

## HERITAGE STATEMENT - Addendum

### John Lyon School, Oldfield House



Planning Application reference: P/1813/19

Application for the redevelopment to provide four storey teaching block with basement; hard and soft landscaping; parking (demolition of existing building)

October 2019

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Regulated by RICS

## Site: John Lyon School, Oldfield House

**Client:** John Lyon School

**Our Ref:** JLD/mac/8871

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## 1.0 Introduction

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- 1.1 This Addendum to the submitted **Heritage Statement** has been prepared following concerns raised by the Conservation Officer and members of the public over the height and siting of the proposed scheme for the replacement Oldfield House. A revised scheme has been prepared using the same design ethos and basis.
- 1.2 This Addendum should be read alongside the further submissions made by the Applicant in response to the Conservation Officers comments, dated July 2019. While those submissions were on the basis of the original scheme, the conclusions drawn on the impact of the proposed building are maintained, and now significantly enhanced by these revised proposals.
- 1.3 To provide guidance on the impact of the proposed building on views, new CGI's and Verified View Wire Line drawings have also been produced. This imagery assists in understanding how the proposed building will appear in the context of the topology and trees. 8 such viewpoints were requested by the Planning Officer and Conservation Officer following a meeting between the Council and the Applicant in August 2019.
- 1.4 Key viewpoints are highlighted in this report and all are set out within the revised Design & Access Statement.
- 1.5 The key revision to the proposed building has been to utilise the topology of the site in creating a lower ground floor level. This has achieved a **2.36 metre** reduction in the buildings overall height. The revised drawings and Design and Access Statement set out how this has been achieved and its impact on the buildings appearance and setting. This revised proposal has also been reflected in the imagery provided with this revised submission. It is these that allow for the full assessment of the impact of the reduced building on its surroundings.

## 2.0 Visual Impact of the Proposal

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- 2.1 This part considers the visual impact of the proposed new building with reference to the Verified View Wire Line drawings commissioned for this revised scheme. These are considered to reinforce the consistent conclusion that the proposal will have a less than substantial impact on the heritage assets and preserve the openness and character and appearance of the location.



*Figure 1 - Artists impression of the revised proposed scheme from the playing field*



*Figure 2 – Line drawing showing view from public realm (West Street).*

- 2.2 Figure 1 provides the rendered CGI of the proposed building, viewed from the public realm on Lower Road, close to its junction with West Street. It clearly demonstrates that the building will be significantly screened from view in these long range views. Notwithstanding the dominance of the trees, the glimpses that are available show the building to be well separated from the main school buildings and of a height and scale that complements its surroundings rather than competing with or dominating it. This assessment is reinforced by consideration of the verified views from these northern viewpoints.

- 2.3 Figure 2, which is slightly further to the east on West Street, highlights that the dominance is still the trees, the listed building (Field House) and the main school buildings. The proposed building, even were it fully visible, sits naturally within this setting, relating well in height and scale terms to the buildings either side. It will continue to be sited in a well landscaped plot with a sense of space around it – such space and greenness being a key characteristic of the Conservation Area in this location.
- 2.4 Figures 3 and 4 below, also highlight that trees in the foreground and surrounding the site will limit views to glimpses and such glimpses will be of a structure that sits comfortably within its surroundings and in relation to nearby buildings.



*Figure 3 - line drawing from public realm (Lower Road)*



*Figure 4 - line drawing from public realm (Lower Road)*

- 2.5 The impact on the longer views up 'The Hill' is considered as neutral. The introduction of the building in to the landscape does not have any dominating effect. It sits well in relation to the adjoining buildings, both in terms of scale and siting, and preserves the existing openness and landscape that is evident in this part of the Conservation Area when observed from these viewpoints
- 2.6 The roads to the south of the property provide opportunity for shorter views into the site and of the existing and proposed building. Views from Crown Street are generally limited by the high brick wall. However the featureless roofscape of Oldfield House is clearly visible. Figure 5 below demonstrates the reduction of the existing roofline which will be seen from the public realm, as well as reduced visible width of built form, achieved through its deeper set back into the site. The visual impact of the building will be much less than the existing Oldfield House; those parts which will be visible will be of much greater architectural quality and interest and a more open view from within the Conservation Area is created.



*Figure 5 - line drawing from public realm (Crown Street)*

- 2.7 Figure 6 below, also from Crown Street, highlights how the view will be opened up with less built form visible and a slight reduction in the height of what will be visible. The proposed site for this building is further down the hill than Oldfield House, allowing the topology to reduce the impact of the height and protect, and in places, enhance the wider views.
- 2.8 As this imagery clearly indicates, the mass of the building is screened, and the visual impact of the existing to the proposed building from the principle views is reduced. This therefore improves the relationship of the built environment and the open spaces, providing a better connectivity with the broader vistas.



Figure 6 - line drawing from public realm

- 2.9 There will be a change of view by the entrance to the school and this is illustrated at Figure 7 below. That image demonstrates the siting of the proposed building will introduce new built form. However, this must also be balanced with the fact, not shown in this imagery, that Oldfield House is to be demolished and therefore that part of the site will become more visually open. Also contributed to by the deeper setback of the proposed building.



Figure 7 - line drawing from public realm (Middle Road)

- 2.10 Figure 7 also successfully demonstrates the comfortable relationship between the new building and the main school buildings. The building shares a similar perceived height as the existing Oldfield House, by virtue of its deeper set back. Its overall height compares favourably with the main school buildings, appearing as a building of lesser height and scale, and thus not having any dominating impact. Good levels of separation are achieved



between the existing and new buildings, maintaining the spacious landscape setting of the location.

- 2.11 A further CGI, providing a rendered view of the proposed building broadly from the view point of Figure 8 below will better illustrate the opening up of the southern part of the site through the removal of Oldfield House. This will create longer views through to open space, boundary trees and the horizon.



*Figure 8 - view that will change, but improved due to the relocation of Oldfield House and the high-quality design*

### 3.0 Assessment of Harm

- 3.2 The Conservation Officer, in responding on the original submissions, identified the existing Oldfield House as being a building which respected the neighbouring John Lyon School by not dominating them in height and scale. It being concealed behind a high wall on Crown Street and allowed plentiful green space and established trees in the foreground and around the site. Such features were concluded to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the locally listed buildings.

- 3.3 The original proposals were seen to contrast to this through the height, scale and siting of the replacement, the loss of trees and introduction of predominantly hardsurfacing to the site. The proposal was identified as being 3.25 metres higher than the ridge of Oldfield House. This was considered to be overly dominant and not respecting the general height of the main school buildings. From the north (Lower Road) it was considered that the buildings were visually taller than the other school buildings.
- 3.4 Overall the proposal was considered to create *a much more dominant and overpowering building, undermining a sense of openness in key views up from the playing fields and from Crown Street in the setting of the listed and locally listed buildings. The loss of trees around the building would emphasise these problems as would the introduction of so much hardstanding to the site.*
- 3.5 While a full and detailed response and justification was provided by the applicant at that time, these further significant revisions address the key concerns raised by the Conservation Officer.
- 3.6 Firstly, the provision of the agreed imagery addresses the criticism that insufficient information was provided to allow for a full assessment.
- 3.7 The building is much reduced in height (2.36m), now appearing as a three-storey (two storey and mansard) structure when viewed from the Crown Street side. The imagery provided demonstrates that from the majority of angles (north and south of the site) the building will be significantly screened from view. The Verified Views allow one to see through the screening allowing for the observation that the building's height and scale reflects and respects that of the neighbouring buildings. This includes the listed Field House which when seen in the views from Lower Road and West Street continues to be the dominant building.
- 3.8 Overall the proposed building sits comfortably in its setting without dominating the nearby buildings or impacting on the skyline when observing the longer views up 'The Hill'. It is well separated physically and visually from nearby buildings, with extensive intervening planting retained. As such the important feature of a spacious landscape setting is preserved. The building will have no materially harmful impact from these views.
- 3.9 In the shorter views from the residential streets to the south, the removal of Oldfield House will increase the sense of openness in the southern part of the site. From Crown Street the proposed building will have a much reduced visual impact and more open views will be created.

- 3.10 When viewed from the site entrance the new building will be more apparent. However its reduced scale will relate well to the main school buildings, providing a building clearly of lesser scale and height. This viewpoint will see the greatest change with the introduction of the new building. However the impact of this must be balanced with such a building providing high quality architecture of visual interest and a significant enhancement to the existing Oldfield House. Furthermore the removal of the latter will see greater openness through the southern part of the site, creating new views through the site to the treed boundary to the east. On balance it is considered that such an impact will not result in any material harm to character and appearance of the Conservation Area in this location.
- 3.11 Consideration of the proposed landscaping, as set out within the Landscape Proposals, highlights the neutral impact on the proportion of hard landscaping across the site (1.3% increase in hardstanding/built areas). As such the spacious and green nature of the site will be preserved and enhanced by a comprehensive landscaping proposal. Tree removal is selective, removing only Category C trees (9) of limited quality and lifespan, being replaced by 23 new trees. Such managed planting will be of greater quality and variety, and will much better preserve the landscaped quality of the site and wider Conservation Area in to the future.
- 3.12 This revised scheme has addressed the concerns raised by the Conservation Officer in respect of the scale of the building and how it relates to its surroundings. The new imagery provided helps to demonstrate the minimal harm the proposed building has on its immediate and wider location. Such harm to be balanced against positive impacts that come from the removal of Oldfield House and its replacement with a building of much greater architectural and visual quality.

#### **4.0 Summary & Conclusions**

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- 4.1 The reduced height of 2.36m from the previous scheme is an increase of only 0.89m from the existing ridge height of the higher location of the current Oldfield House. This reduction, and the additional groundwork, fully responds to the concerns raised by the Conservation Officer.
- 4.2 Overall, the proposed building sits well in context, respecting the local and wider views. The siting of the building, respecting the more historic position of the original Oldfield House, allows the spaces between the designated heritage assets and the built environment within the Conservation Areas to be enhanced. The architectural quality of the building and

comprehensive landscaping of the site will have an enduring, positive impact on the Conservation Area. As such it is considered the proposals will result in less than significant harm and, in this case, such harm will be, on balance, *de minimis*.