
Project: **St Giles Catholic Primary School, Cheadle**

Title: **Design and Access Statement / Statement of Significance**

Date: April 2021

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Introduction

This design access statement accompanies a planning application for a proposed internal alterations to 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 limited to the first floor and a small area of the ground floor as identified on drawing no. 2528-30-02A. The proposed alterations on the ground floor include the partial removal of 2no. walls to the head teachers office. The first floor alterations are more extensive and include the removal of walls, relocation of screens and general refurbishment throughout.

Amount

To the ground floor, work would generally focus on the head teachers office and adjacent store. To the first floor the proposals would include alterations to 2no. classrooms, group room, office, tea bar, storage and WC facilities.

Access

Access to and around the building will remain generally unaffected, with the only alteration to any access routes being at first floor level with the creation of two small corridor areas. 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.

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 and first floors, the internal arrangements in the works areas 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 building users and hence the wider viability of the building in its continued use as a primary school.