

## Assets of Community Value

4 February 2020

Application Number: 19/001

**Nominated Asset:** Former Cowley Saint John's Boys School site

**Site Address:** Princes Street, Oxford

**Ward:** St Clement's

**Applicant:** East Oxford Community Association

**Recommendation:** The Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services is recommended to:

1. Agree that the Nominated Asset should be confirmed as an Asset of Community Value
2. Agree to include the asset on the City Council's Register of Local Assets of Community Value Register and place the asset on the Local Land Charge Register.

### Background to Report.

1. The Localism Act and the Assets of Community Value Regulations set out the opportunities and procedures to follow for communities wishing to identify assets of community value and have them listed.
2. The City Council is able to list a nominated asset if, in its, opinion:

*An actual current use of the building or other land that is not an ancillary use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community; AND*

*Is it realistic to think that there can continue to be non-ancillary use of the building or other land that will further (whether or not in the same way) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.*

**OR**

*There is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not ancillary use furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community; AND*

*It is realistic to think that there is a time in the next five years when there could be non-ancillary use of the building or other land that would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.*

3. These definitions have been taken from the Government's Regulations. There is no national guidance as to what the key terms in these definitions mean. It is for the nominating organisation in the first instance to argue why it considers the nominated asset meets the definition in the Regulations.
4. If the owner objects to their property being placed on the List, they have a right in the first instance to an internal review by the City Council of this decision.

## **Nomination**

5. East Oxford Community Association (EOCA) wrote to Oxford City Council in a letter dated 10 December. An email was sent notifying Oxford City Council that the letter was sent on 10 December 2019. The nomination was received at the City Council offices on 10 December 2019 to nominate the "former Cowley Saint John's Boys School site" for inclusion as an Asset of Community Value. A plan of the nominated area is attached to this report.
6. EOCA has argued that:
  - a. Since 1976 the premises have been in use as a community centre, community development and advice centre.
  - b. The premises are occupied by the following stakeholders
    - Afrikan Caribbean Kultral Heritage Initiative (ACKHI)
    - BK.LUWO (Women's Centre)
    - East Oxford Community Association (EOCA)
    - Fusion Arts
    - GreenPrint
    - Oxford Action Research Centre (OARC)
    - Oxford Chinese Community and Advice Centre
    - OxPots (Community Pottery Studio and Workshop)
    - The Phoenix Bar
    - Open Doors for Asylum Seekers and Refugees
  - c. It serves a multitude of other users and hirers for one-off sessions, prayer meetings, classes (e.g., advice sessions/ language classes), MPs and Councillors surgeries, workshops, seminars, yoga, tai chi, educational dance, health and fitness classes as well as other meetings, talks, presentations and public or private events (e.g. wedding receptions, birthday parties, etc.)

## **Response to consultation**

7. Oxford City Council is the landowner and the applicant is a leaseholder. The council has been consulted via its Community Services Directorate, and no objections have been received to this nomination.

## Assessment

8. The nominating organisation is a community organisation for the purpose of the regulations. It is registered as a charity with the objective of advancing citizenship and community development by means of providing recreational facilities and organisation of recreational activities aimed at improving the conditions of life for the residents of East Oxford. Membership is open to all inhabitants in the locality regardless of background or belief and associate membership is also possible. The City Council therefore considers that the EOCA is eligible to nominate Assets of Community Value.
9. Parts of the centre are not in use due to structural issues and as a result two of the lessees (ACKHI and EOCA) are operating on other premises. However the nominating body has indicated that they are scheduled to return to return to the site after refurbishment.
10. The centre is well used by several groups and organisations that cater to the needs of a wide range of communities and a range of activities. It is used in a non-ancillary manner that provides facilities that can be enjoyed by the leasees for their specific activities, as well as the wider community for public and private events.
11. The City Council, as landowner is looking to redevelop the site for a number of uses including maintaining the community uses on the site. A number of consultations have taken place. More information about the progress of this redevelopment can be found on the City Council website<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore realistic to envisage that there can continue to be non-ancillary use of the building for social and public benefit for the foreseeable future.

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[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20269/east\\_oxford\\_community\\_centre/562/east\\_oxford\\_community\\_centre\\_development](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20269/east_oxford_community_centre/562/east_oxford_community_centre_development)

## Decision

**I confirm that:**

**Nominated Asset:** Former Cowley Saint John's Boys School site

**Site Address:** 44B Princes Street, Oxford

**Should** be an Asset of Community Value and included on the City Council's Register of Local Assets of Community Value Register and placed on the Local Land Charge Register.

**Name:** **Adrian Arnold**

**Title:** **Head of Planning Services**

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Background Papers:** Nomination application, letters from the owners.

**Contact Officer:** Arome Agamah

**Extension:** 2360

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020

