

**HERITAGE STATEMENT IN
RESPECT OF A REPLACEMENT
COMMUNITY BUILDING**

AT

**HURST VILLAGE HALLS, SCHOOL
ROAD, HURST RG10 0DR**

MLP REF: SR/24/188

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This statement sets out relevant planning policies and the application of those policies in respect of heritage matters in so far as they relate to areas of special character as identified in the development plan. In so doing the following conclusions are reached:
- National planning policy sets out that the weight to be afforded to the heritage asset and that the information to be provided should be proportionate to the status of the assets as well as the proposed changes. This has been applied to the development proposal which is relatively minor and has an acceptable effect on heritage, namely the area of special character.
 - The application lies within the Area of Special Character designation where the policy TB26 of the Managing Development Delivery DPD refers. None of the buildings which comprise the village halls complex are identified as being of Traditional Local Character and there is no written policy statement as to the elements which are important to the special character.
 - This aside, the building which it is proposed to replace is of contemporary, pre-fabricated design and was gifted to the Parish some years ago by a local business. It has been used since this time as a Scout hut and has reached the end of its natural life, hence the proposal to replace it.
 - The proposal is, by any reasonable judgement, an enhancement in approach and materials palate such that, along with the removal of the contemporary structure, would be of visual benefit to the Area of Special Character. It also reflects the group of buildings which comprise the Village Halls complex.
 - Views to the building are evident and it will be seen against the traditional group as well as the landscaped backdrop.

- 1.2. The proposed development meets the objectives of, inter alia, heritage character and due weight should be afforded to these matters in the determination of this application. In the absence of any other material considerations, the application should be granted.

2.0 Relevant planning history

- 2.1. There have been previous applications pertaining to the site. They are:

09672 Single storey extension. Granted 1977

89197 Extensions. Granted 1978

23143 Single storey extension. Granted 1985

95/80402 Extensions. Granted 1995.

98/67396 Extensions. Granted 1998

F/2003/9654 New pitched roof to existing flat roof. Granted 2003.

- 2.2. From records made available to us, there have been no applications for the Scout hut although it appears on the approved drawings for the 2003 application and is labelled as such. As such, it is plainly lawful by reason of longevity as is shown by the dated image below.

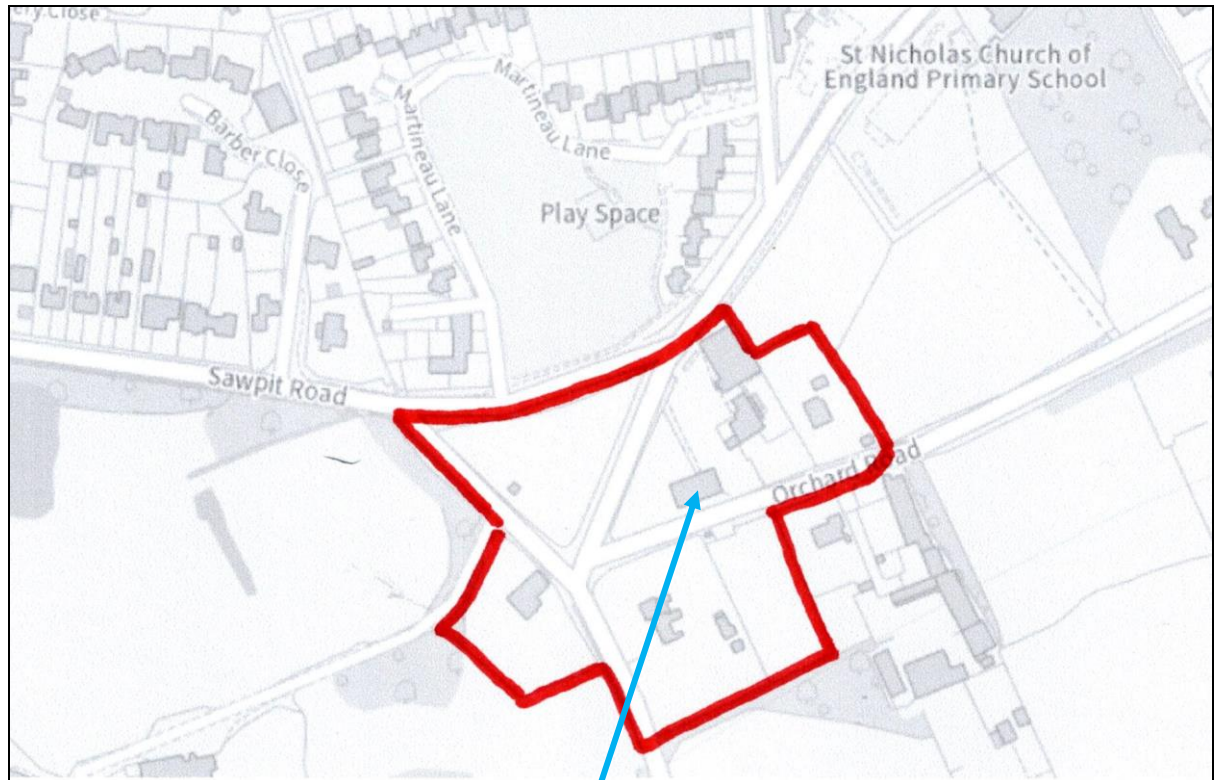


2010

The subject building

3.0 **Planning policy and its application to the proposals**

- 3.1. The site lies within the Area of Traditional Local Character and is part of a modest group with this designation. The area is shown below – edged red - from the proposals map.



The subject building

- 3.2. Policy TB26 refers and reads:

Policy TB26: Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character

- 1. Areas of Special Character are shown on the Policies Map.***
- 2. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals to or affecting Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting.***
- 3. Proposals that involve the demolition of a Building of Traditional Local Character will require strong justification.***

3.2. The relevant Framework policies are as follows:

195. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value⁷⁰. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations⁷¹.
196. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:
 - a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
197. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.
200. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
201. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

4.0 **The application of planning policies**

4.1. There is no specific policy statement pertaining to the Hurst Village Halls and School House Area of Special Character. Policy TB26 refers to Buildings of Traditional Local Character and none are implicated in respect of this proposal. The tests of policy are:

- The requirement to demonstrate that proposals “retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting”.
- Where demolition of a building of Traditional Local Character is proposed, it will require “strong justification”

- 4.2. The sub-text identifies the designation as being groups of buildings which reflect traditional character reflecting the areas past and where conservation area designation is not justified. Furthermore where the proposals are conceived they should have regard to the historical context, scale, form, massing and materials of the groups or particular building(s).
- 4.3. It is clear that the building to be removed and replaced is one which is of its time and by any judgement this should be welcomed. It is plainly not of traditional character and in no way reflects the vernacular or materials of the village halls. These, in contrast, are a pleasing group of buildings which justify their designation by reason of the history, general form and the Berkshire materials palate. These are shown in the photographs below.



1



2

Photographs 1 and 2 show the traditional group of buildings with steep pitched roofs, slate and Berkshire red stock bricks and vertical fenestration. They have an historic reference as is shown



3



4

Photographs 3, 4 and 5 (below) show the contrast with the building to be replaced. This is contemporary with a flat roof and composite panels. It can be seen from Orchard Road and School Road within the complex of the Village Halls.



5

- 4.4. The design of the replacement building is one which will satisfy the test of enhancement when judged against the building to be removed. The key features are as follows:
- The floor plan is of commensurate scale to the existing structure which is proposed to be removed.
 - The design approach is reflective of a simple curtilage structure which does not compete, in architectural terms, with the Village Halls complex.
 - The simple fenestration and openings are broadly similar to that of the building to be replaced.
 - The facing materials of stained softwood will reflect an enhancement over and above the composite panels of the existing building.
- 4.5. This approach acknowledges the relevant heritage planning policies and the desirability of providing a more suitable replacement building to serve the community needs.

5.0 Summary – the impact on heritage

- 5.1. By way of summary, the following matters are set out:

- The weight to be afforded to the heritage asset in this case is less than for a conservation area or listed building. It is a locally based designation and the information to be provided with a planning application is required to be proportionate to the status of the assets.

- The application site lies within the Area of Special Character designation as set out in the Managing Development Delivery DPD and policy TB26 refers.
- It is noted that none of the buildings which comprise the village halls complex are identified as being of Traditional Local Character although they are pleasing in terms of the local vernacular and traditional materials palate. There is no written policy statement as to the elements which are important to the special character and it is a matter of judgement.
- It is clear from observation that the building which it is proposed to be replaced is of contemporary, pre-fabricated design. It was gifted to the Parish some years ago by a local business and has remained in place ever since. It has been used as a Scout hut and has reached the end of its natural life, hence the proposal to replace it. It is, by any judgement a building which detracts from the Area of Traditional Local Character.
- In contrast the replacement building is an enhancement in approach and materials such that, along with the removal of the contemporary structure, would be of visual benefit to the Area of Special Character.

5.2. It follows that there is no conflict with relevant national or local planning policy in so far as it refers to heritage matters.