

Jim Latheron

From: Cllr Purves, Elizabeth
Sent: 11 October 2012 18:49
To: Jim Latheron
Cc: Cllr Walshe, Roger
Subject: Cobden Road Centre

Dear Jim

Thank you for letting me know that the Cobden Road Centre is to be put on the market.

Cobden Road School, an old Victorian Board School needs to be retained as it is an essential feature of the Hartslands Conservation area. If no longer required by the District Council, it should be converted sympathetically into private homes with adequate parking in the old yard. Such conversion would greatly enhance the townscape significance of both this imposing building and its surrounding space. Local examples of sympathetic conversion are the St John's Hall in Hollybush Lane and the Old Police Station in the High Street.

The school, designed by the Sevenoaks architect E Evans Cronk, contributes significantly to the historic character of the Conservation area and is a much loved feature for local residents. The Hartslands Conservation Area Appraisal (2011) identifies the building and the surrounding yard as contributing to the character of the area. A plaque on the façade is inscribed " School Board for Sevenoaks Public Elementary School for Infants 1877". The Appraisal concludes, " It is important to retain the character of buildings and a mix of commercial, community and residential uses in order to protect the architectural and historic character of the area." Cobden Road School adds to the character of the area, it should be sympathetically converted.

Below for interest is an extract about the history of the Cobden Road School from Sevenoaks: An Historical Dictionary, (to which you contributed) to be published early November.

I hope you can include these points in your report.

Best wishes

Elizabeth

Cobden Road School. *The school built in 1877, was administered by the local School Board, for the children living in the Hartsland area. It was typical of such schools built after the 1870 Education Act, single storey red brick, with large high windows, lofty ceilings, pointed cowls on chimneys, picturesque detailing in its brickwork, and with a marching yard. Originally for the education of boys and girls from five to seven years, this was extended in 1884 to include schooling for the girls up to the age of 14. In 1899 the register shows an attendance of 324 pupils, 193 girls and 131 infants. In the 1934 edition of the Cobnut, the School magazine, news of old girls showed that most were employed as clerks in shops, or as domestics. The school closed in 1975.*