

Heritage Statement



Bat and Ball Station, Bat and Ball Road, Sevenoaks

On Behalf of Sevenoaks Town Council

February 2017

Project Ref: 2386A

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INTRODUCTION

1. This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Heritage Collective on behalf of Sevenoaks Town Council and relates to an application for listed building consent and planning permission for the Bat and Ball Station, a grade II listed building located to the west side of Bat and Ball Road, Sevenoaks.
2. In accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) this statement describes the significance of the listed building as a designated heritage asset.

Heritage Assets

3. The Bat and Ball Railway Station is a grade II listed building, first designated on 24 July 1990. The building dates from 1862 and was the original terminus for Sevenoaks before the mainline station was built in 1868. Following several changes of use the building has been unoccupied for approximately 20 years. The List Description for the building reads:

"Railway Station. 1862, the original terminus for Sevenoaks before the main line was built in 1868. It comprises Station offices and waiting room with Station Master's House at the NE end. Built in London yellow stocks with string courses in red, dark blue and cream with dark blue slate roof. 1 storey to centre with gable end to SW and 2 storey Station Master's House at NE end. 9 windows in all. Both gables are plain barge boarded, the south west gable has a circular bricked-up window feature. The station gable ends (back and front) have a decorative red brick band of pseudo machicolations. This feature also runs along the top of the recessed walls under the canopies, back and front. The two double entrance doors and 4 windows are recessed into an entrance portico, with typical carved valance boards under the eaves. The portico roof is supported on 2 wooden columns plus brackets, the NE column retaining its hook and eye for the horses reins. The windows are segmental arched with red brick voussoirs and cream terracotta keystones and springers, each with trefoil motif. All windows are double-hung sashes, with horns on the upper sash and with one vertical glazing bar per sash. These glazing bars end in 'capitals' with responds in the top corners of the sash. The fanlights over the double doors are subdivided into a circle with two semi-circles below. The Platform side shows a single storey building with gable ends to right and left, each with plain barge boards and a bricked-circular window feature. The centre of the building is recessed, the eaves beam with its valance boards being supported on a single wooden column. Minor later extensions have been added at each end."

4. The application site is not located within or adjacent to a conservation area and there are no surrounding listed buildings capable of being affected by the proposed development.

Proposals and Relevant Background

5. Full details of the proposed development are outlined in the Design and Access Statement and drawn submission of this application.
6. In brief, proposals entail the refurbishment and small scale alteration of the grade II listed building to provide a series of community rooms for the local community centre. Specific alterations to the buildings fabric include:
 - Provision of a café along with associated kitchen and servery;
 - Introduction of new internal WCs, including two accessible WCs (one internal and one within the open courtyard);
 - General refurbishment and restoration of lost and damaged features; and
 - External works of maintenance and refurbishment.



Plate 1: Front (east) elevation of the Bat and Ball Station

Purpose of the Statement

7. The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to assist with the determination of the applications by informing the decision takers on the effects of development on the historic built environment. Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets affected are presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised.
8. Specifically, this report assesses the capability of the listed building to absorb change to its fabric without causing harm to its significance. Particular regard is given to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The report also sets out how the proposal complies with the guidance and policy of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and local planning policy.
9. The heritage assets affected have been observed and assessed by the author following a site visit made on 3 March 2016 in good weather.



Figure 1: Site location plan

RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

Legislation

10. Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 66 of the Act place a duty on the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (the NPPF)

11. The NPPF constitutes the Government's current national policy regarding development in the historic environment. It is a material consideration and includes a succinct policy framework for local planning authorities and decision takers. It relates to planning law by stating that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
12. Paragraphs 126 to 141 of the NPPF deal with conserving and enhancing the historic environment with much emphasis on "significance", defined in Annex 2 as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."
13. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF places a duty on the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, providing a proportionate level of detail. The effects of any development on a heritage asset therefore need to be assessed against the four components of its heritage significance: its archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interests.
14. Paragraph 129 requires LPAs to identify and assess "the particular significance of any heritage asset". This should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, including by development affecting its setting.
15. Paragraph 131 requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
16. Paragraph 132 applies specifically to designated heritage assets. It states that great weight should be given to their conservation and it requires a proportionate approach (i.e. the more important the asset, the greater the weight attached to its conservation).
17. Conservation (for heritage policy) is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF:

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."

18. The importance and relevance of this definition is that it does not suggest conservation to be the same as preservation. Indeed, what sets conservation apart is the emphasis on proactively maintaining and managing change and not on a reactive approach to resisting change. In its simplest interpretation conservation could amount to a change that at least sustains the significance of a heritage asset.
19. Paragraph 133 deals with substantial harm to, or total loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset. In cases of substantial harm or total loss of significance, applications should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that outweighs that harm or loss. Paragraph 134 deals with cases of less than substantial harm and notes that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Heritage protection and the conservation of heritage assets are recognised as of benefit to the public.
20. Paragraph 137 notes that proposals which preserve those elements of the setting of heritage assets that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of that asset should be treated favourably.

Local Planning Policy Context

21. The Core Strategy (adopted February 2011) and the Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted February 2015) are the central elements of planning policy, forming the Local Plan, for Sevenoaks District Council. The following policies are relevant to this report.
22. Core Strategy Policy SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation: This policy notes that development should be to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character. The policy notes that new development should create safe, inclusive and attractive environments that meet the needs of users and incorporate principles of sustainable development. In regards to heritage assets the policy notes that these features will be protected and enhanced.
23. Policy EN4 Heritage Assets: This policy notes that proposals which preserve or enhance the character, appearance or setting of an asset will be permitted. The policy also notes that applications will be assessed with reference to the following:
 - a) The historic and/or architectural significance of the asset;

- b) The prominence of its location and setting; and
- c) The historic and/or architectural significance of any elements to be lost or replaced.

National and Local Planning Guidance

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 2012

24. The National Planning Practice Guidance (2014), *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, updated 10/04/2014, provides advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment in accordance with the NPPF (2012).
25. In relation to harm the guidance states:

"Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting."
26. The document notes that:

"If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative viable uses, the optimum use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes."

The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most profitable one. It might be the original use, but that may no longer be economically viable or even the most compatible with the long-term conservation of the asset. However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner."
27. The document also notes that on occasion harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused provided the harm is minimised.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

28. Paragraph 020 of the guidance notes that public benefits can be heritage based and can include:

"Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;

Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset;

Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation."

29. The Sevenoaks tithe map of ca. 1839 (The Genealogist, Kent History and Library Centre, Sevenoaks tithe map, digital copy, probably ca. 1839) depicts the site of the Bat and Ball Station as undeveloped. The site of the present station building seems to be identifiable with part of plot 23, 'Pond field & others in one', [Arable], apparently owned by Sir Edmund Filmer and occupied by John Allen Telby.
30. A railway link to Tonbridge via Redhill existed from 1842 and the anticipation of a local connection to Sevenoaks led to speculative building in the St John's area (C. Rayner, Sevenoaks Past with the Villages of Holmesdale (Chichester: Phillimore, 1997), p. 101).
31. The station currently known as the Bat and Ball was the first terminus in Sevenoaks; it opened in 1862. Other sites considered for the location of the station had included Riverhead Square. The route that connected to Sevenoaks ran via Otford, Shoreham and Eynsford then linked into the London Chatham and Dover line at Swanley (C. Rayner, Sevenoaks Past with the Villages of Holmesdale (Chichester: Phillimore, 1997), p. 101).
32. The station building is described in the Buildings of England as:
'1862 for the Sevenoaks Railway. The original station building, of mildly polychromatic brick, remains largely unaltered.' (J. Newman, The Buildings of England: Kent: West and the Weald (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 524.)
33. The line was opened on 2 June 1862, however, it is likely that there was a temporary terminus here or in the vicinity prior to the completion of the current building (J. Dunlop, The Pleasant Town of Sevenoaks: A History (Sevenoaks: Caxton and Holmesdale Press, 1965), p. 165).
34. A description of other structures of the station, such as the engine shed and footbridge, are provided by D. Glasspool, 'Kent Rail: Sevenoaks Bat & Ball', <http://kentrail.org.uk/Sevenoaks%20Bat%20&%20Ball%202.htm>. Here numerous photographs show the past configuration of the station building and the covered footbridge.
35. In 1866 the Bat and Ball station was used by the Prince and Princess of Wales (J. Dunlop, The Pleasant Town of Sevenoaks: A History (Sevenoaks: Caxton and Holmesdale Press, 1965), p. 165), and in 1867 by Queen Victoria, on their visits to Knole (C. Rayner, Sevenoaks Past with the Villages of Holmesdale (Chichester: Phillimore, 1997), p. 101).
36. The Bat and Ball station appears to have acquired its 'Bat and Ball' suffix in 1869, taking the name from a nearby public house.

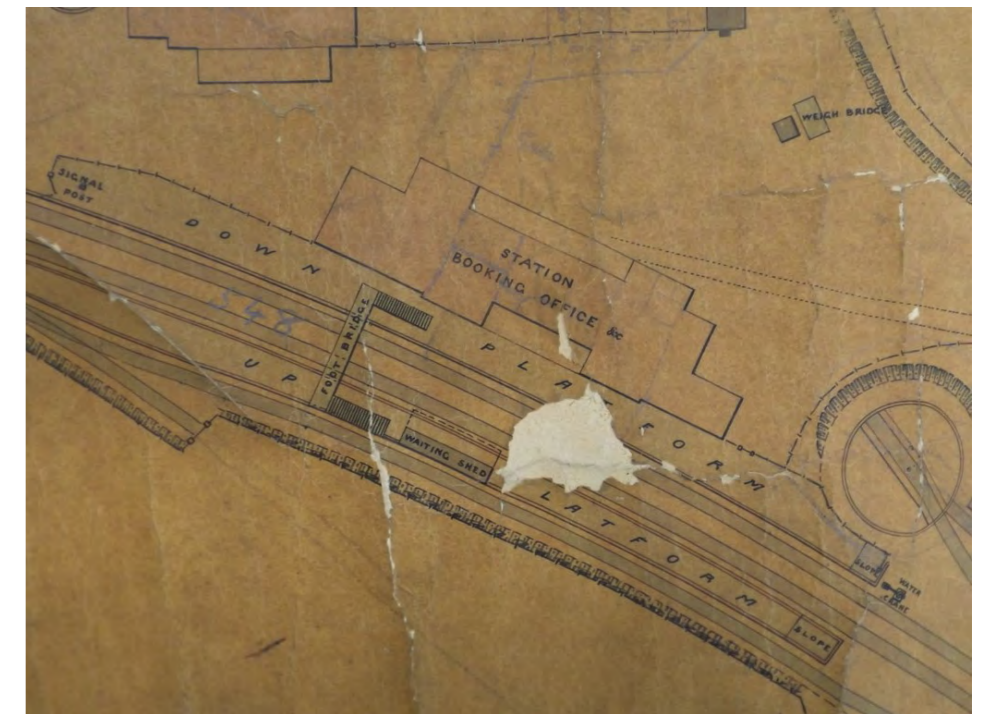


Figure 2: Plan of the Station from 1874



Figure 3: Extract from the 1896 OS Map

37. The development of railway services in the area meant that around seven years after its construction the Bat and Ball line was 'an unimportant appendix to the Maidstone route' (D. Glasspool, 'Kent Rail: Sevenoaks Bat & Ball').
38. A plan, perhaps dating from 1874, depicts 'Sevenoaks Station [Bat and Ball]'. The station building is labelled 'Station Booking Office &c' (Kent History and Library Centre, U3273 P1/217, L. C. & D. Ry, Sevenoaks Station [Bat and Ball], plan, 26/8/74.), however, the plan does not demonstrate the internal configuration of the station at this date.
39. Rail services were reduced during the First World War and the Bat and Ball station was closed to passenger traffic in ca. 1916 (J. Dunlop, *The Pleasant Town of Sevenoaks: A History* (Sevenoaks: Caxton and Holmesdale Press, 1965), p. 191).
40. A plan dating from 1920 likewise labels the station building 'Station Booking Office Etc.' but again does not demonstrate the internal configuration of the station (Kent History and Library Centre, U3273 P1/213, S. E. & C. R. Sevenoaks Station (B & Ball)).
41. A plan probably dating from 1940 shows the use of the station building in greater detail, including (roughly from north to south) a station master's house at the northern end of the block, a booking office and booking hall, a general waiting room, a ladies waiting room, lavatories and areas marked lamps and porters. The plan also depicts numerous other features in the area, including the footbridge, signal box, goods shed and air raid shelters (Kent History and Library Centre, U3273 P1/212, S. R. Sevenoaks Bat & Ball, plan, 9.7.40).
42. A plan of 1941 suggests that by this time the use of station buildings had altered, or was planned to be altered: instead of forming a station master's house, the ground floor rooms at the north end of the block are labelled div.[?isional] engineer and files, whilst the areas adjacent to the south seem to have been used or contemplated for use by accounts and a drawing office. It seems likely these areas related to the 'Divisional Engineers Office, Southern Railway', as stamped in the corner of the plan (Kent History and Library Centre, U3273 P1/219, S. R. Sevenoaks B & B, plan, 12-12-41)
43. A similar plan seems to date from 1945 (Kent History and Library Centre, U3273 P1/220, S. R. Sevenoaks B & B, plan, 30.11.45).
44. A photograph from 1962 shows the station clearly and depicts, as shown on earlier plans, a timber infill structure beneath the existing canopy on the platform side, which was likely in use as a waiting room (Copyright Ben Brooksbank). The photograph also shows the covered footbridge prior to the removal of the canopy at a date between 1962 and 1984.



Figure 4: Extract from the 1907 OS Map

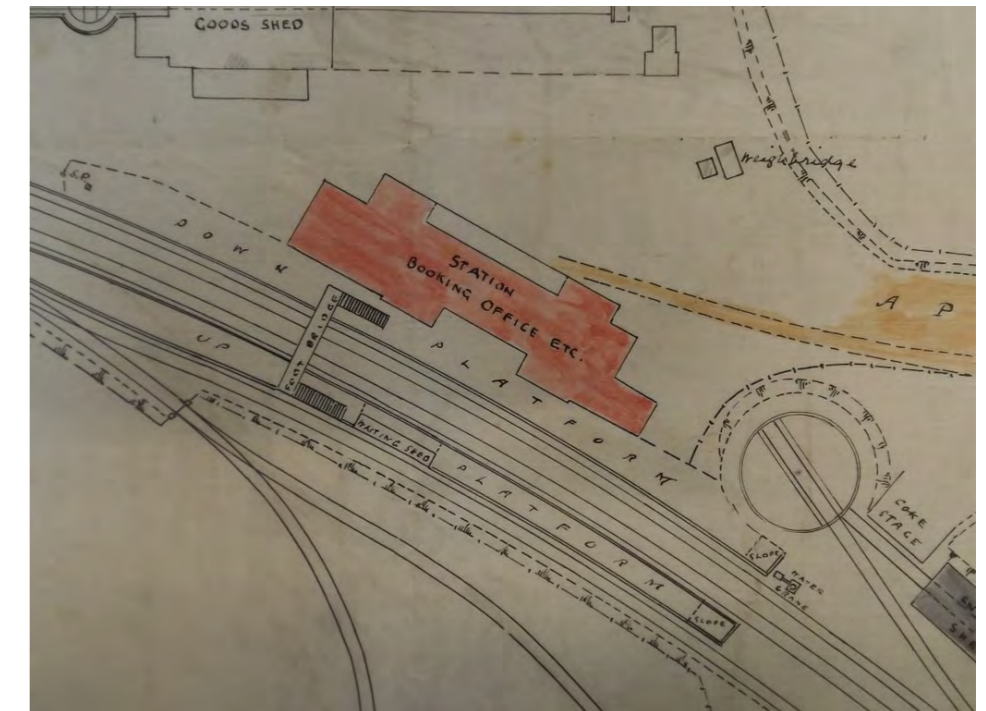


Figure 5: Plan of the Station and surroundings from 1920



Figure 6: 1922 Photograph of the Bat and Ball Station



Figure 7: Extract from the 1936-41 OS Map

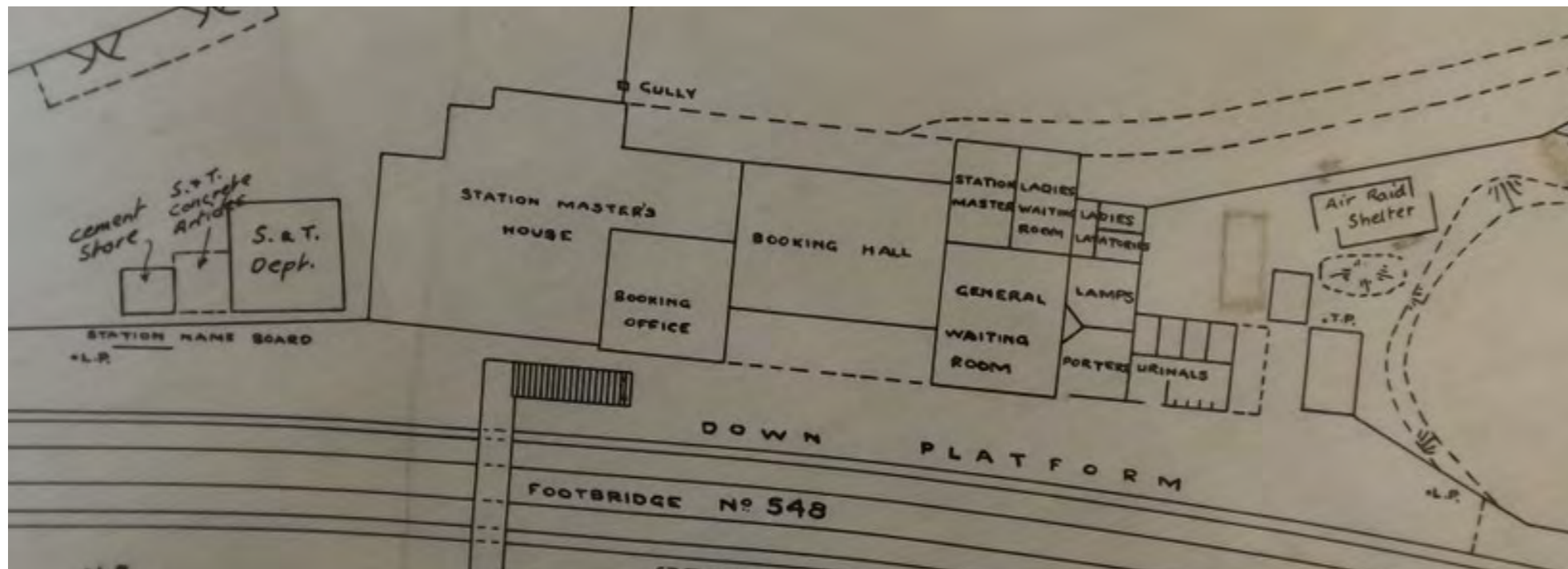


Figure 8: Plan of the Station and surroundings from 1940

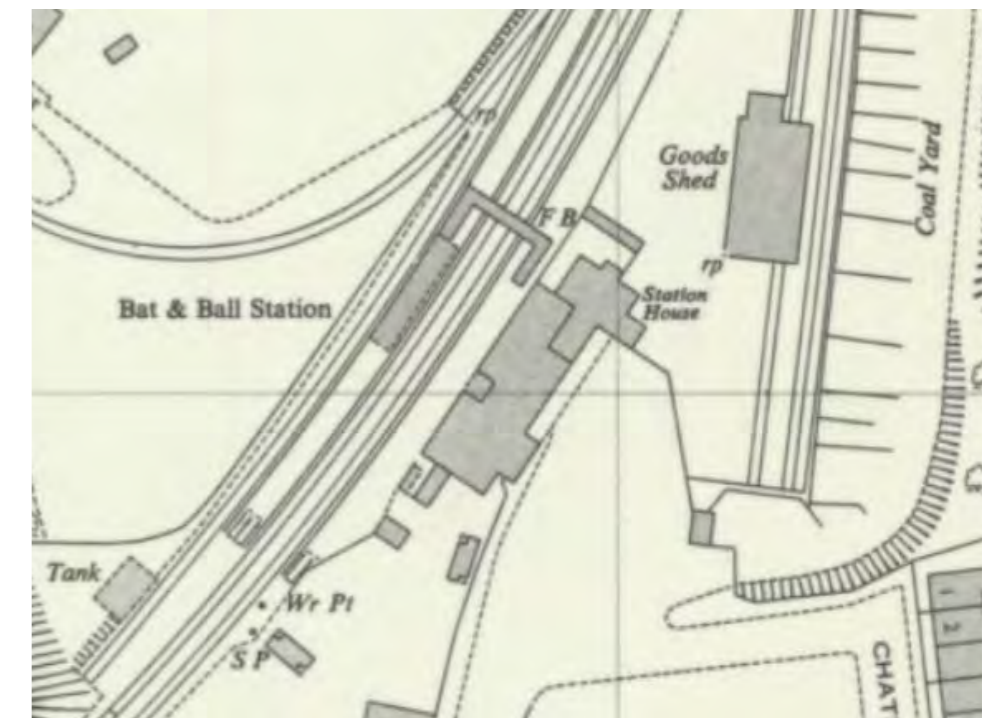


Figure 10: Extract from the 1959 OS Map

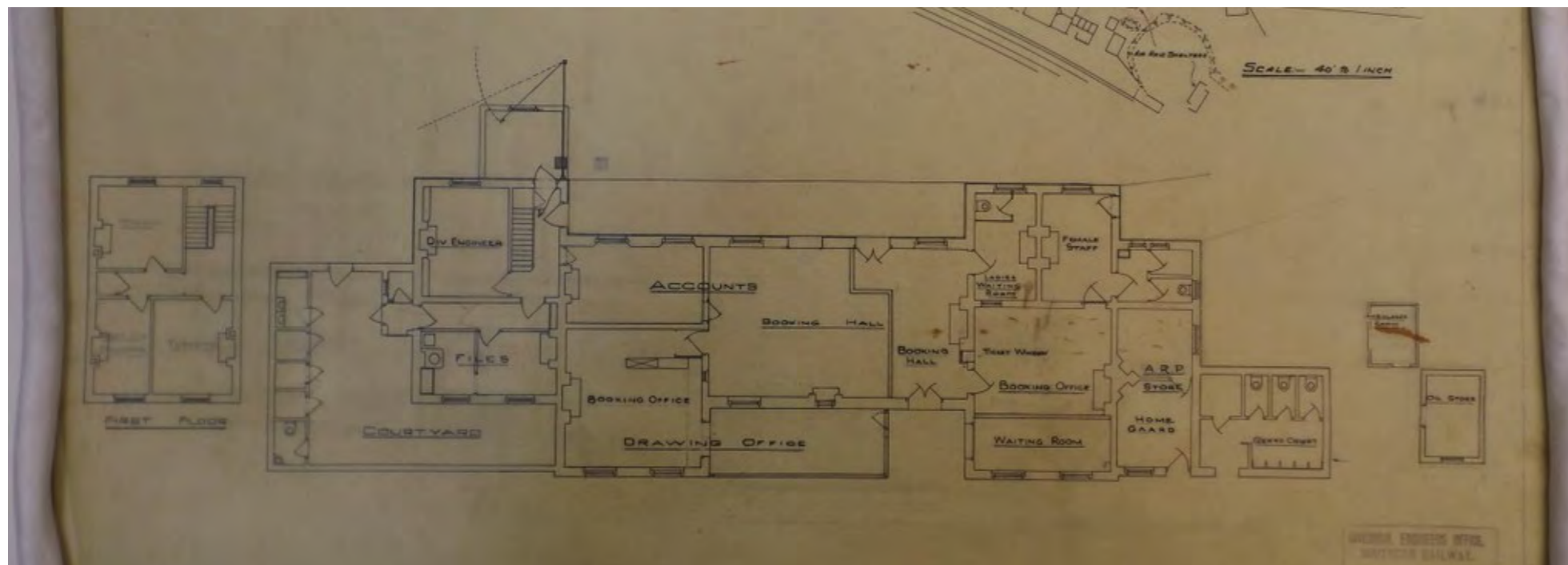


Figure 9: Plan of the Station from 1941



Figure 11: 1962 photograph of the Bat and Ball Station

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

47. It is recognised that not all parts of a heritage asset will necessarily be of equal significance. In some cases certain elements could accommodate change without affecting the significance of the asset. Change is only considered harmful if it erodes an asset's significance. Understanding the significance of any heritage assets affected and any contribution made by their setting (paragraph 128, NPPF 2012) is therefore fundamental to understanding the scope for and acceptability of change.
48. A description of the Bat and Ball Station and its heritage significance is presented below. The descriptions are proportionate to the asset's significance and are sufficient to understand the nature of any impact the proposals may have upon that significance.

The Bat and Ball Station

Description

49. The Bat and Ball Station is a part single storey part two storey yellow brick structure roughly in an elongated H plan. Those two storey areas are located to the north east and feature the original station masters residential dwelling. This part of the building remains in private residential use and is outside of the application site.
50. The yellow brick structure possess a broadly picturesque and gothic external form and features string courses in red, dark blue and cream brick with glazed red tiles, a decorative red brick band of pseudo machicolations and gables with carved bargeboards.
51. The main entrance doors, two sets of double doors with decorative fan lights above, are situated to the road side beneath a timber portico with carved valance boards supported on two columns with brackets.
52. Original windows survive in varying states of repair and typically double-hung sashes, with horns on the upper sash and with one vertical glazing bar per sash. The windows are located within segmental arches with red brick voussoirs and cream terracotta keystones and springers, each with trefoil motif.
53. The building's platform elevation is more basic in detailing but continues the general aesthetic of the front elevation. There is also a timber portico to this elevation, though, during the early 20th century, this was replaced by a fully enclosed timber and glazed waiting room.
54. There are minor later extensions at each end which are typically flat roof structures of broadly matching aesthetic.



Plate 2: Front (east) elevation of the Bat and Ball Station



Plate 3: Front (east) elevation of the Bat and Ball Station



Plate 4: Front (east) elevation of the Bat and Ball Station



Plate 5: Side (north) elevation of the Bat and Ball Station



Plate 6: Platform (west) elevation of the Bat and Ball



Plate 7: Open courtyard area to the south



Plate 8: Bridge across platforms to the west



Plate 9: Alterations present to the west elevation



Plate 10: Boarded windows to the platform elevation

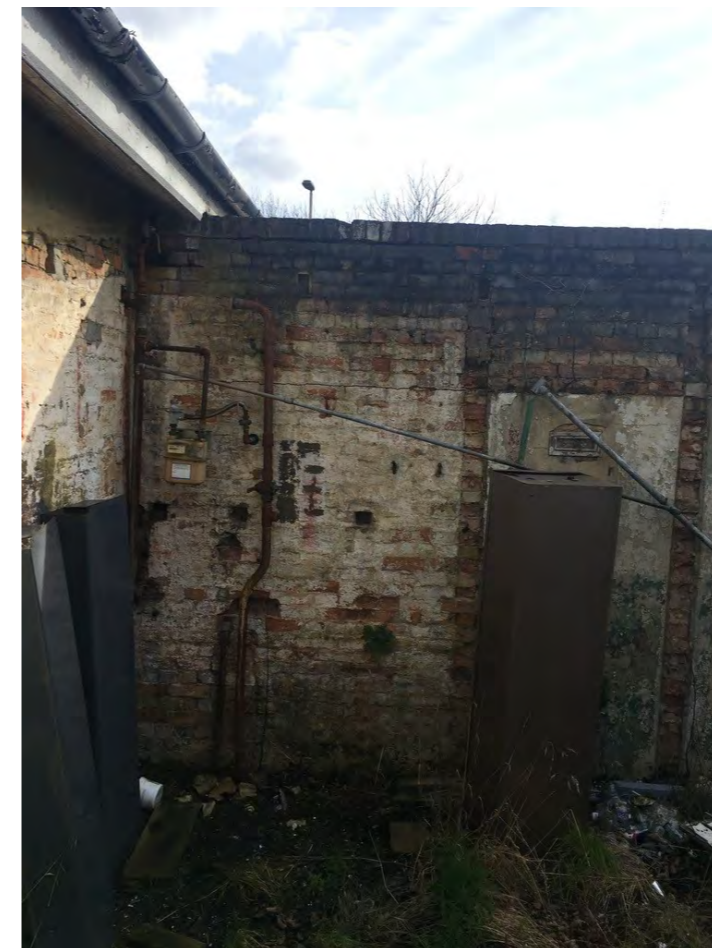


Plate 11: Interior view within the open courtyard



Plate 12: Interior view within the open courtyard

55. Internally the station comprises station offices, booking halls, luggage rooms and waiting rooms. A number of rooms retain original panelling, timber flooring, chimney breasts (though no fireplaces) and some original features such as the station master's desk and ticket windows. While minor alterations have been undertaken the station's plan form appears to be broadly intact.
56. Internally the building is deteriorating considerably following a 25 year stint of being uninhabited. Water ingress through the roof and walls (caused by the raised concrete platform) have resulted in floors deteriorating to a dangerous level. The building is in much need of capital investment to ensure the halt of deterioration and its ongoing conservation and maintenance.

Architectural Interest

57. The grade II listed building is of considerable architectural interest as a largely unaltered and highly representative station building of its period. The building has likely survived in such an unaltered state due to its limited use, almost immediately after construction, and its isolated position from the town centre.



Plate 13: Interior view within the main booking hall



Plate 14: Interior view within the main booking hall



Plate 15: 'General waiting room' with desk and ticket window



Plate 16: Interior view within the 'Station Masters' office



Plate 17: Interior view within the 'Ladies Waiting Room'



Plate 18: Typical cornice within the 'General Waiting Room'



Plate 19: Boarded up ticket window as seen from the main booking hall



Plate 20: Water damage present within the 'Booking Office'



Plate 21: Typical internal joinery detail



Plate 22: Typical internal joinery detail



Plate 22: 'Booking Office' ticket window



Plate 23: Boarded up door within the 'Booking Office'

IMPACT ON HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND POLICY COMPLIANCE

58. Externally the building's architectural interest is derived from the picturesque and gothic influences of its envelope, the use of materials and general aesthetic merit of the building's composition. Internally this is demonstrated by a number of factors including:

- Its plan form, which appears to be mostly intact and clearly demonstrates how the building would have been used by both staff and passengers with luggage rooms, ladies waiting rooms and booking halls etc.;
- Surviving features associated with the use such as station masters ticket windows and desks.

59. Other features with the curtilage of the building are also of architectural interest; including the original footbridge and the opposite timber waiting room. The footbridge dates from a few years after the main station building and is a cast iron structure with triangular spans. Though surviving the footbridge lost its decorative cover in the mid to late 20th century. The original timber waiting room with decorative valance on the opposite platform also survives broadly. These features contribute to the architectural interest of the site as a set piece of railway architecture.

Historic Interest

60. The grade II listed station building is also of historic interest as the main railway for Sevenoaks when constructed in 1862, though soon replaced by the main line terminus in 1868. The building is highly representative of an important moment for the transportation of people and goods in the Sevenoaks area, specifically for the connection it provided to central London.
61. Illustrative value of the building as a mid 19th century station is mostly derived from its broadly unaltered external form and appearance and numerous internal features including the plan form which shows how the building was used and surviving elements of station master's fittings.
62. There is also a degree of associative value due to the station having been host to the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1866 and Queen Victoria in 1867.

Archaeological and Artistic Interest

63. Overall, the building is of limited archaeological interest given its late date.
64. While the building's external envelope is of some aesthetic merit this contributes to its architectural interest, rather than artistic value.

65. This section appraises the impacts of the proposed development on the heritage sensitivities identified within the report. It seeks to support the Local Planning Authority in their decision making process.

Impact Assessment

Change of Use of the Bat and Ball Station

66. As noted within the Introduction proposals entail the refurbishment and small scale alteration of the grade II listed building to provide community rooms for the local community centre. This will provide a lettable main community hall for community uses such as meetings, presentations, classes and events and allow exhibition of local museum artefacts.
67. While the building's original use is no longer viable it is clear that the building is in need of considerable investment and maintenance and has, for around 25 years, been unoccupied.
68. The building's conversion to a local community use is an appropriate use for the building which will lead to investment in the structure and its surroundings. This investment will see for the grade II listed building's restoration, long term conservation and maintenance which will remove the current risk to the building and secure the structure's optimum viable use. Additionally, the provision of this suite of community rooms will represent a considerable public benefit as defined by the NPPF.
69. The change of use of the building will clearly require some level of alteration. However, due to the nature of the building and proposed use changes required are limited (more so than for a residential use etc.) and can be achieved without the need for high levels of alteration to fabric or plan form. The physical alterations to the fabric of the Bat and Ball Station necessary to facilitate the change of use are considered in section below.

Physical Alterations to the Bat and Ball Station

70. As part of the proposals a key component is the refurbishment and upgrade to the grade II listed building. Externally this comprises elements of maintenance and refurbishment and the removal of the detracting modern brick plinth from the front elevation. It is also proposed to part lower the surrounding ground level in order to help combat damp issues internally within the building.
71. Internally the general refurbishment and repair of fabric is more comprehensive given the deteriorated condition of the Bat and Ball Station's interiors. These works include:

- Roof: Insulation of the existing roof at ceiling level to upgrade energy efficiency;
 - Windows: Unblocked/boarding removed and windows reconditioned. Where necessary (for example where decayed beyond repair) replaced in a like for like fashion making use of traditional materials and techniques;
 - Windows: Secondary glazing provided to windows within the Luggage Room, Booking Hall and café to upgrade sound insulation and energy efficiency;
 - Joinery: Existing doors, architraves, panelling and skirting all to be retained and refurbished (including redecorated) as required. Where necessary (for example where decayed beyond repair) replaced in a like for like fashion making use of traditional materials and techniques;
 - Plasterwork: Existing cornices retained and refurbished as required, where missing sections present infilled to match existing;
 - Floor: Existing timber floor boards removed, insulated and boards reinstated, existing boards sanded and finished with oil. Where necessary (for example where decayed beyond repair) replaced in a like for like fashion making use of traditional materials and techniques;
 - Fire surrounds: Where proposals allow reclaimed fire surrounds and insets provided within the station building;
 - Storage: New appropriately detailed storage provided throughout;
 - Ticket windows: The building currently features two ticket windows which have been boarded over. These will be opened and reinstated and brought back to functional use; and
 - Redecoration: General redecoration throughout.
72. To facilitate the change of use additional facilities are required and the main changes to the building entail the conversion of the existing 'General Waiting Room' to a café, the 'Station Masters' office to a kitchen and the 'Ladies Waiting Room' to WCs.
73. The 'General Waiting Room' is, at present an empty open space with a small, likely late 19th or early 20th century ticket master's desk adjacent to the ticket window. As one of the largest rooms within the station building with access to

adjacent ancillary rooms this is the most appropriate area for the café.

74. Physical changes associated with the provision of the café are limited. The change most capable of affecting heritage significance is the provision of two doors on the room's eastern elevation. These doors will provide access into the proposed kitchen and WCs. The door to the kitchen replaces a late 19th century window (modern glazing). The proposed doors will be traditionally suited and architecturally in keeping with existing doors within the building. While the installation of two doors will lead to the loss of a small amount of historic fabric (wall structure and a single altered window) the overall character of the interior space will be preserved and any effect on heritage significance will be demonstrably limited.
75. Proposals within this room also entail the removal of the ticket master's desk in order to allow for the installation of a sympathetically and appropriately detailed serving counter. The desk will be retained and relocated within the building adjacent to the second ticket window in the 'Booking Office'. This is a historically appropriate location for the desk and, by virtue of its retention and relocation, the heritage significance of the building will be preserved.
76. Within the kitchen the existing door to the 'Ladies Waiting Room' (proposed to be WCs) will be sealed shut and kitchen fittings will be provided including sympathetically around the existing chimney breast.
77. Within the 'Ladies Waiting Room' it is proposed to provide a small mezzanine level which can effectively house plant associated with the kitchen and WCs. All cornicing within this room will be retained within the void space. The room will also be subdivided to provide additional WCs in the form of a staff WC, male WC and accessible WC. The two existing WCs will be retained and refurbished as female WCs. Overall, though these alterations will have a slight effect on the proportions of the room given the ancillary nature and small footprint of this room this should not result in any appreciable effect on the significance of the grade II listed building.
78. Within the 'Booking Office' or 'Luggage Room' proposals are limited to the relocation of the existing desk adjacent to the ticket window, the provision of new storage units either side of the chimney breast and the unblocking of the existing doors which lead directly to the platform. These alterations are minor in nature and will preserve the significance of the grade II listed building.
79. Alterations are also proposed to be undertaken within the open courtyard. This area is proposed to be roofed over with a new flat roof beneath the existing parapet line and internally subdivided to provide an external plant room and an accessible WC for station use when the main building is not open. Plant will be routed into the building via a series of low level, partially buried service ducting which extend from the eastern elevation of the former open courtyard. Additionally, against

this wall, a gas meter box will be provided in an easily accessible location. The existing open courtyard is underused and deteriorating. Given its existing character the area is capable of absorbing change in the form of a new roof and internal subdivision. The limited changes proposed would preserve the significance of the building with no externally appreciable changes.

80. Providing kitchen facilities and additional WCs will obviously require additional plant within the building. For the most part this will be located within the sealed void above the WCs and within the former open courtyard (both discussed above). However, some additional alterations to the main building are required. Currently the building is entirely unheated and proposals also entail the provision of a new wet heating system. Radiators will be located in positions advised by the M&E engineer and will be of a 19th century 'school type' style and form. The newly proposed kitchen requires extract to function well and this is proposed to be provided through a vent to front elevation (concealed beneath the existing retained canopy). Other alterations include the removal of one modern air brick to the front elevation (and infilling with matching brickwork, considered to be a modest benefit) and the provision of four tile vents (servicing WCs) to the sloping roof of the south elevation. These alterations, particularly those externally visible are minor and beneficial in nature and will not result in either the loss of historic fabric or a detrimental effect on the building's character. Overall, these alterations will not affect the heritage significance of the grade II listed former station building.

Policy Compliance

81. As required by paragraph 128 of NPPF (2012) this report has described the significance of the Bat and Ball Station as a grade II listed building. The report then goes on to appraise the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset identified.
82. The proposed development has been designed with careful consideration to the character, appearance and significance of the grade II listed building. The conversion of the listed building will see for its long term conservation and maintenance and the proposed physical alterations are sensitive to significant historic fabric and seek to retain and enhance (and on occasion reinstated) all features of heritage value.
83. As identified as part of the proposals some limited historic fabric is likely to be lost as a result of the creation of two new doors to the café and due to decayed historic timber present in the building. Conservation is the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance. In this case the most significant aspects of the building, its external form and appearance and the vast majority of its historic fabric and

plan form directly associated with its former use as a station, will be retained. The removal of some historic fabric is highly limited and will not impair the appreciation of the special architectural or historic interest of the Bat and Ball Station.

84. In accordance with paragraph 020 of the NPPG there are numerous heritage based public benefits associated with the conversion of the former public house. These can be summarised as:
 - Reinstatement of an active viable use and one which is consistent with conservation of the grade II listed building;
 - Removal of risk to the building which has, for 25 years, been unoccupied and is in urgent need of investment;
 - Key features of heritage value preserved, enhanced where possible and reinstated where lost; and
 - Removal of the detracting external low brick wall to the eastern front elevation.
85. The above heritage benefits are considerable given the building's current lack of use or investment and would demonstrably outweigh any harm considered to be incurred as a result of the minor loss of historic fabric. As such, in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF it is the finding of this report that, when considered holistically, the proposed development would entirely preserve and, in part, enhance the significance of the grade II listed building.
86. The concept of optimum viable use, as described in the NPPG, should also be mentioned here and it is clear that the least harmful use is the optimum viable use and clearly a sympathetic community use is less harmful than an intensively developed site or potential other uses such as residential/commercial/industrial. Paragraph 015 of the NPPG also notes that harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused provided the harm is minimised. In this case any harm is demonstrably low and associated with a minor loss of historic fabric. The harm has clearly been minimised as part of the design evolution and it is clear that heritage based public benefits are considerable.
87. In summary, the proposed development is found entirely preserve the significance of the grade II listed Bat and Ball Station. As such, the proposal is in accordance with the requirements of the 1990 Act, the relevant policies of the NPPF and relevant local planning policies including the Core Strategy Policy SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation and Policy EN4 Heritage Assets.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

88. This report has undertaken an assessment of the significance of the grade II listed Bat and Ball Station. This assessment is followed by an appraisal of the effects of the proposals upon the heritage significance identified with consideration given to local and national policy and guidance.
89. The Bat and Ball Station was constructed in 1862 as the first terminus in Sevenoaks. However, within around seven years of construction the station became underused and a deteriorating use continued before the station finally closed its doors in 1991. Since this date the building has remained unoccupied and is now in need of repair and upgrading works in order to provide a functional and viable use.
90. The proposed development entails the conversion and refurbishment of the former station building to provide a series of community rooms for use of the local community centre.
91. The preceding section has found that the works to the building itself, though resulting in a minor loss of historic fabric, will not affect the special architectural or historic interest (significance) of the grade II listed building. Additionally, the proposals secure a number of heritage based benefits to the grade II listed building. The most considerable of these is the removal of risk to the unoccupied and deteriorating building and the reinstatement of an active viable use which is consistent with conservation of the grade II listed building and will provide capital for long term maintenance. As a whole, the proposed development will result in an enhancement to the building's significance and will ensure that it can be appropriately and sensitively restored, maintained and conserved for the enjoyment of future generations.
92. Overall, this report has demonstrated that the development complies with the requirements of the 1990 Act and NPPF and national and local planning policy and guidance.

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