

Nominate a Heritage Asset

East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street



1. WHAT IS IT? Is it one of the following?	Tick
a building or group of buildings	y
a monument or site (an area of archaeological remains or a structure other than a building)	
a place (e.g. a street, park, garden or natural space)	
a landscape (an area defined by visual features or character, e.g. a city centre, village, suburb or field system)	
2. WHY IS IT INTERESTING? Is it interesting in any of the following ways?	Tick / Rank
Historic interest – a well documented association with a person, event, episode of history, or local industry	y1
Archaeological interest – firm evidence of potential to reveal more about the human past through further study	
Architectural interest – an example of an architectural style, a building of particular use, a technique of building, or use of materials	y2
Artistic interest – It includes artistic endeavour to communicate meaning or use of design (including landscape design) to enhance appearance	y3
What is it about the asset that provides this interest?	
<p>Historic interest: The building was built as St Johns Boys School in 1866 with support from Father Richard Meux Benson (the Vicar of the Parish of Cowley St James and later Cowley St John) and the Society of St John the Evangelist as one of the earliest examples of the involvement of religious communities and the church in the development of education institutions across the East Oxford suburb.</p> <p>It remained a school until the reorganisation of the education system in Oxford from a three to two school system in the 1970s. The school buildings were reused as a centre for the arts and other community uses. As such it has been an important venue for music in particular, as well as the Bloomin' Arts Group who were influential in the development of Cowley Road Carnival.</p> <p>Architectural interest: The main school building as an interestingly designed building, possibly</p>	

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by the Diocesan architect G.E. Street, with roof top lantern vent cupola and end chimney stacks with tumbled brickwork. Windows retain stone transoms and mullions, although the detailing is otherwise simple, reflecting the charitable status of the school.

3. WHY IS IT LOCALLY VALUED? Is the interest of the asset valued locally for any of the following reasons?	Tick / Rank
Association: It connects us to people and events that shaped the identity or character of the area	y1
Illustration: It illustrates an aspect of the area's past that makes an important contribution to its identity or character	y1
Evidence: It is an important resource for understanding and learning about the area's history	
Aesthetics: It makes an important contribution to the positive look of the area either by design or fortuitously	y3
Communal: It is important to the identity, cohesion, spiritual life or memory of all or part of the community	y2
<p>How is the asset locally valued as heritage?</p> <p>Association and illustration: The building is associated both with the locally significant person of Father Benson, who made a significant contribution to the development of health, welfare and education services across the early suburb, as well as the religious community of the Cowley Fathers. The building provides a highly visible symbol of the involvement of religious people and organisations in the provision of education in the area.</p> <p>Aesthetics: The good quality architecture of the building makes an important contribution to the Victorian and Edwardian character of Cowley Road and Princes Street, which is emphasised by its position on a corner plot.</p> <p>Communal: As a school used within living memory the building has a communal value for former pupils who remain in the area.</p> <p>Communal: The use as a community centre has been highly successful creating a centre for performance as well as the visual arts that supports community cohesion and interaction and now contributes to the identity of the people of East Oxford.</p>	

4. WHAT MAKES ITS LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE SPECIAL? Do any of the following features make the heritage significance of the asset stand out above the surrounding environment?	Tick
Age ... Is it particularly old, or of a date that is significant to the local area?	y
Rarity ... Is it unusual in the area or a rare survival of something that was once common?	
Integrity ... Is it largely complete or in a near to original condition?	y
Group value ... Is it part of a group that have a close historic, aesthetic or communal association?	y
Oxford's identity ... Is it important to the identity or character of the city or a particular part of it?	y
Other ... Is there another way you think it has special local value?	
<p>How does this contribute to its value?</p> <p>Age: The main building dates from the first two decades of the development of the suburb and, as such, would be considered early in this setting.</p> <p>Integrity: The building retains much of its Victorian and appearance and character. The large kitchen extension on the Princes Street side has unfortunately hidden some of the original architectural detailing however.</p> <p>Group value: The Building has communal value as one of a series of buildings that chart the development of education facilities for the growing suburb between the mid 19th and early 20th century, often with charitable support from the church or other organisations.</p> <p>Oxford's Identity: The use of the former school building as a community centre has led to the</p>	

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development of cultural activities that have drawn the community together and supported the development of East Oxford's reputation as a part of the city with a particularly rich cultural life that promotes a diverse community that is nevertheless well intergrated, contributing significantly to the identity of East Oxford.