

WA/2023/02009 – Listed Building consent for alterations and extensions to the to St John’s Seminary to create 41 dwellings including alterations to the chapel to provide residents gym and spa facilities following demolition of existing outbuildings; erection of extensions to The Lodge and Lower Lodge at. ST JOHNS SEMINARY CRANLEIGH ROAD WONERSH GUILDFORD GU5 0QX

Applicant: St John’s Wonersh Ltd - St John’s Wonersh Ltd
Parish: Wonersh
Ward: Bramley & Wonersh
Grid Reference: E: 502463
N: 145068
Case Officer: Tracy Farthing
Neighbour Notification Expiry Date: 16/10/2023
Extended Expiry Date: 09/02/2024
Committee Meeting Date: 07/02/2024

RECOMMENDATION That, subject to conditions, listed building consent is
GRANTED

1. Site Description

The application site extends to approximately 18.5 hectares of land and comprises a focal large building and two lodge houses set within.

It is located on the northern side of Cranleigh Road, approximately 160m outside of the eastern boundary of the defined settlement of Wonersh. Vehicular access is via two access points from Cranleigh Road.

The lawful use of the majority of the site is a Seminary, which falls within Use Class C2 (Residential Institution), with The Lodge and The Lower Lodge in Class C3 residential use.

The Grade II Listed Seminary was built in the 1890’s by F. A. Walters, a prominent figure in late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Catholic church building, and has been the focal point for the training of priests in the Archdiocese of Southwark.

The current floor space on the site, comprises 8,244 sqm (GIA). The principal floor space is within the main seminary building, accounting for some 7,548 sqm, arranged over three floors, with a basement level and an attic storey to the central section and east and west wings and is of red brick construction under slate roofs. The seminary building runs east-west with two wings towards the eastern and western ends. Whilst the building dates from the 1890s it was extended and altered in the 1960s at which time the east and west wings were extended to almost double their original length. At the same time, the convent was constructed to the east end of the building.

The application site also includes two lodge buildings. The eastern lodge pre-dates the seminary and the western lodge is a later addition. The lodges are referred to as the Lodge and Lower Lodge.

The farm building located on the east side of the Seminary represents the oldest structure on the site having been part of the former Lotisford Farm, sold to the seminary in 1889.

The general character of the area is rural. The topography of the area is such that ground levels generally fall away to the south and south-east. There are areas of woodland in the vicinity, including a small area of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland a short distance to the south-east of the Seminary. There are also water features to the south-east. Public rights of way run along the wooded valleys to the south-east and on to the west of the site.

2. Proposal

Change to listed building sent is required for than bullet as below

The proposal includes:

- The conversion of the existing seminary building from Use Class C2 to Class C3 to provide individual residential dwellings; including the conversion of the chapel to a multi-use leisure facility, including amenities such as a gymnasium, pool, and treatment rooms. The conversion will also include hot desk open offices, breakout areas and a reception.
- The provision of two 4-storey extensions to the north of the seminary building;
- The demolition of the existing modern farm buildings and modern garages, the re-use of the historic farm building, and the construction of some new single-storey buildings within the grounds (to provide more residential dwellings);
- Extensions to the Lodge and Lower Lodge buildings (existing C3 dwellings).

3. Relevant Planning History

WA/2023/02010	Erection of extensions and alterations to existing buildings to provide a total of 52 dwellings, alterations to the chapel to provide residents gym and spa facilities following demolition of existing outbuildings; erection of extensions to The Lodge and Lower Lodge; associated works including landscaping, parking, amenity space;	PENDING
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	formation of a new vehicular access onto Cranleigh Road	
WA/2017/0984	Listed building consent for internal and external alterations to second floor of the East Wing of the seminary building including the insertion of 2 rooflights	GRANT 03/08/2017
WA/2010/0831	Internal and external alterations.	REFUSE 20/07/2010
WA/2010/0832	Application for Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations.	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT REFUSED 20/07/2010
WA/2010/1304	Internal and external alterations (revision of WA/2010/0831).	GRANT 27/09/2010
WA/2010/1305	Application for Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations.	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT GRANTED 27/09/2010
WA/2011/1547	Listed Building Consent for demolition of staircase hall partition and various alterations.	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT GRANTED 01/11/2011
WA/2010/0793	Application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to seminary building.	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT GRANTED 13/07/2010
WA/1978/1057	Alterations and single storey extension to existing oil tank enclosure.	GRANT 01/08/1978
HM/R7859	Extension to Common Room.	GRANT 31/05/1955
HM/R3687	New cowhouse, dairy and alterations to existing farm building.	GRANT 24/03/49

4. Relevant Development Plan Policies and Guidance

Local Plan (Part 1) 2018: Strategic Policies and Sites, 2018 - Policies SP1, SP2, ST1, TD1, HA1, RE2, RE3, ALH1, AHN1, AHN3, CC1, CC4, NE1, NE2.

Local Plan (Part 2) 2013: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies – Policies DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM5, DM6, DM7, DM8, DM9, DM11, DM14, DM20, DM25, DM35.

Other guidance:

- o The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)

5. Consultations and Town/Parish Council Comments

Wonersh Council	Parish	(only report no objection, objection, or none received)
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Can you copy HE/Victorian Society comments as they would have been relating to the LBC as well

6. Representations

1 letter has been received expressing support for the following reasons:

- Good engagement from developer with LPA and neighbours
- Sensitively designed
- Prefer a residential use to an institutional or commercial use believing it will be less disruptive

7. Impact on Heritage Assets

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering applications which affect Listed Buildings, Local Planning Authorities must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Paragraphs 205-209 of the NPPF 2023 are of particular relevance and are provided below:

Section 16 (2) of the Listed Buildings Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special interest,

205. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

206. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

207. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

208. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

209. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The application of the statutory duties within section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 combined with the guidance contained in the NPPF means that when harm is identified, whether that be less than substantial or substantial harm, it must be given considerable importance and weight.

Policy HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 outlines that the Council will ensure that the significance of heritage assets are conserved or enhanced to ensure the continued protection and enjoyment of the historic environment.

Heritage asset potentially affected:

- Grade II listed building St Johns Seminary and associated curtilage listed structures

Significance of heritage assets:

St John's Seminary is a large late 19th century building in the Dutch/Jacobean style, designed by F. A. Walters for the Catholic Church for its use as the focal point of training of priests in the Archdiocese of Southwark. It has subsequently been subject to some alteration and extensions in the 20th century, but it substantially retains its plan form, principal interior spaces and historic features, which tell us about how the seminary functioned, and how its occupants lived and worked in the building. It continued to be used for its original purpose until its closure in 2021. F. A. Walters was a prominent figure in late 19th and early 20th century Catholic church building, particularly within the Southwark diocese. Its associated curtilage listed structures include the laundry, lodges.

The farm building dates to before the development of the site as a seminary, having been part of the former Lotisford Farm. It is therefore not curtilage listed but it illustrates the history of the site.

Assessment of the impact to the heritage assets

Extensions

The proposed scheme includes demolition of several extensions and buildings which are all of a later date and are not considered to contribute to the significance of the listed building. The proposed extensions, although large are located at the rear of the building and would not dominate. The proposed design is a contemporary interpretation that will complement the existing building. The materials and details are important to ensure that the high-quality design carries through to the construction and the details of these will be secured through conditions. As, such, no harm is identified resulting from the extensions to the Seminary Building.

Conversion of Seminary

The conversion of the seminary building involves some minor external alterations. To the area addressing the courtyard to the north of the seminary, some of the window cills would be lowered to provide door openings. In places modern fenestration additions will be removed which would result in visual enhancement.

It is recognised that the conversion will require some subdivision and loss of plan form and fabric, in the main, this has been dealt with sensitively with a minimal amount of subdivision proposed. On the third floor of the central section the timber panelling of the dormitory has previously been lost, apart from one small section on the eastern end. This is an important part of the significance, and it still clearly demonstrates the hierarchy. The proposal does involve the loss of a small proportion of this panelling to enable an appreciation of the plan form. The building has a number of large principal spaces of which the chapel and ambulatory are proposed to be retained as open, communal spaces. However, the library and refectory are proposed to be from spaces within privately owned dwellings.

The library will remain as an open double height space, and following amendments to the internal works, it will retain all its decorative pillars and some of the bookcases. The refectory will be subdivided but all the decorative pillars will be now retained.

Justification has also been provided by the applicant for why the loss of these spaces as communal areas is necessary, this includes information relating to the overall viability of the scheme. The library forms part of dwelling H3 at 256 sqm (2775 sq. ft) and the refectory would be located within dwelling H4 at 461sqm (4962 sq. ft). If these spaces were to be reallocated to communal space. This would represent a loss to the anticipated sale figure to each of these dwellings (the larger most prestige in the development) and also would incur a further loss of revenue from the future management change such that revenue would need to be found in commercial rent of these spaces.

Whilst the amendments and justification provided has lessened the harm arising from the proposal, less than substantial harm is identified and is considered to be moderate on the spectrum.

Chapel Alterations

The alterations to the chapel are fairly minimal, with it staying as a predominantly open, communal space. The existing 1960s extension at the west end of the chapel will be screened off to create a spa area. The jacuzzi and pool will be raised off ground. All these alterations are reversible giving it adaptability for the future. No harm is identified subject to conditions securing the provision of more detail such as materials, finer detailed drawings etc.

Lodge Extensions

Both lodge buildings are proposed to be independent dwellings with extensions which would not dominate the building's form, the design is considered appropriate and no harm is identified.

Formation of a new access, including the closure of the existing accesses

Whilst not including any loss of historic fabric, the new access will result in the former accesses being surplus to requirements. Each existing access will be blocked by ornate bollards. The formation of a new access will result in the lodge building's intended use not being immediately appreciable and for this reason, less than substantial harm is identified which is considered to be on the lower end of the spectrum.

Car Ports, bin stores and other ancillary buildings

The proposed change of use requires more parking (including car ports), bin stores, private amenity space and solar panels. This has been designed sensitively to minimise the harm as much as possible, with none of the grounds at the front of the building subdivided or visually affected. Parking is scattered across the site rather than creating large parking areas and car ports and bin stores, the bike store and solar panels do not feature within main principal views. Less than substantial harm identified which is considered to be on the lower end of the spectrum.

Conclusion

The proposals would cause less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of St Johns Seminary. This arises through both direct and indirect impacts. The direct impact results from the conversion of the seminary building and the loss of internal fabric and plan form which contributes to the understanding and appreciation of the architectural and historic interest of the building as a seminary.

Indirect impacts upon the contribution made by the setting to the significance of the seminary and the ability to appreciate that significance derive from the harm caused as a result of the new ancillary buildings as these introduce new built form onto the site resulting in visual clutter where currently there is none. In addition, the new access causes harm as it disrupts the narrative that the two lodges play as 'gate-houses' to the Seminary grounds.

In accordance with Paragraph 205, great weight is afforded to the harm identified.

Paragraph 208 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The public benefits that the development may achieve need to be considered as part of the assessment of the application in accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF, 2023, along with the contents of the 1990 Act (as amended). The preservation of the building's significance through a viable alternative use and the provision of housing would achieve substantial public benefit. It is clear that the site has no future for its original use or comparable end uses, it is therefore considered that there is sufficient public benefits associated with the proposal to outweigh the harm identified..

In conclusion, the public benefits of the proposed development sufficiently outweigh the harm caused to the significance of St Johns Seminary as a Grade II Listed Building.

Recommendation

That consent be CONSENT GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this consent,

Condition:

The plan numbers to which this permission relates are (insert plan numbers here). The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. No material variation from these plans shall take place unless otherwise first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

In order that the development hereby permitted shall be fully implemented in complete accordance with the approved plans and to accord with Policy TD1 of the Local Plan 2018 (Part 1) and Policies DM1 and DM4 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

2. Condition:

Prior to commencement of development, a schedule identifying all doors, doorcases, windows, joinery, panelling, fireplaces and surrounds, decorative plasterwork and other architectural features that are to be altered, relocated, concealed or removed, fully describing the work proposed must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The schedule must describe the arrangements for temporary storage/off-site repair, the person or specialist body responsible for the removal, storage and repair, and a timetable for reinstatement. The works must not be executed other than in complete accordance with these approved details and any other doors, doorcases, windows, joinery, panelling, fireplaces and surrounds, decorative plasterwork and other architectural features not identified must be retained and protected during the course of works.

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and of the area and to accord with Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and DM1, DM4 and DM20 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

3. Condition:

Before relevant works begins, drawings to a scale not smaller than 1:5 fully describing the following details must be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works must not be executed other than in complete accordance with these approved details:

- a) Spa/chapel partition indicated on section DD of plan no.760/184E.This drawing must show:
 - elevation

- materials
- b) Any screen/partition to pantry and utility of unit H4 on first floor as indicated on plan no. 760/143K. These drawings must show:
 - elevation
 - materials
 - method of affixation to bookcases/pillars

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and of the area and to accord with Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and DM1, DM4 and DM20 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

4. Condition:

Before relevant work begins a specification and/or drawings fully describing method of incorporating thermal, fire and sound insulation, describing the effect on the appearance and fabric of historic and architectural features must be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works must not be executed other than in complete accordance with these approved details.

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and of the area and to accord with Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and DM1, DM4 and DM20 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

5. Condition:

Before relevant work begins, drawings to a scale not smaller than 1:20 showing internal building services, noting all necessary cutting, chasing and other alteration to historic fabric must be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works must not be executed other than in complete accordance with these approved details.

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and of the area and to accord with Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and DM1, DM4 and DM20 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

6. Condition:

No new plumbing, pipes, soil stacks, flues, vents, ductwork, satellite dishes or the like, shall be fixed to any external face of the building other unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and of the area and to accord with Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and DM1, DM4 and DM20 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

7. Condition:

All building works, finishes, and making-good, both internal and external, shall match the relevant existing work in respect of method, detail, and finished appearance unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where new materials are to be used externally, the colour match shall make allowance for future weathering

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and of the area and to accord with Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and DM1, DM4 and DM20 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

8. Condition:

All new partitions shall be scribed around existing ornamental mouldings.

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and of the area and to accord with Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and DM1, DM4 and DM20 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

9. Condition:

No new grilles security alarms, lighting, cameras or other like items shall be fixed to any external face of the building other than as shown on the drawings hereby approved.

Reason:

In the interests of the character and appearance of the listed building and of the area and to accord with Policies TD1 and HA1 of the Local Plan (Part 1) 2018 and DM1, DM4 and DM20 of the Local Plan (Part 2) 2023.

Informatives:

1. The applicants/owners are reminded that the lodge buildings are considered to be curtilage listed and will remain so once the permission is carried out. Therefore, Listed Building Consent will be required for any works which would

affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. It is a criminal offence to carry out works that require Listed Building Consent without such a consent being obtained.

2. The applicants/owners are reminded that under the GDPO 2015 Schedule 2 Part 2 Class A, planning permission is required for the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure if it would involve development within the curtilage of, or to a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure surrounding, a listed building.

The Council confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Case Officer Tracy Farthing Signed: Date: 24 January 2024

Agreed by Team or DC Manager.....Date:.....

Time extension agreement in writing seen by signing off officer:

Yes No N/A

Agreed by Development Manager or Head of Planning Services

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This report has been agreed under the delegated authority by the Head of Planning Services. Decision falls within ...(*number reference*) of the Scheme of Delegation (initialled by Authorising officer)