

Meeting:	Strategic Planning Advisory Panel
Date:	12 th September 2006
Subject:	Vaughan Centre
Responsible Officer:	Graham Jones
Contact Officer:	Graham Jones
Portfolio Holder:	Property, Housing Planning (Development) and Planning (Strategic)
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To consider the status of the former Vaughan School building as a locally listed building and advise the Executive accordingly

Reason for report

To enable proposals for the future of the site and building to be prepared in the light of the decision

Benefits

To provide clarity and certainty in developing proposals

Cost of Proposals

Included within the report

Risks

Removal of the Local Listing may have the potential risk of weakening the Council's position in the retention of similar buildings in the future, depending on the relevant circumstances.

Confirming the Local Listing would increase the difficulty of finding a suitable site for the Neighbourhood Resource Centre, delaying and potentially prejudicing the project.

Implications if recommendations rejected

Continuing uncertainty about the future of the building

Section 2: Report

The Vaughan Centre

2.1 Existing Situation

The Vaughan Centre, formerly Vaughan first school, has been in use for some years as a day centre. People First have been developing a set of proposals to replace the Vaughan Centre and other facilities in the Borough with three neighbourhood resource centres and a funding bid has been submitted to Government with a decision expected very shortly. Indications are that this is likely to be successful. The Vaughan site would be well situated for one of the three centres, but the locally listed status would presume against demolition and the cost of conversion would be prohibitive (estimates have suggested this could be up to £3m) and the end product far from ideal.

Local listing does not offer statutory protection and in normal circumstances can be tested through the submission of a planning application which would set out the case (if any) for demolition for consideration by the Development Control Committee. However, to pursue this process in developing proposals for a Neighbourhood Resource Centre would leave the question of their acceptability in doubt until an application was decided, with the potential for considerable delay in the project and abortive costs. For this reason the Advisory Panel's view is sought as to whether the local listing designation should be confirmed or whether in the particular circumstances it could be rescinded. Local Listing is within the terms of reference of the Panel.

3.1 Brief History

The Origins of a "Local List" of Buildings for Harrow

The statutory list of listed buildings includes 3 categories of building grades, ranging from Grade I to Grade II* to Grade II in order of relative importance. Prior to the last full re-survey of the borough's historic buildings by central

government in 1983, there existed another category of listed buildings known as Grade III. Many of these buildings were upgraded to Grade II during the 1983 re-survey, but not all of them qualified. Harrow Council therefore included the remaining building in a local list of building of special architectural or historic interest. This local list has been gradually added to since 1983, although the main source of further additions resulted from a Borough-wide environmental survey (The Environmental Assessment of Residential Areas – EARA), carried out in 1990, where “interesting” or “good” buildings were identified. These EARA buildings have since been reviewed and those considered worthy of local listing reported to Committee for inclusion on the local list. There are approximately 900 properties currently on the local list (compared with approx 300 statutorily listed).

The Designation of Locally Listed Buildings

The criteria for the local listing of a building is based upon those for statutory listing (i.e. architectural interest, townscape/group value, historical interest and associations), with additional local considerations such as the contribution made to the local environment and townscape. While locally listed buildings in general are clearly not of the same quality or interest as Statutorily listed buildings, the local list often provides potential candidates for statutory listing as well as performing an important function in identifying buildings which are valued for their contribution to the local scene.

Status of Locally Listed Buildings

Locally listed buildings do not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing and are subject to the same planning controls and permitted development rights of any un-listed building. Internal works that do not involve change of use or subdivision will not require any consent from the local planning authority. Locally listed buildings are only protected from demolition if they are situated within a conservation area (in the case of locally listed dwellinghouses, notice will need to be given to the local planning authority before it can be demolished, enabling the authority to impose an Article 4 Direction if deemed necessary).

However, since locally listed building can contribute greatly to the quality of the environment, their protection and preservation is highly desirable. Under Policy D12 of the Harrow UDP, the Council will endeavour to protect these building from demolition and detrimental alterations and will also endeavour to protect their setting.

The Local Listing of the Vaughan Centre

The Vaughan Centre was locally listed in the early 1990s, following its recognition as a “Good Building” by the EARA survey. It was built in circa 1909 to the design of Harry George Crothall (b. 1865, d. 1929). Crothall was Middlesex County Council Architect from 1908 onwards and responsible for a number of school buildings in north and west London. Within Harrow, he also designed the original parts of Harrow High School on the corner of Gayton Road and Sheepcote Road (which was also locally listed in the early 1990s), and Whitefriars First & Middle Schools on Whitefriars Avenue in Wealdstone. Elsewhere in Middlesex, he designed Featherstone High School in Southall, Hobbayne School in Hanwell and Ealing Green High School in Ealing (source:

Cherry and Pevsner 1991). Three of his buildings, which form part of the Michendon Lower School complex in Enfield, are now Grade II listed.

The Vaughan Centre, which was previously known as the Vaughan Infant School, is a typical example of a late Victorian/Edwardian school building. It has a robust and striking appearance, constructed from yellow stock bricks with red brick detailing. The building comprises a central two-storey element with single storey projecting gabled wings. A distinctive feature is the double height windows with semi-circular heads and it retains a number of original internal and external features including windows and doors. The design, although relatively understated, has Arts & Crafts influences in aspects such as the chimneys and verge details. There have been a number of single storey side and rear extensions to the building, but these do not detract from the overall character and appearance of the building.

The building occupies a large site in a densely developed part of the Borough. It is contemporary with the Edwardian suburb of West Harrow and contributes to the local street scene. It once formed part of a wider school complex with the Vaughan Junior School until the Junior School was demolished in the early 1990s to make way for housing.

The Fate of Locally Listed Buildings

Since the introduction of the local list in 1983, a total of 4 locally listed buildings have been demolished, whilst 11 buildings have been upgraded to statutorily listed buildings (the most recent example being The Rayners Hotel Public House on the corner of Village Way East and Imperial Drive). The loss of four buildings demonstrates their vulnerability and the lack of protection they have outside of conservation areas. The loss of these buildings can cause considerable public outcry, as was expressed recently following the demolition of the Railway Hotel Pub in Uxbridge Road, Hatch End.

Conclusions

The circumstances leading to the Local Listing of the Vaughan Centre have not changed. The building was designed by an architect of local and regional importance in terms of public buildings, whose work is recognised at both a local and national level. It is a typical example of Edwardian school architecture and contributes to the local townscape. Historically, it is contemporary with the Edwardian suburb of West Harrow, which although not a conservation area, has a distinctive and attractive character and appearance. What has changed since the listing is the needs of People First in delivering their essential services, which cannot be accommodated within the building. To avoid any wasted time or abortive costs members views are sought as to whether this is sufficient to consider rescinding the locally listing.

Reference

B. Cherry and N. Pevsner (1991) *The Buildings of England: London 3: North West* (Penguin: London)

2.3 Consultation

Internal only

2.4 Financial Implications

As in the report

2.5 Legal Implications

The rescinding of the Local Listing could be used against the Council where it seeks to retain locally listed buildings elsewhere in the Borough

2.6 Equalities Impact

None

2.7 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

None

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Background Documents: None.