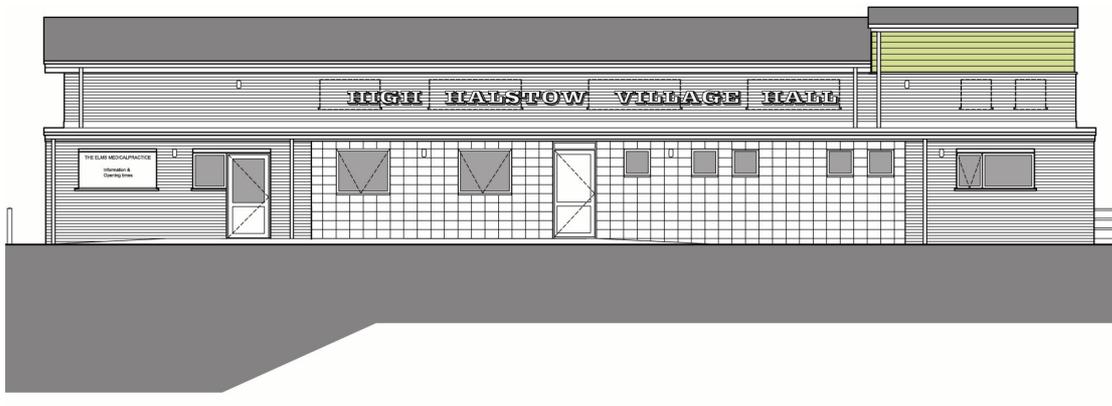


High Halstow Village Hall

High Halstow, Kent ME3 8TW

Extension and alternations to existing roof, elevations and fenestration.



Design and Access Statement

Prepared by Clay Architecture Ltd, 23 April 2010

Introduction

High Halstow is a village that lies at the centre of Hoo Peninsula in Medway, Kent, and within the Thames Gateway Kent Growth area. The Village Hall lies at the Heart of this rural community, providing accommodation for a wide range of users and activities that serve the needs of the young and old alike.

The Hall was built in approximately 1961 and has been in need of substantial refurbishment for some time. The roof is in need of replacement, the timber in most of the window units is in a poor condition and it has suffered from vandalism. This has resulted in a number of windows being broken and boarded up and a number of rain water pipes have been damaged and are missing.

The building also falls short of current expectations for a village hall in relation to its thermal performance, heating strategy, scope and extent of facilities and accessibility for users with disabilities.

The Site

The hall is located within the village and is within reasonable walking distance for most of its residents. It is accessed from 'The Street' and sits within a generous parcel of land owned by the Parish Council. The hall is set back from the road with car parking immediately in front of it.

The hall faces towards the road to the west beyond which is a school and the Memorial Hall. There is also a bus stop located in front of it. To the north is a public footpath, which runs west to east. Beyond this is residential housing. To the south of the hall is a small area of parking and a small block of public toilets. Beyond this is residential housing. Immediately to the east of the Hall is a recreation ground a small children's play area.

The west and south elevations are the most prominent when approaching from 'The Street'.

Planning Constraints

The existing Village Hall sits within a rural village. The proposals do not alter the halls usage or represent an intensification of activity on the site, beyond the capabilities of the existing hall.

The following policies are listed in the local plan in relation to the site:-

- H11 – Residential developments in Rural Settings
- BNE26 – Business development in Rural Settings

Neither of these policies are affected by the proposals.

The Hall borders a recreation ground to the East. The local plan relates to this a protected open space. This is not adversely affected by the proposals.

The land surrounding the Village Hall, including the car park and recreation ground are under the ownership of the Parish Council. The ground levels surrounding the principal entrances and exits to the building are intended to be re-graded as to provide accessible level thresholds. In addition to this the metal fencing adjacent to the north of the building is intended to be removed and

replaced with stainless steel removable bollards. This is proposed, as the existing fencing in this location provides an easy climbing route onto the flat roof. This sits on land owned by the Parish Council. The Parish Council is aware of this and are supportive of the proposals.

A public footpath is situated to the north of the Village Hall. This is not affected by the proposals.

Existing Building Facilities and Users

The current Village Hall has a large central space that provides accommodation for up to 140 people with a stage for amateur dramatic and other performances. Other spaces arranged around two sides of the hall provide a kitchen, male & female toilets, a small meeting room/ green room, and facilities for the local medical practice to hold a regular surgery in the village.

Principal current users of the Village Hall at present are as follows:-

- Youth Club – Meeting weekly during term time providing activities for youngsters including indoor football, arts & crafts and table tennis.
- Amateur Dramatics and Concerts – Productions by Dramarama and others on a regular basis (capacity 140 seated).
- Soundhole – Regular performance opportunities for local bands.
- Badminton – Played in the central hall.
- Doctor's Surgery (weekly).
- Meetings & Presentations.
- Events & Activities including a regular Farmer's Market.
- Hired out for wedding receptions, parties & other events.

Design Aims

The proposals are aimed at providing an attractive village hall, by addressing the dilapidation of the existing building, refurbishing and reordering it and to bring it up to current standards and expectations. This includes:-

- Making it sound & Secure, with an attractive and appropriate appearance with an improved sense of arrival.
- Improving the Halls spatial efficiency meeting the needs of both existing & new users.
- Improve the halls sustainability by reducing maintenance and minimising energy usage and operation costs.
- Bring the hall up to date with current statutory and other regulations for public places including DDA.

Design Proposals

Reordering:

The proposals include a significant reordering of the building including extending out to fill in the recesses along the west elevation facing 'The Street'. This includes:-

- Relocating the principal entrance to the Hall, to the south elevation (currently where the Doctor's Surgery entrance is located).
- Providing staircase access to the storage area at first floor level. Currently this is accessed via a loft hatch and is very cumbersome, especially when storing and retrieving props. This will give much easier and useable access.

- Providing a larger kitchen, relocated to the south-west of the plan. The current kitchen is too small to adequately serve the hall. The kitchen can serve directly into the bar area, providing refreshments for a range of activities. The bar area can be joined or separated from the main Hall, providing a high degree of flexibility.
- New male, female and accessible toilets are provided adjacent to the kitchen. These are centrally located so that they can easily be accessed from the Doctor's Surgery facilities or those of the main hall.
- The general position of the hall and stage remains largely the same. Additional storage is provided below the stage and at the opposite side of the hall below the new staircase to the first floor storage area. A loading door has been added to the rear of the stage allowing larger items of stage, props and equipment to be brought directly onto the stage from outside. The removable bollards allow for a convenient route for these items to be brought from the car park to the loading door.
- The Doctor's Surgery is repositioned with its own dedicated entrance to the northwest of the plan. This allows the surgery to have its own waiting room, surgery and treatment room. The waiting room can also double up out of hours as a green room and changing area for performances.
- The existing recesses on the west elevation are intended to be filled in to provide the additional space required by the Doctor's surgery and WC facilities.

Materials:

The existing elevations have been subject to vandalism. This has resulted in large number of openings being boarded up and painted. In addition to this, the windows, doors, facias and rainwater goods are in a dilapidated condition and are at the end of their useful lives.

New materials have been carefully selected and arranged as to give a robust finish whilst reinvigorating the appearance of the hall. The central portion of the west elevation (facing 'The Street') is to be removed and replaced with stack bonded clay blocks. The blocks are blue in colour and are ribbed. This introduces a tough and contemporary material with a splash of colour. The ribs provide interest and present a surface that is unattractive for graffiti.

This is repeated on the east elevation facing the recreation ground. Here a large glazed screen facing the recreation ground has been subjected to consistent vandalism resulting in the windows being smashed and covered in boarding (see fig. 3). The proposed expanse of clay blocks is broken up by piers of new matching brickwork. This breaks up the expanse of the wall and retains the rhythm of the structural grid that is evident on the existing building.

The brickwork from the demolition works is intended to be retained and stitched into existing blocked up openings .

The existing windows and doors are proposed to be replaced with new units with a powder coated aluminium face. This will provide a fresh and crisp facelift to the existing building, whilst increasing its robustness. The glazing is intended to be double glazed and toughened/laminated.

Rainwater goods are proposed to be replaced with cast Aluminium. The downpipes are intended to have anti-vandal concealed fixings to the wall of the building, providing a clean & crisp appearance whilst being highly resistant to vandalism.

The weather boarding on the existing south elevation (see fig.2) is proposed to be replaced and extended at high level with coloured fibre cement weatherboarding. This wraps around the raised portion of roof strengthening the identity of the new entrance to the main hall. The fibre cement has been selected for its longevity and is used to further introduce colour into the elevations.

Signage:

The building is not clearly signed, although its mass and setting clearly identifies itself. From 'The Street' a circular plaque identifies the hall in a difficult to read format (see fig.5). The proposals include a traditionally styled painted sign on the brickwork at high level.

Additional stainless Steel lettering is indicated on the South Elevation immediately over the main entrance.

Two notice boards are indicated. One adjacent to the entrance to the Doctor's Surgery on the west elevation and one adjacent to the main hall entrance on the south elevation. Both of these are indicated to be recessed into an existing window opening.

Access Statement

Access to the building and its facilities currently neither meet the expectations of users or the requirements of DDA. This includes the following:-

- Narrow entrance doors and stepped access (approximately 150mm high into the building).
- No accessible WC.

The proposals indicate for the principal entrances and exits to be widened in line with current recommendations. The external ground level is to be regarded, providing level thresholds, and include a new accessible WC.

Consideration is also give to access to the main stage. As well as stepped access, provision is indented for a conveniently located power source to allow the use of a mobile lifting platform as well as a removable ramp. A permanent ramp and lifting platform have been considered for providing access onto the stage but due to limitations of working within the framework of the existing hall, would unduly compromise the hall for activities including badminton as well as the stage and neighbouring facilities including the Doctor's Surgery.

Summary

The current Village Hall is in poor condition and in need of extensive repair and refurbishment. It's facilities and access fall below current standards and expectations.

The proposals address the condition of the building and bring it up to date to modern standards whilst providing an attractive venue for current and future users of all ages and abilities.

Drawing/ Document Summary

This report is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:-

- Planning Application Form
- Clay Architecture Ltd drawings:-
 - 5071/PL/100 - Site Location Plan
 - 5071/PL/101 - Existing Block Plan
 - 5071/PL/102 - Existing Floor Plans
 - 5071/PL/103 - Existing Elevations & Sections
 - 5071/PL/104 - Proposed Block Plan
 - 5071/PL/105 rev A - Proposed Floor Plans
 - 5071/PL/106 rev A - Proposed Elevations & Sections

Existing Site Photographs



Fig.1 Main Elevation (West) facing 'The Street'



Fig.2 South Elevation – Existing Doctor's Surgery entrance



Fig.3 Rear Elevation (East) facing the recreation ground



Fig.4 North Elevation



Fig.5 View from 'The Street'