Heritage Assessment: John Munroe Hospital, Rudyard

Introduction

Town and Country Planning legislation requires the submission of a statement demonstrating how the special historic or architectural interest of a building or area has been considered within a planning application proposal.

This Statement demonstrates how design principles and concepts have been applied to the design of the proposal and how it has taken account of national and local historic environment planning policies, and in particular how the design preserves or enhances the historic and architectural importance of the application building; how the proposal has been designed to harmonise with the existing architectural style of the building and area; the application building's setting; and particular physical features of the building and area that contribute to its special interest or character.

The Statement also shows how the design approach to access balances the recommendations of the Equality Act 2010 with the historic asset.

Rudyard Conservation Area

The Rudyard Conservation Area was designated in July 2016. An Article 4 Direction was first declared on the land to the south west of Rudyard Lake in 1978 to control the substantially rebuilding and extending of holiday chalets. The 2016 Conservation Area covers a much larger area of land and a more comprehensive Article 4 Direction.

There are no Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the application building.

The Rudyard Conservation Area is located about 5km north-west of Leek. It is largely centred on Rudyard Lake and also takes in the wooded banks of the lake, the village of Rudyard and some isolated dwellings and farmsteads close by. It also contains part of the North Staffordshire Railway where it runs alongside the lake.

Rudyard Lake was constructed as a reservoir in the late 18th century to feed the Caldon Canal. During the 19th century, it was a popular destination for tourists, particularly day-trippers who took advantage of its easy reach by train from Stoke on Trent and Macclesfield, and as far away as Manchester. The rail line left by the North Staffordshire Railway now operates for pleasure rides up and down the East side of the lake by the Rudyard Lake Steam Railway . The lake is used for many water-based activities such as boating, canoeing, fishing and also for walks.

The wooded area to the south-west of the lake was historically occupied by a large number of holiday chalets allowing longer stay holidays. Many of these remain- some of them having been renovated or replaced with structures of a more permanent nature. Some have been abandoned and have perished over time.

Rudyard village is concentrated along Lake Road and Dunwood Lane. The dwellings in the village are mostly small stone former farm tenants' cottages. There is a small estate of 20th Century public housing at the end of Lake Road. There are larger dwellings in the village- the former Railway Hotel, now converted into apartments, the Rudyard Hotel, the castellated Cliffe Park Hall, once used as the clubhouse to the Rudyard Golf Club and Rudyard Villa.

The application building is the principal building in the grounds of the John Munroe Hospital. "Fairview" was a large stone dwelling when it was granted planning permission in 1987 for a change of use to a Residential Home for the Elderly. Planning permissions were granted for

additions in 1998, 2000 and 2004 at which point the building became a hospital. Two dwellings, formerly independent of the hospital have been absorbed into the site and are used as part of the hospital operations. One of these- The Larches- is the subject of a separate application.

The Historic Context of the Application Property

The application building was formerly a private dwelling and was used as such when planning permission was granted in 1987 for its change of use to a Residential Home for the elderly. It has received planning permission for three extensions which have all been implemented.

The original building was a substantial two and two and a half storeys and constructed of dressed coursed stone. It dates back to the early 20th Century and has a plain tile roof. There are large gables to the main building and two large stone chimneys in the roof. The windows are mixed in age, size and style with some of the original windows with ornate leaded top lights retained at first floor. Extensions erected since 1987 are of one and two storeys and in a mix of materials. These extensions have largely enveloped the original building with only small parts of the upper floors visible, and larger parts of the original first floor.

The planning policy context

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

The development plan for the area is the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

Plan Policies

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Submission Version February 2018 contains the planning and conservation policies that are relevant to this proposal.

Policy SS1 Development principles requires new development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the area and maintains is local distinctiveness.

Policy 1A encourages Sustainable Development in the area.

Policy SO8 in the Design and Conservation section promotes local distinctiveness by means of good design and the conservation, protection and enhancement of historic assets.

Policy DC2 The Historic Environment requires heritage assets and their setting to be enhanced and gives protection to designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Heritage Assessment

The planning application proposes the rebuilding of two conservatories and the erection of a new building in-between them in the form of an infill. The proposal allows greater flexibility in resident daytime use and better supervision.

The elevations of the proposed extension are to be in coursed natural stone and the roof will be flat with roof lanterns. Windows will be mahogany Upvc to match the windows in this part of the building with smooth natural stone cills.

The application building is within the closed grounds of a hospital and not visible by the general public. Nevertheless, planning legislation requires the proposal to respect the Conservation Area status of the site. In terms of Policy SO8, the proposal is in keeping with the character of the application building and the character, scale and design of buildings nearby. Realistically, the proposal results in a neutral impact on matters of the Conservation Area. The majority of the proposal is a stone replacement of a typical conservatory construction. The infill space is deep within a narrow gap. It is considered that the nature of the application building and the nature of the proposal do not detract from the character of the Rudyard Conservation Area.

Conclusion

This Assessment has, with the assistance of the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal, identified the elements of the character of the Rudyard Conservation Area and examined the value of the application building within this context. The proposal has been assessed against the Council's Local Plan policies. The conclusion of this study is that the proposed extension to The Larches will not harm the historic character of the Conservation Area and will comply with the Council's planning policies.