

Plans for redevelopment of Royal Blind School approved

PLANNING permission has been approved for the re-development of one of South Edinburgh's best known buildings and the site of a former school for the blind.

Proposals from homebuilder CALA Homes will breathe new life into what was once Edinburgh's Royal Blind School at Craigmillar Park.

The original C-listed Victorian school building has been empty since it closed in 2014, but it will now be transformed in 49 homes.

Plans were initially submitted by CALA in December 2018 but were later revised following extensive community consultation to reduce building heights, reconfigure key blocks and change some of the materials used.

More recent extensions to the old school building and some surrounding buildings will be demolished to enable what CALA describe as 'carefully considered new-build homes', with design and materials appropriate for new development within Craigmillar Park Conservation Area.

Craig Lynes, Land Director with CALA Homes (East), said: "We've worked closely with neighbours over the past three years to ensure we create a site that brings benefit to the local area.

"Naturally, we're thrilled that our plans for this important building have been approved and we're looking forward to returning the Royal Blind School back to its former glory.

“We’ve carefully considered our proposals so that we can create a development which quickly becomes part of the fabric and adds to the area.

“It’s been crucial to us to engage with members of the local community through a series of events and amend our plans following feedback and we’re pleased that this flexible approach has been appreciated by local people and city planners.”

Currently, the site includes the vacant school building, a swimming pool, the Royal Braille Press and a bungalow.

CALA’s plans will convert this into 21 apartments within the school building, a new build flat over the garage, the refurbishment of the gatehouse and 26 new build townhouses.

The Royal Blind School was founded in 1835 and the original School building was built in 1874. It later relocated to Morningside after its two campuses were merged in 2014. The Scottish Braille Press relocated to Robertson Avenue in March 2018.