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**From:** Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk> **On Behalf Of** Conservation Officer  
**Sent:** 16 October 2025 13:19  
**To:** Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Simon Davis <Simon.Davis@arun.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** FW: BN/97/25/PL

**BN/97/25/PL**

*Land off Church Lane Barnham*

*Change of use of land from agricultural use to residential use, creating 4 No permanent private gypsy plots with associated parking, landscaping and facilities*

A map-based assessment has identified the following assets:

### Curacoa - Listed Building

Curacoa is an early C19 cottage of two storeys which is faced with flints with red brick dressings, quoins, and a modillion eaves cornice. It has a hipped tiled roof and casement windows. It is considered to derive its significance from its architectural and historic interest. The cottage sits amongst at loose arrangement of residential properties and is set well back from the roadside to the south-east, within a flint and red brick boundary wall which defines a small garden area. The application site forms part of the wider setting of the cottage.

### Barnham (Church Lane) Conservation Area

The Conservation Area includes the original medieval settlement of Barnham, lying to the south of, and separate from the principal village. Barnham Court and St. Mary's Church are an historically important and imposing pair of buildings; the former dating to circa 1640 is one of the finest brick houses of its date in the county. These buildings highlight those two seats of power and control in the medieval period (the Church and Manor), as well as also representing the administrative and social focus of the community. More modestly scaled and proportioned residential dwellings are focused on Church Lane, Hill Lane, Fattening Ground Lane and Highground Lane.

Surrounded by agricultural land, the conservation area has a distinctive rural character with buildings of various styles, ages and materials; principally brick, flint, plain clay tiles and natural slate. An informal development pattern, mature planting, flint boundary walls, and grass verges enhance its rural character.

The area has an important relationship with the surrounding agricultural land. The fields between Church Lane and the Rife are also important to the immediate setting and rural character of the settlement. The application site forms part of the agricultural landscape both inside and around the conservation area, providing separation between the historic core of Barnham from the more modern part of the settlement, as well as forming part of the land that helped form its economic base

### Minstrel's Barn – Locally Listed Building (non-designated heritage asset)

Minstrel's Barn, a former agricultural building first recorded on the Barnham Tithe Map of 1846. It expanded throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries before being converted into a residential dwelling. Minstrel's Barn is now experienced primarily within the conservation area, being one of the first buildings encountered when entering from the north. Historically, it would have been closely associated with the surrounding fields and derives its significance from both architectural and historic interest

## **The Proposal**

The proposal involves the change of use of agricultural land to accommodate four permanent private gypsy plots. Each plot would include a static mobile home, a day room, parking for two vehicles, and a private garden area. The plots would be screened with hedgerow planting. According to the design statement, the day rooms would be constructed using traditional knapped flint brick with slate tiled roofs to reflect local architectural styles. However, it is unclear whether the flintwork would be hand-laid or constructed using flint blocks. The static mobile homes are also proposed to have flint elevations in an attempt to reflect the vernacular.

The Barnham (Church Lane) Conservation Area is characterised by its distinctive rural setting, which is partly informed by the surrounding agricultural land—some of which lies within the conservation area and affords views out to the countryside. The character is also shaped by the spatial distribution of buildings, the use of traditional materials, and the presence of mature vegetation. The application site is located within the conservation area and forms the entrance into the developed part of the historic village. Until recently, the site was fully visible from the lane,

allowing views of the flint walling and the agricultural character of the locality. These features remain evident, despite the recent planting of a hedge behind the wall.

The land remains in some form of agricultural use and also forms part of a tract of undeveloped land between modern Barnham and the conservation area (which focuses on the historic core of the settlement). Even though new hedging has been planted there are still opportunities to understand its agricultural use and function as a gap between the built developments. The site in its undeveloped appearance therefore provides a key function in separating the two different character areas.

The proposal incorporates a number of structures into the site. While the applicant has made efforts to incorporate materials found locally, the introduction of modern development in this sensitive context would fundamentally alter the open rural character of the area. The proposal would result in the loss of agricultural land that currently contributes to the conservation area's character and setting. It would reduce the undeveloped gap between the historic settlement and modern Barnham, thereby diminishing the ability to experience and appreciate the spatial separation between the two distinct character areas.

Further, the proposed development, including the hedging would lead to not only the loss of view of the field, but also loss of the view of the surrounding countryside. The development would also be visible in views into the conservation area from the footpath. It is considered that this would harm the established character of both the lane and the conservation area.

The applicant suggests that hedging would shield the development from view and mitigate its impact. However, the change in land use would remove the agricultural context entirely. Moreover, the hedging itself is not considered appropriate for this sensitive location. A more traditional or locally specific hedgerow would have had a more positive impact. It is also important to note that hedging should not be relied upon as a primary means of mitigating the impact of new development, particularly when it is allowed to grow to a height that obscures views. New development should be inherently appropriate and acceptable within its context.

Although a new hedge has been planted behind the flint wall, the site remains partially visible from the lane, and views of the flint wall and agricultural character are still possible. The land continues to exhibit signs of agricultural use and functions as a visual and spatial buffer. The proposed development would introduce multiple structures into this open landscape, and even with hedging, the loss of views of the field and surrounding countryside would be significant. The development would also be visible from the footpath, affecting views into the conservation area and harming the established character of both the lane and the wider area.

Further, I note that comments have been made that the hedging would screen the large housing estate in the fields further to the west. However, when I visited the site, I could look over the gate and still see the development being constructed. It is assumed that if permission were granted, this view would now be of the new proposed structures along with any of the new housing estate. This approach is confirmed by views 3 and 4 in the Design and Access Statement.

The existing hedging itself is unfortunate, and not one that I believe is appropriate for the sensitive context. It is a shame that a more traditional or area specific hedging was not used. The latter would have had a more positive impact upon the conservation area. Reliance on tall hedging to mitigate development is not considered acceptable; new development should be designed to be appropriate in its own right.

Additionally, the flood risk assessment indicates that land raising would be required in part of the site. This would further alter the character of the area and increase the prominence of the

development, exacerbating its impact on the surrounding context. This is evidence by the street view drawing.

The site forms part of the setting of both listed and locally listed buildings, and its loss as agricultural land would negatively affect their context. This impact cannot be considered positive and would result in harm to the significance of these heritage assets.

### Conclusion

These comments are from a built historic environment perspective only. It is concluded that the impact of the proposed development would result in harm to the conservation area, as well as some harm to the setting of the designated other identified heritage assets and therefore harm their significance. The proposal is such that the impact can be described as causing less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF (2024). As such, you will also need to consider the public benefits that the development may achieve as part of your assessment of the application, along with the contents of section 66 & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).







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