

Planning Statement - Design & Access Statement

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

Context

The site is located on Park Road, close to the north-eastern corner of St John's Park, and falls within St John's conservation area. A short walk to the west along Park Road is providence strict Baptist Chapel, a Grade II listed building with a similar front façade. A short walk south of the site is the Parish Church of St John, a Grade II listed building.

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 site is sheltered with neighbouring properties on both sides and at the rear. These properties are all overlooking at the Park Centre. Beyond the northeast boundary there is a small wooded area that separates Park Centre and the neighbouring properties from Marle Place playground.

There is no trees or shrub on site, and 95% of the outdoor spaces are covered by non-permeable materials. At the front of the building are located six parking spaces directly accessible from park road.

The original Victorian building gross internal area is 395 sqm, it has been extended at the rear twice in the mid/late 20th century by 313 sqm with a two-storey rear extension. The site closed to the public in 2021 and substantial structural and cosmetic work is required before it can be brought back into use.

Justification

This project seeks to reinforce public spaces for the community of Burgess Hill and has been widely acknowledged by the committee of Park Centre. The functionality needs to improve for it to thrive, as building is derelict and needs significant structural work.

The project involves creating several new spaces that can be used independently at the same time thanks to new side accesses. It seeks to diversify the use of the building whilst also catering for as many people as possible, creating access to all areas on site for disabled users. This has been addressed by creating multipurpose and independent areas named by colours on the plans, that make the building a more

efficient use of space. Having these additional accesses also help to manage the fire and safety requirements.

The proposed West side first floor extension has been included to adequately accommodate the hall with accessible toilet facilities and much needed storage. Thanks to this extension, the first-floor hall could receive up to 145 people.

The project also includes an extension on the East Side, named red room on plan. This could potentially be used as an exhibition space. Internal alteration to the existing Victorian building has been made to allow this new gallery space to connect to a coffee area. The boundary between Park Centre and No 58 Park Road is formed by a combination of fence and wall. Along most of this boundary; on the neighbouring side, there is a hedge that exceeds 4m in height. This existing hedge would conceal the proposed extension ground floor and first floor roof.

A 'changing place' facility has been added that will make Park Centre a more inclusive, comfortable place for occupants and the general public.

Thanks to the potential renting of some rooms and the activities of the building including community events, exhibition and the coffee business, the building will generate an income which will be used to pay for its maintenance throughout its life cycle.

Amount

The proposed two storey side extensions have been designed carefully to maximise the functionality of the site and building. This is to be achieved by creating an additional 150m² of internal space which will increase the maximum user occupancy to 335 people at any given time.

The west side first floor toilets block extension creates 40 sqm space. It creates a covered external walkway below leading into one of the side entrance of the building.

The East side extension has two storeys and is name as the red room. This space is to be 82 sqm and is spread across two floors with a mezzanine that overlooks the entrance to the gallery.

As well as upgrading existing building elements to meet current building regulations, the proposal also includes 122m² of biodiverse/extensive green roof space. This will create a significant amount of habitable space for the local wildlife, something that has been neglected previous additions at this site.

The main existing pitched roof with will be upgraded with insulation and solar panels shall be installed, taking advantage of the 102m² roof area and the of the building's orientation to the sun.

Scale

The heights have been proportioned in keeping with the existing area.

For the West extension, the first floor extension will have a crown roof (part pitch part flat) following the slope of the main pitch roof in order to minimise its impact on the neighbouring properties natural light. The height of this roof will be lower than the existing adjacent flat roofs. The ground floor roof will be seating lower than the decorative detailing located at mid height of the existing front elevation.

For the East extension, the ground floor roof will be matching the height of the one located on the west side. The first floor roof will be located lower than the eaved of the existing Victorian building. We have offset the first floor on the east side to not encroach on the neighbour (No 58).

Landscaping

At the front, the new hardstanding for the driveway will create a uniform floor finish up to the building. At the building level, on each side of the front elevation, the floor finish will change for a paved area, levelled with the hardstanding.

In front of the parking spaces will be located posts lights at about 1 meter high. At the front, lighting will also been included within the porch area (wall mounted) and on the side extensions (ceiling mounted).

Currently, at the rear of the building is an uneven hardstanding area with no vegetation or habitats. The proposal seeks to enhance this area with an accessible garden area with bushes and plants. This area will also benefit from new benches, planters, timber decking area and a covered outdoor space. Raised flower beds will be constructed along the pathways and ramps that will be at an accessible height for wheelchair users. The garden will also benefit of lighting.

Appearance-Existing

Some modifications have been done to the front elevation through the 20th century. The original portico has been demolished and replaced with painted timber and glass porch with a felt roof covering. Some windows on the first floor have been boarded up with plywood, the entire front elevation has been painted white and a wall mounted lighting has been installed above the front door. The front pediment has been filled in with what appears to be render. The right side of the front elevation has been extended, mirroring the left-hand side to accommodate a lift to the building which is now out of use.

The side elevations of the building haven't been painted and the original brickwork, lintels and cornice details remain.

Appearance-Proposed

The proposal has been designed to provide a healthy blend between the traditional design and contemporary, utilising full height glass with an aluminium parapet.

On the front elevation, the glazed porch will be removed and replaced with a brick portico that is more responsive to the scale and design of the original.

The previously added lift on the east side of the building behind the front elevation will be removed and two blocked up windows will be unblocked. This will maintain the existing symmetry of the front elevation and allow more natural light into the gallery behind.

Proposed extensions will be constructed of brickwork that matches existing colour of the original. The original pitched roof is to be upgraded to comply with building regulations, like for like slate tiles are to be used, as well as in-line solar panels. The front windows, and windows visible from the main staircase will be upgraded with double glazed timber windows. The other windows will be power coated aluminium with white finish. The existing uPVC white windows in good condition will be retained where possible.

The entrance to the gallery will be full height glazing and set back from the front elevation which will partially conceal it from the street view (see elevations) and create a covered porch area.

The proposed green roofs are to include a stepped cornice detail at eaves level.

There are to be 5 no full height narrow frosted windows with hidden frames on the east elevation within the gallery. The gallery space is also to have a rooflight adjacent to the mezzanine, which is to be not visible from street view.

The bin storage structure at the front is to be an aerated timber screen, complimenting the brick colour. An information board fixed to the bin storage will be visible from Park Road will inform local residents of events and activities taking place at park centre.

This proposal compliments the original building and is an opportunity to provide rejuvenation and coordinate the sporadic modifications that have taken place over the years.

Access

The main access from Park Road will be maintained as existing. Covered bike storage is included at the front of site and the car parking arrangements are to include a dedicated disabled parking space.

The ground floor of the building is level with the sloped drive and a patio at the rear. The proposal has been designed to provide wheelchair access throughout the property including the front drive and garden. This has been achieved by equalising the internal floor level where possible, adding a new lift, new platform lifts and internal and external ramps.

Foul Drainage

The existing property foul drainage runs along the west side of the building. It is already connected to public foul sewer and the plan is to utilise the current drain run. We will increase the flow subject to permission from relevant authority.

Rainwater Drainage

Currently rainwater drainage on the site is directed into the public foul sewer. We intend to improve this situation through the use of SuDS. Soakaways will be installed and there is an intention to install a rainwater harvesting system if it is deemed viable.

Sustainability Assessment

The proposed construction will be built to meet current regulations and therefore, insulation will be built into all elements to comply with part L of building regulations. All glazing will be double glazed, and all existing roof insulation and covering will be upgraded.

In-line solar panels are proposed to be fitted to the existing pitched roof. The positions have been indicated on the drawings.

Extensive green roofs are proposed for the extensions and bin storage.

Garden area with trees/bushes proposed to replace the existing hardstanding area.

Water saving dual flush W. C's will be used in all new bathrooms in the property.

LED light fittings will be used for all light fittings.

The entire site and building will be made accessible for wheelchair users.

The layout of the proposal allows for different areas of the building to be separated from others via access routes and circulation which increases the efficiency of the building and comfort levels of the users of each room.

Heritage Statement

There are no scheduled ancient monuments.

The site is not in an archeologically sensitive area.

There are no listed buildings bordering the property.

The property is within the St John's conservation area. The proposal acknowledges this by partially concealing the existing later additions to the site from the principal elevation (Park Road) with a modern, however, subservient proposal that compliments the existing property and the surrounding area.

All materials proposed are in keeping with the existing building and by reinstating the original central window/brick lintel, the design pays homage to the history of the building.

The proposed extensions to the principal elevation have been noticeably offset to ensure the proposal is subservient to the main house and to the area. We have kept the later added lift wall and openings to maintain the original façade and to minimise the visibility of the side extension from Park Road.

Historic parks and gardens

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.