



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 24 June 2024

by H Smith BSc (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 August 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/A5840/W/23/3333846

William Booth Training College, Champion Park, Southwark, London SE5 8BQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Brian Troddyn (The Salvation Army) against the decision of the London Borough of Southwark Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/AP/1989.
 - The development proposed is installation of PV arrays to the roofs of houses 1 - 9.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/A5840/Y/23/3333845

William Booth Training College, Champion Park, Southwark, London SE5 8BQ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Brian Troddyn (The Salvation Army) against the decision of the London Borough of Southwark Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/AP/1938.
 - The works proposed are installation of PV arrays to the roofs of houses 1 – 9 inclusive.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.
5. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was published in December 2023 after the Council made its decisions. I have had regard to the revised Framework in reaching my decisions.
6. The main block is a Grade II listed building. It is common ground between the parties that the appeal buildings 01-09 are located within the curtilage of the listed building and were constructed before 1 July 1948. As such, by virtue of section 1(5) of the Act they form part of the listing.

Main Issues

7. The main issues with both appeals are whether the proposal would i) preserve the listed building known as William Booth Memorial Training College (Main block), or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

8. The William Booth Memorial college and campus is located in Denmark Hill. The main administration block and tower (main block) is a Grade II listed building¹ designed by the 20th Century British architect, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. It was constructed in 1929 as a training college for the Salvation Army, and as a memorial to its founder, William Booth. The main block, identified on the submitted plans as building 16, was listed in 1972. It comprises a long, 4-storey block with projecting 2-storey wings at either end, with an imposing central tower and short end towers. It is mainly constructed from brown brick with stone dressings with modernist gothic detailing. The design includes symmetrical facades, arched windows, and decorative stonework, giving it a stately and formal appearance. The college grounds are well-maintained, featuring manicured lawns and mature trees, which contribute to the overall dignified and historic character of the site.
9. From the submitted evidence, the listed building's special interest and significance stem in part from the building's illustration of a large institutional establishment and its association with both Gilbert Scott and the Salvation Army. The main block is characteristic of Scott's signature style which blends elements of modernist form and materiality with striking scale and some decorative elements of the gothic tradition. The building's sustained use for its original purpose also contributes to the significance of the heritage asset.
10. The accommodation blocks (buildings 01 to 09) are 4-storey structures built of brown brick with distinctive clay pantile-covered hipped roofs which complement the brickwork tones of the elevations below. They are positioned to the east and west of the main block, with those to the east being arranged to enclose a separate quadrangle. I consider the architectural and historic interest of these buildings derive from their large scale, formal design, materials and elevation detailing that complement the grandeur of the main block, and their ancillary related functioning with it. Due to their planned layout and coherent design alongside the main block, they also participate to the narrative of the development of the college buildings and grounds.
11. Notwithstanding the height of the buildings, the roofscape is an important component to the form and design of the buildings as a group, and the special interest and significance of the main block.
12. The appellant argues that the appeal buildings are of less significance relative to the main block. There is a hierarchy of form and design of the buildings within the complex. Nevertheless, they still contribute in a tangible and meaningful way to the main block's special interest and significance.

¹ List Entry Number: 1378472

13. The site is located within the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area (CA) and forms a substantial portion of Sub Area 5 (Champion Park: Salvation Army college complex and the railway at Denmark Hill station). The CA's built form comprises predominantly 18th and 19th Century development and stretches along two long residential streets of Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane. It features a mix of terraced houses and grand villas, set along tree-lined streets. It also includes Grove Park and Maudsley Hospital.
14. The area of the CA between Denmark Hill and Grove Lane has a strong institutional character, based on the extensive building complexes of the William Booth Memorial College and the Maudsley Hospital. The college presents a dominating group of buildings, especially given the striking height of the central tower and its prominent position on the ridge of Denmark Hill. The large accommodation blocks on the eastern side of the main block, loom above the brick boundary walls running along Champion Park and Grove Lane, providing a sense of enclosure. The Conservation Area Appraisal (London Borough of Southwark, August 2003) specifically identifies "the quadrangle of accommodation blocks" as contributing to its character, stating that "collectively, they have a very strong visual impact on the adjacent streetscape" (p33). Thus, the campus makes a dramatic impression in its setting, allowing for the tower to act as an important local landmark that provides a sense of place and enriches the townscape.
15. Given the above, the character and appearance and thus special interest and significance of the CA, insofar as it relates to these appeals, are primarily the college's distinctive architectural style and dominant historic building structures which loom visibly in the streetscape as well as in longer views. It is also the way the surrounding buildings of varying ages and styles reflect the evolution of the area.
16. By virtue of their historic and architectural integrity and authenticity, the college buildings add considerably to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

Proposal and effects

17. The proposal seeks to introduce solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to the sloped portion of the hipped roofs on appeal buildings 01 to 09. Although predominantly black, the panels' darker colour and smooth, reflective surfacing, set proud of the matt clay-brown coloured roof tiles, would make them stand out as modern, incongruous additions. This would draw the eye and interrupt the tiled roof finish and rhythm of the solid roof form. It would therefore be at odds with the historic character and appearance of the buildings on which they would be sited.
18. I acknowledge that there is black detailing already evident across the campus, such as black railings with stained black timber handrails, and gates and rainwater goods finished in black. However, due to their size, siting, and design, these features appear as discrete and sympathetic additions to the buildings, unlike the proposal that would appear as black bulky additions that would contrast jarringly to the clay-brown coloured roofscape of the buildings. Although the panels would be symmetrically positioned, this would not mitigate the visual impact as the contrasting colour of the roof tiles would still be seen.

19. The appellant indicates that the roof tiles have been replaced on some of the appeal buildings. However, these tiles appear as sympathetic and appropriate replacements to the listed complex. They do not change the appearance of the existing roof form and remain evident as part of the original design of the buildings. As such, the replaced tiles have sustained the building's special interest. In contrast, the attachment of the panels would obscure a substantial area of the roof coverings, consequently eroding the evidential authenticity of the roof slopes.
20. The proposed panels would not be attached to the main block and would mainly face inwards to the campus. That said, because of the positioning of buildings 01, 02, 03 and 04 the panels would readily be seen when standing within the eastern green quadrangle area and from windows in the accommodation block elevations facing towards these buildings. Public views of the panels on buildings 03 and 04 would also be glimpsed from Grove Lane through gaps between the college buildings. Whilst there are some mature trees located within the site and along Grove Lane, views of the panels would only be partially screened by the trees when in leaf. There would also be prominent views of the panels on buildings 05 and 06 from the main block itself, and also from the courtyard area located to the east of the main block. Indeed, figures 6.6 and 6.7 of the appellant's Heritage Statement, dated 11 July 2023, illustrate the extent to which the panels to buildings 01, 02, 05 and 06 would be visible from within the college grounds.
21. Views of the proposed panels on building 07 would be highly visible from within the site to the south and from the neighbouring residential properties along Champion Grove that back onto the site. This is because building 07 is taller than the nearby campus buildings 12, 13 and 14, and therefore its roof slope appears prominent in views from this direction. The proposed panels on buildings 08 and 09 would be highly visible from the Salvation Army Headquarters building, and the residential blocks of flats known as Hannen House and Allport House and their children's play area and car park. Indeed, figure 6.8 of the Heritage Statement illustrates views from the outdoor spaces near Hannen House. I also observed that glimpses of the panels would be possible from the surrounding streets and residential areas, particularly of those on buildings 05, 07, 08 and 09.
22. Although the proposal's visual impact in important views of the main block from Champion Park would be limited, as indicated above, the panels would significantly impact the appeal buildings in many views where their architecture and layout can be appreciated. The panels would undermine the architectural integrity of these buildings that arises from the design of their roofscapes that forms part of the consistent and matching construction and detailing across the wider site. It would also harm the authenticity of how you experience the buildings. Thus, in harmfully altering the curtilage listed appeal buildings, the proposal would undermine the special interest and significance of the listed building.
23. Given the above, views of the panels would generally only be glimpsed from the public domain outside the campus but there would be multiple viewpoints from within the CA. However, I find that they would have a greater visibility from the private domain. As such, they would have a moderate degree of prominence, thus causing harm to the character or appearance of the CA. The

buildings and the campus as a whole are important components of the CA, the harmful effects to them would also affect the CA.

24. I note that the panels would have a temporary lifespan and are potentially reversible and photovoltaic technology is rapidly evolving. Nonetheless, it is likely that they would either be replaced or repaired and thus become a fixture of some considerable permanence.
25. The appellant states that modern extensions and ramps to the listed buildings, such as the administration block, are already apparent which affect the original design composition of the buildings. Nevertheless, no detailed evidence has been submitted to show the extent of these alterations or their planning history. From my observations on site and the evidence before me, the campus has been well preserved and maintains a unified architectural language amongst its buildings.
26. Drawing the above together, I find that the proposal would not i) preserve the Grade II listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area. In doing so it would harm the significance of these designated heritage assets.

Public Benefits and Balance

27. With reference to paragraphs 207 and 208 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the extent and fairly localised nature of the proposal, I find that the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets assessed above would, individually and cumulatively, be 'less than substantial' but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 208 of the Framework requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing the asset's optimum viable use.
28. The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. The appellant claims that the solar panels would sustainably generate electricity per year, which would meet the requirements of the Council's climate change emergency. In addition, the solar panels would help to reduce the carbon footprint of the college and would help the Salvation Army to meet their commitment to implementing a Net Zero Carbon approach. It would also save an estimated £51,754 annually from the reduction in energy bills. This financial saving would release finances that could be used for the ongoing upkeep and longevity of the listed campus, as well as the continued occupation of the site by the Salvation Army, keeping it within its historic use. There would also be some economic benefits from the construction phase.
29. The appellant has submitted a Whole Building Approach Assessment² report which sets out the college's approach to reducing energy consumption and associated carbon emissions through the use of on-site technology and generation. The report states that the proposed solar PV arrays are estimated to generate 99,153kWh of electricity per annum, accounting for 8.84% of the total electricity consumption (or 2.76% of total annual energy consumption). It

² Salvation Army: William Booth College – Whole Building Approach Assessment (E3 Sustainability)

also states that potentially less than 10% would be exported back to the national grid.

30. The report includes a table on page 9 that shows the overall energy saving and decarbonisation opportunities for the site. This shows that the proposed PV panels offer the second greatest reduction in carbon emissions (20.9 tonnes of CO₂ e/year), with the greatest being the replacement of the boiler system which requires a much larger investment (c. £5m). However, the table also shows several other savings recommendations, including to insulate exposed pipework and fittings in plantrooms, which would provide a reduction in carbon emissions of 20.0 tonnes of CO₂ e/year at a lower investment (£4,125) than the PV panels (£109,186). The table also shows that the installation of Quattroseal to external doors would provide a reduction in carbon of 12.8 tonnes, with an investment cost of £17,600. The report does not explain whether these recommendations and/or a combination of the other savings recommendations would be feasible for the site and whether the installation of PV panels would still be necessary. The letter from David Legge does little to address this issue.
31. The appellant recognises that the future conservation of the heritage asset does not solely depend on the financial savings made from the installation of PV panels. While I accept that locating the panels on the roofs of the buildings would provide maximum available yield, for the reasons given above, it has not been fully demonstrated that the only way of securing the benefits identified would be via the appeals proposal. Indeed, the report suggests that there are other ways of securing some or all of the benefits identified, some of which would likely be less harmful than the proposal before me.
32. Furthermore, there is no substantial evidence before me to demonstrate that the future and continued occupation of the Salvation Army on this site relies upon the financial savings associated with the proposed panels. In the absence of more detailed information in that regard, there are no reasons which lead me to believe that the Salvation Army's continued use of the buildings is dependent on the proposed development and works.
33. Paragraph 164 of the Framework states that, when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic. However, it goes on to say that where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the Framework.
34. Paragraph 8 of the Framework makes clear that an environmental objective of achieving sustainable development also includes contributing to protecting and enhancing our built and historic environment, and Paragraph 205 of the Framework states that 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.
35. I have considered the public benefits put forward by the appellant, and I have also borne in mind that the life of the proposed panels is likely to be limited and that it is probable that it could be removed without significant damage to the existing fabric of the buildings. However, having regard to the duty

imposed by section 16(2) of the Act and in giving considerable importance and weight to the harm to the assets' significance, I find that the harm would not be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

36. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not i) preserve the listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area. It would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Act and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also conflict with Policy HC1 of The London Plan, Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (adopted 2021), and Policies P19, P20 and P21 of The Southwark Plan 2019-2036 (adopted 2022). Collectively, these policies, among other things, seek to ensure that development affecting heritage assets and their settings conserve or enhance their significance by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings, and respond positively to the characteristics of the area.
37. It would also conflict with guidance set out in Southwark's Historic Environment Heritage Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2021), which amongst other things, seeks to protect the historic environment from harm and ensure that development conserves or enhances heritage assets and their settings.

Other Matters

38. Reference has been made to previous planning approvals for solar panels on buildings 17, 18 and 19 (refs 23/AP/0400 and 23/AP/0533). However, these buildings either have flat roofs or are located to the rear of the site, so are not comparable. The circumstances are not the same as the proposal before me.
39. The appellant also refers to other solar panel developments, such as the PV panels installed on the modern platform shelters to Denmark Hill Station. However, I observed that the railway shelters are located within a cutting on lower ground than the appeal site, and therefore appear less prominent than the proposal before me. Whatever the background to those other developments might be, they set no precedent in these appeals as I have considered these appeals on their individual merits.
40. Whilst I appreciate that there are modern shopfronts and television aerials attached to existing rooftops in the vicinity of the appeal site, these are generally more discreet, and in any event, form an essential function to the properties and are an accepted part of residential areas. As such, their presence offers limited support to the proposal.
41. There are a number of other Grade II listed assets which lie in proximity to the appeal site. These include the Grade II listed statues of General Booth and Mrs Booth to the forecourt on Champion Park, the Grade II listed Denmark Hill Station which lies to the north, and the Grade II listed residential properties at 27 and 29 Champion Grove, and 143-149 Grove Lane.
42. Mindful of the statutory duty set out in section 66(1) of the Act, I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving their settings. From the evidence before me, the special interest and significance of these assets largely stem from their historic and architectural interests, but are also derived, in part, from their training college and/or urban townscape settings.

43. Given the extent and nature of the proposal, I find that the settings of these designated heritage assets would be preserved and the contribution they make to the assets' significance would not be harmed.

Conclusion

44. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both appeals are dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR