

Design, Access and Heritage Statement:

Congerstone Village Hall Redevelopment

INTRODUCTION:

This statement has been prepared to support the planning application for the partial demolition and extension of the Congerstone Village Hall.

Congerstone Village hall is in the heart of the Congerstone Conservation area, and the front brick barn element is noted as a building of historic importance in the HBBC Congerstone Conservation Area Management Plan.

The statement will review the historical importance of the village hall and the importance of the hall on the context, as well as the need for the hall.

LOCATION:

Congerstone is a village within the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth in the centre between Coalville, Tamworth, Leicester and Hinckley.

Congerstone is classed as a “rural village” within the current core strategy document. This means the village has some services including primary school, leisure facilities and public transport options which supports the sustainability of the village.

Within the village, the hall is at the centre off main street adjacent to the crossroads.

The view of Congerstone Village Hall is a key vista as the village is entered from the Barton Lane approach.

There are many smaller villages in the area which utilise Congerstone Village Hall and other facilities in the village.



SITE DESCRIPTION:

The site currently consists of an existing brick building over 200 years old, with a prefabricated concrete building attached to the rear dating from the 1970's.

The built form is located to the south of the site giving an open aspect to the north parking area.

The brick building fronts onto Main Street and is set back circa 4m from the back edge of the footpath. The concrete framed element has limited impact on the street scene as it is generally shielded by the original part of the building on the site.

The main street highway boundary is constructed from a Carlton Stone Wall. The wall adjacent to the neighbouring house - The Banky is constructed of the same material. The remaining exposed boundaries are constructed from red brick.

The brick element of the community hall was originally constructed as a barn therefore there is little in the way of fenestration or detail on the road facing elevation. There is currently one poorly proportioned window fronting onto Main Street which offers little in the way of an active frontage.

The building has had many uses in the past including a garage, there are many historic, unsympathetic alterations to the rear. Such as the render patching of the garage door and installation of poorly proportioned window and door openings.

There is little in the way of landscaping on the site with a gravel parking area, tarmac access road and lawn to the front.

The original building is in a poor state of repair with significant damp issues, the prefabricated element is also damp, has very limited insulating properties and is well beyond its design life. The layout also limits the use of the spaces and limits the rental options available.

Despite being in a poor state of repair, the hall is well used by a variety of users including community groups such as the Womens Institute, a coffee morning group, yoga and Zumba classes, quilting groups, mother and baby groups, rentals for parties as well as community meetings.

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HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The village hall is a significant building as it offers an insight into the farming past of the village and how the village was formed.

From a socio-economic point of view, the village hall is well used by residents of Congerstone and other surrounding villages. The village hall is important for community uses and also confirming the village's status within the local plan as a rural village, by offering a leisure facility.

The hall, or barn as it was originally is unremarkable yet is in the centre of the village showing how the village grew and the farming significance. Its loss would be a detriment to the form and character of this area of the village.



PLANNING HISTORY:

There have been no changes or planning changes to the hall for many years. As there is no change of use and the scheme is an established community use, the theory of the development will not be contentious.

In February 2024 a planning application was approved ref 24/00183/FUL for a similar but more contemporary scheme which once costed was simply unaffordable, this has led to the submission of this more modest scheme.

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Congerstone is classed as a “rural village” within the current core strategy document. This means the village has some services including primary school, leisure facilities, the desired public house and transport facilities. The policy states that development ensuring existing services are supported.

The Carlton boundary wall to Main Street is to be retained unaltered.

To support the existing services in these villages the council will:

- i. Support housing development within settlement boundaries that provides a mix of housing types and tenures as detailed in Policy 15 and Policy 16
- ii. Support development that complies with the Policy 17: Local Needs
- iii. Support development enabling home working and other small scale employment uses within Rural Villages Resist the loss of local shops and facilities in rural villages unless it is demonstrated that the business or facilities can no longer operate in a viable manner. Initiatives to establish local stores and facilities will be supported.
- iv. Require transport improvements in line with Policy 14
- v. Support the development of the tourism industry in line with Policy 23
- vi. Require development to be of the highest environmental standards in line with Policy 24

THE PROPOSAL:

The proposal is to demolish the prefabricated concrete element of the building and rebuild a larger, purpose built hall.

The existing building is to be fully renovated over time including a new roof, insulation and damp proofing to the existing walls and extension to the toilet facilities.

The new extension is to be constructed out of materials such as red brick and clay roof tiles to match the existing.

The proposal is subservient to the original hall building being set back and lower, ensuring the focus remains on the existing building.

The proposal includes solar panels to the southern roof element to again further improve the sustainability of the project.

A larger, barn door style glazed element is proposed to the Main Street elevation to improve that elevation and to reference the original use of the building.

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THE NEED:

The proposal will improve the versatility of the hall and the intention is to also offer work space options for residents working from home to hire and community uses such as bingo groups and cinema groups.

The hall needs to be upgraded to meet modern requirements to ensure its sustainability, longevity and continued use.

The poor insulating properties, damp and electric heating mean the building is efficient and expensive to run, the proposals will improve this and ensure a more cost effective scheme.

The development will secure the facility within the village which will ensure the continued use and sustainability of the village.

The development, and opportunity the new development brings will encourage younger residents to remain in the village as there will be more options for home working, social and leisure activities.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN:

The extension itself is only marginally larger than the existing building, a previously larger application has already been approved, the size of any potential habitat on site is below 25m2.

PARKING:

The site currently has an area of informal off road parking within a gravelled area within the site, the proposal looks to retain this.

Generally the scheme will be utilised by local residents who are also likely to walk to and from the site. The site is also close to St Mary's church which will be able to offer additional parking as needed.

There is currently no cycle parking on site however this is proposed within the new scheme to further enhance sustainability.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal is in keeping with the village, as the existing concrete building has limited architectural merit. The new proposal has been well designed and at a scale appropriate to respect the existing building.

The development is supported by the local community and has an established use, confirming the need for the work.

The development improve the sustainability of the hall itself and the local community by offering high quality community use space.

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