to the poor aging of the timber seats.

For these reasons, the proposed alterations to boundary treatment and the proposed landscaped design cannot be supported in principle.

The proposed decluttering of the internal spaces and rear elevations of Slingley and Westview Houses from later partitions, utilitarian extensions, later stairs to basement level and the unveiling of the original spatial hierarchy to ground floor of Slingley and Westview Houses coupled with a new stair to match original stair, enhanced internal circulation and access to all levels through a new lift sensitively nested in between Westview and Channing House are considered positive and beneficial interventions that require further design definition in terms of methodologies, detailed design, material specification and material samples/ trial samples, and are supported from the conservation stance.

The proposed two storey new link building at basement and with colonnade to ground level rear elevations of Channing, Slingley and Westview Houses, although less than ideal to unveil and reinforce the original design of the rear elevations of the listed buildings, has been carefully thought through and it is effectively meant to externalise the currently convoluted internal circulation leading to the dining hall to the rear of the main school buildings, and will allow for improved WC provisions, including accessible WC. The proposed design appears contemporary, minimalist, and lightweight and would provide sufficient visual permeability to still be able to read the architectural composition of the uncluttered and original rear elevations especially of Slingley and Westview Houses. Detailed design, including methodologies, specification and material samples are fundamental to ensure that the new building respects and sensitively responds to the design of the host buildings. The proposed link building is supported.

The proposed roof top extension to Channing House will match the existing one, thus blending in with the design of the host building and respecting the existing materiality, while offering an additional classroom for educational purposes. The impact of the proposed extension on the setting and significance of the heritage assets involved, especially in those views taken from Cholmeley park towards the development site, was assessed on site by officers and it is expected that this will be neutral, and the proposed extension is supported, however detailed design, methodologies, material specification and material samples will need to be approved by the planning authority

The proposed scheme is considered largely justified and acceptable, although detailed design information is generally needed, and the varying impact of the proposed works has been generally sensitively mitigated by design. However, the impact of the proposed boundary alterations related to the reconfiguration of the access from The Bank and some elements of the proposed landscape design are not justified and not sufficiently assessed in the application, although being harmful and are not supported in principle. In conclusion, the application cannot be supported as it stands.

Kind Regards,
Elisabetta

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