

24 May 2016
Our ref: EJWP-202A

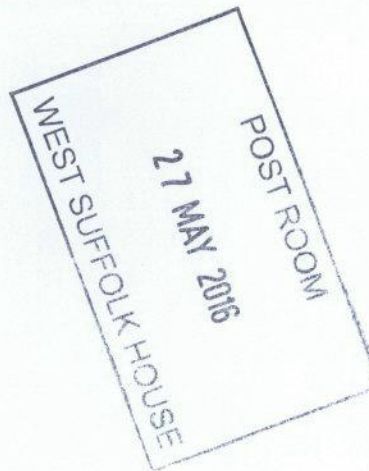
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Aaron Sands
Planning Services
St Edmundsbury Borough Council
West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
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IP33 3YU



Dear Aaron

**Proposed demolition of former village hall and replacement with a single dwelling at The Street, Stradishall.
DC/16/0453/FUL**

I refer to your email dated 12th May 2016, sent following the above application having been deferred by the Development Control Committee on 4th May 2016. I note your comments with regard to Member's views and note that the Council's minutes for this meeting have not yet been published. However, I made my own substantive notes of the discussions that took place at the Committee in respect of this application. I have discussed this matter at length with my client and am instructed to respond as follows:

The Building Survey Report.

I confirm that the report referred to at the Committee meeting was submitted with the application. The report prepared by Philip Pank and Partners describes the building, its structure and current condition. It confirms that the building does not comply with current building regulations, its foundations appear to be a brick plinth on an un-insulated concrete foundation which could not be converted to be used either structurally or thermally. It concludes that it would be impossible to adapt the building to comply with existing regulations without demolishing and rebuilding.

The design of the building

I note your comments with regard to design of the building and your suggestion that I meet with Claire Johnson to discuss this. I met with Claire Johnson and Gemma Pannell on 14th September 2015 to discuss the previous application and the Council's reasons for refusal. Unfortunately, the Officer's suggestions for the retention of the building and its conversion to provide a single storey dwelling on this site, would provide insufficient accommodation to make the scheme viable. As advised at that time, and reiterated in the application documentation and further in my presentation to the Committee, the proposed building would in fact be smaller than the substantial detached modern new build house that has replaced The Haven, and would provide a buffer, and transitional form between this and Hoult's Mansion.

It is important to note that it was only Councillor Pugh who commented on the design and form of the building and thought that it should be moved back into the site, or cut into the slope to reduce its bulk. However, even he supported the view that it was essential for the site to be redeveloped. It was apparent at the meeting that Member's were generally in favour of the scheme and welcomed the demolition and replacement of the building. Indeed Councillor Rushden went as far as to refer to the existing building as an eyesore.

The community issue

As previously advised in the application submissions and confirmed by Member's at the meeting the hall has not been used by the local community for many years. The attached letter dated 18th March 2007 confirms that due to the fact that the building was no longer suitable for community use the Parish Council gave notice and handed the building back to Clopton Hall Farms. Furthermore, the letter confirms that the hall is family owned and not a community asset of any kind.

The letter further notes the Parish Council's preference to convert part of the Church to form the village meeting room. However, in the meantime the applicant has been generous in offering the Parish, on an informal basis, use of a barn on his estate known locally as The Lodge and formerly as the Marley Hut.

This building is shown on the attached plan and lies some 150 metres to the south of the former village hall. The building has heating, a kitchen, toilet facilities, adequate parking and is accessible to all users. It provides superior accommodation to that which was provided in the hall. I attach some photos of the interior and exterior of the building.

In terms of its planning status its established use is that of A1 retail and storage having been approved by planning permission E/94/1157/P. The building is used by the Parish Council no more than a dozen or, so occasions each year. This use is de minimis, so no actual change of use has occurred and planning permission is not required. Furthermore, it would not be expedient for my client to seek to formalise that use through the change of use of the building as he still requires the building for storage and other farm related activities for the majority of the time.

It is noted that the supporting text to Policy DM41 recognises (paragraph 7.25) that circumstances will vary from community to community, and the policy will be applied reasonably.

The second part of the policy relates to proposals that result in the loss of valued facilities or services which support a local community (or premises last used for such purposes) and sets out a range of criteria to be met including whether there is any local demand for the building and whether alternative facilities are available, or a replacement facility can be provided.

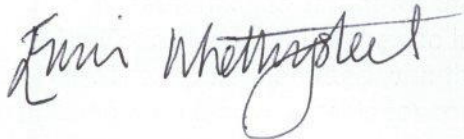
Firstly, as is evidenced by the Parish Council's letter of 18th March 2007, and further confirmed by Member's at the Planning Committee the proposal will not result in the loss of a valued facility.

The hall has remained vacant for the past nine years following its abandonment by the Parish Council in 2007, as they no longer considered the building suitable for their needs. The report submitted with the planning application further confirms that the building is no longer suitable for community use and is unsuitable for conversion.

The applicant has provided, albeit on an informal basis, a suitable alternative building of a better standard that is accessible to the local community. However, it is noted that this is not the Parish Council's preferred location for a meeting room, as it is their desire to convert space within the Church to provide a Parish meeting room. It would therefore, seem more appropriate if the applicant were to make a financial contribution (fairly related in scale and kind, to the development proposed) towards the cost of creating a Parish meeting room within the Church.

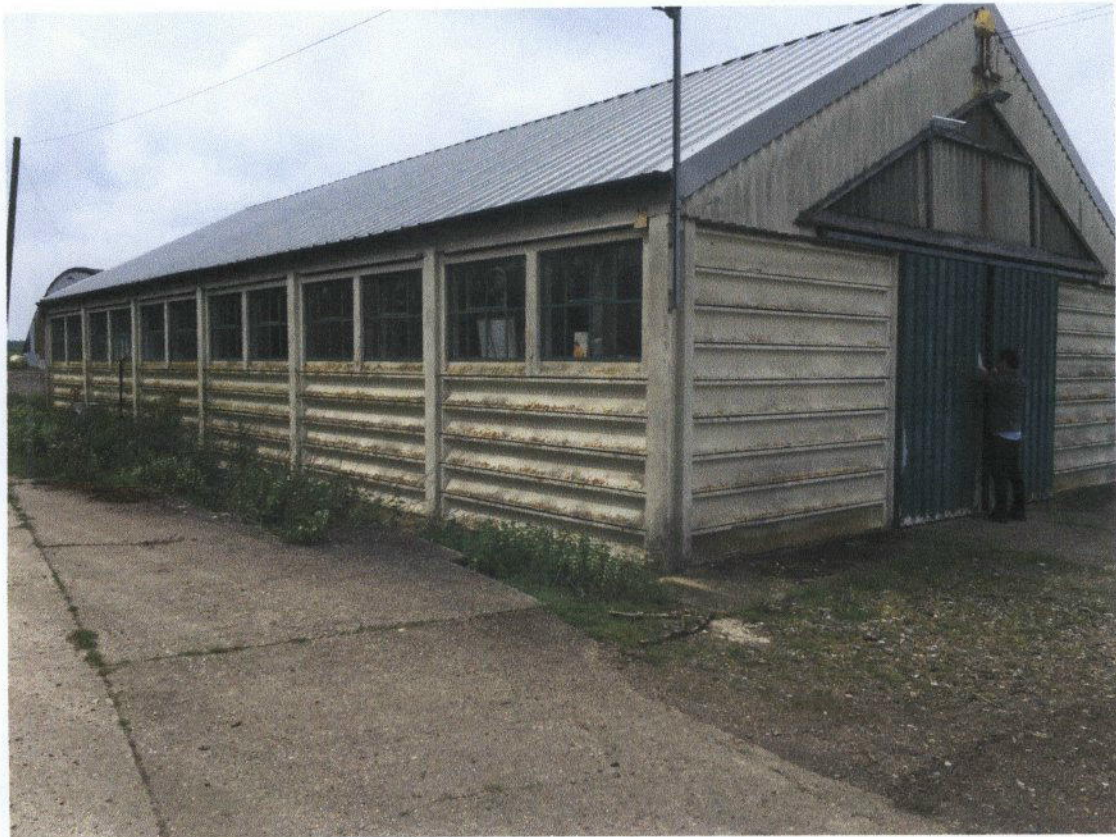
I ask that you take the further information above and attached, into consideration and return this application to the Development Control Committee for its determination at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erica Whettingsteel', written in a cursive style.

Erica Whettingsteel BA (Hons) Dip TP Dip UD MRTPI

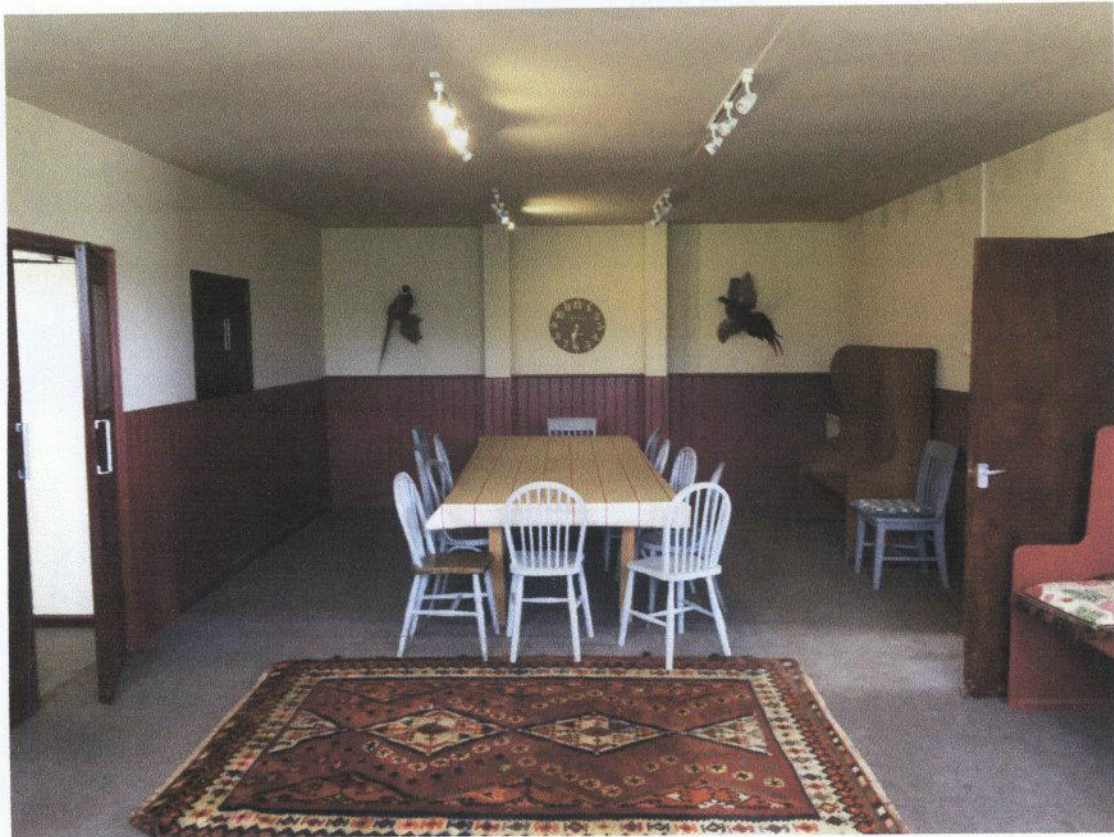
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The exterior of the building



The kitchen facilities



Room used for meetings



Exterior showing parking and level access to building

Plan showing location of former village hall relative to replacement facility

Google Maps



STRADISHAL PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk
Mrs Lisa Pitt
4 Hill View
Lidgate
18th March 2007

Chairman
Mr Adrian Lee
High Acre
Stradishall

Dear Chris,

Further to recent discussions with myself and Edward Kerr regarding Stradishall Village Hall, at the Parish Council Meeting held on 6th March 2007 it was decided because of the current regulations regarding Fire and Disabled Access to Public Buildings which the Village Hall does not meet, that rather than spend a large amount of money on a building that is under used and not of a type that could easily updated, that the Parish Council would give up the lease and hand the building back to Clopton Hall Farms before the insurance is renewed March 24th 2007. I would therefore be grateful if you would accept this letter as notice of the Parish Councils intent to hand back the Village Hall on or before this date. I will read the electricity meter before this and arrange for the supply to be transferred to Clopton Hall Farms I will also arrange for the Parish Councils belongings to be removed. As I know you aware we have plans for the future of the playing field and to help convert part of the church in Stradishall to form the village meeting room and I will ask Edward Kerr to contact you in the near future to discuss this further. The Parish council on behalf of the village residents would like to express there thanks for the many years you and your family have allowed us to use the village hall which until recent years was used for many village events, I hope the Parish Council will be able to support your future plans for the building.

Yours Sincerely



Adrian Lee
Chairman Stradishall Parish Council