

Planning Statement – Heritage statement

Park Centre, 60 Park Rd, Burgess Hill RH15 8ET

1. Evidential value

Archaeology is a vital resource for understanding our shared history. It offers a unique opportunity to enhance development through place-making, community involvement, and the potential growth of local heritage tourism. Discoveries have been made from investigations in Burgess Hill, showing evidence of pre-urban activity, including prehistoric and Roman activity, as detailed in the document “Burgess Hill, Historic Character Assessment Report, November 2005, EUS” by Roland B Harris. Furthermore, the area of St John’s Common in the centre of Burgess Hill has been identified as being of high archaeological interest.

2. Historical value

As per information given on the park centre website <https://parkcentre.org.uk> “The St John’s Institute, now known as the Park Centre, was built in 1872 and gifted to the town by 19th Century artist and philanthropist Emily Temple. The Institute was originally used for a range of recreational and leisure activities including concert parties and major events such as religious and political meetings. [...] In more recent years the Park Centre was used by WSCC as a “Find It Out Centre”, a place for local residents to get advice, information and support, as well as a Youth Centre.”

The property is within the St John’s conservation area. St John’s Park is on the opposite side of Park Road but not directly opposite from the site. This is an open park that serves as a pavilion, cricket green, children’s playground, café and skatepark.

3. Aesthetic value

An article titled “Emily Temple: Burgess Hill Benefactress” written by Lisa De Silva shows an image of the front of Park Centre from 1910.

The front elevation of this Victorian building was of facing brick with cornice details at various heights, arched windows and an entrance door, with brick lintels details. The main entrance was framed by a portico with cornice detail as well. The pediment of the front elevation showed cornice details and decorative plaque. Above the front access, at the first-floor level, there was originally a large arched window. A feature that has since been lost.

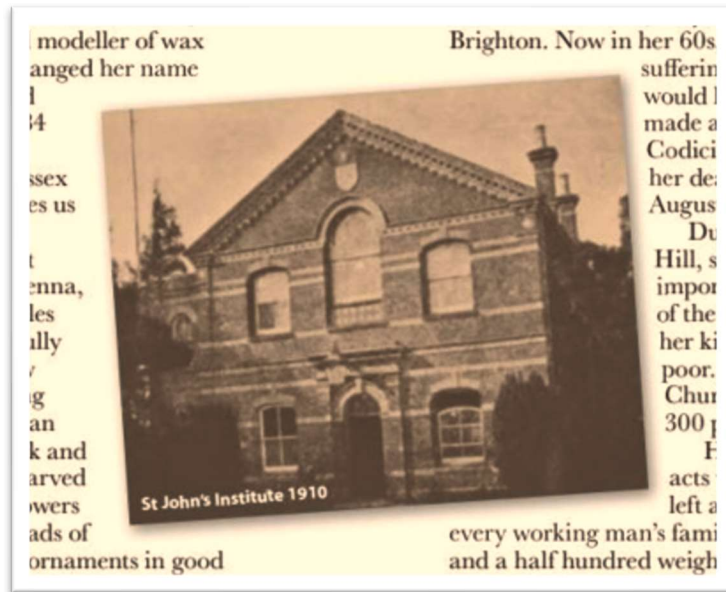


Image from article *Emily Temple: Burgess Hill Benefactress*. Full article available at <https://parkcentre.org.uk>



Image showing the current appearance of Park Centre

Today, the front elevation of the building is painted in white and the pediment has been rendered. We propose that the paintwork be removed and the original brickwork be restored.

Some of the original timber windows on the front elevation have been boarded up, and we propose to reinstate them with double-glazed timber windows. This approach honours the building's original design while enhancing energy efficiency, ensuring that the new windows are in keeping with the character and aesthetic of the property.

Additionally, the building is in a state of disrepair and requires extensive structural and cosmetic renovations. Its current condition poses safety risks, and without prompt action, it is likely to deteriorate further and may face irreversible damage.

Bullet pointed below is a comparison of the current and proposed appearance of the building, as outlined in the design and access statement:

Appearance – Existing

- The original portico was demolished and replaced with a painted timber and glass porch with a felt roof.
- Some first-floor windows have been boarded up with plywood.
- Entire front elevation painted white; wall-mounted lighting installed above the front door.
- Front pediment filled in with what appears to be render.
- The right side of the front elevation is extended to mirror the left side. A lift was installed behind which is now out of order.
- Side elevations remain unpainted, preserving original brickwork, lintels, and cornice details.

Appearance - Proposed

- Proposal aims to balance traditional and contemporary design, featuring full-height glass and an aluminium parapet capping.
- The white paint on the front elevation shall be removed and the existing brickwork restored.
- Glazed porch to be removed; replaced with a brick portico reflecting the original scale and form of the original feature that has been lost.
- The out-of-order lift on the east side is to be removed.
- Four blocked windows on the front elevation shall be reinstated; restoring the symmetry of the design and increasing natural light in the proposed gallery.
- A recessed false window above the main entrance shall be established on the front elevation to align with the original central window. This shall help to restore the original composition of the front elevation.
- The proposed extensions will use brickwork matching the original colour.
- The original main pitched roof is to be upgraded for compliance with building regulations, using like-for-like slate tiles and in-line solar panels.
- Front and staircase-visible windows upgraded to double-glazed timber; other windows to be powder-coated aluminium with a white finish.
- Existing white uPVC windows in good condition shall be retained where possible.
- The entrance to the gallery shall feature full-height glazing set back from the front elevation, creating a partially concealed covered porch area.
- Proposed green roofs will include a stepped cornice detail at eaves level.
- Five full-height narrow frosted windows with hidden frames on the east elevation of the gallery.
- Gallery space to have a rooflight adjacent to the mezzanine, not visible from the street.
- Bin storage at the front to consist of an aerated timber screen complementing the brick colour.

- An information board on the bin storage visible from Park Road shall help to inform locals about events at the park centre.
- Overall, the proposal aims to complement and rejuvenate the original building and coordinate past modifications.

4. Communal value

This building was originally designed for the community, and our goal is to give it back to the people of Burgess Hill. We envision a multipurpose project that features an inviting indoor space filled with natural light and adorned with a green roof. The addition of a café will create a welcoming environment where residents can gather, relax, and engage in meaningful discussions. This space will not only promote community life but also celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the area through an art and museum gallery, showcasing the quality and creativity of Burgess Hill. Our aim is to revitalize the building as a vibrant hub that fosters connection, creativity, and community spirit.