

The Great Hall At Mains Mains Lane Poulton-Le-Fylde FY6 7LE

Proposed erection of 8 no. guest accommodation pods to the rear of the site to support the existing wedding venue.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

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/1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. PWA Planning is retained by James Foster, to prepare a Heritage Statement relating to the proposed erection of 8no. guest accommodation pods to the rear of the site, to be used in connection with the existing wedding venue on site at The Great Hall at Mains, Mains Lane, Poulton-Le-Fylde, FY6 7LE.
- 1.2. The Heritage Statement should be read alongside the full suite of plans and reports submitted for determination as part of the full planning application.
- 1.3. Should the LPA require any further information in respect of heritage matters to ensure the grant of consent, then it is requested that Agent is contacted in the first instance.

/2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The planning application site relates to existing wedding venue known as 'The Great Hall at Mains', located in Little Singleton, on Mains Lane. This site contains a mixture of uses, including residential and holiday accommodation as illustrated in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Ariel overview of the application site outlined in red (Source: Google Maps)

- 2.2. The application has been submitted alongside detailed plans and a Planning Statement which sets out the extent of the proposal and provides an in-depth analysis against both national and local planning policies. Whilst it is not necessary to repeat all this here, the Planning Statement confirms how the proposed creation of guest accommodation pods to the north-west of the site would support the existing uses at the site, providing additional accommodation for the existing wedding venue guests, achieved by erecting 8 pods, accessed through the creation of a new path taken from the existing hardstanding car park at the rear of the site.

2.3. The application site currently lies within a Countryside Area and an Area of Open Coastline as defined in the adopted Fylde Local Plan. The application site does not lie within a conservation area, although it is identified to lie within the setting of the Grade II listed Mains Hall building, as shown on Figure 2 below. Therefore, the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 5 - Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) are followed through this statement.



Figure 2: Map Extract from Historic England, showing the position of the application site (red triangle) in relation to the Listed Building (blue triangle)

2.4. The listed description for the Grade II listed Mains Hall is provided by Historic England. The building was first listed on June 9th 1967, with the most recent amendment to the listing description occurring on June 11th 1986, as set out below:

Manor house, perhaps originally late C16, remodelled in C17, altered in C18, and subsequently; now hotel. White-painted rendered brick, slate roof. Now very irregular plan: 2- room hall range flanked by short projecting gabled bays, with large rear extension to the centre and various outshuts and additions. Formerly 3 storeys, reduced to 2 storeys in C18. Front has doorway in centre, 4 windows at ground floor and 5 above, one window on each floor of the left gable and 2 on each floor of the right, all of these windows modern vertical rectangular casements with diamond-ledged glazing. Rear wall has traces of 3 labels to former brick mullion windows, and there is a 2-light brick mullion window in the apex of has two 1/4-round moulded beams with large cyma stops, ex situ panelling in C17 style; former kitchen (now bar) to rear of hall has stopped chamfered beams and similar bressumer; staircase with turned balusters, panelled newel posts, broad handrail; roof of 4 collar trusses with cambered collars, 2 pairs of purlins windbraced above and below (some braces missing), 2nd and 4th trusses have wattle and daub infill and doorways with chamfered jambs (a curiosity of the roof is that the tie-beams appear to rest on wall plates set about one metre from the walls, which are clearly re-used, having joist housings on the upper edges).

/3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 A search of the statutory list provided by Historic England was undertaken by PWA Planning in November 2021. This confirmed that the nearest listed building is Mains Hall, which is Grade II listed, and sits to the east of the site.
- 3.2 Whilst the site lies within close proximity to the Grade II listed Mains Hall, the proposed development is for additional accommodation to support the wedding guests, which is the same use of the Mains Hall; therefore, it is envisioned that the proposals will only have a minor impact on the building, with the scale of development suitable for the size of the site.
- 3.3 This proposed application reflects a continuous effort to maintain and enhance the offerings of the wedding venue, utilising the entire site. Further to this, the proposed application will also allow the site to be redeveloped to reflect the aspirations of the new owners, enhancing the facilities and offerings of the site, which allows for a greater number of guests to stay at the site.
- 3.4 The proposed development seeks to create additional accommodation facilities on site to support the existing accommodation provided within the Mains Hall. The proposed development is considered to have no discernible visual impact on the character, appearance or setting of the adjacent listed building.
- 3.5 Indeed, the proposed materials used to form the pods are considered to be sympathetic to their woodland setting, the listed building and the vernacular as a whole and will ultimately improve the current unkept appearance of the rear portion of the site, to enhance the views of both the Main and Great Hall.
- 3.6 Fylde Borough Council have produced a Built Heritage Strategy for Fylde (2015-2032), which aims to provide an overview of many factors that should be considered when planning for development to ensure the built heritage is protected, enhanced, and preserved. This has been carefully considered when designing the scheme proposed,

with the proposals reflecting a small-scale development responding to the surrounding countryside landscape in which the site lies within.

- 3.7 Page 58 of this strategy states that: "*The Council will promote high quality contextual design which is sympathetic to the historic character of the area, reflecting and interpreting the particular qualities of the surroundings which responds to and reinforces locally distinctive patterns of development including form, scale, proportion, materials and landscaping.*"
- 3.8 The materials of the proposed pods reflect the Council's ambitions, utilising similar materials which look to reflect the neighbouring Great Hall, including a range of cedar, larch, and thermowood timber cladding.
- 3.9 In addition to incorporating similar materials, the proposed pods will also reflect similar angular building features present on both the Grade II listed Mains Hall and Great Hall, responding their historic character and the sites setting.
- 3.10 Further to the above, page 65 identifies it to be a key action of both the council and other organisations to '*seek to maximise publicity for the area in respect of its environmental quality and the contribution that its built heritage makes.*'
- 3.11 The proposals will help to promote the heritage of the site and its surroundings, through the expansion of accommodation at the site, with a greater quantity of guests able to stay on site in proximity to the nearby heritage asset, instead of having to find alternative accommodation arrangements. It is further considered that more public will be enticed to use the site as their wedding venue with the opportunity for more of their guests to appreciate the surrounding built heritage.

/4 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the Development Plan. The determination shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. The statutory Development Plan for the site comprises the Fylde Local Plan (adopted October 2018). Key planning policy documents that comprise 'material considerations' include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) and other local supplementary planning guidance documents considered relevant to the proposal.

Fylde Local Plan (adopted October 2018)

- 4.3. The following Local Plan policies are relevant to the proposal at hand:
- Policy ENV5 – Historic Environment
 - Policy EC6 – Leisure, Culture and Tourism Development
 - Policy EC7 – Tourism Accommodation
- 4.4. **Policy ENV5** requires proposals for development to conserve, protect and where appropriate enhance the character, appearance, significance, and historic value of Fylde's designated and undesignated heritage assets. In addition, stating that the Council will; 'promote the district's heritage assets through tourism, culture and economic development.'
- 4.5. This proposal presents the opportunity to enhance and improve the existing local heritage asset by virtue of the extension accommodation facilities, which will contribute to a wider customer base that can appreciate the setting of the Grade II listed Mains Hall.

- 4.6. Therefore, it is envisioned through the proposed development that greater interest will be generated in relation to the site, helping to promote this already popular heritage asset and wedding venue to an even wider audience. Moreover, the additional accommodation that the proposals will provide offers greater potential for visitors to stay on site, instead of having to find alternative accommodation arrangements elsewhere; thus, enhancing localised spending power
- 4.7. **Policy EC6** promotes sustainable tourism through 'realising the potential of the Borough's heritage assets and states that the council will seek to encourage daytime and evening cultural tourism facilities, in addition to protecting these assets and support them to adapt to new challenges.
- 4.8. This proposal reflects a development that seeks to revitalise the existing local heritage asset through enhancing the existing wedding venue and its "improved wedding venue offer". The applicant's intention is to continue to support the local economy in delivering high-quality accommodation for wedding guests through the construction of sympathetically designed pods. As such, the proposals are supported by Policy EC6 in protecting and realising the potential to rejuvenate the building.
- 4.9. Policy EC7 allows for a limited increase in accommodation within existing static and touring caravan site boundaries to enable environmental improvements. Whilst the existing accommodation provision is not provided within a 'static' or 'touring caravan site' the proposed development is of similar nature comprising of a minor development of 8 pods for short-term guest accommodation. Therefore, the proposals are considered to represent a small-scale contribution to an existing tourist accommodation, upon an existing and well-established site. It is also considered that the proposed development will enhance the environment through maintenance of the area that is currently left unruly managed and underutilised; thus, incurring aesthetic benefits.
- 4.10. Moreover, the principle of tourism-based development has previously been established on site, through the existing use of the site, with the Grade II listed Mains Hall currently providing limited accommodation for wedding guests, while further short-stay

accommodation at the site was granted under application ref. 17/0670. As such it is considered to reflect development determined to be permitted under Policy EC7.

Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.11. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The golden thread running throughout the Framework is the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11) whereby developments which correctly balance the requirements of economic, social, and environmental issues should be granted planning permission unless there are strong reasons that permission should not be granted.
- 4.12. Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF considers heritage planning and identifies the following key drivers in the decision-making process:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 4.13. The NPPF unifies the overall approach to planning, in order to ensure that deliberations over decisions relating to heritage assets are made in the full planning context. Securing sustainable development is the primary driver of the NPPF. In the heritage context this relies on maintaining active use (long-term) in a manner that seeks to limit potential harm to significance.
- 4.14. Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

4.15. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states:

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

4.16. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states:

"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

/5 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The site has been utilised as an event venue since 2004, including the facilities to accommodate the wedding party within the Grade II listed Mains Hall. The proposed development subject to this application would support and improve the offer at this venue, thereby continuing to support the local economy and preserve the use of the heritage asset into the future, through the utilisation of the additional revenue generated.
- 5.2. The proposed development reflects a design that will mimic and reflect the existing building at the Great Hall, compromised of similar materials and angular features. It is anticipated that overall, the proposed design and selection of materials will serve well to attract customers but will also ensure that the proposed pods will not detract from the adjacent heritage assets.
- 5.3. When considering the scheme against Paragraph 199 of the NPPF, the impact of this proposed development on the significance of the nearby designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. It is considered that the impact of the proposed development upon the significance of the Grade II listed building is negligible, with the proposals helping to enhance the site overall, through the utilisation of this vacant parcel of land.
- 5.4. Considering the scheme against Paragraph 202 of the NPPF, it notes that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.5. In this instance, it is considered that less than substantial harm is caused by the proposal, with the proposed works being carried out to secure the long-term future of the site as a wedding venue. The additional income revenue streams the guest pods will create will also help to preserve the neighbouring heritage asset, by virtue of not only improving the existing wedding venue and associated facilities, allowing more

- guests to stay on site after a wedding, but also increase funds to spend on the upkeep of the Listed building.
- 5.6. In addition, additional employment will be created for the local area, also a public benefit, as additional staff will be needed to help manage, maintain and service these new guest pods.
- 5.7. Lastly, in considering Paragraph 203 of the NPPF, it is judged that the development proposals subject to this application are sympathetic and in-keeping with the woodland setting and surroundings. This has been achieved through the careful consideration of both the proposals design, sitting, and scale to reflect the surroundings limiting any visual impacts. The proposed number of pods and siting of the pods across the site is considered appropriate, located to the rear of the existing Great Hall, ensuring that the development remains out of site from the wider surroundings, while also not overly developing the site.
- 5.8. In addition to the above, planting of trees and shrubs, including soft edge / transitional areas of planting, has been incorporated within the proposed design to guarantee the Grade II listed building remains conserved and protected, ensuring that there will be no loss in its significance.
- 5.9. Therefore, the scheme is not considered harmful to the significance of the setting of the Grade II listed building, and in taking a balanced view, the benefits of the proposed development and the enhancements to the existing wedding view are considered to far outweigh any perceived harm.
- 5.10. Overall, the proposed development is deemed to promote good design, that respects and protects the significance of the Grade II listed building. Any perceived harm that results from proposed erection of pods is demonstrably outweighed by the public benefits that result from securing the optimum viable use, enhancing the venue as a leisure and cultural attraction, while providing a greater array of services at the site.

- 5.11. On the above basis, the proposed development is ultimately consistent with Local Plan Policies ENV5 and EC6, and EC7 as well as the provisions of the NPPF. Permission should therefore be granted without delay.



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