

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED CAR PARK
ON LAND TO THE NORTH OF
ST MARY'S CHURCH
HARTPURY

27 January 2022



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PROPOSED CAR PARK **ON LAND TO THE NORTH OF** **ST MARY'S CHURCH** **HARTPURY**

Background and Context:

A paddock to the north of St Mary's Church, Hartpury, at the junction of Park Road and an unnamed road, has been used under Permitted Development (less than 28 days per year) for occasional car parking, in connection with activities at St Mary's Church, and the adjoining Old Chapel Hall for over 60 years. There is also some very limited parking in front of the church.

This paddock became available for sale in 2019, and Hartpury Heritage Trust purchased it to ensure its availability for car parking continued. In order to counteract difficulties in wetter months, the Trust has laid stone and altered fencing. Forest of Dean District Council considered that these works and others caused detrimental harm to the setting of St Mary's Church and the Trust received a letter prior to enforcement action, dated 20 March 2020, Reference: EN / 0062 / 20. Part of the concern was works carried out to the north boundary wall of the church and a new gate. This has been rectified under Planning Reference: P1653 / 20 / FUL.

The Trust are anxious to rectify the remaining issues and yet continue the use of the car park whilst providing more flexibility in the use of the car parking area particularly in wetter weather when the paddock cannot be used. Without this flexibility, dangerous parking occurs in both the speed unrestricted roads, Park Road and the unnamed road, where there are no pedestrian footways. An enquiry was made of Gloucestershire Highways in January 2019, Reference: F / 2019 / 042248 / PRE, when advice was given regarding necessary visibility splays regarding access into and egress from the paddock.

As indicated in the Justification and Heritage Statement associated with this application, there is an increasing need for car parking at all times of the year to meet the needs of the church, and the objectives of the Trust. In addition, St Mary's Church is part of a benefice of seven churches, which means that increasingly congregations will attend services and events at other churches within the benefice generating a requirement for car parking. St Mary's Church is located in a rural area, approximately two miles distant from the centre of Hartpury so that most visitors will travel by car. The Old Chapel Hall also generates a car parking requirement, often not met by the limited car parking in front of the chapel and in front of the church. It too has enjoyed the benefit of the use of the paddock since it was acquired by the applicant in 1998.

National Heritage Lottery Fund grant applications are currently being made by St. Marys Church to support fund raising for ongoing church repair and other activities. This will require outreach to the wider community as a grant condition such as bell ringing training days which will generate a demand for parking. These activities are necessary to help maintain heritage assets in and around the church and Old Chapel Hall.

It is difficult at this stage to estimate how many days the car park will be called into use as this depends on numbers of funerals, weddings other services and activities but the applicant anticipates approximately 40 days.

Works & Design:

A measured survey of the site has been carried out to ascertain levels, important features, potential visibility splays etc, Reference: Ruxton Surveys 21140 / 01. A Transport Technical Note has been produced by Cotswold Transport Planning, Reference: 211008, an illustrative Landscape Master Plan and a Landscape Plan has been produced by Illman Young, Reference: 22116-IYL-00-XX-DR-L-9001, and 22116-IYL-00-XX-DR-L-2001 respectively, and a Construction Ecological Management Plan, CEMP, has been produced by Wild Service, Reference: EP2021018BV1. Together these documents describe and illustrate the proposal.

It is proposed that the recently laid gravel running parallel to the north boundary wall will largely be removed and replaced with reinforced grass, with a narrow path of gravel to assist pedestrian access. This will provide for 52 car parking spaces in two parallel lines, separated by a 7 metre wide access way. Parking will be away from the churchyard wall to avoid damage to it and the roots of the churchyard Yew trees. A track from here will be taken to Park Road, again in reinforced grass, and a new access with visibility splays each side formed onto Park Road. The car parking area will be screened from the northerly aspect by a new mixed hedge and orchard, and new stock fencing would be erected along the road boundaries. A timber vehicular and pedestrian gate will provide access into the car parking area; the existing gravel area at the entrance will be retained. The exit onto the highway will be paved with bitumen macadam, all other surfaces will be permeable to permit drainage. Visibility at the exit from the car parking have been assessed as more than adequate, having regard to a speed survey, and the splays available.

The car parking site has been assessed as having a low ecological value. Care needs to be taken with regard to the yew trees along the north boundary to the church and ecological enhancements to the car parking site have been identified within the CEMP. No permanent external lighting is proposed. The planting of native trees as hedges, the creation of a wildlife pond and the installation of a log pile and hedgehog box adjacent to the south-east corner of the site, will provide enhancement to the biodiversity of the site and also interest for children. The applicant will be exploring the need for pollination for an orchard with them in association with the nearby Bee Shelter.

The public right of way which crosses diagonally the church yard to the south of the site and exits at the extreme south-western corner of the site will be unaffected.

Layout & Siting:

A 52 space car park is proposed, formed in two rows with a central access lane, all formed in reinforced grass with a small gravel path to assist with pedestrian access. The layout is indicated on the Landscape Plan. Cycle storage will be provided at the western end of the car park, together with two disabled parking spaces, but it is intended that the existing car parking in front of the church is best used for disabled parking, being closer to the church and the Old Chapel Hall and with reasonably level access.

Landscaping:

It is recognised that parking to the north of the church could have a negative impact on the setting of the church and views of the church, particularly from the north and western sides. Landscaping and planting at present is currently very limited. It is proposed to plant a mixed hedge immediately to the

north of the car parking area, to provide screening of the car park whilst maintaining the open aspect when viewed from Park Road. This will also provide valuable wildlife habitat.

The existing paddock will be retained as occasional sheep grazing and will be planted with indigenous orchard trees. This will support the work of the nearby Orchard Centre and improve biodiversity.

Access:

The current vehicular and egress is off the unnamed road close to the Park Road junction. Although carried out under Permitted Development for many years, this is unacceptable to the local highway authority. In order to secure a planning approval, access and egress from the site has to be improved. A one-way system is, therefore, proposed with an entrance from the unnamed road and an exit onto Park Road. The Transport Technical Note has established that visibility splays adequate for the proposed use can be formed within the applicant's site and within the adopted highway.

Swept Path Analysis has also been carried out at the entrance to the site, the exit from the site and within the site.

Two disabled parking spaces are proposed to the west end of the site, close to the entrance, but it is proposed to retain the existing spaces in front of the church for disabled parking, since these are closer to the destinations. A narrow compacted gravel path will be provided within the vehicular car parking area to assist with those less mobile. Wheelchair access once at the front of the church is good, with access to all of the church without any steps up to the chancel step, and wheelchair access is possible to the entrance and throughout all of Old Chapel Hall. This was DDA compliant when restored.

Parking in the car park is considered to be short term and therefore at present there is no proposal to provide car charging. This will be added later if demand requires.

Planning Considerations:

Car parking on the paddock to the north of St Mary's Church has taken place under Permitted Development and for in excess of 60 years. The Trust which now owns this paddock, owns the Old Chapel Hall, restored the bee shelter and works closely with the church, wish to formalise the car parking to provide more flexibility and availability of safe parking at the wetter times of the year. Parking otherwise takes place in an uncontrolled manner on the surrounding roads, impacting vehicular and pedestrian safety since there are no footways on any of the surrounding roads. This will assist in ensuring the viability of the Old Chapel Hall and with the maintenance and use of the church. This will also address the concerns of Forest of Dean District Council with regard to the current arrangements causing detrimental harm to the setting and character of St Mary's Church.

Summary & Conclusions:

The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of a sustainable development which means there is an expectation that the development will be permitted, unless any harms clearly outweigh the benefits. The Trust under Permitted Development Legislation is allowed parking on the paddock for 28 days a year, regardless of its impact on the setting of the adjoining church and heritage assets. Access and egress to the site is also permitted without regard to highway or pedestrian safety. When the paddock is not available due to weather conditions, car parking takes place in an uncontrolled fashion in an unsafe manner on the surrounding roads.

This application seeks to address all of these issues and helps to secure the ongoing viability of the three important heritage assets: the church, the Old Chapel Hall and the bee shelter, and the heritage assets contained therein. This application will also improve biodiversity of the site. As such, any benefits outweigh any harms, and the application should be permitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. B. A.', written in a cursive style.

Chartered Surveyors
27 January 2022
RB/cmf



Entrance to proposed car park looking south



Paddock and proposed car park looking east



Paddock and proposed car park looking south from Park Road



Paddock junction with Park Road



View east Park Road and proposed exit



View west Park Road at proposed exit