

APPENDIX 5 - Joint Committee Of The National Amenity Societies Comments:

Holt Hall is a Grade II listed building within the Glaven Valley Conservation Area. Initially constructed in the early 1840s for Walter Hamilton Pemberton, the building stands near the site of an earlier house, and fragments of a C12 chapel are incorporated into a folly near the Hall. The 1840s Hall was designed in a neo-Elizabethan style and included ancillary buildings (now replaced), and the surviving walled garden. Following a sale of the Hall in 1863 to John Rogers, it was extended and the ancillary buildings were replaced with the existing service wing and stables. After a change of use in the C20 alterations took place within the hall and further development on the site.

Despite C20 alterations and additions that detract from significance the building retains many historic interior features, and the site as a whole retains its legibility as a C19 country house, with ancillary buildings, within a landscape. The Victorian Society understands the need to find a sustainable use for the building and the site's history as an educational facility would suggest the suitability of school use. Despite the uncontentious proposed works to the main Hall and its interior, other aspects of the proposals raise concerns.

This would see the demolition of the 1860s service wing, stables, and the reconstructed glasshouses, and their replacement with several new buildings to facilitate the proposed school use. The loss of the historic service wing and stables in particular would harm the significance of the listed building through the loss of historic fabric that contributes to the legibility of the Hall as a C19 country house. The design of the new buildings is in strong contrast with the historic buildings, using a palette of materials (expanses of glass and metal) that has more in common with an urban or commercial setting, than a historic country house within a predominately rural Conservation Area. Located between the Hall and the walled garden, such a contrasting building would disrupt the relation between these historic structures. Furthermore, the proposal to locate the main entrance within the new building, rather than the historic Hall, would reduce the prominence of the Hall on the site, in effect turning it into a wing of the new school building. This would be increased by the new buildings having a larger footprint than what would remain of the Hall.

Overall, the scale and design of the new buildings, coupled with the loss of historic fabric, would cause a serious level of harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building, the Conservation Area, and the setting of the listed building. The Victorian Society believe that the provision of school facilities on this site is possible, but any proposals must play closer attention to the character of the listed building, its setting, and the Conservation Area

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Holt Hall, built in the 1840s for Walter Hamilton Pemberton, is listed grade II and located within the Glaven Valley Conservation Area. The Victorian Society does not object to reinstating its former use, but concerns remain regarding the harm to significance caused by the proposed demolition of the northern service building and ancillary buildings. The preservation of the Hall is positive, but the removal of these buildings will negatively affect the significance of the heritage asset and the overall understanding of the site.

The service building and ancillary buildings hold high evidential and historical value as they contribute to the understanding of the historic use of the site and demonstrate the original spatial relationship between the buildings and the hall. Their demolition would result in an adverse impact, constituting harm to both the heritage asset and the site through the loss of historic buildings and the removal of tangible evidence of original site layout and planform. The application proposes building recording to mitigate the removal of these buildings, but this

does not outweigh the heritage harm that the demolition will cause. The decision to demolish a historic building and replace it with a new building should not be taken lightly, as the sustainable re-use of existing buildings should be a priority. A full life cycle analysis should be conducted for the replacement building(s) and include the end-of-life energy and carbon of the existing building before any proposal for demolition is considered. Retaining existing buildings and seeking to enhance their energy performance in sensitive ways is in keeping with building conservation and sustainability.

The Victorian Society opposes the proposed construction of a new northern two-storey extension near the current service and ancillary buildings. The extension, which will abut the Hall on its northern elevation, will use materials such as glass and metal, which are at odds with the Hall's materiality and do not provide a seamless visual relationship. The extension's scale and massing may overshadow the principal asset and remove the legibility of the building hierarchy. The extension's height and scale will also negatively impact the garden's significance. The Victorian Society believes that the extension is not in line with the Glaven Valley Conservation Area Appraisal (2024) guidance and policies on new development, which emphasizes appropriate scale, massing, design, and materials. They also suggest that the extension should be subsidiary to the existing buildings, use traditional local vernacular materials, and not compete with or overshadow existing buildings, particularly historic ones. The Victorian Society urges the authority to withhold consent and seek further justification for the proposals.