

HERITAGE STATEMENT ADDENDUM

**Former School House
146a Lea Bridge Road London E5 9RB**

On behalf of:

**Oculus Architects Ltd
155 Regent's Park Road,
London
NW1 8BB**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. I have been requested by Oculus Architects (the “Applicant”) to provide independent advice on the proposed alterations to the consented conversion of the Former School House at 146a Lea Bridge Road, London, E5 9RB (henceforth the “Site”). This is an addendum prepared to accompany the new Listed Building Application for the Site’s use as a Vietnamese Monastery and should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement prepared by Heritage Collective dated January 2013 as part of the original application 2013/1894.
2. I am a qualified heritage consultant holding an MSc in Town Planning [specialising in Conservation and Urban Design] from Newcastle University and a BA (Hons) degree [equiv. to Part 1 Architecture] from School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi. I am also an accredited member of the Royal Town Planners Institute (RTPI) since 2012 and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) since 2016.
3. 146a Lea Bridge Road is a detached former Infants’ School building that is grade II listed (list description at Appendix 1). It dates from 1855 and is believed to have been designed by the architect E. C. Hakewell, the same architect responsible for the parish church of St James, Clapton. The site also lies within the Lea Bridge Conservation Area, designated in 2005. The building is included in Historic England’s ‘At Risk’ register due to its degraded condition.
4. Listed building consent (Ref: 2013/1894) and planning permission (Ref: 2013/2118) were granted in January 2016. It is my understanding that the property was subsequently bought by the Chan Khong Monastery in 2018 who wished to retain more closely the original use of the building by using the school hall as a prayer hall, D1 use class, and retaining a separate use C3 dwelling to the rear for the visiting monk.
5. However, the conversion works began without the relevant consent from the local authority. Following related correspondence with the Council, the Applicant have engaged in pre-application discussions, whereby the new use has been considered to be acceptable in principle. However, additional works undertaken would have required consent, and this addendum addresses those works. In particular, the Council has raised objections to:
 - Structural works which diverge significantly from those consented (particularly roof level steelwork in the residential part of the building);
 - Complete replacement of the main hall roof covering with new tiles; and,
 - Demolition of structural timbers within the residential part of the building (e.g. the roof timbers, stairs, floors, internal walls).

6. This addendum is a response to the additional works and will review the consented scheme against the current proposal. It would then assess the impact of the new proposal on the significance of the heritage assets, as already established in the previous consented scheme.
7. The Heritage addendum should be read in conjunction with the documents accompanying the current application.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

1. **2013/2118:** Planning Permission for Conversion of existing school hall building into 2x2 bed flats. External alterations comprising installation of timber shutters, glazed door, conservation-style rooflights, new lead and timber windows, erection of timber fence to the north-east boundary and provision of cycle racks"- **Granted** on 16th January 2016.
2. **2013/1894:** Listed Building Consent for "Internal alterations to Grade II listed building comprising installation of internal partitioning, infilling of arched doorway, and external alterations comprising installation of timber shutters, glazed door, conservation-style rooflights, lead and timber windows, timber fence to north-east boundary and provision of cycle racks, in connection with planning application for conversion of the school hall building into 2x2 flats"- **Granted** on 18th January 2016.
3. **2018/3749:** Non Material Amendment for "Non-material amendment to planning permission 2013/2118 dated 18/01/2016. Effect of variation would be to allow for the commencement of works without full discharge of conditions 3 (design details), 5 (landscaping) and 7 (tree protection)."
4. **2018/3789:** Discharge of Conditions for "Submission of details pursuant to conditions 3 (particulars of works, detailed drawings and glazing sample), 5 (hard and soft landscaping) and 7 (tree protection plan) attached to planning permission 2013/2118 dated 18/01/2016."
5. **2018/3790:** Discharge of Conditions for "Submission of details pursuant to condition 3 (Structural appraisal, details of structural floor, Proposed services, internal joinery) attached to Listed Building Consent 2013/1894 dated 18/01/2016."

3. SUMMARY OF WORKS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. This section of the report is to be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement accompanying the previous application, the Structural Report and the proposals drawings. Each section below summarises the extent and impact of the detailed proposals relating to change of use.

Element	Proposed	Works involved	Potential Impact
Ground Floor	Prayer Hall	Retain the internal space as one large space- this is less intrusive than the original proposal as it would not require any further interventions.	Preserve
		New altar- This would be a free-standing structure, with a statue of Lord Buddha centrally placed with no implications on the structural stability of the main building.	Preserve
	Additional W/C	This would be an extension to an existing block containing toilet. This part of the building is considered to be intrusive. Whilst this is an addition, it would enhance the overall appearance of the structure and provide much needed ancillary facilities to the new use- located at a discrete location, in the least significant part of the building.	Minor harm but essential for the functionality of the new use.
	Reconstruction of Chimney basis	This is an improvement to the previous proposal as it would retain original plan form and feature within the building	Preserve
	Additional door into the rear kitchen	This would require intervention within later partitions and would not harm any fabric of significance.	Enhancement- providing better functionality
Roof	Re-positioning of the rooflights	This would allow more light into the prayer hall with minimal intervention to the fabric	Enhancement- providing better functionality
	New roof	The roof's condition is considered to be very poor, and has deteriorated since original approval. As such the repair and replacement of the slipping tiles and their like for like replacement was necessary. This has been undertaken carefully to ensure that the character and appearance of the building is not affected.	Minor harm but essential for the long term community use of the building
Structural	Strapping of corners	This would strengthen the structure further, and provide longevity to the building	Enhancement
	Chimney	Structural strengthening of the chimney breasts	Enhancement

2. As in the previous scheme, all roof trusses and supporting stone corbels will be preserved as part of the scheme. Since there will be additional use in the first floor, the open void of the roof would be retained in its entirety, allowing appreciation of the original open, high ceiling, character of the school hall in the prayer hall.
3. Additional structural works, in addition to those already approved, have been undertaken to ensure that the building is suitable for its new use as a prayer space and for its users in the future.
4. This proposal constitutes a positive enhancement to the special interest of the listed building and is considered to be less intrusive than the originally approved private residential home. The new use would retain its original community/public use, which also contributes to enhancing its appreciation.
5. The new use would inevitably result in a degree of change to the fabric and spatial arrangement of the building. However, care has been taken, insofar as practical and possible, to reduce the impacts to the minimum. The alterations will result in a degree of change that falls in the category of 'less than substantial' harm in terms of the NPPF. Harm in this category needs to be weighed against the benefits of the proposed development.
6. It is clear that the building has been neglected for many years. Although a residential use has been approved, the new use is considered to be a better and more suitable use of the building. There would be considerable investment to bring it back into a reasonably sound state of repair including structural works. The proposals would result in careful restoration of the building, but also secure its long-term future and maintenance. The benefit of the new use is considered, on the whole, to far outweigh the harm resulting from the conversion. The building needs to continue to evolve and adapt if it is to have a viable and public use in the 21st century. These changes will form part of the ongoing evolutionary narrative of the building. The overall effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Lea Bridge Conservation Area is considered positive and enhancing.

4. CONCLUSION

1. This is a Heritage addendum to be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement submitted as part of the original application. Following the original approval for the conversion of the Grade II listed School Hall into a two bed residential house, the current application seeks a change of use into a prayer space. This use is considered to be more suited for the building and would be less intrusive to the fabric.
2. However, the community use would also necessitate additional structural and roof works. This has been undertaken only where necessary, keeping in mind the significance of the building. The proposals are considered to result in less than substantial harm in terms of the NPPF. They will result in minimal harm to the significance of the listed building and will considerably enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
3. The proposals are also considered to offer public benefits as the building would retain its community use. In addition, the repair of the listed building in a dilapidated state and improving one's experience of the conservation area. As such the proposed benefits of reinstating lost significance and providing with site with a long-term viable community use by far outweigh the minimal harm that will be caused by the proposals. This assessment concludes that the proposals accord with this policy and guidance and offer sympathetic and informed change with an acceptable effect on heritage significance.