

# Development Management Sub Committee

**Wednesday 29 July 2020**

**Application for Listed Building Consent 19/06072/LBC  
At St Joseph's Nursing Home, 41 - 45 Gilmore Place,  
Edinburgh.**

**Conversion to student residential accommodation with  
communal facilities at ground floor and in chapel; demolish  
existing east and west outbuildings and extensions and  
replace with new 3 storey accommodation around retained  
landscaped courtyard.**

**Item number**

**Report number**

**Wards**

B11 - City Centre

## Summary

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This proposal will deliver a new use for this listed building whilst preserving its main features of architectural and historic interest.

The works comply with the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Scotland Act 1997 as they preserve the character and setting of the listed building and preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The internal alterations do not involve the loss of any features which contribute to the special interest of the listed building and the external works preserve the frontage and involve acceptable change to the exterior. The demolition of the outbuildings is acceptable.

## Links

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[Policies and guidance for this application](#)

HES, HEPS, HESDEM, HESINT, HESSET, HESEXT, HESUSE, LDPP, LEN02, LEN03, LEN04, LEN06, NSG, CRPMAR,

# Report

## **Application for Listed Building Consent 19/06072/LBC At St Joseph's Nursing Home, 41 - 45 Gilmore Place, Edinburgh.**

**Conversion to student residential accommodation with communal facilities at ground floor and in chapel; demolish existing east and west outbuildings and extensions and replace with new 3 storey accommodation around retained landscaped courtyard.**

### **Recommendations**

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1.1 It is recommended that this application be Granted subject to the details below.

### **Background**

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#### **2.1 Site description**

The application site relates to the former St Joseph's nursing home which sits on the south side of Gilmore Place. Built as St Joseph's Convent for the Little Sisters of the Poor, it is category C listed (listed on 23 January 1998 LB reference: 44937).

The main building dates from 1889 and incorporates an 18th century house. A chapel was added to the rear in 1897. The front building is three storey and attic high with a high flanking wall largely obscuring the ground floor. A gabled central entrance doorway with a Celtic cross above leads to the main building and there is a vehicle entrance to the west; this is a single road. The building is solid Victorian stone design with pitched slate roofs, crowstepped gables, square dormers and timber sash and case windows.

The rear section of the main building has been substantially altered with modern extensions and fire escapes.

Internally, the main building has no apparent features of interest. The rooms have all been converted for nursing home use and most have suspended ceilings. Staircases are plain.

The chapel to the rear is two storey with stained glass windows. It has been subdivided internally and is now on two floors. Again, it has a plain interior although it has a good barrel vaulted ceiling. It was further extended in 1906.

There are a number of outbuildings which flank the sides of the site enclosing the garden area which has some small trees and bushes. These outbuildings are largely in brick, some single storey, some two storey, and are of various dates some as early as the chapel. There is currently parking for about 15 cars in the rear area.

This application site is located within the Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area.

## **2.2 Site History**

6 January 2020 - concurrent planning application for conversion to student residential accommodation, demolition of outbuildings and replacement with new three storey accommodation around retained landscaped courtyard (application reference: 19/06070/FUL)

## **Main report**

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### **3.1 Description of the Proposal**

It is proposed to redevelop the site to form student housing. The main listed building and chapel will be retained and converted, and the outbuildings will be demolished and replaced by new three storey blocks on all three sides with a central landscaped courtyard.

The proposed development proposes a total of 230 bed spaces across 29 separate cluster flats. There will be 17 cluster flats in the refurbished existing building, and a further 12 cluster flats in the new build blocks. The cluster flats range in size from three bed to 12 bed. Within these cluster flats there is a range of accommodation provision, including twin rooms, standard rooms with shared bathrooms, en-suite rooms, and 5 accessible bedrooms. Each cluster flat includes a fully equipped kitchen/living area, with adequate cooking and storage facilities for each resident.

In addition to the living accommodation, the proposal provides shared amenity space in the form of music rooms, social space and study space, located across the ground floor of the existing building and into the chapel space. Residents will also have access to a central laundry.

On the main building, the modern rear extensions and fire escape will be removed and the rear facades largely re-instated. A single storey, lightweight, glazed colonnade will be formed at ground floor to aid circulation whilst additionally bringing light into the ground floor. The replacement of the existing external fire escape to the west wing with a fully enclosed reconfigured stair allows for emergency vehicle access to the rear courtyard, whilst ensuring sufficient emergency escape routes are provided from all proposed flats. The front elevation to Gilmore Place will be largely unchanged apart from a new escape door and the change of a window to double doors for access to the bike store. The main entrance to the existing building from Gilmore Place will be maintained.

Internally, the main building will be reconfigured.

The chapel will be retained in its current format on two floors with the lower floor forming a cluster flat and a warden's flat and the upper floor as an activated space for residents to congregate and socialise.

The brick outbuildings will be demolished, and three separate blocks will be formed on the east, south and west sides of the courtyard.

To the east and west edges, development will reflect the previous outbuildings by being built hard up to boundary walls. The existing tall hedge which sits in line with the retaining wall on the south boundary will be maintained and reinforced with additional planting and the new building here will be set back from the boundary to create separation distance from the gardens of Gillespie Crescent.

The new blocks will be three storeys high and those on the east and west boundaries will be single aspect facing into the courtyard. The south block will be double width and dual aspect. The elevations will be formed primarily from stone, with a metal roof and feature dormers. The overall design is symmetrical and based on an axis with the centre point of the chapel.

A series of formal green spaces will be created along with external cycle storage. There will be no car parking on the site.

The following documents have been provided to support the application:

- Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement; and
- Conservation Statement.

These documents are available to view on the Planning Portal.

### **3.2 Determining Issues**

Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states - In considering whether to grant consent, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. For the purposes of this issue, preserve, in relation to the building, means preserve it either in its existing state or subject only to such alterations or extensions as can be carried out without serious detriment to its character.

Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states - special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

In determining applications for listed building consent, the Development Plan is not a statutory test. However, the policies of the Local Development Plan (LDP) inform the assessment of the proposals and are a material consideration.

### **3.3 Assessment**

To address these determining issues, the Committee needs to consider whether:

- a) the proposals preserve the character of the listed building;
- b) the proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- c) All public comments received have been addressed.

#### a) Character of the Listed Building

In determining applications for planning permission or listed building consent, the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Paragraph 4 of Historic Environment Policy for Scotland 2019 (HEPS) identifies that:

*The documents that should be referenced for the management of the historic environment are Scottish Planning Policy, Our Place in Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland, the associated primary and secondary legislation and Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change series of guidance notes.*

HEPS outlines how we should undertake our duty of care whenever a decision affects the historic environment. It contains a number of policies including a policy statement that decisions affecting the historic environment should be informed by an inclusive understanding of its breadth and cultural significance. Other policies stress that detrimental impacts should be avoided. Where appropriate opportunities for enhancement should be sought.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) guidance note Managing Change: Use and Adaptation of Listed buildings, sets out the principles that apply to converting historic buildings to new uses. Other HES Managing Change guidance which applies to this case includes Demolition, Interiors and Setting.

Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance note on the use and adaptability of listed buildings is applicable. It states that *for a building to remain in use over the long term, change will be necessary. This reflects changes over time in how we use our buildings and what we expect from them. A building's long-term future is at risk when it becomes hard to alter and adapt it when needed. Proposals that keep buildings in use, or bring them back into use, should be supported as long as they do the least possible harm.*

The building has now been empty for over 2 years and a new use needs to be found for it. It is a difficult building to convert because of its deep plan and the condition of some of the ancillary buildings is poor. However, the current proposals represent a scheme which causes the least possible harm whilst creating a new use for the site and buildings. The changes are assessed below in more detail.

#### *Demolition of Outbuildings*

Policy Env 2 of the adopted Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) states that proposals for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, taking into account the condition of the building and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value to be derived from its continual use.

Historic Environment Scotland's (HES) Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance note on the Demolition of Listed Buildings states that if one of the following situations applies then the loss of a listed building is likely to be acceptable, as long as this is clearly demonstrated and justified.

- the building is no longer of special interest;
- the building is not capable of meaningful repair;
- the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to economic growth or the wider community;
- the repair of the building is not economically viable, and it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.

A conservation statement has been submitted with the application. In relation to the outbuildings it states - *It is noted that whilst these brick outbuildings are very different from the main listed building, they respond well to the composition of the site as a whole, and form an interesting frame for the internal garden area. The new proposals follow this composition.*

The conservation statement sets out the history of the buildings starting with the main building built in 1889 and the addition of the chapel on 1897. It has been clarified by the agent that the older east outbuildings were built at the same time as the chapel and some of the west outbuildings were built in 1904 thereby forming part of the listing of the building.

The ones on the east boundary are two storey and single storey; there are also some modern rendered ones either side. The outbuildings on the west boundary are two ranges of single storey units with some modern rendered garages in-between. These early outbuildings are brick with pitched roofs and sash and case windows. It should be noted that the listing description does not mention the outbuildings although this is not a definitive list of what is and is not listed on the site. As the outbuildings do technically form part of the listing, the tests set out in Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change guidance on Demolition must be applied although there is a lack of clarity in this document about the demolition of curtilage listed buildings such as these.

The key test in this case rests on whether the outbuildings are of special architectural or historic interest. If they are, then the other tests would have to be applied to justify demolition. The applicant's conservation statement assesses the significance of the outbuildings as neutral and cites the Burra Charter as a framework for this determination.

There are a number of charters that the Council recognises as being important in reaching an understanding of the historic environment. The Burra Charter was the first to give a framework for understand the cultural significance of a historic asset and identifies five values that should be applied in determining the significance - aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual. These can be used to assess the importance of these outbuildings and whether they are of a cultural significance that would merit their retention.

It is acknowledged that aesthetically the buildings form a pleasant grouping round the courtyard but the buildings themselves are not architecturally significant. They do not form a cohesive composition and there is nothing special about their materials and detailing. It is suggested that the main finance went into making sure the front building was of high quality and a cheaper brick was used for these outbuildings. Some were built at the same time as the chapel but whereas care was taken with its form and design to create a historic landmark on the site, there is no evidence that these ancillary outbuildings had any historical connection to the Little Sisters of the Poor in the same way that the Chapel has. There is no scientific or spiritual value to the buildings and socially they would have provided limited housing and ancillary storage for the site.

In assessing the outbuildings against the criteria in the Burra Charter, it is agreed that they are of neutral significance and as such do not form part of the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. In assessing against the statutory tests in Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, their demolition would preserve the special interest of the listed building and its setting.

Historic Environment Scotland have confirmed they are satisfied that there is justification for demolition on the grounds that these are curtilage buildings which individually are not of special architectural or historic interest.

It is noted that the applicants argue that the repair and re-use of the outbuildings are not economically viable and have provided financial information and cite the marketing history in making their case. This is set out in the Planning Statement and as an appendix to the conservation statement.

The applicants state that the costs involved with repair and conversion of the existing outbuildings would take the project significantly above the viability limit. They state that conversion of the east and west blocks could provide a total of 17 beds at a cost of £72,265 per bed. The proposed new-build design for the east and west blocks will provide a total of 61 beds at a cost of £42,282 per bed. Based on the number of beds lost, there would be an approximate £5.8m drop in the capital value of the completed development. However, no costs have been provided on overall viability taking the whole site into account and based on the fact that the outbuildings are not considered to be of special interest, a full economic viability assessment has not been requested for these outbuildings.

Based on the information submitted, the demolition of the outbuildings is considered acceptable.

### *Alterations to Main Listed Building*

Policy Env 4 (Listed Buildings - Alterations and Extensions) in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) states that proposals to alter a listed building will be permitted where those alterations are justified; will not result in unnecessary damage to historic structures or result in a diminution of the building's interest; and any additions would be in keeping with other parts of the building.

Externally, the only change to the front is the change of a window to double doors for access to the front bike store and the conversion of a window to a door for escape purposes. To the rear, the removal of modern extensions is a positive enhancement to the character of the building and the lightweight additions proposed will complement the strong stone facade. The new stair enclosure will be in stone to match the building.

There are no proposals shown for existing features such as original windows and doors. A condition is therefore applied that any proposals to change these will require further approval.

Historic Environment Scotland's guidance document entitled *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Interiors* states *the interior of a historic building is important in defining its character and special interest. The interest, experience and enjoyment of a historic interior can be derived from a number of factors including its design, structural plan and layout, the quality of its decorative scheme, materials and craftsmanship, fixtures and fittings, any associated archaeology, and historical and cultural associations.*

The interior of this building has few features of interest. The rooms are largely cellular and the staircases plain. Suspended ceilings and en-suites are in most rooms. It is proposed to largely strip out the interior to form the cluster flats. This will have limited impact as no features of special interest have been identified. However, a condition has been applied to ensure that the building is recorded as work progresses.

The alterations to the main listed building do not affect its special interest and are acceptable.

### *Setting*

LDP Policy Env 3 (Listed Buildings - Setting) states that development within the curtilage or affecting the setting of a listed building will only be permitted if not detrimental to the appearance or character of the building or its setting.

In terms of setting, the building has a strong street frontage which will remain unchanged. The building's setting to the rear is framed by the outbuildings and garden space and the redevelopment will re-create this relationship with symmetrical buildings around a central courtyard with an axis based on the chapel. The new buildings are lower than the main listed buildings and the subservience will be maintained in this development. The design, materials and form of the new buildings complement the main listed building.

The setting of the listed building will be preserved.

With reference to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the proposals preserve the setting and character of the listed building.

### b) Character and Appearance of Conservation Area

Section 64(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states:

*In exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.*

LDP Policy Env 6 (Conservation Areas - Development) states that development within a conservation area will be permitted if it preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the conservation area and is consistent with the relevant conservation area character appraisal and demonstrates high standards of design and utilises materials appropriate to the historic environment.

The site lies on the west side of the Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area. The character appraisal emphasises the tenemental character of the conservation area and the green focus provided by the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links. Predominant materials are stone, slate and timber and the human, urban scale of buildings, even public buildings, is noted. Although the site is not mentioned in the text, it is identified as a focal point in the townscape analysis and lies within a terminated view.

The building will largely be the same from the street and views from other streets are limited. Therefore, the appearance of the conservation area will be unaffected. In terms of character, the development keeps the main building, so this focal point of the conservation area is unchanged. A new rear courtyard with framing buildings will again be created in a style sympathetic to the essential character of the conservation area. The scale, form and materials are compatible with the essential character of the area. Overall, the development will enhance the character of the conservation area by re-invigorating a site that is currently unused and in danger of falling into disrepair. It will retain and re-use a building in institutional use.

With reference to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the proposals preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, in compliance with LDP Policy Env 6.

### c) Public Comments

#### **Material Comments - objections**

- demolition of outbuildings - addressed in 3.3a);

#### **Non-material comments**

- use as student accommodation - this is not a consideration in listed building consent;
- privacy - this is not a consideration in listed building consent;
- noise - this is not a consideration in listed building consent;
- pressure on local services - this is not a consideration in listed building consent;
- increased parking - this is not a consideration in listed building consent;
- lost opportunity for housing - this is not a consideration in listed building consent; and
- increased demand for water - this is not a consideration in listed building consent.

## **Conclusion**

This proposal will deliver a new use for this listed building whilst preserving its main features of architectural and historic interest.

The works comply with the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Scotland Act 1997 as they preserve the character and setting of the listed building and preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. The internal alterations do not involve the loss of any features which contribute to the special interest of the listed building and the external works preserve the frontage and involve acceptable change to the exterior. The brick outbuildings do not form part of the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building and their demolition is considered acceptable.

It is recommended that this application be Granted subject to the details below.

### **3.4 Conditions/reasons/informatives**

#### **Conditions:-**

1. A detailed building survey (phased plans, elevations, photographic and written survey) shall be undertaken prior to and during development and submitted to the Planning Authority.
2. All original windows and doors, including the main entrance door, shall be retained unless shown on the drawings hereby approved. Any alterations to these features will require the further approval of the planning authority.

#### **Reasons:-**

1. To ensure that a permanent record of this historic building is undertaken
2. In order to safeguard the character of the statutorily listed building.

#### **Informatives**

It should be noted that:

1. The works hereby permitted shall be commenced no later than the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

## **Financial impact**

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### **4.1 The financial impact has been assessed as follows:**

There are no financial implications to the Council.

## **Risk, Policy, compliance and governance impact**

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**5.1** Provided planning applications are determined in accordance with statutory legislation, the level of risk is low.

## **Equalities impact**

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### **6.1 The equalities impact has been assessed as follows:**

The application has been assessed and has no impact in terms of equalities or human rights.

## **Sustainability impact**

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### **7.1 The sustainability impact has been assessed as follows:**

This application meets the sustainability requirements of the Edinburgh Design Guidance.

## **Consultation and engagement**

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### **8.1 Pre-Application Process**

Pre-application discussions took place on this application.

### **8.2 Publicity summary of representations and Community Council comments**

The application was advertised on 17 January 2020.

Four objection comments were received on this application. These are considered in section 3.1 of the report.

## **Background reading/external references**

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- To view details of the application go to
- [Planning and Building Standards online services](#)
- [Planning guidelines](#)
- [Conservation Area Character Appraisals](#)
- [Edinburgh Local Development Plan](#)
- [Scottish Planning Policy](#)

## **Statutory Development**

### **Plan Provision**

The site is located within the urban area of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan.

### **Date registered**

20 December 2019

### **Drawing numbers/Scheme**

01-30, 31A, 32-36,

Scheme 2

## **David R. Leslie**

Chief Planning Officer

PLACE

The City of Edinburgh Council

Contact: Lynne McMenemy, Senior Planning Officer

E-mail: [lynne.mcmenemy@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:lynne.mcmenemy@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## **Links - Policies**

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### **Relevant Policies:**

#### **Relevant Government Guidance on Historic Environment.**

The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland 2019 outlines Government policy on how we should care for the historic environment when taking planning decisions.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Demolition sets out Government guidance on the principles that apply to the demolition of listed buildings.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Interiors sets out Government guidance on the principles that apply to alterations to the interiors of listed buildings.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting sets out Government guidance on the principles that apply to developments affecting the setting of historic assets or places.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Extensions sets out Government guidance on the principles that apply to extending listed buildings.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings sets out Government guidance on the principles that apply to enable the use, the reuse and adaptation of listed buildings.

### **Relevant policies of the Local Development Plan.**

LDP Policy Env 2 (Listed Buildings - Demolition) identifies the circumstances in which the demolition of listed buildings will be permitted.

LDP Policy Env 3 (Listed Buildings - Setting) identifies the circumstances in which development within the curtilage or affecting the setting of a listed building will be permitted.

LDP Policy Env 4 (Listed Buildings - Alterations and Extensions) identifies the circumstances in which alterations and extensions to listed buildings will be permitted.

LDP Policy Env 6 (Conservation Areas - Development) sets out criteria for assessing development in a conservation area.

### **Relevant Non-Statutory Guidelines**

The Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area Character Appraisal emphasises the well-proportioned Victorian tenemental perimeter blocks with Baronial detailing and the substantial area of the open parkland formed by the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links.

# Appendix 1

**Application for Listed Building Consent 19/06072/LBC  
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Conversion to student residential accommodation with  
communal facilities at ground floor and in chapel; demolish  
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## Consultations

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### Historic Environment Scotland

i The proposals affect the following:

Ref LB44937

Name 41-45 (ODD NOS) GILMORE PLACE, LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR /ST JOSEPH'S NURSING HOME, INCLUDING BOUNDARY WALLS, GATEPIERS AND GATES

Designation Type Listed Building

#### Our Advice

The application relates to the above category C listed T-plan block, largely late 19th century incorporating an 18th century house (central 7 bays), comprising the former Little Sisters of the Poor nursing home with chapel at the rear.

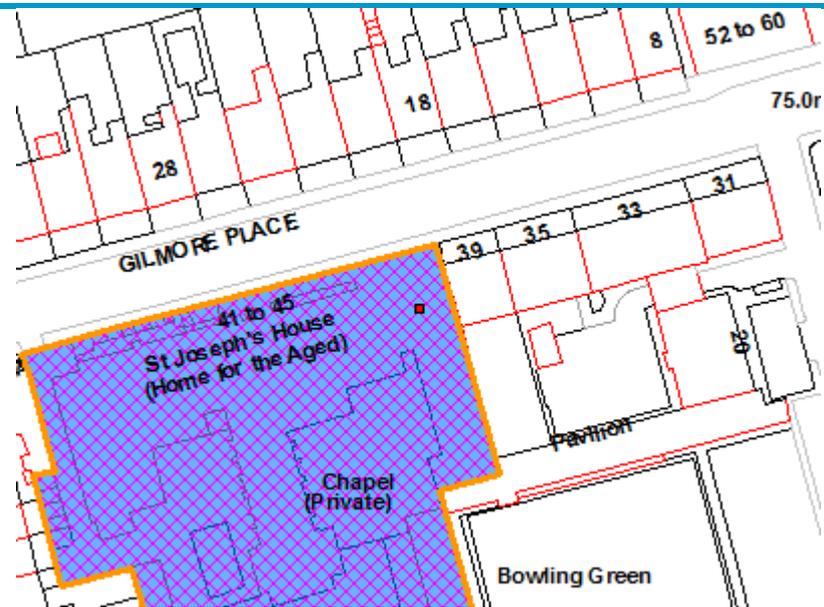
Given its C listing, our locus is specific to the proposed demolition of the east and west outbuildings at the rear of the site, which are within the curtilage of the listed building but not the main subject of the listing. These comprise two ranges of single and two storey ancillary buildings of a relatively plain red brick and slate roofed construction. The east outbuildings appear to date from the late 19th century (as indicated in the 1896 OS map), while the west outbuildings appear to date from the early to mid-20th century. While the buildings may have some historic merit as part of the former convent/nursing home, it is our view that they are of insufficient special interest in themselves. Although the applicant's case for demolition seems to be based on the repair and re-use of the buildings not being economically viable, we are satisfied that there is justification for their demolition on the grounds that these are curtilage buildings which individually are not of special architectural or historic interest.

Planning authorities are expected to treat our comments as a material consideration, and this advice should be taken into account in your decision making. Our view is that the proposals do not raise historic environment issues of national significance and therefore we do not object. However, our decision not to object should not be taken as our support for the proposals. This application should be determined in accordance

with national and local policy on listed building consent, together with related policy guidance.

## Location Plan

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