St Giles' Roman Catholic Primary School, Cheadle, Staffordshire
Internal Re-arrangements and External Fencing
04th October, 2017
Design Access Statement

Introduction
This design access statement accompanies a planning application for a proposed internal alterations and relocation of existing external fencing on the site of St Giles' RC Primary School, Cheadle, and has been written to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. Local planning policy was considered.

Use
The current use of the application site is a primary school, the internal works areas are spread across the ground floor of the school and are identified on drawing no. 2528-19-12. The proposed alterations on the ground floor centre around the provision of two accessible WCs and DDA stairlift (required to provide suitable facilities for disabled staff and pupils). Along with an additional external door to the Y3 classroom.

The external works focus on the playground at the front of the school and the relocation of existing bow top fencing as shown on drawing no. 2528-19-13.

Amount
To the ground floor, work would generally focus on the main school entrance corridor and sapces immediately off this with the exception of the Y3 external door. The current copier room would be decreased in size, to allow space and access for a disabled toilet. The existing classroom store adjacent to the hall will also be reduced in size to accommodate a further disabled WC. A wheelchair stairlift will also be installed in the main school corridor to permit movement for the disabled between the varying levels within the school.

Access
Access will be improved within the school by the incorporation of the stairlift. The new external door to the Y3 classroom will also permit access directly from the recreation area. Access routes towards the school grounds will not be affected by proposed plans.

Appearance
The proposed plan has no effect on the external appearance of the school buildings. The fencing to the front playground will be post fixed with no fixings into the historic building façade.

Statement of Historical Significance
This assessment of the building and its setting has been undertaken using 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' and 'The Setting of Heritage Assets', as produced by English Heritage.

Description of Heritage Value and Significance

Historical Value
Much of St. Giles' Primary School displays a certain degree of historical value which is mainly associative in nature, with the original school buildings having been designed by the distinguished Gothic Revivalist architect A.W.N. Pugin. Although Pugin's work was largely ecclesiastical and usually more embellished (taking inspiration from middle age 'decorated' styles of gothic), he did to a lesser extent become engaged on associated structures of a more secular use such as dwellings and school buildings. In Pugin's written work 'Contrasts', he promotes this use of the style on secular buildings

so projects such as St. Giles' are a fairly rare expression of this.

Evidential Value

In terms of evidential value, St. Giles' can offer some degree of value in terms of telling us about the Victorian sociological movement to formalise education practices in Britain, with the acceptance by government of responsibility for education of the masses, eventually resulting in the 1870 Education Act. During this period, school-houses were constructed in most villages, although the small size of these buildings is evidential of the fact not all the school-age population of the village would attend and that classes were mixed ages, village schools sometimes just consisting of one or two classrooms. The relationship of the school to its setting and particularly the proximity to the churches is also evidence of the practice during most of the 19th century of government granting funding to religious bodies to build schools, rather than building them directly itself.

Added to this, the building exemplifies Pugin's own views on how the Gothic style could be employed to instil Christian (Catholic) morals upon the general population.

Aesthetics

As a heritage asset, St Giles' Primary School offers some aesthetic value however the 1950's extensions to the sides and rear of the original building do somewhat detract from this and prevent it being seen in isolation. The area of the building forming this application dates from the 1970's and is located fairly remotely from the Victorian part of the building, to the rear of the site. The style of this extension is unrelated to that of the original school house.

Impact of Proposals

The impact of the proposed works is non-existent externally and on the ground floor particularly, the internal arrangements in the area in question have already been subject to modification in the past and therefore the proposal would do little to damage the historical value of the original building, whilst making it more suitable for continued use by disabled building users and hence the wider viability of the building in its continued use as a primary school.