Project:	**The Valley Primary School, Oakamoor** **Proposed Fencing and Gates**
Title:	**Design and Access Statement/ Statement of Significance**
Date:	**October 2022**
Project ID:	**4271-04**

1. Introduction

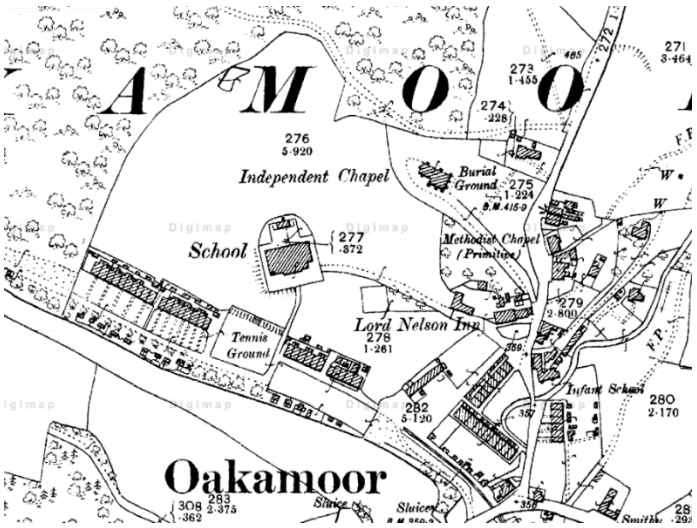
This document accompanies a planning application for the proposed redevelopment of the site at The Valley Primary School in Oakamoor and has been written to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. Local planning policy was considered.

2. Assessment of Asset, Setting and Significance

2.1 Development Over Time

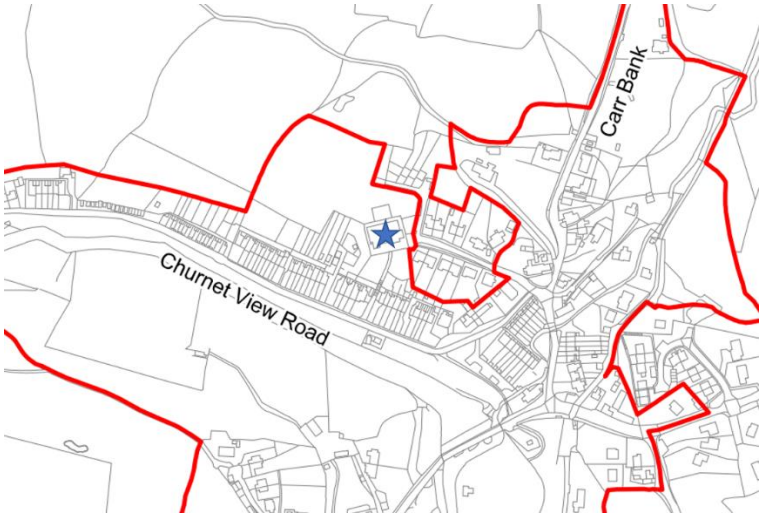
The history of the school building is well documented. Records suggest that the land which the school occupies was originally part of Carr Meadows which was later developed to accommodate the school and housing. It is understood that the school was built by Alfred Bolton in 1892 as a community asset.

Over the years the school has been extended modestly with small extensions to the South and East.



2.2 Description of Asset and its Setting as Existing

The school is located within the Oakamoor Conservation Area. The Valley School (unlisted) was built on Carr Meadows and was named as The New Schools. It was built by Alfred Bolton in 1892 and it was designed to be multi-functional and available for social events and village societies, lack of large social space being at a premium. Built from pink gritstone ashlar, it has an L-shaped plan with prominent gables featuring round and mullioned and transomed windows and finials.



2.3 Assessment of Significance

The assessment of the schools significance and that of its setting have been undertaken using 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' and 'The Setting of Heritage Assets', as produced by English Heritage. The assessment seeks to justify the proposals impact on the asset and on the wider context of the Oakamoor Conservation Area, in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The main school building holds associative historical value within the Conservation Area. The School has been ever-present throughout the development of Oakamoor and still provide the educational use for which they were first intended thus adding to the communal and social value of the buildings.

The building is a visually interesting and high quality piece of architecture when compared with the other buildings within the Conservation Area and therefore holds much aesthetic value. The style adopted was largely favoured for rural education and community buildings in the late 19th century.

3. Amount

The existing school site occupies an area of 10,936m^2. The proposal includes for new fencing to the full boundary of the school site, with gates as necessary. The proposal also includes approximately 115 linear metres of fencing within the school boundary.

4. Layout

The primary design intent for the proposal is to improve security to the school site as a whole. The proposal includes installing new vertical bar fencing to the 'front' of the school site, complete with gates incorporating access control. The rear of the school site will be bounded by paladin mesh fencing. In some instances the boundary is identified by stone walls. In these situations the wall will remain and the new fencing will be installed in board. Please refer to the accompanying plans for details of the types of fencing and locations of installation.

5. Scale

Although single storey the scale of the existing building and the surrounding properties make the school very prominent on the street scene. The proposed fencing to the main prominent elevations is 2.4m high vertical bar railings, with 2.4m high paladin mesh fencing to the rear of the school site. All fencing within the school site is low level bow top fencing.

6. Landscaping

This section is of limited applicability as the application is limited to the replacement of existing fencing. As such the bio diversity of the site will not be affected. There is no significant new landscaping required as the works are modest in nature.

7. Appearance

The existing aesthetic is generally continued to the new with the replacement of the existing vertical bar fencing to the front of the school site with new vertical bar fencing of a more appropriate height. The existing timber fencing and gates to the school car park will be replaced with a 5 bar style timber gate and posts and rail fencing. There is no architectural merit in changing the aesthetic nor attempting to make a significant statement with the proposal.

8. Access

School access and security will be improved with the addition of the new security fencing to the perimeter of the school site along with the access control to the main pedestrian access points. The general access to the school building and around the school building will not be affected.

9. Impact of Proposals

The proposals forming this application present a range of impacts on the asset itself but also a number of potential positive impacts for both the school and the wider area of Oakamoor.

To the exterior of the site the proposals include the removal of some poor quality fencing and boundary treatments which are beyond repair. The condition of the poor quality fencing is detrimental to the appearance of the school and the wider Conservation Area.

Overall the impacts of these proposals on the historical asset and Conservation Area are relatively minor when compared to those carried out previously within the local vicinity. There is also the case that these proposals are securing the future of the asset by improving

security and making the site suitable for use as a school in the 21st century and for many years to come.