DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

ALTON SCHOOL DORMITORIES

09/01114/FUL 13 NOV 2009

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1. Introduction

1.1 Alton School are applying to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for planning permission to change the use of part of the ground floor of the school building into accommodation.

1.2 The building is Grade II* listed, built in 1847 as the Hospital of St John by A. W. N. Pugin. The building has previously been used as a Monastery and a Boys School in it's history but more recently the building has been split into two sections. One section has been used as a youth retreat centre by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham in association with Alton Castle. The other section of the building was used as a primary school until 5 years ago, and has since been vacant. This application looks to bring the remaining third of the building into the use of the retreat centre, returning the whole building into one use and ownership.

1.3 The youth retreat centre wish to provide accommodation for staff and teachers to permit greater numbers of visiting school groups to be accommodated, building on the great success since opening in 2001.

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2. Process

2.1 This Design and Access statement is provided in accordance with the requirements of Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Article 4C of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 and Article 4C of the Town and Country Planning General Development (Procedure) (amendment) (England) Order 2006.

2.2 The Design and Access Statement sets out information concerning the design and access principles for the development of this site. It provides a contextual appraisal of the proposed development that follows the Assessment, Involvement, Evaluation and Design process.

3. Assessment

Background

3.1 Brownhill Hayward Brown have been commissioned by Alton School to undertake the architectural and design work related to this scheme.

Site Context

3.2 The site is on the outskirts of the village of Alton and sits to the south east of Alton Castle above the Churnet Valley. The site is within the Alton and Farley conservation area.

Local Character

3.3 The site sits next to the Medieval Alton Castle. The mix of buildings in the village of Alton are mainly of sand stone construction.

Involvement

3.4 Pre-application discussions have been held with officers from the conservation department at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and English Heritage.

Evaluation

3.5 The change of use application will greatly improve the use and facilities of the building, and will allow more people to enjoy the currently vacant listed building.

3.6 The use of the building will safeguard the future of the building without allowing it to fall into ruin. This will ensure the complex remains in single ownership permitting suitable maintenance etc.

3.7 The project has been designed to have minimal affect on the historic fabric and is all reversible in nature.

4. Use

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4.1 Current use is vacant, previously a primary school (5 years ago).

4.2 Proposed use is staff and teacher accommodation.

5. Amount

5.1 All works are internal. The amount is unaffected by this application.

6. Layout

6.1 The layout of buildings within the site are unaffected by this application.

7. Scale

7.1 The scale of the building is unaffected by this application.

8. Appearance

8.1 The addition of 2 No. drainage pipes and 2 No. stone vents to the south elevation are the only alterations to the external appearance of the building.

8.2 The stone vent will be cut stone sourced to match the existing building.

8.3 The drainage pipes will be cast iron, painted black to match those found elsewhere on the existing building.

9. Access

9.1 Internal circulation will be level or ramped where necessary.

9.2 One of the proposed accommodation rooms will be wheelchair accessible (including shower room).

9.3 It is proposed to have limited carparking within the former playground area. This will be softened by limited landscaping.