



CHICHESTER
HARBOUR
CONSERVANCY

CHICHESTER HARBOUR AREA of
OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
(AONB) Unit
Planning Consultation
Development Assessment Report

Chichester Harbour AONB Unit : Delegated Process Assessment

St Thomas A Becketts Church, Church Lane, Warblington, Havant, Hampshire

Planning Application: **APP/21/00033**

Proposed installation of a new septic tank to serve the church; drainage to the tank; a new path; and a timber shed

Chichester Harbour AONB Unit Recommendation – No objection

Suggested considerations: -

- schedule of materials to be as indicated on submitted application forms

Planning Approach

The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. The LPA should assess the application carefully as to whether the proposed development would have a significant impact on or harm that statutory purpose. Relevant to this is the duty on public bodies to 'have regard' for that statutory purpose in carrying out their functions (Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000). The Planning Practice Guidance confirms that this duty also applies to proposals outside the designated area but impacting on its natural beauty.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy, administer and safeguard the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The aim of conserving and enhancing the areas natural beauty requires the Conservancy to consider the proposal on its landscape character aspects. Landscape covers both urban environments as well as countryside and coastal areas.

- Landscape Character

The Landscape Character Areas define relevant key characteristics, ecological features, important views across land and water areas, historical features, settlement character, as well as key issues to landscape condition and landscape sensitivity, together with a landscape strategy to be followed. The summary and recommendations lay out the special qualities of Chichester Harbour AONB protected landscape.

- Management Plan

The Chichester Harbour AONB Management Plan (2019-2024 Third Review April 2019) identifies 10 special qualities (page 10) that represent the exceptional features that contribute to the AONB designation. On this basis the Chichester Harbour Management Plan provides an integrated coastal zone management strategy for the Trust Port and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Relevant policies would include Policy 1 (Conserving and Enhancing the landscape), Policy 2 (Development Management), and Policy 3 (Diversity of Habitats).

- Planning Principles

The Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Beauty Planning Principles (Management Plan version April 2019) provides guidance on development. These principles set a range of criteria to be addressed to achieve a favourable consideration in terms of likely impact within the AONB.

AONB Planning Principles **PP01: Chichester Harbour as a Protected Area**, is applicable to this and all proposals within or affecting the AONB protected landscape. This sets out the key over-arching approach for the AONB, in that the statutory primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Great weight shall be given to the protection of the landscape, the conservation of nature, and the special qualities of Chichester Harbour and its surrounding supporting hinterland.

AONB Planning Principle **PP05: Packet Treatment Plants, Cesspits and Septic Tanks**, this requires the proposal to indicate potential implications for water quality in the Harbour, and indicate how the drainage regime and waste-water would be dealt with.

- Joint Chichester Harbour AONB SPD

The Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Beauty Joint Supplementary Planning Document (2017) requires that any development proposed in the AONB should be guided by to protect, conserve, and enhance natural beauty and wildlife (Section 2 overarching principles). Section 8 requires that in designing new development, consideration of the setting of the development in the AONB landscape must be shown as to how the proposal would contribute to the character of the area. All development within the AONB should follow the guidance as closely as possible. The SPD is adopted by both Chichester District Council and by Havant Borough Council as part of their planning policy and development control approach. The adopted guidance requires a clear demonstration that no harm is caused to the AONB.

Planning History Relevant to current proposal

There is no recent or relevant planning history available for this site on the LPA public access website. LPA approval of tree works make up the planning history record, including **APP/20/01189** dated 1 February 2021 for the removal of 3x Leylandii and Cupressus to the north boundary and replacement with a native hedge mix. CHC commented on 21 January 2021 raising no objection.

Contextual Consideration - Site Location and Existing Development

The site is located within the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), where development is subject to more stringent planning guidance to ensure that development respects and enhances the inherent qualities of such a sensitive location.

The red-line application site indicates the area of proposed works within the church planning unit.

The red-line site lies within a countryside location.

The site is within a LPA designated Conservation Area.

The site is indicated to be on or close to a building on the scheduled list of buildings of historic or architectural importance – the gravewatchers hut and the church building.

The site is assumed as being within Flood Zone 1: Low Probability of flooding.

The site is located along the north-west corner of the church site, to the left of the entrance from Church Lane. The area includes an existing watch hut to the west boundary and an oil tank. There are trees to both the west and north boundary areas as well as planting areas. Three trees to the north boundary are indicated to be removed.

Submitted Proposal and Supporting Documents

The current proposal seeks (as shown on the submitted block plan) the erection of a timber shed (3m by 1.8m) on concrete paving slabs and the installation of a 'cube septic tank' of 1.2m by 1m by 1m to be buried with only the manhole cover visible to the ground. This is to be connected to the watch hut using 100mm diameter pipework laid at a fall of 1:80. The outfall to the east is to be a land drain.

The submission includes a Heritage, Design and Access Statement which has been considered as part of the assessment.

Applicants Approach to the AONB protected landscape designation

The submission makes no reference to the sites location within the context and setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty protected national landscape. There is no reference made to the Chichester Harbour AONB planning policy documents relevant to the consideration of the proposal. The proposal has therefore apparently been made with minimal knowledge or acknowledgement of the status of the AONB and AONB Management Plan, or with a level of understanding that would be considered necessary and appropriate given the nationally recognised protected status of the AONB.

Planning Assessment

The statutory purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. The adopted guidance requires a clear demonstration that no harm is caused to the AONB.

The consideration would require a full and detailed assessment of the potential, possible, and probable impact to the character and appearance of the site and locality of the AONB protected landscape. The main AONB protected landscape Planning Principle policy assessment issues to be considered for this site relate to –

1. Relevant planning history implications for the proposal
2. The principle of the use and activity of the development to the AONB locality
3. The positioning layout design and visual character and impact of the site to the AONB
4. The proposed physical works, scale, massing, and bulk on the AONB landscape
5. The building design, character, appearance, and finished treatment to the AONB
6. The impact on the tranquillity and natural environment to the AONB
7. The wildlife, biodiversity, and environmental effects within the AONB
8. Any measures to mitigate the impact of ecological and environmental disturbance
9. Consideration against the relevant AONB Planning Principle guidance

Consideration 1: The planning history implications for the proposal are specifically relevant in this submission. The earlier permission for tree works (removal and hedgerow replacement) have been approved by the LPA.

Consideration 2: The principle of the proposed use and activity would not likely be a significant concern due to the use relating to the proposal being unchanged as part of the ecclesiastical use within the existing planning unit.

Consideration 3: The principle of the positioning, layout design and visual character and impact of the site to the AONB would require detailed examination if to be considered within the surrounding environment.

The proposal for the timber shed opposite the Listed Building grave-watchers hut is maybe not the ideal location, but it is set 1.2m from the building and would screen the existing above ground oil tank. The septic tank would be underground and would serve a new toilet within the grave-watchers hut. The drainage route would run through / beneath the roots of the boundary trees which have permission to be removed within this Conservation Area.

The proposed layout arrangement on the site does not impair the character or overall setting of the area. The positioning impact would be noticeable within the area of the church yard, but only in terms of the immediate setting. This would be an alteration with minimal localised impact on the character within the AONB protected national landscape.

Consideration 4: The principle of the proposed physical works and building bulk and scale would require detailed examination if to be considered within the surrounding environment.

The scale of the timber shed is small within the context of the open and landscaped church grounds. It would partly be hidden from external public views. The septic tank is below ground so would not have a visual appearance. The scale, massing, bulk, must also be assessed alongside the impact in building design and character.

Consideration 5: The principle of the building design and character, together with the appearance of the construction materials and finished treatment to the site and surrounds would not be a serious concern due to the design reflecting / being compatible with that of the locality. The works would not have a substantive impact on the wider AONB protected national landscape.

Consideration 6: The principle of the impact on the tranquillity and natural environment of the proposal would be unlikely to be a concern due to no anticipated change from the existing use and activity associated with the site.

Consideration 7: The principle of any harm to wildlife, biodiversity, and environmental character within the AONB is unlikely given the proposal relates to a small area within the church grounds. The proposal would not result in any substantial increase in the demands for recreational activity in the locality or add to the associated disturbance of wildlife areas.

The proposal would not involve the removal of any substantial parts of the existing structure that could play host to existing wildlife habitation. The proposal therefore would not obviously impact on existing wildlife habitats. The new building profile would be unlikely to harm wildlife habitats / foraging routes. Assuming that there is no wildlife uses of the structure, the proposal would not therefore be viewed as harmful to the wildlife or biodiversity of the site.

Consideration 8: The principle of measures to mitigate the impact of ecological and environmental disturbance should not be necessary. Improvements could be considered generally through the installation of bird and bat boxes at the site, hedgehog houses in the rear garden, and similar easy applied wildlife improvements.

Consideration 9: The relevant AONB Planning Principle guidance is PP01 and PP05. The works can be provided without harm to the local character of the surroundings or pattern of development and the spaces between buildings. The sites setting within the landscape and the design, materials and finishes employed are all acceptable. The guidance requirements are addressed in the proposed development. The proposal would be unlikely to have an alternative use outside the existing activity of the site.

Summary Conclusion

The adopted guidance requires a clear demonstration that no harm is caused to the AONB. The sites location within open countryside within the AONB is a key consideration.

The positioning of the proposal would have a localised impact on the character and appearance of the site and the immediate surrounds. The structures scale, design and appearance with suitable construction materials would enable the building to sit unobtrusively within its setting. The proposal would have a limited visual impact on the AONB protected national landscape character.

The proposal is unlikely to have any significant impact or effect on the AONB in relation to wildlife conservation and protection.

Other Comment

The planning application will be considered by the LPA in terms of other aspects applicable to the planning merits of the proposal, such as any overlooking impact to neighbouring property and gardens, any perceived loss of privacy, any equated loss of light and cause of shadowing, noise generation and disturbance, traffic generation and on-site parking provision, and in terms of overall good building design and land-use neighbourliness.

A copy of this planning assessment report is attached to the consultation comment response to the LPA for information and for open transparency public view.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy manage and advise on the
Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
One of the UK's National Landscapes

The comment and recommendation are made having regard to the Policy framework:

- Chichester Harbour AONB **Landscape Character Assessment** (CBA update 2019)
- Chichester Harbour **Management Plan** (2019-2024)
- Chichester Harbour **AONB Planning Principles** (Management Plan version April 2019)
- Chichester Harbour **AONB Joint Supplementary Planning Document SPD** (2017)
- National Planning Policy Framework (Revised 2018)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)
- Havant Borough Local Plan (2011/2014)

Visit our webpage – www.conservancy.co.uk/page/planning
One of the UK's National Landscapes

