

30th May 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)

Construction of extension to south side of church. This application affects the character and appearance of the Rustington Conservation Area (resubmission following R/188/13/).

Church of St Peter & St Paul The Street Rustington

Thank you for your internet representation made on 29th May 2014 which has been recorded as '**an objection**' with the comments as follows:

There is information written in the original statement explaining the need for the development of St Peter and St. Paul's church that may be incorrect. A precedent has been established as to no removal of headstones, or the building over graves that are less than 100 years old. The author has stated that as all graves on the plot designated for development are more than 100 years old, it is ok to remove them/ build over.

There is a burial plot that is planned for removal and re-siting in the plot area that may be less than 100 years old. According to the inscription, the lady died in 1918. The inscription is not clear, presently, but it is legible. Therefore, according to this precedent, this grave cannot yet be touched, or moved for another four years, nor can it be developed on until at least the 6th June 2018, (following this precedent), at the earliest. This information should be checked for accuracy. Official records could confirm this. However, with a small amount of effort, one can see the date in 1918 inscribed.

The extension is part of a larger reordering scheme that, unless given greater scrutiny, may ultimately see a loss of heritage assets, for the church, the village, and a wider audience. The parish council have designated St. Peter and St. Paul in the Conservation area, though it would seem that heritage may be deemed less relevant in this case. The church congregation has coped, including with uneven floors, in nearly 1000 years of the church's existence. The same way it is unnecessary to change the interior, save for conservation and presentation/ consideration. There is a wider issue, that is the correct and proper presentation of the church, both to continue to serve the parishioners, whilst seeking to improve the quality of their experience, and to keep and enhance its place in the village's historic interpretation for future parishioners and lovers of history. Whilst not directly affected by this particular application, there is a deep unhappiness with a number of local people who understand the true nature of heritage, at the potential catastrophic loss of such items as the pews, the pulpit, or the removal of the floor. This particular church also still retains its original Mensa, the altar, from medieval times, under the floor. There are a number of people who feel it should be revealed, and displayed, in situ. The comment from church officials on this matter is that it is not conservable. There is evidence of a conserved piece preserved years ago, on display at the local museum. This establishes that it is perfectly conservable, and also a highly valuable heritage asset. The church was also the local haunt in the early 20th century of one of this country's greatest composers, Sir Charles Hubert Parry, who used to be the church organist on a Sunday, and lived down the road. Therefore, this church, its floor, and its fittings, from this time, and earlier, should be seen as of national importance, heritage wise. This application needs further and more open consultation, with the Head of the Church and with relevant

professionals, including local historians and the Parish council, who will support a scheme of preservation and sympathetic restoration encompassing all aspects, including the greater needs of the congregation, so the church can be seen in its proper context for generations to come, and at no loss of our heritage. There is no objection to the parishioners need for the toilet, or an extra store room, but to do so in this particular manner, along with some of the other proposals put forward for the 'reordering', may cause irrevocable damage to the presentation of the church, be against its own precedent, and at a loss of highly important heritage assets, as previously described. It is also not necessary to destroy a 300 year old holly tree, howsoever it rooted, just because it is too big, or a perceived threat. Make it smaller.

Your views will be considered before the application is determined and I shall write to inform you of any decision made.

Please be aware that if the application is to be determined by the Council's Development Control committee and your letter has been received at a late stage after the Agenda has been published you will not receive a separate letter notifying you of the date of the meeting and procedures for public speaking. In such circumstances it is recommended that you track the progress of the application on the Council's website or telephone the Council for further information. Please be advised that any comments you make that are not included within the Committee Agenda will be reported to the Members of the Development Control committee. Please also be aware that only a small number of all planning applications received go the Development Control Committee. Most are determined under delegated powers by Officers in which case your comments will again be considered before the application is determined.

Please be aware that Planning Services operate an 'open file' policy and will publish details of your comments on the internet on the Arun District Council Planning section. Please ensure that you only provide information that you are happy will be made available in this way. If you supply information belonging to a third party, please ensure you have their permission to do so. If you do not wish your comments to appear on the 'open file' please confirm this in writing and I will arrange for it to be destroyed although this means that its contents will then be disregarded.

In the event of a subsequent written representations appeal, against a refusal of planning permission on a householder application, any representations made on the application will be automatically forwarded to the Secretary of State. Unlike all other types of appeal, there will be no further opportunity to comment at the appeal stage.

Yours faithfully

Karl Roberts
Assistant Director Planning & Economic Regeneration