

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee: East Area
Date: 25 January 2007
Ward: Heslington
Parish: Heslington Parish Council

Reference: 06/02480/LBC
Application at: Lord Deramores Primary School School Lane Heslington York YO10 5EE
For: Internal electrical rewire and external lighting units (retrospective)
By: LCCS Education Services
Application Type: Listed Building Consent
Target Date: 25 January 2007

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The application relates to a Grade II listed building with playing fields located on NE side of School Lane, on the edge of Heslington village. It seeks consent for internal and external alterations following the internal electrical rewiring of the school and the installation of external security lighting and associated wiring. The application is retrospective and has been submitted as a result of an enforcement complaint and investigation.

1.2 The applicant's agent has submitted a letter in support of the application. It explains that the lights have been installed at the request of the School to enhance security at the school for pupils and staff and to protect the premises and property during hours of darkness. It confirms that the lighting fittings and method of operation have been chosen for low energy consumption, general aesthetic appearance and environmental impact to the surrounding neighbourhood premises. The rewiring was required to meet Health and Safety requirements.

1.3 A planning application is also before the Council for determination for the external light fittings (06/02479/FUL).

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Conservation Area Heslington 0029

City Boundary York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams East Area (1) 0003

Listed Buildings Multiple (Spatial)

Schools Lord Deramore's Primary 0208

2.2 Policies:

CYHE4

Listed Buildings

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Internal

Conservation - Have visited the site twice, once during the day and once at dusk. Does not think that the internal installation is unacceptable in these particular circumstances. The interior is generally of less value than the exterior and has been much altered, although the main hall has some quality. Adapting a Victorian school to modern day needs will clearly result in some conflict, but it is preferable overall that the school continues in use and is allowed to 'move with the times', provided that the conflicts are minimised. Most of the wiring has been carried in surface-mounted plastic trunking which can look obtrusive, but most of it is at low level and is not eye-catching. More importantly, it is physically less damaging than chasing cables into the wall plaster, especially if repeated over time as technology changes. So although the wiring does look crude in some areas it can be regarded as reversible. The light fittings etc are also acceptable, again bearing in mind the educational standards etc to be met.

The external installation is almost acceptable. The cabling has mostly been run close to existing cables or along discrete routes, and do not think the light fittings are too alien (any security / amenity lighting is going to be conspicuous). But the terminal boxes to the light fittings stand out, and the cables carried across the gables of the front façade need to be better routed or concealed. There is scope for improvement by moving some wires slightly and by painting some lengths and fittings in a dark colour, which is common practice on historic buildings.

Unhappy to either accept or refuse the scheme as it stands, but suggest that either it be approved subject to some agreed adjustments being made or it be withdrawn and resubmitted after these adjustments.

Update by Officer:- Verbal agreement with Conservation Officer to recommend application subject to condition requiring minor alterations to be undertaken, including repositioning and painting of wiring on right hand gable of front elevation, painting of cabling on central gable on front elevation, painting of junction boxes and re-routing and painting of cabling on pier buttress on northern elevation.

Environmental Protection Unit - No objections.

3.2 External

English Heritage - Do not wish to offer any comments on this occasion. Recommend that this application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice. If, in due course, your Authority is minded to grant consent, please forward these comments to the Government Office in line with Circular 01/2001 paragraphs 26-28.

4.0 APPRAISAL

4.1 The main consideration is the impact on the character, appearance and setting of the listed building.

4.2 In addition to Policy HE4 of the Draft Local Plan referred to in Section 2.2, national advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) and Policy E4 of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan are also of relevance. PPG15 reinforces the special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of architectural or historic interest. Annex C of PPG15 offers guidance on alterations to listed buildings. Paragraph C.68 states that 'only undamaging and visually unobtrusive position for fixtures [including security lighting] should be agreed'. Paragraph C.69 states that 'long runs of surface wiring should be avoided' and the 'introduction of new services to historic interiors must also be handled with care'.

4.3 The internal rewiring, needed to meet health and safety requirements, has largely been carried in surface-mounted plastic trunking, at low level. As such, it is not unduly obtrusive and could easily be reversed with limited damage to the listed fabric.

4.4 The light fittings themselves are of a simple design, though modern in appearance, and are relatively small in relation to the size of the building. They require cabling, which is orange, around the external walls of the building for the power supply and associated junction boxes. The fact that the building is listed does not seem to have been taken into account in the design of the fittings, routing of the cabling or colour finish of the cabling and boxes. Efforts have been made to install the lights on the primary front elevation of the building in an unobtrusive manner by siting them behind the corner buttresses. The positions of light fittings on other elevation or parts of the building are not contentious. However, the cabling and junction boxes on the front elevation and the cabling around a buttress on the northern elevation, due to their position and/or exterior colour, needs to be altered and this could be dealt with by condition.

4.5 Subject to these minor alterations being made to the routing and colouring of some of the wiring and the colour finish of the junction boxes, the external works are considered to be acceptable.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 In light of the above, it is recommended that the Council be minded to grant consent subject to conditions and apply to the Secretary of State to grant the consent. This is necessary under planning regulations as the application has been made by the Council and involves alteration to the exterior of a Council owned listed building.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Council to apply to Secretary of State

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out only in accordance with the following plans and other submitted details:-
Drawing nos. RBS 050103/E1 and RBS 050103/E2 dated May/June 2005 and RBS 050130/E3 dated May 2005 and manufacturer's details of 'Thorlux Mercian' lighting;
or any plans or details subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority as an amendment to the approved plans.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

- 2 The following works shall be undertaken to the cabling and junction boxes associated with the external lighting hereby approved within two months of the date of this approval:

- the cabling routed across the southern-most gable on the front elevation of the building shall be repositioned to be 50mm lower;
- the junction boxes and cabling located on the front elevation of the building shall be painted or colour finished dark brown;
- the cabling routed around the eastern-most pier buttress on the northern elevation of the front building shall be repositioned in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority beforehand and shall be painted or colour finished dark brown.

Reason: In order to preserve the special interest of this grade II listed building.

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

Notes to Applicant

1. REASON FOR APPROVAL

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposal, subject to the conditions listed above, would not cause undue harm to interests of acknowledged importance, with particular reference to the special interest of this grade II listed building. As such the proposal complies with Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, Policy E4 of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan (Alteration No.3 Adopted 1995) and Policy HE4 of the City of York Draft Local Plan (incorporating 4th set of changes, April 2005).

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