

6. FULL APPLICATION – REINSTATEMENT OF ENTRANCE CANOPY AND BARGEBOARDS, PROVISION OF NEW WINDOWS AND DOORS, RE-FORMING OF EXISTING EMERGENCY ESCAPE RAMP, INSTALLATION OF SEPTIC TANK, REMOVAL OF CHIMNEY STACK, AND INSTALLATION OF PV CELLS AT POMEROY MEMORIAL HALL, FLAGG (NP/DDD/0822/1062/ALN)

APPLICANTS: THE TRUSTEES – THE POMEROY TRUST

Summary

1. The proposals are for alterations to the external appearance of Pomeroy Memorial Hall. The lawful use of the site is as a village hall.
2. The development would conserve the character of the site and the surrounding area.
3. The Highway Authority has recommended refusal on highway safety grounds. The proposed alterations would not, in themselves, lead to an intensification of vehicular and pedestrian access and so whilst it is acknowledged that the existing arrangement is substandard, our view is that there are insufficient grounds to justify a refusal on highway safety grounds.
4. The application is recommended for conditional approval.

Site and Surroundings

5. Pomeroy War Memorial Hall is situated close to the small hamlet of Pomeroy, which is located adjacent to the main A515 Buxton to Ashbourne road. The building is positioned on the northern side of the A515, to the north west of the hamlet. It is within open countryside for planning policy purposes.
6. The building was constructed in 1921 in memory of those who died in the first world war. It comprises a single storey and is orientated with its ridge at right angles to the road and its main entrance doorway in the road facing gable end. It is constructed in a mixture of limestone 'Davey' blocks and limestone rubble walling with sandstone dressings. The roof has a covering of Welsh blue slates.
7. It comprises a single room internally and has been historically used as a community village hall. The building is currently unused.
8. To the west of the building is an enclosed paddock, now fully given over to grass. A public right of way runs along the north eastern boundary of the paddock, just outside of the application site.
9. There is an existing gateway within the boundary wall to the east of the building, which gives vehicular access from the A515 into the site.

Proposal

10. Planning permission is sought for the refurbishment of the Hall, including external alterations. These consist of the reinstatement of an entrance canopy on the south gable elevation; re-introduction of barge boards; restoration of sash windows and new doors. The proposals also include alterations to an external access ramp, installation of photo-voltaic cells and the provision of a septic tank within the field to the east.
11. Internally the southern half of the building would be subdivided to provide a kitchen and dining space and toilets.

RECOMMENDATION:

12. That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

- 1) **3 year implementation period**
- 2) **Adopt amended plans**
- 3) **Written Scheme of Investigation for a scheme of archaeological monitoring/watching brief to be submitted and implemented.**
- 4) **Solar pv panels to be black and non-reflective, with no visible external framing**
- 5) **Retaining walls to access ramp to match the existing stonework**
- 6) **Barge boards to be painted a recessive colour.**
- 7) **No hardsurfacing of paddock to the east of the building.**

Key Issues

- Impact of the character and appearance of the building.
- Highway Safety
- Archaeology

History

13. August 2022 – planning application for widening of existing gateway, reinstatement of entrance canopy and bargeboards, provision of new windows and doors, re-forming of existing ramp, installation of septic tank, removal of chimney stack, installation of PV cells - Withdrawn following objections from the Highway Authority on highway safety grounds (NP/DDD/0222/0233).

Consultations

14. **Highway Authority** – recommends refusal on highway safety grounds. *The proposal, if permitted, could introduce vehicular and pedestrian traffic movements on A515 and could result in indiscriminate car parking issues at the location where emerging and forward visibility is severely restricted. Additionally, due to the unavailability of safe walking and crossing infrastructure, the proposal could lead to potential danger and interfere with the safe and efficient movement of traffic on the adjoining highway.*
15. **District Council** – no response
16. **Parish Council** – no response
17. **Authority's Archaeologist** - The building itself has limited archaeological significance and the intended changes will largely improve its condition and preserve it for future use. In the field to the east of the Hall are three archaeological features, a Roman road, a lead rake and a boundary stone. These are not statutory monuments but are all listed on the HBSMR and are considered to have low (or local) significance. (Note: The response still refers to the re-topping of the hard standing in the field and the potential impact of this on the Roman road and the Lead Rake, however in this amended scheme the hardstanding is omitted). The Parish Boundary stone is located by the gate into the field at the side of the A515. It has been confirmed that the development would not impact upon the stone. The works to install the septic tank are small in scale but could impact on the Roman Road. Recommends a condition to

agree an archaeological monitoring/watching brief to mitigate the impact of the septic tank groundworks on any archaeological remains.

Representations

18. None received.

Main Policies

19. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, HC4, L3, T1

20. Relevant Local Plan policies: DMC3, DMC5, DMT3

National Planning Policy Framework

21. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In the National Park the development plan comprises the East Midlands Regional Plan 2009, the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and saved policies in the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2001. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance in the NPPF.
22. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states that 'great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.
23. Para 110 states that in assessment applications, it should be ensured that a safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.

Core Strategy

24. Core Strategy policy GSP1 sets out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park's objectives having regard to the Sandford Principle, (that is, where there are conflicting desired outcomes in achieving national park purposes, greater priority must be given to the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, even at the cost of socio-economic benefits). GSP1 also sets out the need for sustainable development and to avoid major development unless it is essential, and the need to mitigate localised harm where essential major development is allowed.
25. Core Strategy policy GSP2 states, amongst other things, that when development is permitted, a design will be sought that respects the character of the area.
26. Core Strategy policy GSP3 sets out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.

- 27. HC4 states that outside of named settlements, proposals to provide community facilities and services involving the change of use of traditional buildings or a replacement building which achieve enhancement will be encouraged.
- 28. Core Strategy policy L3 requires that development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal significance of archaeological, artistic or historic assets and their setting, including statutory designation and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest.
- 29. Policy T1 states that sustainable transport and access will be encouraged.
- 30. Core Strategy policy CC1 states that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources.

Development Management Policies

- 31. Development Management Policy DMC3 requires development to be of a high standard that respects, protects, and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place. It also provides further detailed criteria to assess design and landscaping, as well as requiring development to conserve the amenity of other properties.
- 32. Policy DMC3. B sets out various aspects that particular attention will be paid to including: siting, scale, form, mass, levels, height and orientation, settlement form and character, landscape, details, materials and finishes landscaping, access, utilities and parking, amenity, accessibility and the principles embedded in the design related SPD and the technical guide.
- 33. Development Management Policy DMC5 provides detailed advice relating to proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, requiring new development to demonstrate how valued features will be conserved, as well as detailing the types and levels of information required to support such proposals. It also requires development to avoid harm to the significance, character, and appearance of heritage assets and details the exceptional circumstances in which development resulting in such harm may be supported.
- 34. Policy DMT3 states that development which includes a new or improved access will only be permitted where a safe access can be provided.

Assessment

Principle of Development

- 35. The application building is not within a named settlement and so Core Strategy policy HC4 requires that proposals for community facilities within existing traditional buildings will be encouraged. In this case, the building is not of any heritage significance, being as it is, an early 20th century building built largely in artificial stone. However, it already has a lawful use as a village hall and therefore in principle its refurbishment is acceptable.
- 36. For clarity, it is understood that the Hall was last used as a general village hall in 1986, but has since been used by parts of the community for band practices and performances, and by local drama groups. It remains watertight and well maintained, and has not had any other intervening uses that we are aware of or advised of. We are therefore satisfied that the use as a village hall has not been abandoned.

Impact on the character and appearance of the building

37. A series of alterations are proposed in order to refurbish the building and bring it back into use as a village hall.
38. Photographic evidence provided with the application shows that there was historically a canopy above the main entrance door on the south facing gable end. The former line of the canopy can still be seen on the surrounding stonework. It is proposed to re-instate a new canopy in the same position and of a similar size and design as the original. This is acceptable as it would restore the building to its original design.
39. Similarly the building originally had projecting barge boards on the gable end and these would also be reinstated. The existing window frames would be refurbished and fitted with slim line double glazing. Both of these proposed elements would be in keeping with the character of the building.
40. Solar pv panels are proposed on both roofslopes, towards the southern end of each slope. No details have been provided with regard to their design, but provided they are black with a non-reflective finish, then given the relatively modern origins of the building, they are acceptable, despite being prominent from the A515.
41. There is an existing external ramp on the east elevation but it is narrow and not up to modern specifications, A new accessible ramp would be provided with a black powder coated handrail. Provided the dwarf walls are faced in stone to match the main building, the appearance of the ramp would be satisfactory.
42. A chimney stack which projects off the eaves in the centre of the east elevation, would be removed. The stack does not contribute to the character of the area in any way and so the works are acceptable.
43. In conclusion the proposed alterations to the external elevations of the building would be in keeping with the character of the host building in accordance with policies GSP3 and DMC3.

Highway Considerations

44. Vehicular access to the site is currently served off the adjacent A515, which is a busy main road with a 50mph speed limit. Emerging and forward visibility splay are substandard. To the east, only a 126m splay is available, when the standard requirement is 149m. In addition the site access is within 60m of sharp bend in the A515 road. There is no protected right turn lane into the site and due to the bend in the road, there is substandard forward visibility for vehicles approaching from the east.
45. A previous application, submitted in early 2022, proposed to widen the access gateway and to create a newly surfaced car park to the east of the building. The Highway Authority objected on the grounds that although the lawful use of the building is as a village hall, the proposals would be likely to lead to an intensification of the use of the access. Because of the narrow nature of the access and the lack of any formal surfacing in the paddock and on the verge, in reality few drivers would risk entering the site as it currently exists. The proposed widening of the access and the creation of a surfaced car park would have made the site more inviting to motorists to try to enter and therefore intensified its use. We agreed with the Highway Authority's objections in that case and as a result, the application was withdrawn.

46. This re-submission excludes any alterations to the access and does not propose to create a surfaced car park. The proposals are simply to refurbish the building as part of bringing it back into its current lawful use. The Highway Authority has, however, maintained its objections, on the grounds that the proposals would introduce pedestrian traffic movements on the A515 and could lead to indiscriminate car parking at a location where visibility is severely restricted. They point out that there is no footway or street lighting in the area (the substandard footway on the southern side of the A515 only leads up to Pomeroy Cottages) and pedestrians attempting to cross opposite Pomeroy Cottages would be in potential danger due to high speed, lack of street lighting and restricted safe stopping distances.
47. We fully agree with the Highway Authority's assessment that the current access arrangements are substandard and potentially dangerous, both for vehicles and for any pedestrian attempting to access the site. However the key point is that Hall could be brought back into use as a community facility at any time without the need for planning permission, and the access arrangements would remain as they are at present.
48. The question is whether the proposed development (which are only to make alterations to the external appearance of the building), would in itself lead to an intensification of the use of the access by both cars and pedestrians, when compared to the level of use if the building were simply re-opened without any external changes (Note, any internal refurbishments do not need planning permission).
49. The proposals subject of the current application that require planning permission are not required to facilitate the return of the building to wider community use. The only provision that is arguably required to broaden the attractiveness of the venue to use is the provision of the septic tank; but even that could be substituted for a composting toilet without requiring planning permission, or by utilising portable toilets for any community events of lengthy duration.
50. As such, our view is that the proposed development would not in and of itself directly lead to or facilitate an increased intensity of use of the building, and therefore we do not consider that there are sufficient grounds to refuse the application on Highway Safety grounds.

Archaeological considerations

51. The Authority's archaeologist has identified that in the field to the east of the Hall there are three archaeological features: a Roman road, a lead rake and a boundary stone. These are not statutory monuments but are all listed on the HBSMR and are considered to have low (or local) significance
52. The Parish Boundary stone is located by the gate into the field at the side of the A515. It has been confirmed that the development would not impact upon the stone. The works to install a septic tank are small in scale but could impact on the Roman Road.
53. A condition is recommended to agree and carry out an archaeological monitoring/watching brief to mitigate the impact of the septic tank groundworks on any archaeological remains.

Climate Change Mitigation

54. No climate change mitigation statement has been submitted. However the plans do include proposals for an array of solar panels on both the west and east facing roof slopes, which will provide a source of renewable power to the village hall. Given the fairly minor nature of the proposed development, the provision of solar pv panels is proportionate and meets the requirements of policy CC1.

Other Considerations

55. A septic tank is proposed in the field to the east of the building. The Design and Access Statement explains that a package treatment plant (which is sequentially preferred) is not possible as package plants require a permanent electrical feed. The Hall is not connected to the main electric supply and is considering the use of a generator as back up to the batteries of the photo-voltaic installation. The additional cost of mains electric is not viable. This argument is accepted in this case and the septic tank is acceptable in principle.
56. As the site already has a lawful use as a village hall, we do not consider that the proposals would have any additional impacts on residential amenity over and above the existing situation.

Conclusion

57. The proposed alterations to the Memorial Hall would be in keeping with the character of the building and the surrounding area. The proposed alterations would not, in themselves, lead to an intensification of vehicular and pedestrian access and so whilst it is acknowledged that the existing arrangement is substandard, there are insufficient grounds to justify a refusal on highway safety grounds. The application is recommended for conditional approval.

Human Rights

58. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

59. Nil

Report Author and Job Title

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