Proposed Beach Access

at

Sea Road, East Preston, Littlehampton

Supporting Statement

for

Full Town Planning Submission



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1 Background

The requirement for beach access was identified by a number of residents of East Preston who experience mobility difficulties, either personally, or through family members and friends, and find that the shingle does not allow them any access to enjoy the beach.

From early discussions an informal body was formed, called the East Preston Beach Access Group, to create disabled access to the beach. Once planning consent is received for the proposals this Group, as the projects champions, will become constituted as an unregistered voluntary group in order to seek funding and to implement the project.

The Group is aware that beach access facilities have been successfully carried out at Shoreham and Bognor Regis beaches and it is felt that a similar project should be both possible and desirable for East Preston.

The Group have discussed the proposals with officers of the East Preston Parish Council and formally presented to the council's Amenities Committee. The Parish Council have confirmed they would be the Applicant for the planning submission and fund the planning fee.

The Parish Council have agreed that when the proposed beach access is completed they would become the custodians and take on the responsibility for ongoing maintenance and insurance.

2 Context

There is no direct vehicle access, disabled or otherwise, for the public to East Preston beach. There are many opportunities for able bodied pedestrian access. The limited vehicle access helps to preserve the charm and character of the beach.

However, for anyone with mobility challenges, enjoyment of the beach is denied as independent unaided access onto the beach is not possible due to the shingle nature and inclined profile of the beach.

The Sea Road access point is considered appropriate for the proposed disabled access to the beach as it is centrally located in the Village and would create the least impact on the wider beach setting, given the proximity of the caravan field, yacht club, and beach kiosk.

The vehicle access down Sea Road passes the caravan field on the left and terminates at a line of bollards. Thereafter, the beach access way starts off level with shingle on top of the existing compacted substrate. Then, parallel with the beach Kiosk, the access way begins to opens up with a gradual incline to the shingle beach and foreshore beyond.

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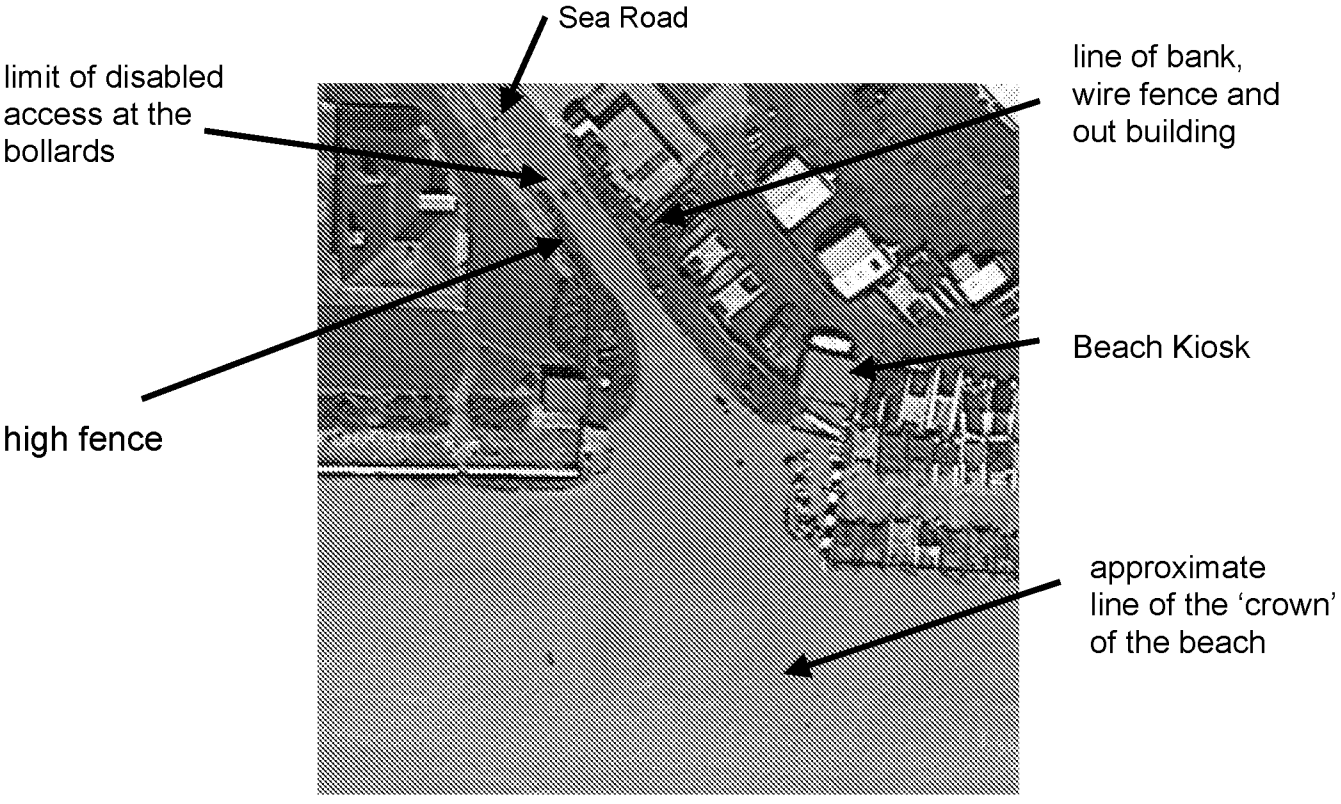
Those with mobility difficulties are restricted to the start of the beach access way, at the line of bollards, by the shingle. At this point the experience of the beach and the beach views are severely limited by:

- the shingle beach which, as mentioned, is profiled with a gradual incline to the crown that limits the views of the beach, foreshore, and breakwaters.
- the high residential boundary fence to the West
- the steep bank, wire mesh fence, and out building to the East that forms the boundary to the caravan field and the kiosk.

This is illustrated below.



Proposed Beach Access Point

3 Planning

The proposals were discussed with the duty planning officer of Arun District Council who advised that a full Desgn & Access Statement was not needed but sufficient supporting information was required in order for the proposal to be fully considered and this forms the basis for this statement.

4 Design

4.1 Assessment & Approach

The design criteria followed is one of least impact whilst catering for a reasonable number of users considered to be, two wheelchair users, a mobility scooter, as well as more ambulant carers or users together with space to pass and manoeuvre. Any greater provision would make the access more dominant than is necessary.

4.2 Involvement

An initial meeting was held with Zoe Steele (ZS) of the caravan field to discuss the proposed layout. At that stage the layout of the beach access was tight to the bank of the caravan field. ZS explained that her family always understood that they had legal title to the mid point of the access way and it was agreed to relocate the proposed beach access to the other side of this mid point. A further meeting was held with ZS at which the revised position and layout of the proposed access was agreed.

Since then a meeting has been held with the occupiers of the property on the other side (180, Sea Road) where this layout and proposals were explained, warmly received and fully supported.

The revised position is shown on the proposed layout as submitted for planning consent.

4.3 Materials and Construction

The first section of the beach access, from the bollards to a point where the beach begins to incline, a permeable resin bonded aggregate (to match shingle), on a sub-base to suit is proposed.

For the second section, following the inclined of the beach, anti-slip timber decking on timber piles (as suggested by the Principal Coastal Engineer, see later) is proposed.

Finished levels to be at or just above the current shingle level, though it is appreciated in stormy weather this may vary and the deck may need to be cleared periodically. The timber decking will weather in and look part of the beach akin to the breakwater timbers.

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4.4 Amount

The total area of the two sections of the proposed beach access is 82.00 sq. m.

4.5 Layout

The plan shows the optimum position where the access decking extends sufficiently far enough onto the beach to give a good vantage point, but not far enough to pass over the crown of the beach where it becomes visible and open to damage from high tides or stormy weather.

4.6 Landscape

No landscape proposals are required.

4.7 Consultation.

Both the Principal Coastal Engineer (PCE) and the Beach Officer, Geoff Taylor, have been consulted during the planning stage and will be involved in the detail design stage.

The PCE carried out a land search with the Land Registry who confirmed that the area was unregistered.

West Sussex County Council's Property Department have conformed they are responsible for Sea Road up to the bollards but not the access way or beach beyond.

5 Access

The decking is primarily for people with mobility difficulties and does not impede others use or traversing the beach.

The bollards restrict vehicles from accessing the decking and the beach.

Conclusion

The proposals will provide a much needed, well thought out facility, with the least visual impact, for people with mobility difficulties who should be able to enjoy the beach and the views, of the foreshore and along the beach, as much possible as any other member of the community.

Holos Form Ltd.
Architecture Design
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Issues

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