

Introduction

This statement has been written to ensure that the initial principle of this proposed development provides a scheme which has been considered to its highest level and against the relevant policies and guidance as stated in Government advice.

The aim within this document is to demonstrate the key factors which have influenced the layout and design of the detailed proposals and how this complies with the guidelines set out by local and central Government guidance and standards.

Site Analysis

The application site is centrally located within the built core of Hitchin and to the north of the town centre.

It is located approximately 0.5 miles to the west of the railway station which has direct links to London, Cambridge and Peterborough. The location is one of the most sustainable in the town with immediate walking distance to all shops and other amenities. The nearest bus stop is less than 100m away on Nightingale Road.

The site is approximately 0.1 hectares in area and is currently home to the existing scout hut which is used by the church and many local community groups such as the Girl Guides, Scouts and Feed Up Warm Up.



Aerial view of the site

Policy Context

North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031

Policy SP1: Sustainable Development

Policy SP2: Settlement hierarchy and Spatial Distribution Policy

Policy SP6: Sustainable transport

Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability

Policy SP10: Healthy Communities

Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity
Policy SP13: Historic Environment
Policy T1: Transport
Policy T2: Parking
Policy D1: Sustainable Design
Policy D3 Protecting living conditions
Policy D4 Air quality
Policy HC1: Community Facilities
Policy NE2: Landscape
Policy HE1: Designated heritage assets
Policy HE3: Non-designated heritage assets

Supplementary Planning Documents

Vehicle Parking at New Developments SPD September 2011

Planning History

18/01946/FP	Our Lady and St Andrews RC Church, 16 Nightingale Road, Hitchin Erection of two storey church hall following demolition of existing scout hut. Alterations to car park layout and access. Granted; 15/11/2018
17/01984/1	Our Lady and St Andrews RC Church, 16 Nightingale Road, Hitchin Single storey extension Granted; 05/10/2017
77/01150/1	Our Lady and St Andrews RC Church, 16 Nightingale Road, Hitchin Erection of prefabricated hut for youth, scout and guide activities Granted; 01/12/1977

Proposals

The proposals seek permission for the erection of a replacement scout hut following demolition of the existing, as well as alterations to the parking layout and access. It is also intended to remove one existing tree as shown on the site plan.

Use

The existing scout hut was built as a temporary building and brought to the site in mid 1970's. It was never intended to still be standing today. Since then, it has been used by the church and many local groups and charities.

Unfortunately, despite efforts to refurbish the building, it does not and will never be able to meet current day standards and is becoming dilapidated in some areas.

Layout

Due to a 20ft no build zone covenant on the site, the proposed building has been located as close as possible to its original position. It is intended to create a slightly larger, modern version of a traditional scout hut and will connect to the existing kitchen and WC areas of the church, meaning that users will no longer have to go outside to access these facilities.

Scale

It is of utmost importance that the proposed building blends well with the surroundings and do not appear out of keeping with the existing neighbouring buildings.

The proposed replacement building will be approximately 1m taller than that of the existing.

Appearance

The elevational style of the new building has been designed to fit in with the existing church buildings. It is traditional in form but uses high quality external materials of red facing brickwork and plain roof tiles to match the adjacent church buildings.

Access

The existing access to the site is via the Grove Road end of College Road and there are no plans to alter this.

Splayed parking spaces have been allowed for along College Road to make it easier to enter and exit along this one way section of road.

A new parking arrangement has been designed to conform to current policy and allows for better manoeuvring than at present. There are also two disabled parking spaces allowed for.



Existing car park arrangement

Refuse and Recycling

Refuse lorries currently enter the site on College Road from Grove Road and stop briefly to empty bins before continuing along the road. There are no plans to change this arrangement.

There are no proposals to change the existing refuse and recycling areas which are located adjacent to the existing Kitchen.

Landscaping

It is proposed to remove one existing tree to facilitate the proposed parking arrangement.

Small areas of planting to verges are proposed which sees an increase of more than 10% biodiversity net gain.

Conclusion

By replacing the existing building, it will ensure the continued use of a vital community facility for many years to come.