

Nominate a Heritage Asset

Craft building and Store at St John's Home, St Mary's Road (formerly St Mary's Infant's and Girls' School)



1. WHAT IS IT? Is it one of the following?	Tick
a building or group of buildings	y
a monument or site (an area of archaeological remains or a structure other than a building)	
a place (e.g. a street, park, garden or natural space)	
a landscape (an area defined by visual features or character, e.g. a city centre, village, suburb or field system)	

2. WHY IS IT INTERESTING? Is it interesting in any of the following ways?	Tick / Rank
Historic interest – a well documented association with a person, event, episode of history, or local industry	y
Archaeological interest – firm evidence of potential to reveal more about the human past through further study	
Architectural interest – an example of an architectural style, a building of particular use, a technique of building, or use of materials	y
Artistic interest – It includes artistic endeavour to communicate meaning or use of design (including landscape design) to enhance appearance	

What is it about the asset that provides this interest?

Historic interest: This small school was established on land bought by Father Richard Meux Benson for the Church in Cowley in 1868. It was run in part by All Saints' Sisters of the Poor. In the evenings it served as a reading room, to encourage the education of working men from the suburb. After the infants' school was replaced by the Comper Building at Hertford Street the buildings of the school were taken into the wider precinct of St John's Home. Latterly the earliest part of the building was demolished, although the attractive roadside range, added in 1881 has been retained.

Architectural interest: The surviving element of the school was built in the locally manufactured yellow stock brick, to the roadside (matching the materials of the St John's Home

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boundary wall, but is in red brick on its other frontages. It was designed in the Gothic Revival style with sharply pointed lancet windows and two-centred arched doorway to the road and has a steeply pitched slate roof. The building's north east wall and roof slope have been completely replaced, following the demolition of the earlier range. Internally the building retains a blocked window to the north west frontage, which is covered by an early 20th century store building.

3. WHY IS IT LOCALLY VALUED? Is the interest of the asset valued locally for any of the following reasons?	Tick / Rank
Association: It connects us to people and events that shaped the identity or character of the area	y
Illustration: It illustrates an aspect of the area's past that makes an important contribution to its identity or character	y
Evidence: It is an important resource for understanding and learning about the area's history	
Aesthetics: It makes an important contribution to the positive look of the area either by design or fortuitously	y
Communal: It is important to the identity, cohesion, spiritual life or memory of all or part of the community	
How is the asset locally valued as heritage? Association/Illustration: The building provides a connection with Father Benson (an individual who made a considerable contribution to the social welfare of the people of the suburb during the mid 19 th century) and illustrates involvement of the religious organisations of the suburb in the provision of education during the early history of the suburb. Aesthetics: from the roadside this is an attractive small building, retaining its late Victorian character and contributing to the overall character of East Oxford as a Victorian and Edwardian suburb.	

4. WHAT MAKES ITS LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE SPECIAL? Do any of the following features make the heritage significance of the asset stand out above the surrounding environment?	Tick
Age ... Is it particularly old, or of a date that is significant to the local area?	y
Rarity ... Is it unusual in the area or a rare survival of something that was once common?	
Integrity ... Is it largely complete or in a near to original condition?	y
Group value ... Is it part of a group that have a close historic, aesthetic or communal association?	y
Oxford's identity ... Is it important to the identity or character of the city or a particular part of it?	y
Other ... Is there another way you think it has special local value?	
How does this contribute to its value? Age: This building dates illustrates a use of the site that began in the early years of the suburb's development, although the present structure was not built until some 20 years later (at least). Integrity: From the road and from the interior the building retains its historic appearance, although it is in fact a fragment of a much larger structure and includes building elements that have been replaced in the past twenty years. Group value: The building contributes to both the group of buildings across the suburb associated with Father Benson and the Cowley Fathers and to the buildings illustrating the development of education provision in the Victorian and Edwardian periods, including the involvement of church organisations in this process. These are both important themes in the history of the East Oxford Suburb. Oxford's Identity: The school was known as the Robin Hood School, referring to the identity of the area between Magdalen Road and Howards Street, which it served until the early 20 th century and therefore contributes to the identity of this neighbourhood within the suburb. The building illustrates the involvement and presence of many religious communities within East Oxford since the early development of the suburb and continuing to the present is a part of the suburb's character and identity.	