OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/01252/LBC Listed Building Consent

Proposal: Installation of an Electric Vehicle (EV) home charger

Location: 20 Church Road Grafham Huntingdon

Applicant: Mr Henry Wright

Grid Ref: 516039 269163

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

20 Church Road is a Grade II Listed Building constructed of red brick dating from the 18th Century, located within a residential area of Grafham. It is located in Flood Zone 1, with the Grade I Listed All Saints' Church and Grade II Listed Old Rectory to the south-west of the property.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

The application is for the installation of an Electric Vehicle (EV) home charger to the rear of the main dwelling. It is noted that a previous application (24/01713/LBC) granted consent for an electric vehicle charger to the south-east side elevation of the outbuilding. This position was agreed after consultation with the Conservation Officer, who did not support the installation of the electric charger to the rear of the main listed dwelling.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

LP12: Design Implementation
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles - Part 3.8 Building Detailing

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

PLANNING HISTORY

1000555LBC - Removal of UPVC windows and replacement with timber windows – consent granted 14.07.2010
24/01713/LBC - Installation of an electric vehicle home charger – consent granted 31.01.2025

CONSULTATIONS

Grafham Parish Council recommends approval.

HDC Conservation Team – object to the application. The proposed location on the rear elevation of the listed building is not supported as it will result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and the way in which it is experienced. Relocating to a post adjacent to this rear elevation would be supported. Full comments from the Conservation Officer are contained within the main body of the report below.

REPRESENTATIONS

One comment has been received from a neighbouring property supporting the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
o Impact on Heritage Assets

* Impact on Heritage Assets

Policy LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 state that developments should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.

Policy LP34 states that a proposal within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a conservation area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area’s character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements or other applicable documents.

The Council will consider the significance of a designated heritage asset and where there is less than substantial harm, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Where there is deemed to be substantial harm, then the proposal would need to achieve substantial public benefits to outweigh that harm.

Section 16(2) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Para. 212 of the NPPF set out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Para. 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification…'.

Local Plan policy LP34 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.

The proposal is for the installation of an Electric Vehicle (EV) home charger to the rear of the main listed dwelling.

The Conservation Officer has considered the proposal and their full comments are contained below:

'The Grade II Listed building, situated along Church Road, is a heritage asset viewable from the public highway, in particular the south (front) and west (gable end) elevations. A boundary wall forms the perimeter boundary with gated entrance to driveway. There is an outbuilding garage within the curtilage of the listed building which also forms part of the boundary wall.

The latest drawing submitted of the proposed elevation shows the EV charger directly attached to the rear wall of the Grade II Listed building, a number of other alternative locations have also been suggested in a previous application (24/01713/LBC). This proposal would impact the architectural and historic significance of the heritage asset. Whilst it is understood that this option is best from an installation perspective, it would result in harm, appear visually discordant against the brickwork of the building, and interrupt the façade.

It is suggested that the applicant consider the installation of the EV charger on a freestanding post which was suggested in the previous comments and is a highly available solution which would cause less impact to the heritage asset. The suggested option minimises impact and preserves the character of the listed building and its setting.

Although the harm is less than substantial, any harm requires clear and convincing justification and must be balanced against public benefit from the proposal. There is no justification, and no public benefit identified in the application, as required by the NPPF.'

It is noted that Listed Building Consent for an electric vehicle home charger was granted Listed Building Consent 31.01.2025 under the reference 24/01713/LBC. It is understood that the underground cabling required to facilitate the previously approved location is not feasible due to water pipework under the driveway and the risk of damage to these pipes during the laying of the EV charger cables.

These concerns are understood however no evidence has been supplied to show why the laying of the charging of EV Charger cables will conflict with the water pipes (e.g. location of water pipes, depth, dimensions etc) or what solutions have been considered to resolve this e.g. different route for the EV Charger cables within the driveway which would not conflict with the water pipes. The application does not evidence why other locations, such as a free-standing post are not possible. The harm to the Listed Building caused by the proposed location does not have a clear and convincing justification, and is not out weighed by the public benefits of one EV Charger when permission exists for another at the same dwelling.

Officers have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. It is considered that the proposed location of the electric charger on the rear elevation of the listed building would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building and the way in which it is experienced. The proposal, therefore, does not accord with ss. 16, 66 & 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, paragraphs 202-221 of the NPPF (2024), Policies LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

*Conclusion
Having special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any other features of special architectural or historic interest the proposed development is not considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as:

The proposed electrical charger to the rear elevation of the listed building would impact the architectural and historic significance of the heritage asset. It would result in harm, appear visually discordant against the brickwork of the building, and interrupt the façade.
Therefore, the proposals do not respect nor preserve the historic character of the listed building. The proposed development is considered to result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of 20 Church Road. This harm is not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended), Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed development is contrary to policy and not acceptable. The proposed development is considered to be in conflict with the Development Plan when taken as a whole and is not acceptable. There are no overriding material considerations that indicate that Listed Building consent should be granted in this instance. Therefore, it is recommended that the application be refused.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Olivia Manton**