

CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

GARRISON CHURCH OF SANTA BARBARA, DEEPCUT BRIDGE ROAD, DEEPCUT, CAMBERLEY, SURREY
GU16 6RS Application Nos 22/0820/LLB 22/0821/FFU

Policy and legislation

The statutory requirements to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings are set out in section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Development Management Policy DM17 of the Local Plan also protects heritage buildings. The National Design Guide also gives great weight to heritage, local history and, in particular, context when assessing development proposals. The importance of high-quality design is further emphasised in the Local Plan policy DM9. See further below under impact.

Significance of the Listed structure

The Grade II listed St Barbara's Church, a prominently positioned landmark building clad in corrugated metal, is a very rare example of a prefabricated Garrison Church, a building type of which there are very few remaining nationally. The building is therefore of high architectural significance. Although designed as a semi-temporary structure, which the corrugated metal cladding is a clear indicator of, the church building has remained virtually unaltered since it was built in 1900.

Due to the strong connections to the local regiments, and the special role the Garrison Church of Santa Barbara has for the local community, the building is considered to be of high historic and social significance, demonstrated by the long tradition of ceremonies and the many memorials and commemorative art works that embellish the Church building.

Impact of the Proposal on the Significance of the Church

The proposed scheme involves the construction of a community hall within the churchyard, to the north of the existing building. Designed in a contemporary built form and materiality, in contrast to the historic character of the church, the new structure would accommodate a number of additional public services required by the church, as Deepcut evolves and expands.

Access to the hall is proposed directly from its north transept through a glazed link, and involves the alteration of an original window to allow for the insertion of an interconnecting door beneath. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 199, requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on a heritage asset's significance, great weight should be given to its conservation: the higher the significance, the stronger the onus for conservation.

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF points out that harm to the significance of heritage assets would need clear and convincing justification; while paragraph 202 sets out that where a development proposal will lead to *less than substantial harm* to the significance of a designated heritage asset, *this harm should be weighed against the public benefits* accruing from the proposal.

The proposed change of an original component of the listed building would result in some degree of harm, considered here to be less than substantial harm, to its architectural significance. However, on balance, from a heritage point of view, the benefits of the project to the Church, and the wider community as a whole, are considered to outweigh the harm to the existing window.

Heritage conservation is about managing change, preparing for the future and making sure our historic buildings can continue to be actively used, whilst safeguarding the heritage values for coming generations.

Heritage Consultant position

From an urban design and heritage point of view, the position, scale, height and built form of the proposed Hall are considered appropriate, being clearly subordinate to the Grade II listed Church building and located within a respectable distance, within a setting with many mature trees. The glazed link between the historic Church building and the new Hall is strongly supported in principle and should provide a light, neutral element with lots of light and transparency, linking the listed structure with the new, contemporary Hall. Given the simplistic design of the proposed structure, and the setting of a Grade II listed structure, high quality detailing is vital for a successful result. It is therefore important that the roof structure of the link should be as slim and subordinate as possible, and the upper level of the glazing should be fully aligned with the fenestration of the new Hall. The link should be fully glazed throughout to provide contrast and transparency, also on the south-east elevation, as the heavy brick plinth on this side is considered to compromise the lightness of the design. The importance of views in and out from the new glazed link was further emphasized by the Design review Panel in 2018. Detailed drawings to resolve these matters are requested to be conditioned.

The contemporary built form of the proposed hall, a rhomboid, is a distinctive but timeless feature, which because of its simplicity and location is not considered to have any detrimental impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Church. From a heritage perspective, a design approach which provides a clear contrast in form and character and visually distinguish between the historic and new structures, yet subservient, is considered a well-established principle. However, from an architectural and heritage perspective, a softer, more sophisticated approach in terms of materiality and colour scheme using dark grey tones, preferably matt, rather than the harsh black, metal sheeting and a different type of texture, in contrast to the existing iron cladding, is required. Subsequently, the brickwork should also be dark grey rather than black, which is considered too prominent given the proximity of the plinth to the listed structure. The detailed design should seek to minimise/eliminate the brick plinth.

Alternatively, the Hall could be clad in elegant dark grey slate, a natural material which would blend in well in this tranquil setting, characterised by the many mature trees.

Conditions

- Fully detailed drawings of glazed link and adjacent Hall fenestration
- Detailed material schedule and samples of all materials to be submitted to the LPA and approved in writing prior to any construction works

22nd November 2022

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Urban Design and Heritage Consultant