

Design and Access Statement

Proposed Change of Use to Nursery School (Use Class E)

The Old Drill Hall (Former Church), 10 Haverfield Road, Spalding, PE11 2XP

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports a full planning application for the change of use of the former church building at The Old Drill Hall, 10 Haverfield Road, Spalding, to a nursery school (Use Class E).

The Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order and reflects the local validation requirements of South Holland District Council. It should be read alongside the submitted application drawings and supporting technical information.

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a former church building within a predominantly residential area of Spalding, accessed from Haverfield Road. The building is detached, set within its own curtilage, and was historically designed for community use.

The surrounding area is characterised by:

- Residential dwellings of mixed age and form
- Local community and institutional uses
- Established residential streets with pedestrian activity

The site benefits from an existing lawful community-related use and is not located within a Conservation Area nor subject to statutory heritage designation.

3. Planning History and Existing Use

The building was last used as a church/place of worship, a community-focused function. It has since become surplus to its original purpose.

The proposed nursery use represents a continuation of community-focused activity rather than the introduction of a fundamentally different or incompatible use.

4. Proposed Development

The proposal involves change of use only, with no substantive external alterations required to facilitate the nursery.

Internally, the building will be adapted to provide:

- Nursery and play spaces
- Quiet/rest areas
- WC and changing facilities
- Staff and ancillary accommodation

All works will be contained within the existing building envelope.

5. Heritage Statement

Original Purpose: Built in the early 20th century (foundation stone laid 20 February 1913), the building served as a training base for the 4th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment.

Military Usage: It remained a military training centre for the Territorial Army for decades, appearing in historical records such as Kelly's Directory of Lincolnshire (1937).

Architectural Character:

- **Construction:** Solid brick with cavity walls, pitched roof, and concrete flooring.
- **Layout:** Mixture of open-plan spaces (former drill floor) and cellular offices.
- **Preservation:** Although not listed on the National Heritage List for England (as of early 2026), it is considered a significant "unlisted building of merit" or local heritage asset due to its Edwardian origins and military history.

The proposed change of use will involve no material alterations to the building's fabric or external appearance. The works will preserve the character, historic interest, and architectural features. Existing access, circulation, and parking arrangements will remain unchanged, maintaining the property's setting and heritage significance.

6. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

The proposal aligns with the NPPF objectives, particularly:

- Promoting sustainable development
- Supporting strong, vibrant, and healthy communities
- Making effective use of existing buildings
- Supporting the provision of education and childcare facilities

South Holland Local Plan (2019):

The proposal has been assessed against the adopted Local Plan and is considered to comply with key policies:

- **Community Facilities:**
 - Protect and support retention/reuse of community buildings
 - Encourage alternative community uses where facilities are surplus
 - The re-use of the former church as a nursery school aligns with these objectives

- **Sustainable Development and Settlement Strategy:**
 - The site lies within the Spalding settlement boundary, where development is supported in principle
 - The proposal represents an appropriate form of development within an established urban area

- **Design and Amenity:**
 - Development should respect the surrounding character, safeguard residential amenity, and avoid unacceptable impacts from noise, traffic, or disturbance
 - The nursery use is compatible with the residential context and comparable in scale/intensity to the former church use

- **Transport and Highway Safety:**
 - Development should be safely accessible and not result in severe highway impacts
 - The nursery will operate during standard daytime hours, with arrivals/ departures spread to avoid peak traffic periods

7. Design Considerations

Use: The nursery school use is compatible with the building's original purpose and layout. Churches are traditionally designed for group activities and quiet community gatherings, which translate effectively to early years education.

Scale and Appearance:

- No change to the building's scale
- External appearance retained
- Character preserved, including contribution to the street scene

Landscaping:

- Existing external areas can be used for outdoor play (with management controls)
- Soft landscaping retained
- No significant changes to boundary treatments

Flood Risk:

A proportionate Flood Risk Assessment confirms the proposed use will be safe for its lifetime, will not increase flood risk elsewhere, and can be effectively managed via retained floor levels, daytime operation, and a Flood Emergency Plan. The development represents a sustainable, policy-compliant form of development in flood risk terms.

8. Access Considerations

Vehicular Access and Parking:

- Existing access and on-site parking remain unchanged
- Nursery operations will be managed through:
 - Staggered drop-off and pick-up times
 - Staff presence during peak periods
 - Operational policies to minimise on-street congestion
- 6 existing on-site parking spaces
- Existing cycle rack
- Dedicated space for pushchairs

Pedestrian Access:

- Accessible on foot from surrounding residential streets
- Proximity to local housing and existing footways
- Supports a sustainable, walkable catchment

Inclusive Access:

- Step-free access where reasonably practicable
- Accessible WC facilities
- Safe, inclusive access for children, staff, and visitors

9. Residential Amenity

- Nursery operates within defined daytime hours only
- Noise levels expected to be comparable or lower than former church use
- Activity will be predictable and managed
- No evening or weekend disturbance anticipated
- Operational management measures will safeguard neighbouring amenity

10. Conclusion

The proposed change of use of The Old Drill Hall to a nursery school represents a sustainable, policy-compliant, and socially beneficial development.

- There is evidence of childcare demand in Spalding and South Holland
- The proposal will create additional spaces, supporting expansion of the 30-hour childcare offer for working parents

Key benefits:

- Re-uses an existing community building
- Supports local childcare provision
- Complies with national and local planning policy
- Preserves the building's character and street scene contribution
- Protects residential amenity

The development is considered acceptable in planning terms, and planning permission is therefore recommended.