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Design & Planning

Heritage Impact Assessment to accompany application for full planning permission at St.John's Community Centre, Church Street, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 6AR.



Existing East elevation of St John's Community Centre

Introduction

This statement has been prepared on behalf of Penistone Town Council and will accompany a Full Planning Application (Ref PP-13694061) for minor alterations to the existing St John's community centre (SJCC) building involving the external changes of new fire escapes, boiler flues and air transfer grills and associated internal alterations.

Proposed Works under Consideration

The works will involve two windows being removed and fire escape doors installed in their place (see following images). NB a photo of the second fire escape location, located within the yard could not be obtained due to access.



Existing East elevation of St John's Community Centre



Detail of Existing East elevation of St John's Community Centre

The community centre is currently used as a community space which can be rented from Penistone Town Council (PTC) and hosts many local activity groups. The community centre also houses the administrative offices for PTC's town clerk and hosts PTC meetings. The alterations are being made to improve the fire safety of the community centre.

Other internal spaces will be altered to allow better use the existing accommodation, ensure compliance with current building regulations for escape in the event of a fire and accommodate a new boiler room.

Relevant Legislation / Planning Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

In terms of the impact on the special character and appearance of the listed building, Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, states:

In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

NPPF para 189 and 190: The NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance (heritage) of any heritage asset affected by a proposal including any contribution made by the setting of the asset. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and the degree of intervention the proposal represents. The local Planning Authorities will take the heritage significance of an asset into account and consider any impacts on the asset to avoid conflict with the conservation of the asset.

NPPF para 193: Great weight given to an asset's conservation, irrespective of the degree of harm

NPPF para 194: Any harm to or loss of significance will require clear and convincing justification

Barnsley Local Plan Policies

Barnsley Local Plan Policy HE1: The Historic Environment: Positively encourage developments that help in the management, conservation and understanding of the historic environment

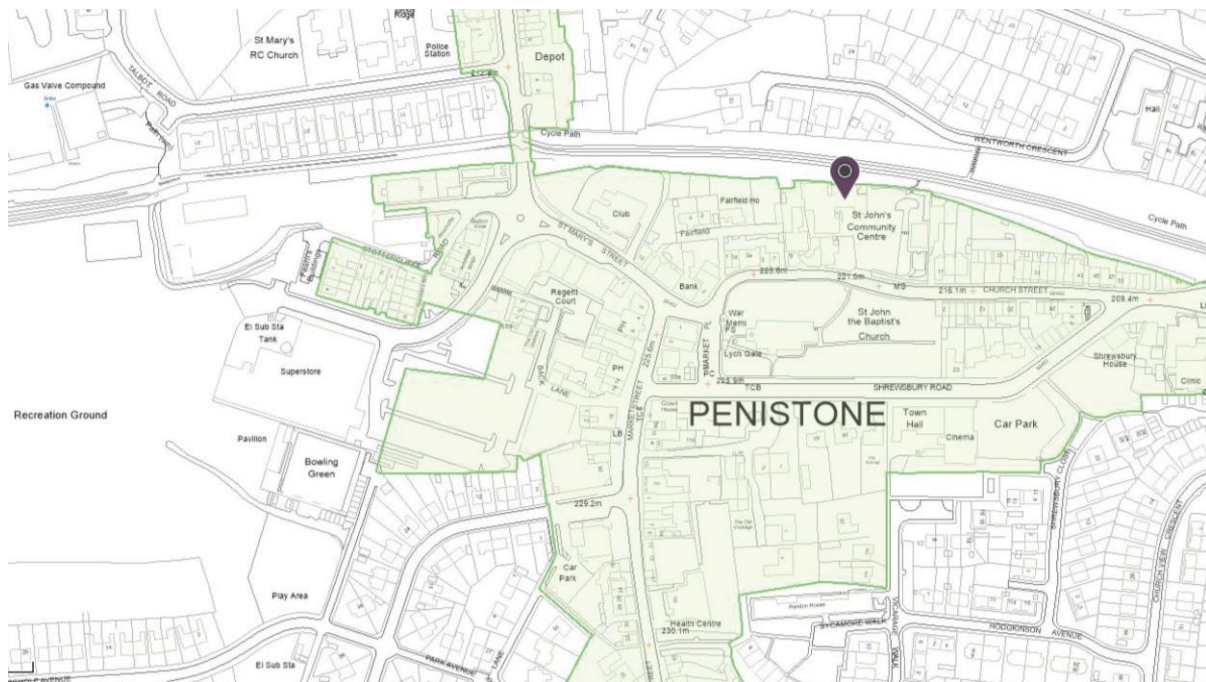
Barnsley Local Plan Policy HE3: Developments affecting Historic Buildings: Proposals involving historic buildings should conserve and where appropriate enhance, respect historic precedents, and capitalise on opportunities to reveal significance.

Designated Heritage Assets

SJCC itself is unlisted however it sits within the Penistone Conservation Area and is adjacent to the Former Girl's National School a non-designated local heritage asset.

SJCC also sits nearby other local heritage assets, notably;

- Milestone built into north wall of churchyard at se 247033. Grade II listed 27/04/1988 No. 1151032
- Church of St John. Listed Building. Grade I. Listed 23/06/1965. No. 1314709



Extract of Penistone Conservation Area Map with St John's Community Centre indicated

Numerous other local heritage assets exist within the Conservation area but the above are the closest and may have views from/to them affected by the proposals.

History of SJCC

SJCC is late 19th Century, however bears a stone plaque inscribed with the date "1987" on the East facing elevation of the Upper Hall. Records indicate that construction work took place between 1850 to 1891. It was originally designed as an addition to the Girl's National School and is typical of municipal buildings of that time featuring smooth red brick and grey slate roof.

From comparison of historic maps, SJCC has undergone a number of historic alterations and extensions with the Lower & Upper Halls having additions to them between 1892 & 1903 and further additions to the rear of the Upper Hall by 1929.



Heritage Values

The significances and sensitivities of the heritage assets in the affected areas can usefully be identified following the practice and advice provided in the English Heritage Conservation Principles (2008).

Evidential Value

Overall, SJCC has evidential value with respect to what it can tell about past local activities in Penistone and its development over the early 20th Century. The application focuses on an area of the building which has had previous modern alterations (windows replaced with uPVC) and an area to the rear of the public hidden from public sight so potential for evidential value in this area is limited.

Historical Value

Overall, the principal historical value here would arise from the association with the adjacent Girl's National School. The illustrative value embodied by the story the place has to offer and the relationship between the spaces contributes. However, the numerous modern internal and external modifications over time to SJCC mean any associative or illustrative value derived from this building is limited.

Aesthetic Value

Overall, there is clearly some designed aesthetic value present, despite the building being functional and municipal in nature. The greatest contributor is the aesthetic value embodied in the arrangement of the site and the historic context of the Girl's National School. However again, externally & internally within SJCC this is much less apparent as any historic fixtures and fittings are no longer present or very limited.

Communal/Social Value

This area of heritage value is concerned with how heritage assets are used and valued by society. Clearly, overall SJCC has a high degree of communal / social value. The building is run by PTC as a community centre and offers activities relating to the community whilst also hosting the Penistone Archives.

Heritage Impact Assessment

As can be seen above, the external alterations and internal finish of the spaces related in the application are mid to later twentieth century. Therefore, these spaces contribute only marginally to the historic significance of the conservation area and local heritage assets.

Primarily, the outward appearance of SJCC contributes most due to its aesthetic values and to a degree the evidential value embodied by the arrangement adjacent to the Girl's National School

The proposed arrangement to provide improved fire safety and access contribute to enhancing the function and access of the building. As such, any minor harm the works may cause will be offset by the improved public & safety benefit the proposal will generate.

Conclusion

Due to the minor contribution of the external aesthetic and evidential value embodied, I would conclude the proposed works represent a low degree of harm to the heritage significance of the building and also to the conservation area. The alterations will be in keeping with the existing building in both materials, form and function whilst upgrading access and safety which will benefit the community.

Overall, I would suggest the proposal is justified and represents no harm to the conservation area or other local heritage assets and is therefore in accordance with local and national planning policy.