

Crawley Borough Council: Local Heritage List: Locally Listed Buildings Consultation 2021

Response from Chichester College Group (CCG) representing Crawley College

Summary

We note that as part of the review, three buildings on the College site (College Road, Crawley) were considered for potential inclusion. Namely:

- Crawley College - Entrance to College Tower (also known as 'The Theatre')
- Crawley College - Four Storey Building (also known as 'D Block')
- Crawley College – Three Storey Building

We note that the three storey building was not included in the final report published for consultation noting that it did not meet the criteria.

In submitting this response, we wish to note and correct a number of inaccuracies in the report and also respond to the rationale for local listing and the potential negative impact on the site and its future development and attracting significant investment to the Town.

We would also note that several of the photographs in the report appear to have been taken on the College campus. We would request details of when these photographs were taken and what permission was obtained to access the College site. As a College, CCG has strict safeguarding procedures in place which require visitors to sign in when visiting the site and permission to be sought for any photography. The College site is locked and inaccessible at weekends and out of hours so we can only assume that these were taken when the College was open – with the report indicating that this was on Tuesday 18th August 2020.

Entrance to Crawley College Tower (TB 01)

7. Description

The building in question is an old studio theatre set above offices/service/storage space. It is not the main entrance and access point to the Tower building and to our knowledge it has never been the entrance to the Tower or College. There is a small door at the side/back of the theatre which leads down narrow steps to the ground floor but this comes out in internal offices. The theatre is not in use and has not been for over 12 years .

9. Authenticity

The ground floor of the building has had significant alterations over the years and is now configured into a number of small office spaces and service/storage areas separated by stud walls and partitions. We believe a more accurate descriptor would be:

“A single significant phase with some alterations and/or extensions”

10. Aesthetic/Architectural Value

We would be interested to understand what criteria have been used to make the statement “is a good example of post-war architecture”. What evidence has been used to consider its architectural merit?

14. Landmark/Townscape Value

Whilst the building is in the close vicinity of the old children’s library, from the road/street level, we cannot see the relevance of the proximity and would refute that the theatre is a dominant structure. Apart from if in a car, the vista of seeing the two sites together and in context is very limited except from an elevated position.

16. Overall Condition

The report notes the condition as ‘Good’. We believe that the condition is ‘Poor’. The upper level of the building (theatre) has been unused for over 12 years and is locked and ‘out of bounds’ to any staff and students because of serious health and safety concerns. There is no lift into the theatre and access is via a wooden staircase only for able-bodied visitors.

The condition of the ground floor is closer to being in an acceptable condition but not fully fit for purpose as office space.

In 2018, CCG Commissioned Ridge to carry out an independent condition survey (Appendix A1). The tables on page 42 & 43 in particular rate this building as being somewhere between acceptable and poor using the Ridge red / amber / green ratings system.

In April 2019, the Department for Education appointed surveyors to run a “Further Education Condition Data Collection” (FECD) programme. They produced the attached Appendix A2 “FECD – Crawley College Drawings” to link data to. Document UID of “TB 01” (Page 178) shows the Theatre. The FECD programme refers to this area as “FEAH”. The Appendix A3 FECD Block Suitability Questionnaire shows both FEAH as 100% “Category III - which is defined as ‘Less than ideal’

Whilst it remains unclear what the criteria is that has been used to make the assessment of ‘Good’ for both buildings has been, the College estates assessment is that neither building meets this criteria either from an estate condition perspective nor running costs efficiency.

Additional photos are provided in Appendix A4a.

Crawley College – Four Storey Building (TB 02)

7. Description

The descriptor is largely correct although we would suggest that the design has elements of Brutalist style but is not a strong example of this design and architectural style.

9. Authenticity

The building ('D Block') has had significant alterations on every floor over the years. This has reflected significant changes in requirements for teaching and learning and the poor quality and lack of flexibility of the space for a modern education facility. We believe a more accurate descriptor would be:

"A single significant phase with significant alterations and/or extensions"

Appendix A1 Notes:

"The original part of the premises dates back to the 1960s and was extended in the late 80s or early 90s. The newer addition benefits from aluminium double glazed windows, as opposed to single glazed sliding windows found in the original section."

10. Aesthetic/Architectural Value

The wording of this section appears to contradict itself – in the first sentence saying that it is a "good example of Post-War public architecture" and in the final sentence saying that "it is not considered to be an architecturally leading example."

We would agree that this is not a leading example of Post-war public architecture and for this reason are unsure why this section has been noted to support local listing.

16. Overall Condition

The report notes this as 'Good'. We believe that the condition is 'Poor'. The building is in a very poor state of repair and has significant limitations for use. There are significant issues around accessibility in the building related to non-compliance with the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Quite simply, the building is no longer fit for purpose.

In 2018, CCG Commissioned Ridge to carry out an independent condition survey (Appendix A1). The tables on page 42 & 43 in particular rate this building as being somewhere between acceptable and poor using the Ridge red / amber / green ratings system.

Some key areas raised in the report include areas that do not meet current Building Regulation Standards.

In April 2019, the Department for Education appointed surveyors to run a "Further Education Condition Data Collection" (FECD) programme. They produced the attached Appendix A2 "FECD – Crawley College Drawings" to link data to. Document UID of "TB 02" (Page 180) shows D Block. The FECD programme refers to this area as "FEAF". The Appendix A3 FECD Block Suitability Questionnaire shows FEAF as 100% "Category III" which is defined as 'Less than ideal'

Whilst it remains unclear what the criteria is that has been used to make the assessment of 'Good' for both buildings has been, the College estates assessment is that neither building meets this criteria either from an estate condition perspective nor running costs efficiency.

Additional photos are provided in Appendix A4b.

Impact of Local Listing of both Buildings on the Crawley College Site

CCG believe that neither building meets the criteria in the report or consultation to be considered for Local Listing. There are inaccuracies in the report and we believe that neither building is of notable Aesthetic/Architectural Value –this is based on independent and specialist assessment of the architecture within the context of the Town.

Given this, we would ask CBC to consider the potentially significant and detrimental impact that well-intentioned but inappropriate listings could have on our ability to develop a College that is fit for purpose for the local community. CCG has developed exciting plans for the redevelopment of the site and is seeking to leverage significant investment in teaching and learning facilities. These plans hinge on the sale/disposal of part of the site that includes these buildings. Any negative impact on value will negatively impact on funds to re-invest in the College and has the potential to significantly delay our redevelopment plans.

Julie Kapsalis

17/2/21

Appendices

A1 – Ridge Report 2018 – Stock Condition Survey of Buildings at CCG (including Crawley)

A2 - Further Education Condition Data Collection (FECD) Report 2019 – map of Crawley College site

A3 - FECD Report 2019 – Block/Buildings Report – Crawley College

A4a – Pictures of Crawley College Theatre (2021) – showing condition

A4b – Pictures of Crawley College 'D Block' (2021) – showing condition