Eunice Huang

From: Ruth Mitchell1
Sent: 06 August 2024 10:25
To: Eunice Huang
Subject: HGY/2024/1103 - Kestrel House School, 104 Crouch Hill, Hornsey, London, N8 9EA

Hi Eunice,

Kestrel House School is a prominent building along Crouch Hill and is considered to positively contribute to the significance of the Crouch end Conservation Area as a prominent Victorian Villa which retains its architectural details and original form. The building, originally Cecile House, is a yellow stock brick late-Victorian villa of three storeys plus a semi-basement, originally five windows wide beneath a hipped slate roof. A long flight of stone steps leads up to the entrance doorway beneath a portico with Corinthian columns. To either side are canted bays at semi-basement and ground-floor levels that have lost their cornices but retain their cast-iron balconettes to the ground-floor windows. New side wings in yellow stock brick with hipped slate roofs are set back from the main elevation and one storey lower. The frontage has a low brick boundary wall with metal gates and railings and some planting. The building has a Haringey Green Plaque commemorating George Shadbolt, photographer, writer and editor, who lived there from 1865-1879

Crouch End is an excellent example of a late-Victorian/early Edwardian suburban development. Kestrel House School contributes to the significance of the Crouch End as a good example of a large Victorian Villa which retains its high quality detailing , which is a prominent part of the Victorian townscape.

It is noted that the window precedent given on the plans is not located within Haringey, is not within a conservation area, nor does there appear to have been any planning history associated with the replacement of windows.

There is no heritage statement provided and it is unclear if the existing windows to the original building are original, but they would appear to be so. Original windows should be retained where possible, particularly where their detailing is hard to replicate, as is the case on this site.

The proposed replacement windows raise significant concerns, their design and materiality. The existing first and second floor windows have a curved top rail (segmental, rather than round) which is clearly shown in the existing elevations. The proposed elevations show these changing to a flat top rail, which would not be considered acceptable as it would considerably downgrade the quality of the built form of the building. Additionally the provided section also demonstrates that the proposed replacements would not be a faithful or well designed, the existing frames are set in relation to the front brickwork so that the top rail and frame thin sections, set behind the facing brickwork. The proposed section does not show this and would create a much thicker frame in an inappropriate material. The existing windows are consistent and have high quality detailing, with the extension windows designed to faithfully mimic the existing. Any replacement windows would need to accurately replicate the joinery details of the windows to the front elevation. Without these details there is insufficient information to determine whether or not the proposed joinery details would match the existing and to assess the impact of the proposed works.

The proposed uVPC would be considered to be a downgrading of the materials. The proposed change for timber to uVPC would be a downgrading of the materials on this locally listed building within the conservation area. uPVC windows are not supported in principle as their design and materiality are uncharacteristic of the original design of the host buildings and would detract from its architectural interest and historic character. UVPC windows have

thicker frames, lack definition of detailing and do not have details associated the joinery and instead tend to have mitred joints. UVPC also has poorer long-term weathering characteristics.

Historic England provide a lot of guidance in relation to the inappropriateness of UPVC windows for historic buildings and in heritage setting and state the following:

> ‘’*although PVCu (unplasticised polyvinyl chloride) rigid plastic replacement windows are popular, their visual character and operational differences make them unsuitable for older buildings, particularly those that are listed or in conservation areas. Because the components used to manufacture PVCu windows are weaker than their timber counterparts, they tend to be much thicker. This, along with different detailing and opening arrangements, can have a significant impact on the appearance and character of older buildings. For example, in traditional windows the glazing bars (usually wooden or metal) are rigid and separate the panes of glass, whereas in PVCu windows they are often only strips of plastic inserted within the glass sandwich of a double-glazed unit.*
>
> *The service life of PVCu windows is relatively short (less than 25 years) compared to well-maintained traditional windows (many of which survive for over 100 years). PVCu windows are not maintenance-free, as is commonly believed, and can be difficult to repair. This means they are usually replaced at the end of their service life. Although it is possible to recycle PVCu, this is still not done widely. Therefore, the carbon cost of a PVCu replacement window will be higher than an appropriately upgraded traditional window.*’’

Overall, there is an in principle objection to the replacement of the timber windows with uVPC as this would result in a considerable downgrading of design and the material quality of the building and would be considered to causeless than substantial harm to the significance of the Crouch End Conservation Area. The maintenance of timber windows can be programmed similar to any other aspect of a schools maintenance plan. If toughened glass is required for the school, then this could be accommodated within the existing window frames, or accurately detailed replacement timber framed windows.

However, as the application stands the proposed replacement window details would not match the existing windows and would represent a downgrading of the quality of detailing and materiality and this would be considered to cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Crouch End Conservation Area. As the Crouch End Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation, and any harm caused to the significance of a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and should be weighed against public benefits. Any necessary harm should be reduced where possible, including through alternative methods of achieving the same benefits. Accordingly, as the proposals are considered to cause less than harm to the significance of the Conservation Area, Conservation would not support this application.

Kind regards,

Ruth Mitchell
Senior Conservation Officer
Placemaking and Housing | Haringey Council

E-mail: Ruth1.mitchell@haringey.gov.uk
Alexandra House 10 Station Road, Wood Green, N22 7TR
www.haringey.gov.uk