

A Gate at the Entrance to the Churchyard of Barford Church.
Application to South Norfolk Council for Planning Permission.
Planning, and Heritage Statement

Barford parish church is in the countryside next to the western edge of the village. It has a churchyard which is mostly to its west and north. It is accessed by Church Road, a cul-de-sac which runs alongside the southern boundary of the churchyard and ends next to its south west corner. Church Road is surfaced highway from the east to the pedestrian access to the church, level with the porch, and continues westwards as both a route with public access and a Norfolk County Council Maintained Unsurfaced Road. There is a vehicular access from it into the churchyard about 50 m beyond the church, shown in Photograph 1 accompanying this statement. Those two entrances are the only entrances to the churchyard.

The vehicular entrance is a gap, 4.8m wide, in the boundary hedge. It has been used for fly tipping in the churchyard. Other local churches have attracted thieves. This application is for a gate across that access which could be locked from evening until morning.

A seven bar gate and posts in galvanised steel as shown in Photograph 2 accompanying this statement is proposed. It is standard in the local countryside. It would be light, easy for all authorised parishioners to operate and long lasting. It would be 4.28 m long and, installed, would be between 1.2 and 1.5 metres high. The hedge beside the space for the gate is 1.8m high. The gate and posts would be along the boundary of but entirely within the churchyard. The gate would be hinged on the eastern post and open into the churchyard enabling hearses and other longer vehicles to swing to their left on entry and to their right on exit. The posts and gate would not encroach beyond the boundary.

The gate would have planning permission by article 3 and part 2 of schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order were it not on the boundary of the curtilage of a listed building, the church.

The church is listed, grade II*. It may perhaps have begun before the Norman conquest. It has an early English chancel, a Perpendicular style nave which is thought to have been built in about 1470, probably replacing a smaller one, a later porch at the western end of the south side of the nave and a tower at the western end. The base of the tower may be as old as the chancel. Above that, it is probably of the same age as the nave. A war memorial which stands beside the path from the pedestrian gate to the porch has been listed separately, grade II. It was erected in memory of nine men of the parish who were killed in World War One. The name of a parishioner killed in World War Two was added.

The heritage values of the church, the war memorial and their settings would not be damaged by the gate. Their protection from fly tipping and thieves would be enhanced. The gate is necessary, practical and appropriate in its countryside setting and will enhance the south western part of the curtilage of the church and thereby the whole curtilage.

None of the trees and hedges in and in the vicinity of the churchyard would be affected by the gate or its installation in any way except for very minor hedge clipping to fit the posts.