

Recommendation Report for Planning Permission

REF NO:	EP/101/25/PL
LOCATION:	The Former Conservative Hall 41 Sea Road East Preston BN16 1JN
PROPOSAL:	Changes to the parking layout with the addition of new grasscrete permeable parking area to the north and south sides of the building, which has permission to be used as a funeral chapel, to increase parking provision to 22 spaces (including a disabled space), and for improved hearse access, fencing to side boundaries and replacement planting to north side. This application may affect the setting of a listed building and is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	
DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	This application seeks permission to alter the parking layout of the site and install 'grass-crete' permeable parking to the north and south of the building.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	Low brick boundary wall to the front elevation, mature planting to the north, east, and south boundaries.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	The site comprises a 1920s community building recently converted into a mixed-use as a funeral chapel and for community use. It features white render to the elevations and a slate tile roof. It has a stepped and hipped roof with side gable ends just below the ridge. There is hardstanding to the front and north side of the building providing access and parking. The works now applied for have already commenced on site, and as such, the hardstanding now also extends further east into the plot as shown on the proposed plans. Access is from Sea Road and Chestnut Court to the north.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The site sits amongst the village shops to the northern end of Sea Road, and northeast of the East Preston & Kingston Village Hall. The area has a mix of retail and community uses but is otherwise residential in character.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY		
EP/96/25/DOC	Approval of details reserved by condition imposed under EP/50/25/PL relating to conditions 3-Biodiversity enhancement layout and 5-covered and secure cycle parking spaces.	DOC Approved 04-11-25

EP/58/25/PL	Replace existing plain roof tiles with natural slate. This application may affect the setting of a listed building and is in CIL Zone 4 (zero rated).	ApproveConditionally 06-08-25
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EP/50/25/PL	Change of use of the existing Conservative Hall building (Use Class F2) to a funeral chapel with associated function room (Sui Generis), removal of front parapet, signage and infill roof, removal of external stores to north side, provision of a new ramp to front entrance, to include local community uses. This application may affect the setting of a listed building and is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development.	ApproveConditionally 06-08-25
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EP/50/25/PL - Sought the change of use of the Conservative Hall (Use Class F2 - Local Community use) to a Funeral Chapel with associated Function Room (Use Class - Sui Generis). It sought the removal of the parapet and associated signage to the front elevation, the removal of the external stores on the north (side) elevation, the respective infill of these removals, and the installation of an access ramp to the front entrance. The proposed use of the site included Local Community uses. This application was approved.

EP/58/25/PL - This application approved the re-roofing of the building in question with slates.

REPRESENTATIONS

East Preston Parish Council - Objection:

- Proposed parking layout would not be ideal.
- Some attendees would not be able to leave quickly in an emergency.
- Concerns regarding the hearse reducing parking provisions.
- Any reduction of on-site parking would increase traffic issues.

1 Objection from nearby occupier:

- Concerns regarding the proposed parking arrangements and potential impacts on the nearby streets.
- Concerns regarding increased traffic congestion.
- Concerns regarding highway safety.

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

Noted. All relevant planning matters, including parking and highway safety, are addressed within the report.

Any commencement of the works prior to determination of this application is at the risk of the applicant.

CONSULTATIONS

CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED:

Conservation Officer:

- The development will not affect the setting of the listed buildings and causes no harm to their significance.

Ecologist - No objection subject to conditions (07/11/25):

- The metric shows a net gain of 14.40% in habitat units and 22.73% in hedgerow units, exceeding the minimum 10% gain required.
- No ecological assessment for species has been undertaken but given the nature of the development and that the habitat impacted is modified grassland and poor condition native hedgerow this is acceptable.
- Standard statutory BNG condition suggested.

Ecologist - No objection subject to conditions (03/12/25):

- The revised metric shows a reduced gain of 14.14% in habitat units. This remains acceptable.

COMMENTS ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Comments noted. Following the site visit, Officers noticed the works were underway and the extent of the hardstanding was slightly greater than originally shown. Amended plans and a revised Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric were requested to account for this. As confirmed by the Ecologist, there has been no unacceptable change to the BNG calculations as a result.

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:

Built-up Area Boundary.

Former Asset of Community Value (Registered: 31/07/15, Expired: 29/07/20).

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

[Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031:](#)

DSP1	D SP1 Design
DDM1	D DM1 Aspects of form and design quality
HERSP1	HER SP1 The Historic Environment
HERDM1	HER DM1 Listed Buildings
QESP1	QE SP1 Quality of the Environment
TSP1	T SP1 Transport and Development
ENVDM5	ENV DM5 Development and biodiversity

[East Preston Neighbourhood Plan 2014 Policy 4](#) Design in Character Area Three

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance

SUPPLEMENTARY POLICY GUIDANCE:

EPDS	East Preston Village Design Statement
SPD13	Arun District Design Guide (SPD) January 2021

POLICY COMMENTARY

The Development Plan consists of the Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031, West Sussex County Council's Waste and Minerals Plans, The South Inshore & South Offshore Marine Plan and Made Neighbourhood

Development Plans. The policies are published under Regulations 19 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. All relevant policies within the East Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan have been considered.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

The proposal complies with relevant Development Plan policies in that it would not compromise the visual amenities or character of the building or area and would not compromise highway safety.

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that

(2) in dealing with an application for planning permission the authority shall have regard to -

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,
- (aza) a post examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,
- (b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and
- (c) any other material considerations.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no other material considerations to be weighed in the balance with the Development Plan.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

This application is liable for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and the following is a summary of the key points:

Onsite gains of:

- 0.03 habitat units (+14.14%)
- 0.03 hedgerow units (+22.73%)

CONCLUSIONS

CHARACTER AND DESIGN

This application seeks to construct install 'grass-crete' hardstanding along the north and south sides of the building to alter and improve the parking layout of the site. It seeks the removal of boundary hedging to the north and south site boundaries in favour of a 2m close boarded fence to the southern side, and a 2m close boarded fence and hawthorn hedging and shrubs on the northern side.

Whilst the removal of the hedging does result in some loss of greenery along the southern side of the site, when viewed from the wider locality, this is predominantly obscured by the building. Its removal does not unduly compromise the visual amenities of the site or the area. The removal of hedging on the northern side of the site would be replaced by a fence that is fronted by hawthorn hedging and shrubs and as such, the green character of this boundary would persist, albeit in a more formalised manner backed by a fence. This would not prejudice the character and visual amenities of the site or area.

The extension of the existing hardstanding further along the north and south sides of the building does

not have any significant impact on how the site is viewed from, or within the context of, the wider area.

The proposal is in accordance with ALP policies D SP1, D DM1, and D DM4, and East Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan (EPNP) Policy 4.

Whilst the proposal sustains the historic character of the area, it does not enhance it. It does not benefit from support from Policy 4 of the East Preston Neighbourhood Plan; however, no harm is identified by virtue of the proposal not prejudicing the historic character of the area.

NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

By adding greater structure to the parking arrangements of the site, attendees will spend less time manoeuvring on site and reduce potential noise impacts on neighbouring properties as a result. The proposal would not materially alter the siting of cars parking on site in relation to neighbouring properties.

The proposal is in accordance with ALP policy QE SP1.

TRANSPORT AND PARKING

There is no specific parking guidance for Funeral Chapel (Sui Generis) uses in either the Arun or WSCC parking standards.

EP/50/25/PL granted permission for use of the site as a Funeral Chapel with associated Function Room, the applicant assessed likely parking demand, estimating a typical maximum of 40 mourners and 3 staff for a service. With car sharing (2-4 No. people per vehicle) and one space per staff member, expected parking demand ranged from 13 to 23 vehicles. Employing a 'double-parking' method in an informal manner, the site was identified as capable of parking 16 cars, potentially displacing up to 7 vehicles during peak use. There are 3 on-street parking spaces in front of the site and other on-street and formal parking opportunities nearby that would have helped to accommodate any overspill parking.

WSCC Highways raised no objection to the anticipated impacts on the highway network, nor the parking arrangements or the potential off-site parking impacts. EP/50/25/PL was recommended for approval subject to conditions and the recommendation was upheld at Committee.

This application seeks to increase available parking spaces on site to 22 bays (including 1 disabled bay and hearse bay), while providing a more formalised layout that, although remains dense, represents an improvement of the structure of the parking arrangements compared to that of those approved. It would aid in the reduction of potential overspill parking to nearby streets. WSCC Highways have again, raised no objection to the proposals.

The proposal would fall shy of sufficient on-site parking to account for all requirements previously anticipated, but the anticipated shortfall would be a significant improvement over the existing, approved arrangements, and there would be no unacceptable or severe impacts on highway safety or the road network in accordance with Paragraph 116 of the NPPF. Guidance given by WSCC Highways in response to this application, is that the proposal would not have any unacceptable impact on off-site parking provision, highway safety, or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network and therefore, the proposal is in accordance with ALP policy T SP1.

HERITAGE

The applicant has submitted a Heritage Statement accurately identifying the Grade II Listed Building adjacent and considering the proposals impacts on the asset in accordance Paragraph 207 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected.

The site is adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building (Bay Tree Cottage). It is a two-storey detached house, dating to 18th century, or earlier. Its principal elevation faces the road and the site. Its significance lies in its architectural and historic interest.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states the 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset... This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

The proposals would have a neutral impact on the visual amenities and character of the building and the area and would not result in harm to the setting of the Bay Tree Cottage.

The proposal is in accordance with ALP policies HER SP1 and HER DM1, EPNP Policy 4, and Paragraphs 207, 208 and 212 of the NPPF.

The emerging East Preston Neighbourhood Development Plan proposes that 'The Conservative Hall' is to become a Non-Designated Heritage Asset as a Locally-Listed Building of Character. The emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan is at the Regulation 14 stage and has only recently undergone public consultation. Whilst the building may someday become a Non-Designated Heritage Asset, it does not yet constitute such an asset. Given the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan is in the very early stages, this is afforded limited weight, and it is not treated as a Heritage Asset.

BIODIVERSITY

The proposal is required to achieve a measurable 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and has done so through improving the condition of the remaining on-site grassland and the provision medium distinctiveness native hedgerow planting to replace the current, poor condition hedgerows. The submitted BNG metric and assessment identifies an increase of 0.03 habitat units (+14.14%) and a net gain of 0.03 hedgerow units (+22.73%). This has been reviewed by ADC's Ecologist and no objections have been raised subject to conditions. There is no known evidence of protected species on site.

The proposal is in accordance with ALP policy ENV DM5.

SUMMARY

The proposal is in accordance with relevant Development Plan policies and as such, it is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions and informatives.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The Council in making a decision should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as Arun District Council to act in a manner, which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Consideration has been given to Article 8 (right to respect private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). It is not considered the recommendation for approval of the grant of permission interferes unreasonably with any local residents' right to respect for their private and family life and home, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation for approval is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

DUTY UNDER THE EQUALITIES ACT 2010

Duty under the Equalities Act 2010

In assessing this proposal the following impacts have been identified upon those people with the following protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).

The proposal would have a neutral impact on the protected characteristics.

CIL DETAILS

This application is not CIL liable.

RECOMMENDATION**APPROVE CONDITIONALLY**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Location Plan (Dated: March 26, 2025).
- Site Layout Plan 'Proposals EP/SR/11 Rev D'.
- Proposed Fence Elevations 'Proposals EP/SR/12'.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of amenity and the environment in accordance with Arun Local Plan policies T SP1 and D DM1.

- 3 The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (the biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

1. A Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
2. The planning authority has approved the plan.

This permission will require the submission and approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan before development is begun.

For guidance on the contents of the Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to the commencement of the consented development please see the link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/submit-a-biodiversity-gain-plan>

- 4 **INFORMATIVE:** Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a

result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the NPPF.