

**ADC Planning Consultation
Conservation/Design Officer Response**

Application Number	LU/153/17/L & LU/152/17/PL
Address	Friends Meeting House, 23 Church Street, Littlehampton
Description	Alteration and addition to Grade II listed building
Case Officer	Andrew Wood
Date	1 June 2017

The Friends Meeting House is an 'L' shaped, grade II listed, former School building of the mid-19th century. It is set some way back from the northern side of Church Street in the East Street conservation area and its distinctive form makes an important contribution to the significance of the designated area.

Exterior works

There is no objection in principle to minor adaptations to the building which facilitate disabled access without harming the significance of the heritage asset. However the proposed front porches and the new storeroom clutter the principal elevations, obscure important architectural features and considerably alter the appearance of the building. The new structures result in little material benefit and their intrusive visual presence diminishes the distinctive aesthetic qualities of the heritage asset, thereby harming its significance.

Para 134 of the NPPF states that 'Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use'.

The harm to the aesthetic qualities of the listed building is not mitigated by any improvement in access for disabled users, as the porches do not materially alter the present arrangements. The proposed storeroom is not essential to keeping the building in sustainable use and there is no justification for siting a utilitarian structure in such a prominent location.

Interior works

Provided the plumbing for the new sink is attached to the interior surface of the wall and causes no loss of historic fabric, there is no objection to this element of the proposal.

The information provided in support of the work to the interior wall of the main Meeting Room is insufficient to allow a full understanding of its potential impact on the significance of the heritage asset (Ref NPPF para 128).

- Evidence must be provided that the alteration is essential to allow wheelchair access to the room (ie. that a wheelchair cannot pass through the existing door openings)

- An assessment of the significance of the affected fabric must be provided. (ie. whether it is part of the original structure, or later work)

Alterations to the existing rear addition

The single storey rear addition is of no architectural or historic interest and the works within are of no consequence from the conservation perspective.

Conclusion

While there is no objection to some of the minor interventions, much of the present proposal is contrary to Para. 132 of the NPPF, which requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and notes that significance can be harmed or lost through inappropriate alteration. The Meeting House is an important component of the East Street conservation area and harm to its distinctive appearance diminishes the significance of both the listed building and that of the wider conservation area.

Refusal is therefore recommended in terms of Local Plan 2003 Policy Area 2, and Local Plan 2014 Policies HER DM1 and 3.

Angela Haywood
Conservation/Design Officer