

Hauxton Old Village Hall

Church Road Hauxton CB22 5HS

Design & Access Statement

16 Dec 2020

DAS01

Existing Property

This former school hall acted as the village hall for Hauxton until a recent move to the newly constructed Village Centre, adjacent to the playground. The Parish Council partly funded the new purpose-built Village Centre by selling the application site with planning permission for change of use to residential.

The core of the building is an attractive hall building, featuring tall windows and ornate brickwork quoins, window surrounds and pediments. To the rear, a basic 1970's single storey extension provides toilet facilities for the hall.

Planning History

An existing, valid application exists for change of use to residential (S/0567/18/FL). This permission sought to establish the change of use. The new owners are revisiting the design in this application to improve on the design quality and make the best use of the site.

The previous permission amounted to little more than changing the names of the rooms - 'hall' became 'lounge' and 'toilets' become 'bedroom' etc. Window sizes remained unchanged even when entirely unsuitable for the proposed use - the very large proposed master bedroom only had access to the existing tiny toilet block window.

Proposed changes

The new owners entered early design consultation with the Parish Council and it was agreed that the front of the building would receive minimal changes so as not to alter the street-scape too much. By doing this, it will remain obvious that the building was the former school and village hall and the sense of history will be retained.

The existing building is set quite a long way back on the site and this, combined with the large double-height spaces, make it unsuitable for dividing-up or providing more than one dwelling. In order to make best use of the site, it would work best as a larger family house. The previous 're-labelling' permission only found room for two bedrooms - it is too large a site (and existing footprint) to have so few bedrooms.

The re-design submitted here seeks to retain the form of the existing building from as many angles as possible. Proposed rear extension is set back from side walls and only projects 0.3m further into the rear garden than the existing structure does. New ridge heights are lower than existing. By setting the extension back in this way, it becomes impossible to see from the street and greatly reduces the impact extension works have on the neighbouring properties, which are relatively distant in any case.

Design considerations:

As explained, the starting point for the design is to keep works to the front facade to an absolute minimum. The main change to this elevation involves lowering the cill to the tall window to insert a front entrance door. This will capitalise on the existing double height glazing, which is currently bisected by an ugly suspended ceiling system. All windows to the existing building will be refurbished or replaced with matching timber versions. Other minor changes to the front elevation

involve changing a window off the lounge to a french door and bricking-up the ugly 1970's side door near the kitchen. The area leading to this would make a good bike or bin store.

The proposed rear extension extends roughly as far back as the existing extension (to be demolished) and is set back in all directions so it will be very hard to see until you are well down the little side track that leads to the farmer's field. Likewise, it is distant to the neighbour to the east and avoids covering up the original rear gable of the hall (to the meeting room).

The distance of structures to the boundary with the neighbour to the east has been improved in this application. The existing rear extension creates a pinch point with the boundary hedge. This has been eliminated by setting back the extension in this area - the resultant space near the boundary would be much easier to maintain and care for.

The form of the rear extension follows that of the main hall structure - a deliberate mirroring but expressed in contrasting materials that make it easy to differentiate where the old hall stops and the new part starts.

The second storey of the extension sits within the pitched roof, with rear dormers providing the head-height to comfortably move around the bedrooms. Two dormers are used instead of a long continuous dormer as they are more subservient to the roof slope. Dormers are set back from the verges, eaves and ridge for this reason too. Because of the angles of the neighbouring gardens, second floor windows do not directly overlook neighbours - any views are very oblique and in any case quite distant.

The proposed materials and details are all high-end - concealed gutters, zinc roofing, slim format brickwork. Simple, crisp and modern - and not competing with the intricacy of the old hall. The proposed materials are quite dark coloured and this will help subordinate the extension, as forms in darker materials look visually smaller, especially when set against trees.

The proposed extension ridge-line is the same as the one over the main hall space, which makes it the equal second highest ridge after the higher one over the existing meeting room.

The proposed Crittal-type windows to the rear extension, while in vogue now, are somewhat timeless as they have been around for nearly 100yrs. Whilst obviously a different style to the existing timber windows, the thin horizontal glazing bars tie in with the ones on the timber windows to the front elevation. The glazing is larger on the rear elevation - being north-facing - larger glazed areas are needed to ensure a good level of daylight inside.

As the existing chimney stack is in the hallway, a new wood burner and chimney are proposed for the rear garden room. The burner will be a highly efficient model and will be DEFRA approved for use in smoke control areas.

The applicants noted in the consultee comments for the previous change of use application that the neighbour to the west likes the fact that the blinds are drawn in the tall west-facing hall window. While we cannot guarantee the eventual blind situation, we are proposing a 1.8m high boundary wall in this area to give privacy to both properties. The bricks used for this wall will try to match the bricks of the existing hall.

The flat roof to the ground floor bedroom extension is a sedum/moss roof. Hardstanding areas are reduced when compared to the previous situation.

All trees on the site are retained in this proposal, including the silver birch to the front of the property. New landscaping and planting beds to the front area help convert the former car park and give a degree of privacy to the front windows. The rear garden will be mostly lawn with the sectional outbuilding demolished.

Three cars can comfortably parked on the front hard standing area. Up to six cars could fit on the drive for when there are visitors to the property.

Access

Principles of access to the property are unchanged.

The ground floor bedrooms and bathrooms give the potential for this to be a life-time home.

Consultation

At a very early stage of the design, the design ethos was agreed with Parish Council members. These proposals have been submitted to the Parish Council and have their support.