

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	242430
Address:	Hurst Village Hall, School Road, Hurst, Wokingham, RG10 0DR		
Proposal:	Full application for proposed single storey timber building following demolition of the existing scout hut.		
Heritage Asset:	The Old School House, Hurst – Area of Special Character (NDHA) Setting of: • Hurst Village Hall (NDHA) • Former Working Men’s Club (NDHA)		
Site Visit Made:	Yes		

Summary Of Recommendations

No objection subject to condition

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes the demolition of a single storey Scout hut, with the subsequent construction of a replacement single storey community building. The application site lies within the heart of ‘*The Old School House*’ Area of Special Character – a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), and within the immediate setting of the late 19th century former *Working Men’s Club* and the 1920s *Hurst Village Hall*. By virtue of their age, architectural and historic interest, as well as their positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, these buildings are identified as non-designated heritage assets.

It is proposed to demolish the extant Scout hut, a prefabricated concrete panel-and timber structure which is approximately 30-40 years old. Whilst the building is effectively read as having a flat roof, it does have a very shallow dual pitch form. The building is of limited architectural merit and does not seek to positively contribute to the Area of Special Character nor to the setting of the adjacent heritage assets. Given this, there are no concerns over the loss of the structure from a heritage perspective.

The proposed new building, a de facto replacement for the Scout hut, is of a similar form and character, albeit is slightly larger in footprint (the application form states the new building would be the same size as the Scout hut, however the site plan appears to show a larger structure?), of a more contemporary appearance and to be placed with a different orientation and position within the site. Given the extant contextual setting, as the replacement building is effectively ‘like-for-like’ in

form, it would arguably seek to preserve the character and appearance of the area. It also may be argued that a new structure with new materials would seek to enhance the immediate character. There are, however, concerns over the finish of the materials, specifically the proposed timber cladding. As this forms the bulk of the structure's appearance, it is important the finish is appropriate for the context. Whilst the application form states the timber would be 'treated' the exact finish and materials should be secured by condition. The application also does make it clear why the building's position is to change, if this has not already been done so, it should be clarified.

Whilst there would be a preference for any new building within this context to have a more traditional appearance and form (for example with a pitched roof), the constraints of funding and resources are understood, and it should be noted the principle of a community resource is fully supported. Given this, no objection is raised against the application from a heritage perspective with no harm likely arising to the setting of the non-designated heritage assets, and the proposed building being acceptable in term of impact upon the Area of Special Character.

Conditions

Notwithstanding information shown on the approved drawings, no relevant works, or those above slab level, shall commence on site until details of materials and finishes have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details should include physical samples as applicable. The works shall then proceed in strict accordance with the approved details. These requirements include provision of information relating to:

- 1. the material, size, texture, colour, profile, and source of facing timber cladding;*
- 2. the material, size, texture, colour, profile, and source of roofing materials;*
- 3. the material, size, texture, colour, profile, and source of windows and doors;*
- 4. materials and finishes to be used in the detailing of eaves and verges;*
- 5. the proposed rainwater goods*

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB24.

Date:	21/02/2025	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer
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