

OCTOBER 1, 2025



## TOWN PLANNING AND IMPACT STATEMENT

Demolition of Church and Presbytery and erection of 9 houses (2 x 5 bed 7 x 4 bed) plus access, parking, landscaping and retention of memorial garden.



The Catholic Church of Saint Charles Borromeo  
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## 1. Introduction and Documents

- 1.1 Absolute Town Planning are assisting 'Landarm' (the applicant) in lodging this application which follows pre-application discussion with the LPA (Adur & Worthing Councils). The Pre-Application reference is PREAPP/0414/24 and earlier proposals presented are as set out within a detailed DAS from ECE the project architects.
- 1.2 The site lies on the corner of Chesswood Road and Ham Road and comprises a former Catholic Church and Presbytery. The church is set back but faces the corner with the presbytery also set back to its western side. The Church was built in the late 1960's and the Presbytery sometime after.
- 1.3 The wider site characteristics are set out in the DAS but for ease of reference a copy of the location plan is below:



- 1.4 There is an existing access off Chesswood Road as can be seen above and the proposal is to demolish the existing buildings and re-plan the access to provide for the erection of 9 houses (2 x 5 bed 7 x 4 bed) plus access, parking, landscaping and retention of memorial garden. This represents a net gain in housing of 8 units above the current on-

site provision. The site includes a memorial garden in the northeast corner on the frontage with Ham Road near the bus stop.

- 1.5 The proposed site layout plan is extracted below for ease of reference.



- 1.6 Other than the Pre-Application submission (explored more in the DAS) the site has no planning history of any real significance that might impact the determination process. The Pre-Application feedback is included at Appendix 1 of this document.
- 1.7 Some history of direct relevance, and this was prepared in advance of any pre-application process, was to review the heritage value of the current church mindful that it is not actually that old. A Certificate of Immunity (COI) is a document which guarantees that a building will not be statutorily listed or be served with a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) by the local planning authority for the succeeding five years. Such a certificate has been sought and obtained in this case to establish certainty that the project is viable and to allow time for redevelopment proposals to come forward. A copy of COI is available at Appendix 2.

1.8 The brief of this report is to show how the scheme responds to the advice, and to set out the changes made, as well as an explanation where such change has proven unviable or considered unnecessary.

1.9 The submission is accompanied by:

Job	Ref	Depicting
7346	PL-01	Site Location Plan
7346	PL-02	Proposed Block Plan
7346	PL-03	Topographical Survey
7346	PL-10	House Type 1-2 Proposed Floor Plans, Elevations & Sections
7346	PL-11	House Type 3 Proposed Floor Plans, Elevations & Sections
7346	PL-12	House Type 4 Proposed Floor Plans, Elevations & Sections
7346	PL-13	House Type 5 Proposed Floor Plans, Elevations & Sections
7346	PL-14	House Type 6 Proposed Floor Plans, Elevations & Sections
7346	PL-20	Proposed Site Plan
7346	PL-21	Proposed Roof Plan
7346	PL-30	Proposed Street Scenes
7346	PL-40	3D Visuals – Ham Road
7346	PL-41	3D Visuals – Chesswood Road

1.10 In addition to the above, and informed by the Pre-Application process, the application is accompanied by:

- DAS and Plans and CGI's by ECE Architects
- Planning and Impact Statement along with the prescribed forms
- Transport Assessment by Sarnlea
- Ecology Report – The Ecology Co-Op
- BNG Assessment - The Ecology Co-Op

1.11 The information lodged with this application is considered proportionate to the scale of project proposed and ample to sufficiently address planning policies it needs to or allow for the imposition of suitable pre-commencement conditions moving forward.

## 2. Development Plan and Planning Policy

- 2.1 Planning applications are judged against the development plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF December 2024) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are also material considerations, and this is changed from time to time, but the following matters are still considered relevant.
- 2.3 Paragraph 11 makes clear that development proposals consistent with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay (11c)), where the development plan is not up-to-date the decision-taker must move to Paragraph 11 d), which advocates that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless:

- i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”*

- 2.4 As Worthing Borough can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and as a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged.

- 2.5 Paragraph 39:

*“local planning authorities approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools*

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*available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”*

2.6 Chapter 5 refers to “Delivering a sufficient supply of homes” and Paragraph 61 states:

*“To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.*

*The overall aim should be to meet as much of an area’s identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.”*

2.7 Paragraph 73 looks to promote the development of smaller sites and identifies that:

*“small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and are often built out relatively quickly”.*

2.8 Chapter 11 is titled “Making efficient use of land” where:

*“planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land”.*

2.9 Paragraph 129 states:

*“good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.*

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2.10 Paragraph 132 states that decisions should meet the following goals:

- a) “will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; b*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.*

### **Local Planning Policy Status**

2.11 The Development Plan comprises:

- Worthing Borough Council Local Plan (WBLP) 2020 – 2036 (28th March 2023)

#### Policy SP1 Presumption

2.12 Policy SP1 reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development expressed also within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and confirms that planning applications that accord with the policies in the WBLP Local Plan will be approved without delay.



2.13 The second limb of Policy SP1 also reflects the NPPF and states that:

*“Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, the Council will grant permission unless:*

*i. the application of policies in the National Planning Policy Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole.”*

#### Policy SP2 (Climate Change)

2.14 This policy represents a ‘comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing climate change’ with goals to secure a ‘Carbon Reduction’, supporting ‘Carbon Sequestration’ and ‘Climate Change’. Many of these measures are baked into other policy of the plan and national guidance and have been a fundamental consideration in the formation of development proposals tabled.

#### Policy SP3 (Health Communities)

2.15 This requires new development to be designed to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, which enable and support healthy lifestyles and address health and well-being needs in Worthing.

#### DM1 (Housing Mix)

2.16 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2020) for Adur and Worthing Councils recommends the mix of housing that ‘should’ be sought. It includes a mix of affordable homes where required (DM3) and a mix of market housing thus:

- 1 bed dwellings - 5-15%
- 2 bed dwellings - 40-45%
- 3 bed dwellings - 35-40%
- 4 bed dwellings - 10-20%

2.17 The council expect:

*“...all applications for new housing to consider the most up-to-date evidence of housing needs and demands to help determine the most appropriate housing mix based on the character and location of the individual site.”*

2.18 It goes on to say:

*“The Council will expect all new build dwellings to meet the optional higher Building Regulations Standard M4(2) for Accessible and Adaptable dwellings unless it can be demonstrated that this would be impractical, unachievable or unviable.”*

2.19 The policy then applies mostly to conversions which are not applicable in this case.

Policy DM2 (Density)

2.20 Policy DM is aimed at making the most of the land that does come forward for development with a steer on density. It states:

*a) “Development proposals must make the most efficient use of land, which will usually mean developing at densities above those of the surrounding area.*

*i) residential development of family housing should achieve a net density of a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare.*

*ii) higher densities, in excess of 100 dwellings per hectare should be achieved in most mixed-use developments, flatted developments and developments located in the town centre and in areas close to public transport interchanges and services.*

*b) In exceptional cases, lower densities to those set out above may be Social Policies acceptable if it is demonstrated that this is necessary to ensure the development is compatible with its surroundings, development viability would be compromised, or to secure particular house types to meet local housing needs.*

*c) The optimum density of a development should result from a design led approach to determine the capacity of the site. Particular consideration must be given to:*

*i) the site context and character of the surrounding area in which it is located and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscapes.*

*ii) its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.*

*iii) the need to achieve high quality design; the*

*iv) need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.*

*v) the capacity of surrounding infrastructure”*

#### Policy DM5 (Quality of the built environment)

2.21 Mindful of the preceding policy objectives of maximising the delivery of sustainable new homes Policy DM5 sets parameters and objectives for new development ensuring it is acceptable.

*a) All new development (including extensions, residential annexes, alterations, ancillary development, change of use and intensification) should:*

*i) be of a high architectural and design quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area. This will include consideration of proportion, form, design, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, materials, detailed design features and landscaping.*

*ii) enhance the local environment by way of its appearance and character, with particular attention being paid to the architectural form, height, materials, density, scale, orientation, landscaping, tree canopy, impact on street scene and layout of the development.*

*iii) make a positive contribution to the sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area.*

*iv) respect, preserve and where appropriate enhance, heritage assets and settings.*

*v) be well built, accessible, fit for purpose, and adaptable to changing lifestyle, demography and climate.*

*vi) include a layout and design which: take account of potential users of the site; create safe conditions for access, egress and active travel (walking and cycling) between all locations; provide good links to integrated public transport; and have acceptable parking arrangements (in terms of amount and layout).*

*vii) make a positive contribution to creating a safe and secure environment by integrating measures for security and designing out opportunities for crime.*

*viii) not have an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, particularly of residential dwellings, including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook, an unacceptable increase in noise giving rise in significant adverse impacts, or vehicular movements resulting in severe cumulative impacts on the road network, or loss of important open space of public value (unless it satisfies any of the exceptions set out under Policy DM7 – Open Space, Recreation and Leisure);*

*ix) respect the existing natural features of the site, including landform, trees and biodiversity and contribute positively to biodiversity net gain. Where appropriate, this will include the protection and integration of existing trees and green infrastructure into new developments.*

*x) ensure that lighting incorporated into developments provides the minimum for public safety, is energy efficient and avoids light pollution”.*

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#### DM6 (Public Realm)

2.22 This is a corner site with two frontages, and the application seeks to retain a publicly accessible memorial garden. Key parts of the DM6 include:

- *New development in appropriate locations, integrated sustainable transport initiatives or regeneration schemes will be expected to improve the public realm.*
- *It is expected that new development will incorporate the highest quality design, landscaping, green infrastructure, street furniture and surfaces.*
- *Proposals for improvements to the public realm that have regard to the Council's Public Realm Strategy and Seafront Investment Plan will be supported."*

#### DM15 Sustainable transport and active travel

2.23 This is a lengthy a criteria-based policy aimed at judging the success of a scheme with regards the need to promote an improved integrated transport network by rebalancing in favour of non-car modes to access jobs, homes, services and facilities. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment; it is near a train station and has a bus stop on its eastern flank. The site is also well placed to access the Town Centre by foot.

#### DM16 (Sustainable Design)

2.24 The policy sets 'minimum standards' setting out the base expectations of the LPA with regards sustainable design. They relate to:

- *a 20% reduction compared to building regulations through energy efficiency measures (27% for non-domestic)*
  - *A minimum 'C' rating EPC for new housing*
  - *The incorporation of design measures where appropriate to minimise excessive solar gain and maximise opportunities for passive cooling through natural ventilation and other passive means.*
  - *Minimise construction waste.*
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#### DM18 (Biodiversity)

2.25 This sets the LPA standards with regards biodiversity the key parts relevant to the case lodged are summarised below:

- *Applications accompanied by information on ecology*
- *protection, conservation, and enhancement of biodiversity.*
- *Resisting the loss of irreplaceable habitats*
- *Min of 10% net gain (now BNG in current legislation)*

#### DM19 Green Infrastructure

2.26 This policy takes a deeper look at the requirements for green infrastructure including:

- *The creation of an integrated network of green infrastructure*
- *Opportunities should be taken to incorporate elements of green infrastructure onsite to create, protect, enhance and manage green infrastructure assets and/or networks to achieve environmental net gain.*
- *In all new developments there should be no net loss of trees and any trees removed should, where practical and appropriate, be replaced on a greater than 1:1 basis to support levels of canopy cover and contribute to biodiversity net gain.*
- *Arrangements and funding for the management and maintenance of green infrastructure over the long term should be identified and implemented. DM20 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage*

#### DM20 (Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage)

2.27 This policy applies to areas of flood risk, ensures risk is managed and that surface water drainage uses SUD's.

#### DM21 Sustainable Water Use & Quality

2.28 As this site is largely car park at present the proposal to remove this and replace with housing and private garden areas along with landscaped public spaces Policy DM21 applies.

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- a) Development should protect and enhance groundwater, surface water features and control aquatic pollution. Development will be permitted provided that it does not have an unacceptable impact on the quality and potential yield of local water resources, the water environment and its ecology.*
- b) The Council will support proposals to replace existing traditional drainage systems with suitable Sustainable Drainage Systems to further reduce water pollution and improve water quality.*
- c) Potentially polluting development should be steered away from the most sensitive areas. As a minimum a preliminary risk assessment will be required for any development where there is potential risk of contamination of controlled waters. New development within Groundwater Source Protection Zones will only be permitted provided that it has no adverse impact on the quality of the groundwater source or a risk to its ability to maintain a public water supply.*
- d) Development must be phased to take into account the timing of any water and/or wastewater infrastructure required which must be in place prior to the occupation of development.*
- e) New residential development must achieve as a minimum the optional requirement set through Building Regulations for water efficiency that requires an estimated water use of no more than 110 litres per person per day.*

#### DM22 Pollution

2.29 This policy says:

- a) Development should not contribute to, be put at risk from, or be adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water, artificial light or noise pollution or land instability. Where possible development should help to improve local environmental conditions.*

- b) New development in Worthing will be located in areas most suitable to the use of that development to avoid unacceptable risks from all sources of pollution.*
- c) Mitigation measures will need to be implemented for developments that could increase levels of pollution, taking into account any cumulative impact. Mitigation should avoid, minimise and offset the impact of development and take opportunities to improve local environmental conditions. Where there are significant levels of increased pollution that cannot be mitigated development will be refused.*
- d) Where appropriate, air quality and/or noise assessments and lighting assessments will be required to support planning applications. These should be undertaken in accordance with the most up to date guidance and have regard to any relevant action plans. Any new development in the Worthing Air Quality Management Area must be consistent with the Air Quality Action Plan. Where any identified harm to any of these factors cannot be adequately mitigated, planning permission will be refused.*
- e) Where there is potential risk of contaminated land, proportionate investigations and assessments will be required in relation to relevant development proposals. These should assess the nature and extent of contamination and the potential risks to human health, adjacent land uses and the local environment. Where identified risks of contamination cannot be adequately mitigated, planning permission will be refused.*

### **3. Material Considerations**

3.1 The material considerations in this case were explored at the pre-application meeting and in written submissions with the LPA. This section explores these in more depth recognising the 'planning balance' will assess in greater depth the planning merits of the proposals as tabled. The material considerations in this case are informed by the pre-application feedback are discussed below, they are:

- Loss of a Community Use and Principle of Development
- Character, Appearance and Design
- Density
- Housing Mix
- Residential Amenity
- Highways and Transport
- Sustainability
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

#### **Loss of Community Use and Principle of Development**

3.2 The Church was built in the 1960's and has served the community up until its closure in 2019. This was due to a reduction in congregation numbers before and during the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in a decline of viability. The Diocese of Arundel & Brighton have advised of a shortage of priests in the area and, by closing St Charles Borromeo Church, they are able to continue to run services at other facilities in order to continue to serve the needs of our local congregation. Of note:

- the developer is committed to retaining a memorial garden at the site as shown on the lodged plans and site layout.
- On the grant of permission funds from the sale will facilitate the building of a new hall at Holy Family, Lancing.

- Funds from the sale will also repair the roof at the Grade II listed St. Mary of the Angels.

3.3 The Diocese of Arundel & Brighton further explain the reasoning behind the disposal as:

- Cost of repairs needed are high and the parish does not have sufficient funds available
- High energy costs to keep it open given environmental performance of buildings was not a consideration in the design of the current building.
- Lack of staff/priest
- Small congregation
- Other churches within the diocese can be used
- The church has been empty for over 5 years

3.4 In the letter from the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton (Appendix 3) it is further explained that:

*“We have explored conversion of church, change of use and other uses of the land, none have been viable so far. The only viable way the Diocese can recuperate some income and fund the repairs needed at other properties, as well as fund other community projects, is from selling the site to a developer to build high quality family homes which are much needed within the area.*

*We advertised the sale of the church building, presbytery and church hall building for 12 months from January 2021 to January 2022. In this time there was no interest in the site for continued community or commercial use. The only interested parties were those seeking residential development on the site. We originally agreed a deal with a retirement development company which subsequently became abortive. We then agreed a sale to Quantum Homes who are now progressing the planning.”*

3.5 Before the ‘proposed’ development is to be considered the loss of the existing use, as a community use, is a material consideration that needs further discussion. Policy DM8 is clear in that community use includes places of worship, it further explains:

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*“e) that where development involves the loss of a community facility the council would resist its loss unless replacement facilities were provided that meets the needs of the community or if it can be demonstrated that the existing premises are no longer required/or not viable and this is evidenced via appropriate marketing for an alternative community use.”*

3.6 In the letter from the diocese they explain that during an extensive marketing exercise no other community uses showed any interest the only potential buyers being exclusively interested in the site’s redevelopment for housing. However, and this will be discussed in the following section, the lack of interest for any viable community use moving forward does open the door to other much needed uses such as housing.

3.7 Policy DM8 - Planning for sustainable communities/community facilities includes churches. It goes on to say at

*“e) that where development involves the loss of a community facility the council would resist its loss unless replacement facilities were provided that meets the needs of the community or if it can be demonstrated that the existing premises are no longer required/ or not viable and this is evidenced via appropriate marketing for an alternative community use.”*

3.8 The above (also Appendix 3) shows not only marketing of the site but also the good use the income from the sale will be put to in terms of securing a future for another nearby community use being the listed grade 2 St Marys of the Angels Church. Evidence is lodged therefore to address the requirements of Policy DM8 but the applicant will be able to respond to any additional queries during the consideration phase of the application process.

3.9 The pre-application process made clear that, as a matter of principle, if the loss of the community use is accepted through the consideration of DM8 then the proposed land use as housing is acceptable as a matter of principle.

### **Character, Appearance and Design**

3.10 The Church is an impactful on a prominent corner building within its context and the presbytery built after is less ornate and, as you might expect, more domestic in scale

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and use of materials. As discussed at pre-application meetings the LPA first preference would be to convert the church into residential units thereby retaining the existing character of the site in its surrounding and the building. Pre-empting this the client engaged the architect in an exercise of exploring the feasibility of this option – this is set out in some detail within the DAS.

**3.11** Policy DM5 of the WLP requires all new development to be:

- *of a high architectural and design quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area (including consideration of proportion, form, design, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, materials, detailed design features and landscaping).*
- *enhance the local environment by way of its appearance and character, with particular attention being paid to the architectural form, height, materials, density, scale, orientation, landscaping, impact on street scene and layout of the development.*
- *make a positive contribution to the sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area.*
- *respect, preserve and enhance heritage assets and settings.*
- *be well built, accessible, fit for purpose, and adaptable to changing lifestyle, demography and climate.*
- *include a layout and design which: take account of potential users of the site; create safe conditions for access, egress and active travel (walking and cycling) between all locations; provide good links to integrated public transport; and have acceptable parking arrangements (in terms of amount and layout).*
- *make a positive contribution to creating a safe and secure environment by integrating measures for security and designing out opportunities for crime.*
- *not have an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, particularly of residential dwellings, including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook, an unacceptable increase in noise or vehicular movements or loss of important open space.*



- *respect the existing natural features of the site, including landform, trees and biodiversity and contribute positively to biodiversity net gain.*
- *ensure that lighting incorporated into developments provides the minimum for public safety, is energy efficient and avoids light pollution.*

3.12 The 'Guide for Residential Development' (SPD) indicates that all new development will be expected to demonstrate good quality architectural and landscape design and use of materials. New development should display a good quality of architectural composition and detailing as well as responding positively to the important aspects of local character, exploiting all reason opportunities for enhancement. Where appropriate, innovative and contemporary design solutions will be encouraged.

3.13 The NPPF seeks to achieve sustainable development, defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The salient parts of the NPPF are as set out earlier in this report.

3.14 Part 4 and 5 of the submitted DAS explains further the design approach and how the design has evolved and developed to address the requirements of the above policies. All dwellings have been designed to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) and accord with the NPPF which sets out to ensure new developments are sustainable and provide an appropriate amount and mix of development.

3.15 Feedback at the pre-application meeting indicated that:

*"...in view of this corner position and the height of the existing church that you could look at more scale of development particularly on the frontage to provide for the density. It is also advised that the design of any development reflect the current use of the site providing some design detail or reuse of materials to reflect the church on the site."*

3.16 The design was adapted to accommodate a taller corner section, built in a light material to reflect the bulk and massing of the church which is to be demolished. Whilst it was hoped that the salvaged materials from the church could be used on-site but this has not proven viable. That said the applicant is likely to want to salvage the materials for use elsewhere on other projects.



## Density

- 3.17 Policies DM2 and DM5 represent key planning policies against which the proposal will be assessed. Policy DM2 provides support for development proposals that make efficient use of land, whilst policy DM5 requires new development to respect and enhance the character of the site and prevailing character of the area through its detailed design and avoid unacceptable impacts in relation to occupiers of adjacent properties.
- 3.18 Density is explored in some detail within the lodged DAS along with a detailed study of surrounding built form and context - but the proposal conforms to the established character of the area by proposing large dwellings within spacious plots.
- 3.19 The Pre-application feedback indicated that the density proposed was too low and that the development:
- “should comply with Policy DM2 of the Worthing Local Plan, make the most efficient use of land which will usually mean developing at densities above those of surrounding development and provide residential development of a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare.”*
- 3.20 Whilst increasing densities are an effective way of getting the most from a site in more central areas where taller buildings are more routinely supported the architect and client have wanted to develop a scheme sensitive to its surroundings within a pleasant and relatively spacious residential neighbourhood. Density is of course increased in line with the policy given the site only currently accommodates a presbytery and 9 family homes are proposed.
- 3.21 The current viable scheme proposed by the client is 9 dwellings and the site area is 0.30ha equating to 30dph. As flagged above Worthing generally aspires to 35 dph (1 ½

dwelling more) but it must be considered that the applicant wants to develop a scheme that fits the site context, retains a memorial garden, provides access and parking to avoid on-street parking and meet targets for ecology. The density desired by the LPA in this case is considered excessive for the site and inappropriate to use such a simplistic measure of density when the applicant wants to be neighbourly.

### **Housing Mix**

3.22 This was discussed at the pre-application meeting and in written feedback. The Council have an 'expectation' that all applications consider the most up to date evidence on needs and demands. However, the most recent indicator to review is the SHMA of 2020 which is challenging to rely upon with any accuracy. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2020) for Adur and Worthing Councils 'recommends' the mix of housing that should be sought is:

- 1 bed dwellings - 5-15%
- 2 bed dwellings - 40-45%
- 3 bed dwellings - 35-40%
- 4 bed dwellings - 10-20%

3.23 The scheme will consist of a mix of medium to large 4 and 5 bed housing types (7 x 4 bed 2 x 5 bed). Each unit will benefit from private outdoor space, ample natural light, and an emphasis on energy efficiency. The layout and arrangement of the homes have been designed to maximise space, ensure privacy, and create a strong community feel within the development.

3.24 It is generally acknowledged that more central locations with higher density development will not be so compatible for accommodating larger units of family housing. This explains why a higher proportion of family sized homes are often delivered in suburban lower density areas as is the case here.

### **Residential Amenity**

3.25 Policy DM5 of the WLP, referred to earlier, requires all new development to have no unacceptable impact on neighbours with reference to overlooking, daylight/sunlight, outlook landscaping and noise

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3.26 As noted in the pre-application feedback the site is also located between two busy roads and within an area that is otherwise residential. The submitted DAS has conducted a character study of the nearby area. The architects have taken great care to design out any significant impacts to neighbours and, given the scheme so obviously complies, it is not considered that any additional light studies are necessary and sun tracking has been included within the mapping of site constraints at section 3.1 of the DAS.

3.27 The relationship of the scheme with neighbours to the north and west is shown in the DAS but also on the lodged site layout plan. In addition, the floor plans for plots 7 to 9 (along this boundary) are set out within the lodged floor plans and elevations which allow ample consideration of any impacts. This is extracted below for ease of reference.



3.28 The DAS also shows sections across the shared with property on Ashwood Close and the smallest of these gaps is at Plot 9 as seen above. An extract of the cross section is shown below which adequately demonstrates compliance with policy.



## Highways and Transport

3.29 The pre-application process was entered into with Worthing Council, but highways matters are dealt with by West Sussex County Council. The pre-application feedback did accept that the site is within a suitable location.

3.30 The submitted Transport Statement by Sarnlea concludes:

- *The development proposals have been formulated in accordance with both local and national policy to which the proposal accords well.*
- *The proposals have been assessed in terms of accessibility by non-car borne modes and the level of accessibility is adequate and in accordance with developments of this type and scale.*
- *The likely level of traffic has been obtained from an interrogation of the National Travel Survey incorporating the TRICS database. The assessment has found that the developments will generate a level of traffic that is immaterial in terms of highway safety and efficiency.*
- *The level of proposed parking provision is sufficient for the developments' needs and in line with adopted standards.*
- *The internal site layouts are suitable and fit for purpose in terms of both highway safety and highway efficiency; and*
- *The details regarding refuse collection and servicing have been assessed as being acceptable.*

### **Sustainability**

3.31 It is accepted that Policy DM16 of the WLP states that all new housing should seek to achieve an A rating (with a minimum expectation of B rating) Energy Performance Certificate.

3.32 In addition, Policy DM17 requires all development resulting in new housing to incorporate renewable and low carbon energy production equipment to meet at least 10% of the predicted total energy requirements (after CO2 reductions from energy efficiency measures).

3.33 Part 6 of the DAS explains the Sustainability Considerations in greater depth.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

3.34 The pre-application response rightly identified that the development would require assessment against Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Policy DM18 requires new development on previously developed land to provide a minimum 20% net gain for

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biodiversity. The metric setting out how this has been achieved has been prepared by the Ecology Co-Op and the findings are included within the application pack.

3.35 The Matrix conclusions are added below for ease of reference:

<b>FINAL RESULTS</b>		
<b>Total net unit change</b> <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	0.11
	Hedgerow units	0.07
	Watercourse units	0.00
<b>Total net % change</b> <small>(Including all on-site &amp; off-site habitat retention, creation &amp; enhancement)</small>	Habitat units	28.98%
	Hedgerow units	N/A
	Watercourse units	0.00%
<b>Trading rules satisfied?</b>	Yes ✓	

3.36 The report accompanying the Matrix concludes:

*“The current scheme meets the 10% mandatory net gain value set out within the Environment Act 2021 and biodiversity aims preferred by Worthing Borough Council have been achieved by reaching at least 20% net gain.”*

3.37 The Ecology Report sets out surveys and studies undertaken and concludes that redevelopment of the site at St Charles Borromeo Church will not impact any habitats of value and no protected species have been identified as present. The most significant impact identified is the loss of a swift nesting site on the northern face of the church and it is proposed that each new dwelling incorporates a built-in nesting feature for swifts as compensation and this can form a suitable planning condition.

3.38 As the BNG calculation shows that the proposed development can demonstrate a net increase in biodiversity value, it should be considered favourable against the National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 187 (d), which supports development that achieves biodiversity net gain

### **Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage**

3.39 Policy DM20 of the WLP sets out that criteria for flood risk assessments. The site is within “Flood Zone 1” which signifies areas with the lowest probability of flooding. This zone is classified as having less than a 0.1% annual probability of river or sea flooding, equating to less than 1 in 1000 chance. It is not considered that a formal FRA is required in this instance given much of the site is currently covered is asphalt for surface parking



self-evidently the proposed development will inevitably reduce to prospect of surface water flooding.

- 3.40 The DAS makes clear that (Pt 6.3) SuDS: Managing surface water with permeable materials to reduce flooding. Furthermore flood-resistant & Climate-Adaptive Landscaping will be designed into any detailed landscape scheme, and the applicant is agreeable to such matters being addressed in any subsequent conditions attached to the grant of planning permission. This option is considered proportionate to the scale and risk the scheme entails.

## **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 It is acknowledged the starting point, particularly where community uses are concerned, to explore alternative community uses by way of marketing as was the case here. New community uses are relatively rare hence retention of those that exist is given some weight in not only adopted local policy but nationally in the NPPF.
- 4.2 In this instance the community use (Church) has experienced a declining attendance and opted to sell the site and use the income towards improving other church buildings. In that sense the loss of a community use at this site is demonstrably helping secure the longevity of a similar community use elsewhere that might otherwise be under threat down to repair costs. Despite the marketing exercise other community uses could not be attracted to the site with the only interest shown being from the development industry seeking to introduce non community uses.
- 4.3 It is common ground that should the evidence regarding the lost community use be compelling, as is the case here, that an alternative residential use would be appropriate.
- 4.4 The DAS shows, as discussed during the pre-application meeting, plans were explored very early on to convert the current building. But double/triple height spaces, built with heavy materials, do not easily lend themselves to conversion and this was ruled out early because of viability. It must also be remembered, and is returned to later, whilst conversion 'sounds' like a sustainable option meeting ever demanding building regulations make this less achievable in practice. The 'planning balance' needs to take a view on such matters but the scheme does provide new family homes on the site of a design considered acceptable.
- 4.5 The scheme not only provides housing but generous new landscaping into a site that is largely hard surfaced for parking at present. It also seeks to safeguard a memorial garden and provide new permeable estate roads and private garden space for generous family housing. The density is even then near to the LPA requirements and the desire to increase density must be balanced with the need for 'neighbourly' development that compliments its setting. In that sense it is hoped the LPA will consider that density provided on this out of centre site is appropriate in the context of the development plan policy.
-

- 4.6 With regards unit mix the scheme is heavily weighted towards large family homes of 4 and 5 bed size. The scheme does not deliver affordable homes and the homes proposed are to be delivered by a private developer that has undertaken sufficient in-depth local market research to know these have a market. Other schemes, more central to Worthing, have similarly been accepted to be capable of a higher than policy requirement of smaller units in part to reach the density requirements referred to above.
- 4.7 On other matters, such as Transport and Ecology, specialist reports are provided adequately demonstrating compliance with development plan policy. The design is high quality and has been heavily informed by feedback obtained at a pre-application meeting with the LPA. Furthermore, the plans are clear and accompanied by a detailed DAS demonstrating fully how the scheme responds to context and addresses the requirements of development plan policy.
- 4.8 The 'Planning Balance' fundamentally accepts that, in the context of land development and construction, the process of weighing the potential benefits of a proposed project against its potential negative impacts applies. It involves a thorough assessment of both positive and negative consequences, ultimately determining whether the project should be approved or rejected. Whilst the LPA might prefer a different mix or a higher density the scheme arrived at intends to be a good neighbour and designed to address a demand expressed for more family homes.
- 4.9 It is hoped 'on balance' this is a scheme worth support from the LPA and the applicant is prepared to lodge additional detail or evidence, if necessary, as consideration of this case begins as well as early discussion around any conditions or obligations.

**Ian Coomber BA(Hons) Cert TP MRTPI**

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# Appendix 1

Pre-Application Letter



Mr Ian Coomber  
Absolute Town Planning Ltd  
C/o Parkers,  
Cornelius House  
Church Road, Hove  
BN3 2DJ

Our reference: PREAPP/0414/24  
Please ask for: Jackie Fox  
Direct Line: 01903 221312  
Date: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Dear Ian,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 2015

**Demolition of Church and Presbytery and the erection of 9 houses with landscaping, revised access arrangement and parking.**

**St Charles Borromeo Church Chesswood Road Worthing West Sussex**

I refer to the above pre application proposal and our meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Site and Surroundings**

The site lies on the corner of Chesswood Road and Ham Road and comprises a former imposing Catholic Church and Presbytery. The church is set back but faces the corner with the presbytery also set back to its western side. There is an existing access off Chesswood Road and parking to the site and rear. The site includes a memorial garden in the north east corner. Also within the site is 155 Chesswood Road a large property which is or has been used for community uses.

There is a range of housing surrounding the site which is primarily two storey in scale.

## **Proposal**

The preferred option is to amend the location of the access slightly to the east and provide 9 dwellings. The development would comprise two units facing Chesswood Road, four units facing Ham Road and 3 units at the back of the site. The mix would be comprise one x 5 bedroom unit and 8 x 4 bedroom units. Each dwelling is shown with parking either to the rear of within the site. Each property would have a garden to the rear/side.

The design of the dwellings is two storey, contemporary with projecting bays to the road frontage.

## **Relevant Planning History**

None relevant

## **Relevant Planning Policies**



National Planning Policy Framework (2024)  
National Planning Practice Guidance  
Guide for Residential Development (internal )(SPD)  
CIL  
Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036  
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)  
SP2 (Climate Change)  
SP3 (Healthy Communities)  
DM1 (Housing Mix)  
DM2 (Density)  
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)  
DM6 (Public Realm)  
DM15 Sustainable transport and active travel  
DM16 (Sustainable Design)  
DM18 (Biodiversity)  
DM19 Green Infrastructure  
DM20 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage  
DM21 Sustainable Water Use & Quality  
DM22 Pollution

DM1 Housing Mix states at relevant section a)-c)

- a) In order to deliver sustainable, mixed and balanced communities, the Council will expect all applications for new housing to consider the most up to-date evidence of housing needs and demands.
- b) The Council will support proposals for high-quality self-build and custom build projects that are sensitive to the characteristics of the local area.
- c) Housing developments should provide flexible, socially inclusive and adaptable accommodation to help meet the diverse needs of the community and the changing needs of occupants over time. The Council will expect all new build dwellings to meet the optional higher Building Regulations Standard M4(2) for Accessible and Adaptable dwellings.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2020) for Adur and Worthing Councils recommends the mix of housing that should be sought:

- 1 bed dwellings - 5-15%
- 2 bed dwellings - 40-45%
- 3 bed dwellings - 35-40%
- 4 bed dwellings - 10-20%

DM2 - DENSITY states

- a) Development proposals must make the most efficient use of land, which will usually mean developing at densities above those of the surrounding area. The optimum density of a development should result from a design-led approach to determine the capacity of the site. Particular consideration must be given to:
  - i) the site context and character of the surrounding area in which it is located, and including consideration of any nearby heritage assets or important landscape;
  - ii) its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport; Social Policies
  - iii) the need to achieve high quality design;
  - iv) the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers;
  - v) and the capacity of surrounding infrastructure.
- b) Residential development of family housing should achieve a net density of a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare. In exceptional cases, lower densities will only be acceptable if it is demonstrated that this is necessary to ensure the development is compatible with its

surroundings, development viability would be compromised, or to secure particular house types to meet local housing needs;

c) Higher densities, in excess of 100 dwellings per hectare should be achieved in most mixed use developments, flatted developments and developments located in the town centre and in areas close to public transport interchanges and local services.

#### Space Standards

d) New dwellings across all tenures will be expected to meet as a minimum, the nationally described space standards (or any subsequent Government update) for internal floor areas and storage space. These standards will apply to all open market dwellings and affordable housing, including those created through subdivision and conversion. The Council's local standards will continue to apply for external space.

e) The Council will only consider any variation to the requirements set out above in exceptional circumstances, for example when a social or charitable housing provider is able to demonstrate that the homes it is seeking to deliver meets an identified need for supported housing and temporary emergency accommodation and that there is a clear and robust 'move on' strategy and site management in place.

Policy DM5 of the SDWLP requires all new development to be:

- i) of a high architectural and design quality and respect and enhance the character of the site and the prevailing character of the area (including consideration of proportion, form, design, context, massing, siting, layout, density, height, size, scale, materials, detailed design features and landscaping);
- ii) enhance the local environment by way of its appearance and character, with particular attention being paid to the architectural form, height, materials, density, scale, orientation, landscaping, impact on street scene and layout of the development;
- iii) make a positive contribution to the sense of place, local character and distinctiveness of an area;
- iv) respect, preserve and enhance heritage assets and settings;
- v) be well built, accessible, fit for purpose, and adaptable to changing lifestyle, demography and climate;
- vi) include a layout and design which: take account of potential users of the site; create safe conditions for access, egress and active travel (walking and cycling) between all locations; provide good links to integrated public transport; and have acceptable parking arrangements (in terms of amount and layout);
- vii) make a positive contribution to creating a safe and secure environment by integrating measures for security and designing out opportunities for crime;
- viii) not have an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, particularly of residential dwellings, including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook, an unacceptable increase in noise or vehicular movements or loss of important open space;
- ix) respect the existing natural features of the site, including landform, trees and biodiversity and contribute positively to biodiversity net gain;
- x) ensure that lighting incorporated into developments provides the minimum for public safety, is energy efficient and avoids light pollution.

The 'Guide for Residential Development' (SPD) indicates that all new development will be expected to demonstrate good quality architectural and landscape design and use of materials. In particular, new development should display a good quality of architectural composition and detailing as well as responding positively to the important aspects of local character, exploiting all reason opportunities for enhancement. Where appropriate, innovative and contemporary design solutions will be encouraged.

Infill development is usually defined as development which fills a restricted gap in the continuity of existing buildings where the site has existing building curtilages, normally residential, adjoining on at least two sides. Infill development requires sensitive design and good landscaping if new buildings are to be fitted successfully into small sites in established residential areas. Insensitive infilling that will negatively impact on areas character or amenity will be resisted.

The NPPF seeks to achieve sustainable development, defined as meeting the needs of the

present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

Paragraph 9 states that “these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the Framework.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF makes it clear that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It states: “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

Paragraph 135 goes on to state that planning decisions should ensure developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Para 139 indicates that permission should be refused for development of poor design especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and Government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and SPGs.

## **Principle of Development**

Policy DM8 - Planning for sustainable communities/community facilities - places of worship are included under the definition for this policy - Para 5.107.

It goes on to say at e) that where development involves the loss of a community facility the council would resist its loss unless replacement facilities were provided that meets the needs of the community or if it can be demonstrated that the existing premises are no longer required/ or not viable and this is evidenced via appropriate marketing for an alternative community use.

Any application will require full details of marketing of the site for the existing and other community uses.

Details of the agents used will be required. Reputable local or specialist commercial agents will need to be used. Evidence will be needed that a variety of marketing mediums have been used such as brochures, advertisements in relevant publications, and web-sites etc. The marketing strategy should bring the availability of the site to the notice of the local community uses and where appropriate to the regional and national market.

Marketing at a realistic asking price taking account of current use and condition. In addition, evidence will be required indicating records of response, interest shown and offers received within reason as to why potential purchasers did not pursue the sale or why offers were rejected.

I understand that it is the intention to use receipts from the sale of this site to invest in and upgrade the listed grade 2 St Marys of the Angels church.

I note that there is submitted a certificate of immunity against listing until 2029.

If it was accepted that the community use could be lost then residential would be acceptable on this site

### **Character, Appearance and suitability**

The site lies on a prominent corner and the 1960s church is an impressive building in itself with some good design features. As discussed on site our first preference would be to convert the church into residential units thereby retaining the existing character of the site in its surrounding and the building. I know that you indicated that this had been explored but would advise that this should be further explored with the insertion of appropriate windows and potentially extensions to provide a suitable development which would also help in relation to sustainability impacts in terms of embodied carbon.

Should the loss of the church and presbytery be accepted the scheme indicates 9 residential units, 8 of which are 4 bedrooms and 1 x 5 bedroom. It is our view that the density is too low for the site, the development should comply with Policy DM2 of the Worthing Local Plan, make the most efficient use of land which will usually mean developing at densities above those of surrounding development and provide residential development of a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare.

It is advised that in view of this corner position and the height of the existing church that you could look at more scale of development particularly on the frontage to provide for the density. It is also advised that the design of any development reflect the current use of the site providing some design detail or reuse of materials to reflect the church on the site.

The housing mix is also not acceptable and should be in accordance with policy DM1 and the strategic Housing Market Assessment as set out above.

It is also noted that there are a number of TPO trees on the site named as small to medium trees 'flowering crab apples' which should be taken into account.

I will not go into any further detail on design as indicated above, I consider that more suitable options should be considered to provide more scale and development.

### **Residential Amenity**

DM5 of the WLP requires all new development to:

viii) not have an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, particularly of residential dwellings, including unacceptable loss of privacy, daylight/sunlight, outlook, an unacceptable increase in noise or vehicular movements or loss of important open space  
The NPPF paragraph 135 includes within its core land-use planning principles that planning should:-

'Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and wellbeing, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'.

### **Future residents**

All new development need to comply with the National Technical Space Standards. The supporting documents indicates that dwellings would comply with the internal space standards, outside space needs to continue to comply with 'Space Standards SPD' which indicates:

## Minimum standards for rear gardens for houses

Type	Rear garden area (m2)
2-bedroom terraced	50
3-bedroom terraced	65
Small Semi or detached (3 bedroom max)	85
Large semi or detached	100

The site is also located between two busy roads and existing residential development therefore any development would need to comply with any noise or overlooking issues and ensure that there is natural daylight and outlook.

A daylight study looking at internal illumination levels in line with BRE guidance should be submitted.

### **Neighbouring amenity**

The development is within a mixed residential area any development would therefore need to respect the amenity of surrounding residential development, particularly the property at 155 Chesswood Road and the properties in Ashwood Close. In particular your proposed plot 9 would be within close proximity of 33 and 34 Ashwood Close which are bungalows/bungalows with rooms in the roof with shallow back gardens. This relationship therefore requires careful consideration to ensure that any development does not cause unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing or detrimental visual impact.

A daylight and sunlight report looking at daylight, sunlight and overshadowing in line with BRE guidance would be required.

### **Access and Highways**

The site is within a sustainable location, cycle parking would be required. Further advice on highways matters and access can be sort separately from West Sussex County Council Highways.

### **Sustainability**

DM16 of the WLP states that all new housing should seek to achieve an A rating (with a minimum expectation of B rating) Energy Performance Certificate. Policy DM17 requires all development resulting in new housing to incorporate renewable and low carbon energy production equipment to meet at least 10% of the predicted total energy requirements (after CO2 reductions from energy efficiency measures).

### **Ecology and biodiversity**

The development will require assessment against Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Policy DM18 requires new development on previously developed land to provide a minimum 20% net gain for biodiversity. The metric will be required setting out how this has been achieved.

### **Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage**

Policy DM20 requires a site specific Flood Risk:

- i) sites of 1 hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1;
- ii) all new development (including minor development and change of use) in Flood Zones 2 and 3;

iii) development that would introduce a more vulnerable class on land at increased flood risk in future or subject to other sources of flooding identified by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Although the site is within flood zone 1 it is also in an area which is liable to surface water flooding, as such a Flood Risk Assessment setting out a sequential assessment would be required.

## **Conclusion**

It is our view that further marketing information is required to justify the loss of the community facility. Although subject to satisfactory marketing residential development could be acceptable as outlined above consideration of the conversion of the buildings should be the first option. The current proposed scheme for 9 dwellings is also not acceptable and that an improved mix and appropriate density should be considered.

I hope this is of assistance

Yours Sincerely

Jackie Fox  
Senior Planning Officer

## Appendix 2

Certificate of Immunity from Listing

# Case Name: COI: Roman Catholic Church of St Charles Borromeo, including the presbytery and church hall, Worthing

**Case Number: 1487109**

## Background

We have been asked to assess the Roman Catholic Church of St Charles Borromeo, Worthing, for a Certificate of Immunity from listing (COI).

## Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	HE Recommendation
1	1487980	Roman Catholic Church of St Charles Borromeo, including the presbytery and church hall	Listing	Do not add to List

## Visits

Date	Visit Type
31 July 2023	Full inspection

## Context

The Church of St Charles Borromeo was included in the Taking Stock project, an initiative to record and assess the heritage significance of Roman Catholic places of worship within the Diocese of Brighton and Arundel. The survey was undertaken in partnership with Historic England (then English Heritage), the Patrimony Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and the Diocese itself.

The church closed in 2020 in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak and it was decided in 2021 that the church would not reopen for worship. The church is currently being sold.

The building does not stand within a conservation area.

## Assessment

### CONSULTATION

The applicant, the Diocese, Southern Historic Churches Committee, the Patrimony Committee, the local authority, the Twentieth Century Society, and the Historic Environment Record (HER) were invited to comment on the factual details of the case as part of the consultation process.

Representatives for the applicant, the Twentieth Century Society, HER, Diocese and Southern Historic Churches Committee, acknowledged the report but did not have any comments to make.

No other responses have been received.



## DISCUSSION

The Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (November 2018) sets out the broad criteria when buildings are considered for listing. After 1850, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary.

The Historic England Listing Selection Guide for Places of Worship (December 2017) identifies that when assessing buildings of this type and date for listing, account should be taken of architectural quality, association with a nationally significant architect, artist, cleric or patron, level of survival, quality of architectural and artistic embellishment, and design and craftsmanship.

The Church of St Charles Borromeo, Worthing was built between 1958-1962, designed by HB Towner for the Diocese of Southwark, later part of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. Externally the design is relatively plain and is dominated by the substantial tower which is surrounded by short wings. The surviving internal fixtures and fittings are modest, with simple stone altars and a late-C20 timber pulpit and font. Other internal features such as the Stations of the Cross have been removed. Compared to other post-war churches, the Church of St Charles Borromeo does not demonstrate the quality of design, interest of planning or level of craftsmanship required for a building of this date to merit listing.

The 1960s presbytery, also attributed to Towner, is typical of domestic architecture of this period without the structural, material, or planning interest to raise its architectural significance.

Similarly, the former mid-C20 detached house associated with the church is a standard inter-war house, which has lost much of its original plan through its conversion to a church hall.

## CONCLUSION

After examining all the records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are not fulfilled. The Roman Catholic Church of St Charles Borromeo, including the presbytery and church hall, Worthing, is not recommended for listing, and a COI should be issued.

## REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The Roman Catholic Church of St Charles Borromeo, including the presbytery and church hall, Worthing, is not recommended for listing, and a Certificate of Immunity from listing should be issued, for the following principal reasons:

:

Degree of architectural and historic interest:

- \* the post-war church does not demonstrate the quality of design, interest of planning or level of craftsmanship required for a building of this date to merit listing;
- \* the associated presbytery and church hall, a converted mid-C20 detached house, are typical examples of C20 domestic architecture without structural, material, or planning interest.

## Countersigning comments:

Agreed.

13 November 2023

# Annex 1

## Factual Details

**Name:** Roman Catholic Church of St Charles Borromeo, including the presbytery and church hall

**Location:** Chesswood Road, Worthing, BN11 2AE

County	District	District Type	Parish
West Sussex	Worthing	District Authority	Non Civil Parish

## History

The site of the church was previously occupied by a plant nursery with a detached house, known as Broadview, to the south-west. The land for the church was acquired in the early 1950s and outline planning permission was granted in 1958. For three years before the church was ready for use, the Dolphin public house in Dominion Road, was used for services; in memory of this association, there is a dolphin motif attached to the side of the nave door. The Bishop of Southwark approved Bingham Towner's plans in 1959 and in May 1962 the first service was held. The total cost of the church was £35,329. The building material is reconstituted stone. The detached house, Broadview, was also reused by the Diocese, originally used as a presbytery, and later as a parish hall. A purpose-built presbytery was built to the west of the church, shortly after in the latter half of the 1960s; it is understood that Towner also designed the presbytery. In 1965, most of the ecclesiastical estates within Sussex and Surrey became the provenience of the newly created Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, including the Church of St Charles Borromeo.

The architect, Henry Bingham Towner (1909-1997) was born and lived his life at Uckfield. He specialised in church architecture and designed more than 25 new churches including the Church of St Wilfrid, Hailsham 1954, and Church of the Holy Family, Lancing 1970.

## Details

Roman Catholic church, built between 1958-1962, designed by HB Towner for The Diocese of Southwark, later part of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, including 1960 presbytery, also attributed to Towner, and the church hall, converted from a mid-C20 detached house.

**MATERIALS:** the church is built of reconstituted stone.

**PLAN:** a cruciform plan; a central square tower surrounded by four equal-sized wings (western nave, north and south transepts, and the eastern chancel with vestry)

**EXTERIOR:** the four wings have pitched roofs. There is a recessed west porch beneath a round arch. Most of the windows are three-arched lights beneath a flat arch. Triple lights. Either side of the nave and chancel wings are clerestorey windows. There are tall triple-light windows at the end of the north and south transepts. All are flanked by single-story lean-tos, with triple and single-light windows, apart from the projecting apses on the east sides of each transept. There is also side openings at the south-west and north-east corners. The squat central tower is topped by a pyramidal roof; there are triple-louvered openings on each side of the tower.

**INTERIOR:** at the west end of the nave is a narrow narthex with a timber and glazed screen, it is flanked by two spaces with metal gateways and a pair of confessionals. The nave has an asbestos tile floor and it topped by a gallery running its full length, internally there is a central square space with four large round arches at the crossing, including a nave arch carried on large corbels. The chancel includes a timber floor and low railings. The chancel and the flanking side chapels retain their stone altar tables and piscina, as well as the material-covered baldachin above a wall-mounted crucifix. The interior is lit by several chandeliers. The Stations of the Cross are removed. The wooden pulpit and baptismal font are later additions. Surrounding the chancel are several rooms including the vestry. Within the tower is a brick-lined staircase with several rooms leading to it at various stages.

**SUBSIDIARY FEATURES:** to the west is the 1960s two-storey brick presbytery. Internally it contains a central hallway surrounded by ground and first-floor rooms. Further west is a former mid-C20 detached house,

converted to a church hall. Some of the internal walls have been knocked through to create large open spaces on both levels.

## **Selected Sources**

### **Books and journals**

Elleray, D R, *Sussex Places of Worship: a Gazetteer of Buildings Erected Between c.1760 and c.1960*, (2004)

Williamson et al, , *Buildings of England: Sussex: West*, (2019), 739

### **Websites**

St Marys 150 years of history, accessed 13 September 2023 from

<https://www.catholicparishofworthingandlancing.co.uk/stmarys150yearsofhistory/>

### **Other**

T Sladen and N Antram, *Historic Review of Roman Catholic Churches in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton*  
St Charles Borromeo, Worthing (2005)

**Map****National Grid Reference:** TQ1599203649

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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1487980\_1.pdf

## Appendix 3

Diocese Letter on Marketing



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
**ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON**

THE ST PHILIP HOWARD CENTRE, 4 SOUTHGATE DRIVE, CRAWLEY RH10 6RP

Adur & Worthing Councils  
Worthing Town Hall  
Chapel Road  
Worthing  
West Sussex  
BN11 1HA

8 January 2025

RE: St Charles Borromeo Church, Chesswood Road, Worthing

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing in relation to the planning application at St Charles Borromeo Church by Quantum Homes. We represent the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton and are the sellers of the site to Quantum Homes.

We are disposing of the site due to the impracticalities of keeping it open. The church has been closed since 2019 and due to a reduction in congregation numbers before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, it has not been viable to keep the church open. We have a shortage of priests in the area and by closing St Charles Borromeo Church, we are able to continue to run services at our other facilities and serve the needs of our local congregation.

The Diocese has a number of other places of worship in the local area which have taken in the decanted congregation. The church will still retain the memorial garden at the St Charles Borromeo site, allowing families to continue to visit.

Funds from the sale will facilitate the building of a new hall at Holy Family, Lancing, and the repair of the roof at the Grade 2 listed St. Mary of the Angels.

Reasons for disposal:

- Cost of repairs needed are high and the parish does not have sufficient funds available
- High energy costs to keep it open
- Lack of staff/priest
- Small congregation
- Other churches within the diocese can be used
- The church has been empty for over 5 years



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
**ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON**

THE ST PHILIP HOWARD CENTRE, 4 SOUTHGATE DRIVE, CRAWLEY RH10 6RP

We have explored conversion of church, change of use and other uses of the land, none have been viable so far. The only viable way the Diocese can recuperate some income and fund the repairs needed at other properties, as well as fund other community projects, is from selling the site to a developer to build high quality family homes which are much needed within the area.

We advertised the sale of the church building, presbytery and church hall building for 12 months from January 2021 to January 2022. In this time there was no interest in the site for continued community or commercial use. The only interested parties were those seeking residential development on the site. We originally agreed a deal with a retirement development company which subsequently became abortive. We then agreed a sale to Quantum Homes who are now progressing the planning.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Kilmartin

Company Secretary

The Arundel and Brighton Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation Limited