

Delegated Report

Listed Building Consent Application

Planning Application No:	20230281
Location:	Gads Hill School, Gravesend Road, Higham, Rochester
Description:	Application for Listed Building Consent for roof and ceiling repairs to classroom H1 and library extension; repairs to cupola and boundary garden wall; take down and rebuild garden shed; repairs to Gardener's Cottage chimney; and replacement self-supporting front boundary fence to Gravesend Road.
Applicant:	Gad's Hill School
Site Visit Date:	26 September 2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

Originally submitted drawings:

Application form
Covering letter dated 21 March 2023
~~Drawing Issue/Register~~
~~Design & Access and Heritage Statement~~
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 100 Location Plan
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 101 Existing Block Plan
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 102 Proposed Block Plan
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 110 Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan
~~Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 111 Existing Ground Floor Plan~~
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 112 Existing First Floor Plan
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 113 Existing Second Floor Plan
~~Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 114 Existing Roof Plan~~
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 120 Existing North Elevation
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 121 Existing South Elevation
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 122 Existing East Elevation
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 123 Existing West Elevation
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 124 Existing Section F
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 125 Existing Section F Detail
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 125 Existing Section F Detail Hand Marked UP
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 145 Proposed Section
Drawing no. 5284/PL/ 145 Proposed Section F Hand Marked Up
Drawing no. 5266/CS/ 616 Rev. A Existing Second Floor Plan
Drawing no. 5266/CS/ 617 Rev. A Existing Roof Plan

The initial submission related to ceiling repairs, but additional repairs to the building were deemed essential and therefore further plans were submitted as part of this application to also include these:

Drawings received on 23.08.2023:

~~Drawing Issue/Register~~
Design & Access and Heritage Statement Rev. A, V5
Retaining wall photographs

Helifix Product Sheet

Proposed Retaining Wall Butress Detail

Retaining Wall Plan

Drawing ref. GH/TSP/1903-01-B (Tree Survey Plan (North) (Existing Layout))

Drawing no. 5266/CS/603 Rev. A (Cottage (c) Existing Roof Plan)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/103 (Existing Site Plan Northern End Areas of External Works)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/111 Rev. A (Gad's Hill Place (H) Existing Ground Floor Plan)

Drawing no. 5266/PL/114 Rev. A (Gad's Hill Place (H) Existing Roof Plan)

Drawings received on 11.09.2023:

Drawing no. 5284/PL/130 (Cupola repairs – existing roof plan)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/131 (Cupola repairs – base and reflected ceiling plan)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/132 (Cupola repairs – cupola roof plan)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/133 (Cupola repairs – existing front elevation)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/134 (Cupola repairs – existing section and rear elevation)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/135 (Cupola repairs – existing section and side elevation)

Drawings received 11.10.2023:

Drawing Issue/Register

Historical photo of cupola

Drawing nos. 5284 (Annotated proposed stabilising of cupola)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/150 (Cupola repairs – proposed roof plan)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/151 (Cupola repairs – base and reflected ceiling pin)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/152 (Cupola repairs – cupola roof plan)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/153 (Cupola repairs – proposed front elevation)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/154 (Cupola repairs – existing section and rear elevation)

Drawing no. 5284/PL/155 (Cupola repairs – existing section and side elevation)

Further information received 18.10.2023

Schedule of Items

Relevant Planning History

There is an extensive planning history but none but the below is relevant to the current proposal.

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20020600	Application for Listed Building Consent for repairs & partial re-building of garden wall involving erection of new buttresses.	Permitted	20.09.2002

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS19 – Design and Development Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Policy for Listed Buildings

Section 16(2) and Section 66(2) (respectively) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires special regard to be paid to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to

assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Historic England

No comments.

Internal Consultees

GBC Conservation Officer

10.05.2023:

The proposed ceiling replacement following collapse is acceptable subject to the following:

Agree replacement Slate - Welsh colour blue/black Lead work should follow the guidance from the Lead Sheet Association manual for rolled lead, which I believe is no longer available being published in three volumes in 1999 - maybe Camilla has an alternative?

Laths should be riven oak or chestnut not machined Agree plaster - mix lime hair. I have no problem with natural hydraulic rather than non-hydraulic as it sets quicker.

12.10.2023

We now have a good set of application drawings and info that covers the need for repairs discussed at various site meetings. It will now be necessary for the architect to submit detailed specifications in the form of a schedule of work and relevant associated drawings. These should be supplemented by the engineers' proposals.

The proposed repairs work is set out in the document: "LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS:

Proposed repairs at Gad's Hill School, Gravesend Road, Higham, Rochester, Kent, ME3 7PA" under the following titles:

Ceiling/Roof Repairs

Cupola Repairs

Repairs to Walls

Rebuild Shed

Gardener's Cottage

Tree Works

Fence to Gravesend Road

Comment:

All proposed work is acceptable subject to conditions requiring further information which can be achieved via a schedule of work with supplementary drawings, including engineer's proposals, to be submitted for approval.

Suggested Conditions for the above listed works

Schedule of works; submitted & agreed.

Prior to the commencement of works, a detailed methodology shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include a full schedule of works and relevant drawings, which comprehensively addresses the following works: Ceiling/Roof Repairs, Cupola Repairs, Repairs to Walls, Rebuild Shed, Gardener's Cottage, Tree Works, Repairs to the Fence to Gravesend Road.

Reason: Inadequate details of these matters have been submitted with the application and in order to ensure that the works preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

Structural report; submitted & agreed

No structural works shall be undertaken until a comprehensive and up to date structural report including working drawings has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All structural works hereby agreed shall be carried out only in accordance with the specification of works and method statement contained in the approved structural report.

Reason: Inadequate details of these matters have been submitted with the application and in order to ensure that the works preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised on site and in the press. An initial consultation expired on 28 April 2023. Following the submission of further plans, the overall consultation period expired on 13 October 2023.

No letters of representation have been received.

Higham Parish Council and Local Ward Councillors were also consulted, and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks listed building consent for roof and ceiling repairs to classroom H1 and library extension; repairs to cupola and boundary garden wall; take down and rebuild garden shed; repairs to Gardener's Cottage chimney; and replacement self-supporting front boundary fence to Gravesend Road.

Further information about the works is as follows:

1. Due to water ingress, the roof of Gad's Hill Place is in poor condition, and the lathe and plaster ceilings on the second floor have been weakened. The ceiling to one of the classrooms failed last winter and needs to be repaired. The rear slate tiled roof will be repaired, and the lathe and plaster ceiling will be reinstated. The roof void will also be insulated.



2. The roof of the Library extension has holes in the lead flashing that is allowing water ingress, causing the previously repaired plaster ceiling below to crack and sag and this needs repairing. The ceiling has had a temporary repair along the line of the cracked plasterboard, and the lead work will be flash taped temporarily. Later, the roof will be removed, insulated, vented and reinstated.



3. The cupola is in a bad condition and needs to be taken down and repaired urgently. It will be braced, to prevent further twisting and repaired off site.



4. The garden wall between the front drive and orchard has cracks, is bulging and needs repair. It has been impacted by previous repairs and by pressure of the trees and plant debris behind the wall of the drive side (west). A detailed design to repair the wall, including putting in buttresses and low level weep holes has been proposed by the Structural Engineer.



5. A further section of wall on the route from the main house to the DT block is also in bad condition and requires repair. This will either be stabilised or taken down completely with proper foundations put in to rebuild the wall.



6. A small brick shed with minimal foundations has been affected by a large oak tree behind it. The shed has been condemned by a Structural Engineer and needs to be rebuilt with new foundations.



7. The Gardeners Cottage chimney stack has broken and cracked bricks and is near a wasps nest. It requires repair. The ridge of the roof needs to be re-bedded as a temporary measure.



8. Tree work and tree removal is recommended to alleviate pressure on the main house and garden wall.
9. The timber fence facing Gravesend Road between the gates to the driveway is unstable and requires replacement with a new self-supporting fence. An alternative option is to put railings on the wall. Either option will not require planning permission.



Principle Issues

The main issue to consider in the determination of this application is the impact of the design and appearance of the repairs on the Grade I Listed Building.

There are no amenity or highways impacts.

With regards to the proposed tree works, there are no protected trees on the site and therefore this element of the proposal would not require consent. Regardless, the proposed tree works will improve the integrity of the listed building.

Design and Impact on Listed Building

Development Plan policy places considerable emphasis on the importance of achieving high quality buildings and places. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2023 seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The NPPF 2023 also places great significance on the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets (paragraph 190). This is echoed in Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that the

significance of the Borough's heritage assets and their setting should always be preserved or enhanced. Saved Policy TC2 of the Local Plan 1994 sets out that for development involving alterations to listed buildings, the primary consideration is the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals must be sympathetic in terms of their appearance and materials.

As the application property comprises a Grade I Listed Building, these policies are all relevant to the consideration of this application.

The listing description of the property reads as follows:

Built in 1779 by Thomas Stevens former Mayor of Rochester. Owned and occupied by Charles Dickens from 1857 until his death 1870. He wrote a number of his novels here. The opening scenes of "Great Expectations" are set in the locality.

Walls of red brick with string course below parapet. Slated Mansard roof with central octagonal bell turret with ogee shaped lead roof, ball finial and weathervane. Sash windows without glazing bars. Projecting porch with columns and pilasters and round-headed entrance door with fanlight. On either side 2-storey 3-sided bays with cornices to each storey. Central first floor window with 3 lights and elliptical arch to centre light. To the south-east the dining room was extended and a large conservatory added by Dickens. Rear much altered and built out, but an original doorcase with pilasters, pediment, and semi-circular fanlight, stone steps and wrought iron handrail. Internally Dickens' study is preserved as he left it with comical invented book titles in a sham bookcase on the door and original bookcases lining the walls. The staircase has had alternate balusters removed and fretwork panels inserted. Hans Anderson stayed at the house in 1857. Dickens built a tunnel beneath the main road to give access to an extra garden where he erected a Swiss chalet now in Rochester museum.

The Council's Conservation Officer has stated that a good set of application drawings and information that covers the need for the repairs has been submitted. It will now be necessary for the architect to submit further detailed specifications in the form of a schedule of work and relevant associated drawings. These should be supplemented by the engineers' proposals.

On this basis, the Conservation Officer is satisfied that all proposed work is acceptable. Historic England did not have any comments on the proposals.

Subject to the suggested conditions, which should allow for the phasing of works, the proposals would be acceptable and would maintain the integrity of the listed building. On this basis, the proposals would comply with the requirements of Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy TC2 of the Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 130, 189, 190, 197 and 199 of the NPPF 2023.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Subject to conditions, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in terms of their design and impact on this Grade I listed building. The proposals would therefore comply with the requirements of Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994, and paragraphs 130, 189, 190, 197 and 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

Approve with conditions.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision.)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	

Dated:	18 October 2023	Dated:	19th October 2023
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