

# **Feasibility Study**

## **For the redevelopment of Chearsley Village Hall**

### **Chearsley, Buckinghamshire**

Prepared for: **Chearsley Village Hall Committee**  
c/o The Village Hall  
Winchendon Road  
Chearsley  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire  
HP18 0DP

Site: **Chearsley Village Hall**  
Winchendon Road  
Chearsley  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire  
HP18 0DP

Project ref: **348**

Date: **19<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

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## Executive Summary

A feasibility study was commissioned by Chearsley Village Hall Committee to establish the potential for refurbishing or redeveloping the village hall building in Chearsley, Buckinghamshire.

The village hall is situated on a good sized plot in a central location within a rural village setting. The site includes a single storey village hall building, tarmac car park, and grassed area with some children's play equipment. Although the site is on the edge of the Chearsley Conservation Area it is not within the Conservation Area boundary, and the building is neither listed nor situated in designated Green Belt land.

Consideration was given to refurbishing, reconfiguring and extending the current hall building. This was the starting point of the review and a number of issues led to the conclusion that the building would be uneconomic to retain and refurbish.

The internal footprint required to provide a replacement village hall building, with all required community facilities would be approximately 280m<sup>2</sup>. This is a substantial increase on the current hall footprint which is 170m<sup>2</sup>. The replacement building would provide a large multi-use hall space capable of being divided into three separate rooms by means of internal partitioning.

A key aspect of replacing the village hall building with a new construction is its reorientation upon the plot. This will allow for more efficient use of the space on site, including enlarging the car park slightly.

Aylesbury Vale District Council Planning Department have indicated conditional, informal support for the proposed development. Buckinghamshire County Council Archaeology have been consulted, and will require a watching brief condition to be imposed upon any planning consent that may be granted. Highways Department at Buckinghamshire County Council have indicated their broad support for the proposal.

A concept design has been developed for a replacement part single storey, part two storey village hall building to accommodate the full range of required activities within a community building, including the accommodation of Chearsley & Haddenham Under 5s Playgroup, which uses the current hall on a regular basis.

Subject to design, the construction budget for the building, at concept design stage, is estimated at £493,000 exclusive of VAT. This estimate is comparable with building cost data from the Building Cost Information Service (historical cost data provided by The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors). Together with application and professional fees, as well as the construction cost for a new village hall, the project total would be £554,000 exclusive of VAT.

Allowing two separate nine month periods for securing funding and allowing for a sequential process for design, planning, funding, detailed specification, procurement and construction, the building could be completed, ready for handover in late summer 2018.

## Contents

1. Background
2. Chearsley Village Hall site
3. Planning considerations
4. Design considerations
5. Building considerations
6. Environmental impact
7. Programme
8. Cost estimate
9. Site Plan (348-003B)
10. Concept design – indicative visualisation

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## 1. Background

A feasibility study was commissioned by the Village Hall Committee to establish the potential for redeveloping the village hall building in Chearsley.

This document is part of a consultation process that has included a questionnaire circulated by the Hall Committee to local residents asking for their views on what they would like the village hall to provide. PCMS Design was approached to consider the potential of adapting the current hall, or suggesting alternatives for new construction should renovation and extension not be possible. A number of potential concept building layout designs were produced, and the public invited to comment during a meeting at the hall. Following this, a request was made to Aylesbury Vale District Council planning department for their pre-application advice. This Feasibility Study has been produced by taking into account the advice which was received.

Chearsley Village Hall is situated in the heart of the village on a corner plot. The plot is gently sloping, and is comprised of a single storey building close to the western-most boundary, with a large turfed area facing the building and also a children's play area slightly down the slope adjacent to the eastern boundary hedge. The site is situated on a junction of five roads, with the plot itself sandwiched between Chilton Road and Winchendon Road. The vehicular entrance is via Winchendon Road where a gateway leads directly into a car park.

The plot was left in trust at some stage in the past for use as a village hall, and the current hall was constructed after the Second World War. The hall is single storey, and comprises a main hall of approximately 100m<sup>2</sup>, with areas that have been added over the intervening years to provide a kitchen area, store rooms, entrance lobby and WCs. Walls are comprised of concrete panels on a steel reinforced concrete frame.

The concerns with the present hall fall into two main areas: the size, scale and layout of the hall is not conducive to modern recreational use, and also due to the outdated construction methods used for the building the integrity of the structure is poor. This is in spite of re-cladding the walls and over-roofing in the recent past.

There is a well-established local pre-school called Chearsley & Haddenham Under Fives (CHUF) which uses the main hall from Monday to Friday. They run eight sessions of childcare per week (five mornings and three afternoons) in Chearsley. As a result, the hall shows permanent signs of this residency; the internal walls, for example, are covered in children's artwork, toys and play equipment is visible or remains within the hall during the week, and items such as cups and utensils are present in the kitchen. If the hall is booked out for a private party or wedding, then playgroup staff have to clear the hall in advance. The presence of the playgroup within the main hall currently precludes other hall uses between 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday. In the two free afternoon slots, one is taken up with meetings of the Women's Institute (WI).

## 2. Chearsley Village Hall Site

The Village Hall building sits adjacent to the north western boundary of a plot of land approximately 1860m<sup>2</sup>. The site is gently sloping downwards from the hall, and comprises the hall building, a tarmac car park, turfed area and range of modern children's play equipment. There is also a willow sculpture, or tunnel, and mature shrubs and trees around the boundary of the site.

Of note is an electricity sub-station which is located adjacent to the southern elevation of the hall; it could limit the options for construction on the site, in terms of building size and position. UK Power Networks were consulted about the sub-station, but there are no plans to relocate or upgrade their equipment in the foreseeable future. An Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) check was carried out by UK Power Networks in October 2014 at the request of the Village Hall Committee. This found that the EMF reading was well within safe limits. There would be a significant cost of up to £100k to relocate the sub-station.

The tarmac car park has marked-out bays for 9 cars, plus room for another 4 or so vehicles at the opposite side of the car park on a part grass/part plastic mesh area. There is a dedicated DDA space available close to the hall. There are also a number of games such as hopscotch painted onto the surface. The site is secured by a mixture of fencing and hedge, and there are metal gates between tall stone pillars at the entrance to the car park. These wrought iron gates could be retained.

Although the site is on the west fringe of the village, because of the hall's position at the junction of five roads, and its location opposite the village green and pub (The Bell), it could be considered to be at the 'heart' of the village.

There is a small children's play area on site which comprises two climbing frames with slides and four swings on timber frames. The equipment is modern and is installed either over rubber crumb or turfed surfaces. Members of the public can access this play equipment at any time by using the pedestrian entrance next to the main gate.

### **3. Planning considerations**

#### Determining authority

The site is within the Aylesbury Vale District Council area, and the local authority will consider any planning application under the Town & Country Planning Act – General Regulations 1992.

#### Planning Policies

The site is not in either a conservation area or on Green Belt land. The site is, however, adjacent to the Chearsley Conservation Area which does need to be taken into account. The planning policies that pertain to this proposed scheme are:

- ▲ Adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) Adopted January 2004.
  - GP8: Protection of the Amenity of Residents
  - GP24: Car Parking Guidelines
  - GP35: Design of New Development Proposals
  - GP38: Landscaping of New Development Proposals
  - GP53: New Development in and Adjacent to Conservation Areas
  - SPG: Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to Parking Guidelines
- ▲ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must also be taken into account.

#### Pre-Application Planning Advice

Advice was sought from the Planning Department at Aylesbury Vale District Council. Details in the form of an indicative concept layout and sketch elevation were submitted.

In summary, the advice was that the proposed development was broadly acceptable in principle. The only issue of concern was regarding the two-storey element, as the positioning of the proposed building on site may have an impact upon the amenities of the occupants of the

neighbouring property at the rear (on Chilton Road). Providing that this issue is addressed, in planning terms the proposed scheme would be considered acceptable. It was suggested that the two storey element be pulled further forward towards the location indicated for a future extension.

The modern appearance of the building was considered befitting with regard to its status and location at the heart of the village. Although it was acknowledged that the building footprint is larger, due to the mature screening around the site perimeter a modest increase in the size of the building would be acceptable.

Overall, it is considered that the replacement hall would sit well within its context in accordance with policy GP35 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan.

AVDLP GP24 requires that new development accords with published parking guidelines. The AVDLP standards for assembly and leisure buildings suggest that one space be provided for each 11 square metres of public floor area. If the floor space of the main hall (180m<sup>2</sup>) is used for the calculation of public floor area, then 17 car parking spaces will be required for the new development. There is scope within the car park to provide exactly this number, including the two DDA-marked bays.

#### Archaeology

Advice was sought from the Buckinghamshire County Council Senior Archaeology Planning Officer. Following checks in the Historic Environment Record for the County, it was confirmed that there are records of medieval sites and burials in the vicinity of the building. Therefore, the proposed development may affect heritage assets of archaeological interest. If planning permission was granted, the Officer would request that an archaeological recording condition be attached to the consent. In practice, prior to development taking place, a written scheme of investigation would need to be prepared and approved by the planning authority, and then a watching programme would be carried out during the initial stages of construction works.

#### Highways and Transport

As part of the pre-application advice process, Buckinghamshire County Council have been consulted about any impact upon vehicular access. No objections were raised by the Highways Engineer, who considers that the existing access is satisfactory.

#### Building Location

The proposed building location is based on the requirement or preference to (as far as practicably possible) rebuild upon the existing building footprint. The proposal is to move the centre of mass of the building in order to improve its configuration in relation to the playground and car park. This will encroach on a small section of current turfed area and the planted willow structure. However, the reorientation of the building makes more efficient use of the space on the plot.

#### Access Roads

Vehicular access to the village hall site is currently adequate, with vehicles turning into and out of the main gateway from Winchendon Road. There are no anticipated additional issues arising from the proposal to construct a new hall. A reconfigured car park will be retained on site.

## 4. Design Considerations

### Current Village Hall building

The current hall building was constructed at some time after the Second World War, reputedly originally as a chicken shed. The original building has been renovated and restored over the intervening years in order to maintain its suitability for use as the village hall. A single storey extension has been added across the west elevation which accommodates the kitchen, WCs, entrance porch and some storage / ancillary space. A small semi-permanent sail-style canopy has been added in recent years extending out from the narrow south elevation to provide shelter for the modest pre-school outdoor play area.

The original building fabric is a concrete portal shed which has been over-roofed and re-clad. Consideration was given to whether the building could be altered and extended to provide a modern improved facility. This was the starting point of the review, but this suggestion was soon rejected due to the inferior and outdated construction methods, and also the complexity and cost of achieving a larger and more modern hall. The building is constructed to the standards of 50 years ago with poor thermal insulation properties, and the fabric of the building including windows, timberwork and roof etc is not worth preserving. The structure does not lend itself to alteration, and levels of insulation are inadequate and difficult to improve. In addition, the heating system is old.

It is likely that asbestos is present in the roof and possibly other elements of the structure, and a full Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey (adhering to the provisions found in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012) would need to be carried out prior to any works taking place on the building.

The shape and size of the hall is not conducive to modern use: the main hall is long and thin. Access to facilities such as kitchen and WCs is not ideal, as these have been added in a piecemeal fashion over the last 40 or 50 years. Functions in the hall have to use the undersized kitchenette / servery making catering difficult.

This construction features listed above would be very expensive to address and, coupled with the necessary refurbishment, would render the project more expensive than a new build.

Given the existing building construction and layout, the recommendation is to demolish the current building, and to build a new village hall on a slightly different footprint.

The current building is already supplied with available service runs – electricity, mains water and foul waste.

### Chearsley & Haddenham Under 5s (CHUF)

A playgroup currently operates Monday to Friday from the Village Hall, running eight sessions of childcare per week (five mornings and three afternoons). They occupy the main hall, and use the ancillary facilities and outdoor play areas. This precludes usage of the hall during the daytimes (except for two afternoons).

Any proposed design for a new hall needs to make provision for CHUF. As the usage is established, it would be sensible to create a shared space that has good access to dedicated WCs, can easily use the catering facilities, has adequate storage and most importantly its own entrance for parents and children. It would also be anticipated that the playgroup will require a



small fenced external play area as at present, with shading such as provided currently by the sun sail. It may be possible to retain the sail and re-attach it to the new hall building.

#### Other Hall Users

Other regular hall hirers include the Women's Institute (WI), various exercise classes, children's karate, parties for both adults and children (primarily at the weekend) and a number of Church-related activities and meetings.

#### Building Scale

The design proposal details a building which is primarily single storey, but with a two storey element that matches the scale of the surrounding residential buildings. The scale of the building will fit well within the context of the site and by sympathetic to its immediate surroundings, being largely hidden from nearby dwellings, streets and the crossroads by mature screening.

The new hall would provide 280m<sup>2</sup> of building footprint overall, with additional optional storage of approximately 32.5m<sup>2</sup> and further potential expansion space of approximately 45m<sup>2</sup>.

The hall will be capable of being divided into three smaller meeting or activity rooms using movable partitions. Additional facilities include a kitchen, entrance hall, foyer, office, meeting room, WCs and a separate plant room.

#### Building Style

The concept design is of a modern village hall building with brick and render elevations. The larger single storey section would have a flat roof, which could provide an external terrace should this be considered desirable. The two storey section would have a low pitched roof to match surrounding buildings. On the main hall section, windows would run in a horizontal line around the building.

The building would benefit from doors and full height windows on the southern facing elevation to make the most of natural light levels as well as providing views of, and access to the external areas of the site.

The main entrance will present as an attractive and welcoming façade, with a covered entrance canopy section and glazed windows and doors to allow a view of the entrance hall within.

#### Building Materials

Brick and render will comprise the main materials for the walls. Roofing material would be concrete tiles or standing seam zinc sheet for the pitched roof and felt for the flat roofed areas. Gutter and fascia details would be proportionate to the building size.

## **5. Building considerations**

#### Construction access

The construction site would be all of the current site with the exception of the outdoor play equipment which would be unaffected. The site is not suitable for access by articulated vehicles.

Access for demolition contractors and construction vehicles can be via the existing driveway from Winchendon Road. The site is central and located on a junction in the centre of the village where five roads meet, which may result in occasional restrictions on use during construction. Temporary protection will need to be provided for the soft grassed play areas.



### Demolition of Existing Building

A full Demolition and Refurbishment Asbestos Survey would need to be carried out prior to any works on site. It would be possible to include the demolition of the existing building within the contract for construction of the new village hall building.

### Perimeter treatments

The existing fencing, hedging and tree boundary around the site would be retained. The perimeter of the whole construction site would be fenced or boarded.

### Trees

The site is surrounded by a variety of both mature and young trees, particularly around the site boundary. The willow structure/corridor will need to be removed, but it may be possible to relocate it elsewhere on the site rather than lose it altogether.

### Service runs

There are no known restrictions to rebuilding, subject to the relocation of the electrical supply, water (and their associated meters), and foul waste runs. The village does not have mains line gas, and the hall has not been converted to use oil. Therefore, heating will be electric, as now or alternatively could be from a ground source heat pump, albeit alongside the installation of photovoltaic panels on the roof.

The hall is in the Thames Water region, and connections would be made to the existing potable water and foul waste runs.

There is the potential to introduce some renewable energy into the new build, for instance PV cells on the roof to provide some electricity for immediate usage, and to enable any surplus to be fed back into the grid. The building may also be suitable for solar thermal panels to provide some contribution to hot water.

There is an existing BT line into the building. This could be retained and it is recommended that the line be upgraded to provide a broadband line so that the hall could have a WiFi connection to bring it up to modern standards – also a necessary feature for any office or administrative function that takes place there.

### Electricity Sub-Station

There is an electricity sub-station located around 5.5m from the existing building. Enquiries have been made with UK Power Networks to identify whether there are any plans to upgrade the infrastructure or equipment, as this may have been an opportune moment to relocate the sub-station. However, there are no plans to move or carry out any works to the sub-station in the foreseeable future.

An electro-magnetic field (EMF) check was carried out on the sub-station due to its proximity with the building, but it was found that the readings were within safe limits. It is understood that the cost would be in the region of £100k to relocate the equipment.

The presence of the sub-station places certain limitations upon the location of any new building, but the proposed building footprint and design can take account of this.

### Construction method

The method of construction is dependant in part on the materials specified. Traditional construction of brick and block cavity wall build is proposed. It is possible that the blockwork internal face for the building could be replaced by structural timber, which may reduce the construction period and offer some increased thermal properties.

### Soil conditions

Soil conditions have not been formally assessed at this stage. At design stage an initial assessment would be made to determine the necessary width and depth of foundations required to support the building load and prevent movement.

### Flood Risk

The risk of flooding from water courses is assessed by the Environment Agency as very low.

## **6. Environmental impact**

The main environmental impacts resulting from demolition of the existing hall are separation and subsequent disposal of waste materials. In particular, any asbestos or other hazardous materials present must be separated and dealt with in a controlled manner.

The three main environmental impacts arising from construction of the new building are the carbon emissions related to the manufacture of the building materials to be used in construction, the thermal efficiency of the resultant building and the extent to which the building materials can be re-used or recycled at the end of the building's life.

Timber framed walls and/or structural integrated panels (SIPs) should be considered both to reduce the environmental impact of the build and to shorten the construction phase. Any timber specified would be from sustainable sources.

Insulation products should be specified to be free from ozone depleting chemicals in their manufacture. Blocks, where used, should be lightweight aircrete containing a high proportion of recycled material, rather than concrete. Concrete, necessarily specified primarily for foundations, should be no more than is required.

Energy saving measures should be included in the design, from natural ventilation, installed low energy lighting & appliances to maximising boiler / appliance efficiency and standards of insulation.

Energy generating measures, such as photo-voltaic cells (PV) or solar cells (evacuated tubes), will be required for the building to be compliant as well as to keep operating costs to a minimum.

The design should be subject to an environmental impact review. This should include reviewing the proposed method of construction and method of removing spoil and construction waste.

The new construction should be designed to meet and, if possible, exceed Building Regulations on thermal efficiency - Part L. The building's Target Emission Rate (TER) would be calculated at design stage and then assessed on completion. An energy performance certificate (EPC) for the building will be required.

Construction waste would be sorted and recycled or disposed of subject to the requirements of the Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

The proposed construction would be subject to the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2007.

## 7. Programme

The project programme has been developed to construct the proposed building at the earliest practical opportunity, allowing sufficient time for funding to be sought.

Feasibility study completed	by January 2015
Agreement in principle of concept design	by end March 2015
Appointment of project manager	by May 2015
Detailed designs complete	by July 2015
Submit planning application	by end September 2015
Planning determination	by end November 2015
Funding applications (initial round)	January – September 2016
Completion of construction information	by end October 2016
Issue tender / Building control application	by end October 2016
Building control approval	by mid December 2016
Funding applications (Round 2)	January – September 2017
Appointment of main contractor	by end January 2018
Construction phase	March – August 2018
Building handover	September 2018

The project programme is dependent on early consensus to facilitate the design process as well as the impact of the weather on the construction programme.

There is opportunity to bring forward the building control application and the issue of the tender and, therefore the construction phase, but this would be at risk of the planning determination or the funding being put in place.

Allowing two nine month periods for securing funding and barring unforeseen delays, the building could be completed, ready for handover in late summer 2018.

## 8. Cost estimate

The construction cost estimate is based on Spon's Architect & Builder's Price Guide, adjusted for known costs. The cost estimate is for a part single storey, part two storey building with a Gross Internal Floor Area of 320m<sup>2</sup>, based within a standard footprint with a block & beam floor, brick-faced external walls and part flat / part tiled roof.

The construction costs include all building works from extending current services, digging and filling foundations, the superstructure, roofing & tiling, internal services to flooring and decoration. The construction estimate excludes the provision of furniture. It includes the cost of demolition of the existing building.

A number of assumptions have been made relating to material costs, prior to detailed design being completed and approved by the determining planning authority. These assumptions have taken the 'middle ground' between standard and bespoke materials and finishes.

Construction costs are estimated at £493,000 exclusive of VAT. This estimate is comparable with building cost data from the Building Cost Information Service (historical cost data provided by The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors).

An additional sum of £30,000 (circa 5%) is recommended to be set aside as a contingency.

Professional (design & project management) fees and planning and building control application fees are not included in the construction cost estimate. Based on estimated professional fees of approximately 11%, plus application fees and the construction cost for the new village hall, the project total would be £554,000 exclusive of VAT.



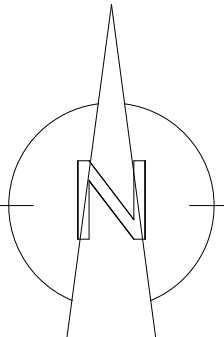
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All works to be carried out to the satisfaction of the local authority and in conjunction with current Bye-Laws and Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (where applicable).

Verify all dimensions before proceeding.

NOTES:

Areas shown are building footprint



Scale 1:200 at A1

0

5

10

15

20 m

ISSUE DATE		REVISION	
25 SEP 14	A	Issued for Review	
15 JAN 15	B	Amendments after Pre App	

PROJECT: **Chearsley Village Hall**

DRAWING: **Proposed Site Plan**

STATUS: **For Review**



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DRAWING Number & Revision:  
**348-003    B**



## 10. Concept design – indicative visualisation

