



PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF
COMMERCIAL BUILDING (CLASS E) TO MEETING HALL
(CLASS F.1) WITH ASSOCIATED ALTERATIONS AND NEW
ACCESS TO DWELLING AT SWEDISH COTTAGE, LEICESTER
ROAD, EARL SHILTON, LE9 7TJ**

on behalf of

MOSTYN GOSPEL HALL TRUST

June 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of the Mostyn Gospel Hall Trust in support of a planning application for the change of use of a commercial buildings (Class E) to a meeting hall (Class F.1) with associated alterations and new access to dwelling at Swedish Cottage, Leicester Road, Earl Shilton, LE9 7TJ.
- 1.2 The statement should be read in conjunction with other supporting information supplied as part of the planning application including:
- Application Forms
 - Site Location Plan
 - Existing/Proposed Block Plan
 - Existing/Proposed Floor Plans
 - Existing/Proposed Elevations
- 1.3 The following sections of the statement provide a description of the application site and its surroundings, details of the proposal, alongside an overview and assessment of the planning policy context relevant to the proposed development.
- 1.4 The statement demonstrates that, when considering local and national planning policy, the development is acceptable in principle. There are no other material considerations which would render the proposal unacceptable in planning terms. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the application is viewed favourably and approved without delay.

2. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is located on the northern side of Earl Shilton to the east of Leicester Road, where the property is situated on a small slip road as shown in Figure 1 below.

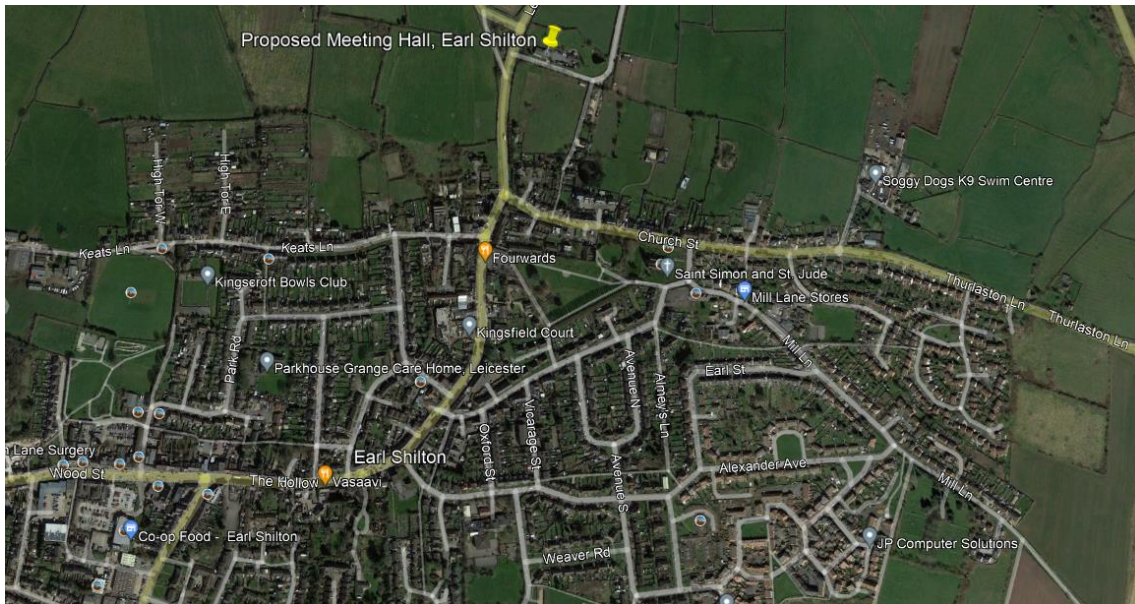


Figure 1: Location of application site

- 2.2 The image below shows the current layout of the commercial building, car park and the adjacent dwelling which shares the commercial access at present. A portacabin is also located within the car park and was used as an office in association with the business. The dwelling has a large garden to the rear and eastern side. To the north of the commercial building is a small paddock and to the west is an area with some hardstanding that is partly grassed over. The site is enclosed by fencing and mature vegetation.

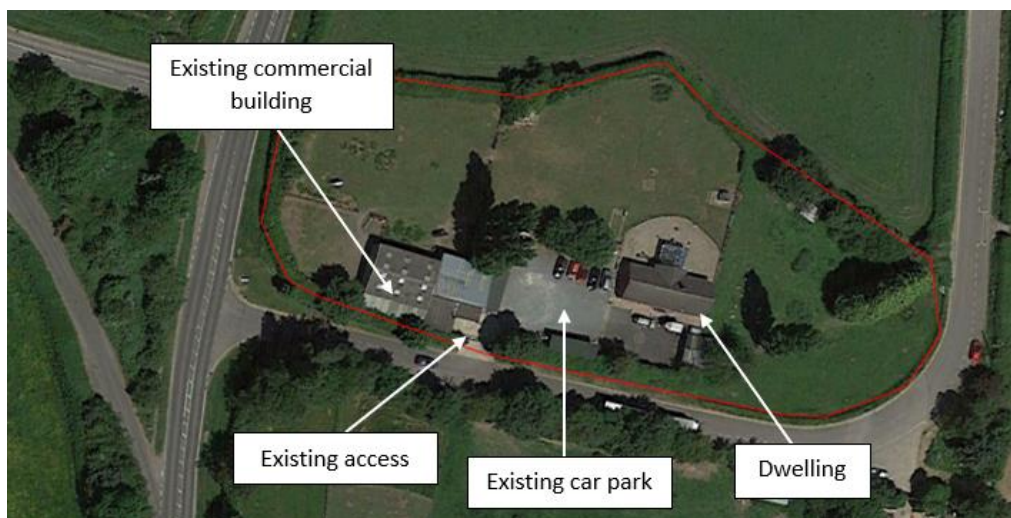


Figure 2: Site layout

- 2.3 The commercial property is currently vacant having last been used in summer 2022 as a retail sales business for animal feed and products. The commercial use operated 6 days per week and was open to the public with a car park on site, which can accommodate around 13 vehicles. Traffic movements associated with the retail operation included customers, staff and deliveries. Whilst these may have varied through the week, the permitted use could easily generate 40 - 50 movements per day. The photographs below show the existing commercial building, portacabin and car park area.



Figure 3: Commercial building and car park

- 2.4 The existing single storey building is in sound structural condition as it was in use until recently. The construction is mainly steel framed, block work with metal sheet roof and concrete floors. The images below show the internal rooms.



Figure 4: Internal views of commercial building

- 2.5 The adjacent dwelling is shown below and is a bungalow with double garage and private amenity space. The property is also vacant at present. It has no restrictive tie to the business however the only access is via the commercial car park.



Figure 5: Dwelling and access via car park

- 2.6 The site access is gated and has good visibility, shown by the pictures below. As the road is only used to access a very small number of properties, there is no through traffic and movements are low.



Figure 6: Access and visibility

Planning History

- 2.6 Planning permission was granted in 1999 for the change of use of the agricultural building to retail sales of animal and pet food (Ref: 99/00195/COU).

Designations

- 2.7 The site is not within any landscape, ecological or heritage designation. The buildings are not at risk of flooding.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the commercial property to use as a meeting hall associated works and the creation of a new access for the adjacent dwelling. The proposed block plan below shows the proposed layout.

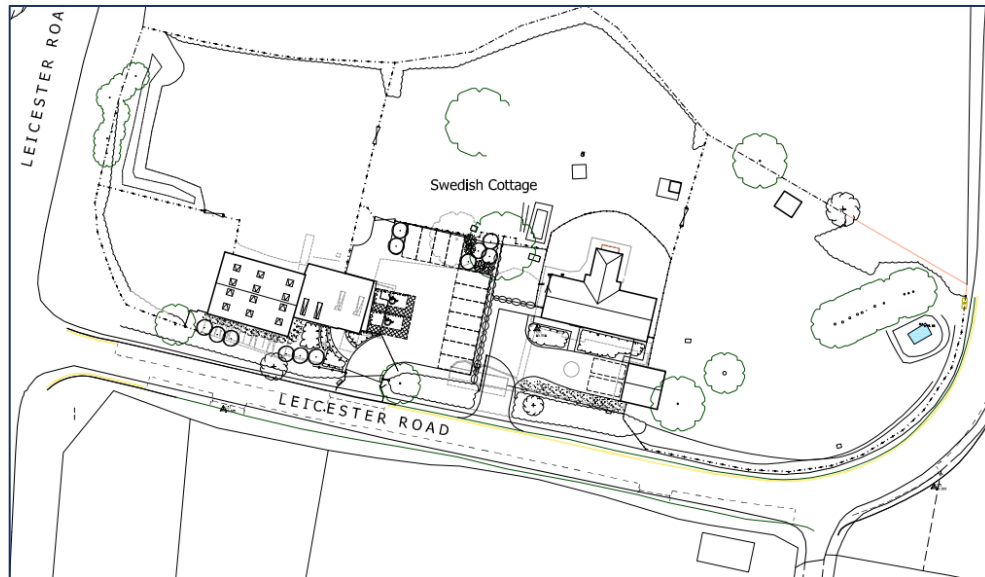


Figure 7: Proposed Illustrative Block Plan

- 3.2 The building would be used by the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church (www.plymouthbrethrenchristianchurch.org) as local meeting hall for congregation members in the surrounding area. The group have been searching for a local meeting hall for several years following the growth in members and to replace a facility in the West End area of Leicester which had been in use for over 60 years but became unsuitable and finally closed in 2019. Since that time and in the absence of a formal meeting place, members have been meeting in private houses which is not a sustainable arrangement. The need for the facility is therefore becoming increasingly urgent.
- 3.3 Use of the meeting room would generally follow the pattern and members attending set out in the table below, however small groups may meet from time to time outside of this schedule.

Schedule of meetings and members attendance

Day	Time of Meeting	Frequency	Members Attending	Vehicles
Sunday	6:00am	Weekly	38-45	9-10
Sunday	5:30pm	Every 6 weeks	38-45	9-10
Monday	7:00pm	Weekly	38-45	9-10

- 3.4 In addition to Christian worship, the church group place great emphasis on charitable duties and working with the local community through Rapid Relief Team (rrtglobal.org). This is a charity organisation of volunteers from the church group set up to provide fast response support services to those urgently in need, such as providing meals to those in the locality facing hardship to disaster relief globally. This planning proposal will provide a vital meeting hall for this charity work.
- 3.5 The existing commercial building will be altered by removing three extensions shaded blue on the proposed floor plan below, reducing the overall built form and mass. The remaining building will have new fire doors on the northern elevation and existing doors on the southern elevation will be altered. Internally the larger open room will remain unchanged except for new doors through to the eastern section and an existing opening to a section being demolish will be blocked up. The eastern section of the building will have internal partitions to create toilet facilities, a small kitchen and a reception area. The current entrance will be altered to provide access to the reception foyer. Some of the existing roof lights will be panelled over. Additional insulation will be provided to internal walls as necessary.

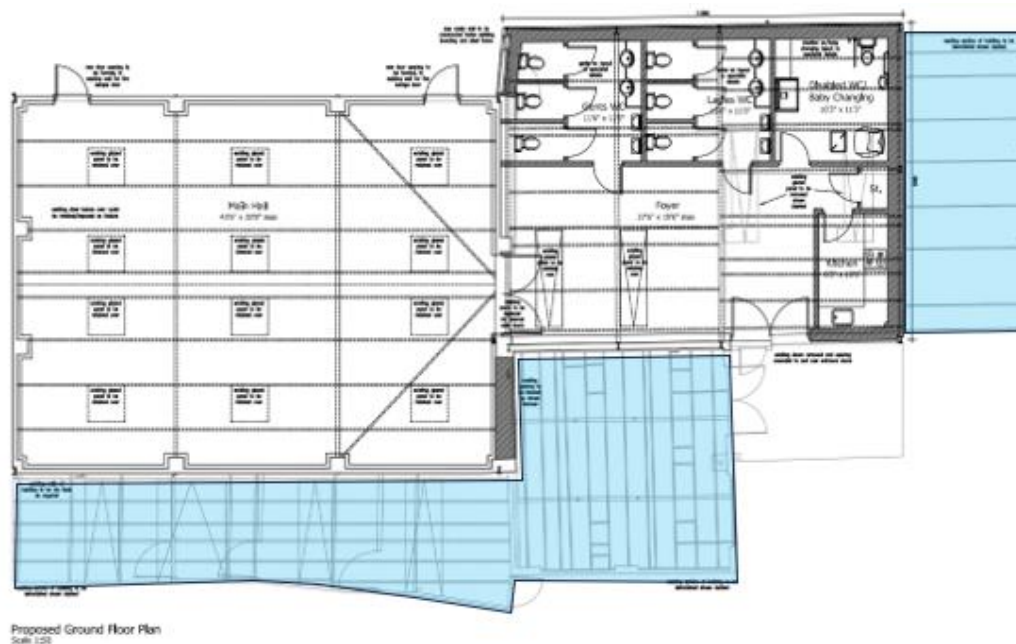


Figure 8: Proposed Floor Plan

- 3.6 The elevations of the building will have minor alterations to accommodate the internal arrangements. New dark green cladding would be applied to the existing walls to give continuity and a uniform finish, as shown below. Aside for the covering of some roof lights, the existing roofing would remain.



Figure 9: Proposed Elevations

3.7 Traffic movements associated with the meeting hall are relatively low and a car share plan would be operated. The table below provides details of the expected congregation and car sharing arrangements, with only 9 regular car visits. The existing car park would be marked out to provide 13 spaces including 2 disabled spaces. Vehicles will have sufficient room to manoeuvre and exist the site.

Likely Traffic Movements

All meetings (Local Congregation)			
Household	Household	Number of people	Car
1	SL	4	1
2	JD	3	2
3	CT	6	3
4	PF	6	4
5	IT	5	5
6	SB	1	6 Car sharing
7	AO	3	
8	MO	5	7
9	CC	4	8 Car sharing
10	JB	1	
11	TD	2	9 Car sharing
12	BG	2	
TOTAL		42	9

3.8 The proposed new access to serve the bungalow would be created by using a section of the existing car park and through the removal of a small section of hedgerow on the site boundary as shown in the detailed section of the proposals plan below. Hedgerow would be

trimmed back to ensure sufficient visibility splay and new gates would be set back from the highway.

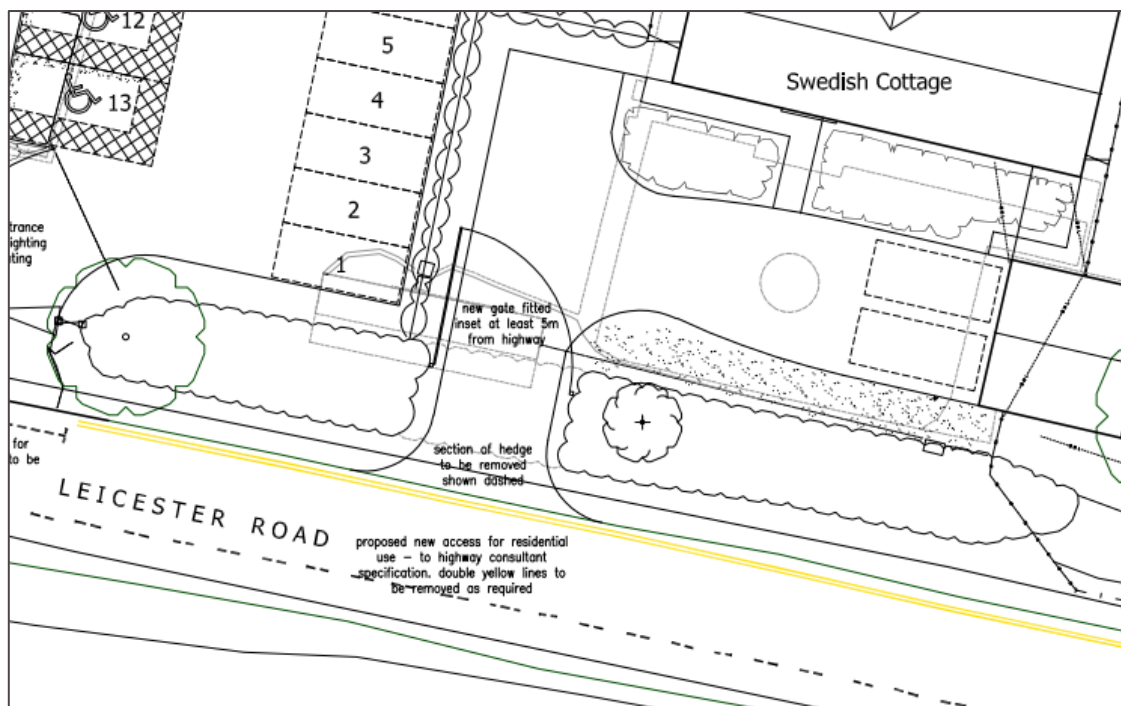


Figure 10: Proposed new access to dwelling

- 3.9 The temporary portacabin structure would be removed from site and new landscaping would be undertaken around the site, in particular along the car park boundary to the dwelling providing natural screening and privacy. The very large trees adjacent to the commercial building are to be removed due to size and proximity, some other vegetation is to be removed as shown on the block plan however replacement and enhanced planting would be provided, as agreed in detail by condition.

4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act) requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Government policy, principally the National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2021, is material to the determination of planning applications.

4.2 The statutory Development Plan against which this application should be determined comprises the Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy DPD 2009 and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (SADMP) 2016.

CORE STRATEGY DPD, 2009

4.3 The Core Strategy DPD provides the overarching spatial strategy and vision for the development of the District up to 2026. The Plan contains a number of strategic policies to guide planning applications and subsequent development plan documents.

SITE ALLOCATIONS & DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES DPD, JULY 2016

4.4 The Site Allocations & Development Management DPD (SADMP) sets out detailed policies and allocations to deliver the requirements of the Core Strategy 2009. The policies which are considered most relevant to this application are set out below.

4.5 The Policies Map for the SADMP shows Tiveys farm as being within the countryside. There are no specific designations on the site.

4.6 Policy DM1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development states that planning applications that accord with the Local Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.7 Policy DM4: Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation states that the countryside will be safeguarded from unsustainable development. The policy goes on to state that development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where it involves reuse of an existing building which leads to the enhancement of the immediate setting or it

contributes to economic growth, job creation and diversification of a rural business. Such development should not have a significant adverse impact on the countryside.

4.8 Policy DM10: Development and Design sets out that developments will be permitted providing no significant adverse effect amenity, it complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area, the use of materials respects the existing, adjoining/neighbouring, it incorporates where appropriate landscaping, conservation of energy and sustainable drainage.

4.9 Policy DM15: Redundant Rural Buildings allows the reuse of redundant rural buildings where it is demonstrated the building is no longer viable in its current/original use, it is in sound condition capable of conversion without significant rebuilding or alteration, any alterations are proportionate and there is an enhancement of the immediate setting.

4.10 Policy DM17: Highways and Transportation outlines that development proposals will be supported where there is no adverse impact on highway safety and sustainable transport modes can be maximised. All development proposals should reflect highway design standards.

4.11 Policy DM18: Vehicle Parking Standards states that all proposals for new development will be required to provide an appropriate level of parking provision.

4.12 Policy DM25 Community Facilities states that the council will support new facilities and these should be located to minimise reliance on the car. Where facilities are established, it should be demonstrated that they are accessible to the community which they intend to serve by a range of sustainable transport modes.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK, 2021

4.13 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides overarching guidelines for the planning system and states that 'the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development.' The central theme of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where proposals accord with the Development Plan they should be approved without delay.

- 4.14 Paragraph 92 states that to provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and services, planning decisions should plan positively for community needs and take into account and support social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

5. ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This planning application is for the change of use of a commercial buildings (Class E) to a meeting hall (Class F.1) with associated alterations and new access to dwelling at Swedish Cottage, Leicester Road, Earl Shilton, LE9 7TJ.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.2 The Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Hinckley and Bosworth is the Core Strategy, 2009 and the Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD, 2016. The NPPF is material to the determination of this planning application. To ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, it contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development at its heart.
- 5.3 The Development Plan and the Framework all fully support the principle of reusing redundant rural buildings for alternative uses. The proposal will demolish less attractive extensions to the existing building, remove the portacabin and provide a uniform dark green cladding, significantly bettering the appearance of the site. Furthermore, additional planting would be undertaken around the site to increase biodiversity and improve the site setting. The principle of converting the disused commercial building into a church meeting room use is therefore deemed in accordance with planning policy.
- 5.4 The conversion will utilise the existing building which is a modest single storey structure. The existing vegetation and further planting around the site provide screening from wider views. The building will have no greater impact than at present, indeed it will be reduced in size. The existing structure requires no additional support with only minor alterations to doors and windows. The conversion of the buildings is therefore considered to meet the detailed requirements of Policy DM15 as no significant rebuilding is required and the alterations will enhance the immediate site.
- 5.5 In terms of other impacts, the buildings are not at risk of flooding, there would no impact on heritage assets and ecological designations. The recent use of the building and its secure nature render the building unsuitable for bats or birds.
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- 5.6 The meeting hall would utilise the existing entrance which good visibility splays all within the applicant's control. Ample parking is provided within the site to meet the members needs with 13 spaces with only 9 regular vehicles anticipated. The church group is very conscious of sustainability and operates its own car sharing group with every meeting. The volume of traffic generated by the church is low (144 movements per week) and when compared to the continuous higher traffic of the commercial operation (240 – 300 movements per week), the proposed use would be a significant reduction. Furthermore given the extremely low levels of traffic on this non-through road and the clear visibility, it is considered that the new access for the existing dwelling would be acceptable and provide clear separation between the church use and residential unit.
- 5.7 Importantly, the proposed use will address a current social and cultural need as well as facilitate the meeting place of the rapid response charity providing services to the local and wider community. Support and provision of cultural facilities for all sectors of the community is supported by national and local planning policy.

Conclusion

- 5.8 This statement has demonstrated that, when considering the Development Plan and planning guidance, the planning application for the change of use of a commercial buildings (Class E) to a meeting hall (Class F.1) with associated alterations and new access to dwelling at Swish Cottage is acceptable in principle and no material considerations would render the proposal unacceptable in planning terms. In accordance with the Act, it is therefore respectfully requested that the application is viewed favourably and approved without delay.