

Nominate a Heritage Asset

Asian Cultural Centre, Manzil Way (formerly the chapel of the New Oxford City Workhouse and Cowley Road Hospital)



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	y
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?	
<p>Historic interest: The building represents the last structural evidence of the former New Union Workhouse built on Cowley Road in the 1860s to provide accommodation for the poor of the city under the New Poor Law (introduced in 1834) and replacing three former workhouses at 'Rats and Mice Hill' (now Wellington Square). The Workhouse was in fact a complex of buildings set well back from the road with a long drive (now Manzil Way) running through extensive gardens, presumably cultivated by the inmates. It was built to serve people from within the city but was actually built outside the city's then boundary. Residents of the suburb, ironically would have had to go to the Headington Union Workhouse which was located on London Road. In later years the workhouse provided residential care for the aged infirm of Oxford and was known as Cowley Road Hospital. Most of the buildings were demolished soon after the hospital's closure in 1984.</p> <p>Archaeological interest: There remains potential for the survival of structural evidence of the former workhouse as subsurface archaeological remains. There is also some potential that the area near to the chapel could have been used as a burial ground for the workhouse.</p> <p>Architectural interest: As the last remaining element of the workhouse the chapel has</p>	

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architectural interest as a fragmentary survival the workhouse which can provide an impression of the larger building's appearance. The building is designed as a simple Gothic revival chapel in the buff brick that was produced locally and typifies large parts of the East Oxford Suburb

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	y2
Illustration: It illustrates an aspect of the area's past that makes an important contribution to its identity or character	y1
Evidence: It is an important resource for understanding and learning about the area's history	y4
Aesthetics: It makes an important contribution to the positive look of the area either by design or fortuitously	y3
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 solitary building illustrates the earliest use of this land for a social welfare function (albeit one that is often viewed negatively), which has continued to the present day with the reuse of the land of the former workhouse for a geriatric hospital, day care, hospital, and the present suite of health care uses that include the Manzil Resource Centre, Restore, St Bartholomew's Medical Centre, and the East Oxford Health Centre as well as Manzil Gardens, representing a continuity of this land for over 150 years. It contributes to the wider historic theme of the provision of health care and social welfare facilities in the east Oxford Suburb, which was partly due to the area's position outside the city. Aesthetics: The building is an attractively designed Gothic revival chapel that contributes to the Victorian architectural character of the East Oxford Suburb. Evidence: The potential of the area's archaeological interest to reveal more about the history of the workhouse and the people who lived within it is of great interest as a resource to investigate the history of Oxford in the mid and later 19 th century.	

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?	y
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?	
Other ... Is there another way you think it has special local value?	
How does this contribute to its value? Age: The building dates from the earliest period of the suburb's development, preceding the surrounding housing developments and originally representing a development in the open fields outside the town Rarity: As a surviving element of one of Oxford's workhouses the building is a rare survival in the city. Only one other purpose built workhouse building is known to survive in Oxford (part of Summer Fields School in Summertown), although other buildings in the city were used as workhouses, or parish poor houses at various times. Integrity: The original architectural scheme of the chapel is appreciable and well preserved externally, although it has been altered inside. Group Value: The building is one of a group of buildings that chart the history of the provision of health care and social welfare facilities in East Oxford from the medieval period into the 20 th century as an important them of the area's development.	