

## **Planning Information – Christian Brethren Church, Sandhills Lane, Whitehaven, Cumbria**

**Proposal:** Re-surfacing of forecourt parking area



Christian Brethren Church

August 2020

SRE Associates - Planning and Development Consultancy



## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant in support of the resurfacing of a parking area at the Cristian Brethren Church, Sandhills Lane, Whitehaven, Cumbria.
- 1.2 Section 2 describes the application site, Section 3 details the pre-application advice received, and Section 4 provides justification for the development.

## **2.0 The Application Site**

- 2.1 The area of land subject to the planning application is located to the southwest of the Cristian Brethren Church on Sandhills Lane in the town centre of Whitehaven. It is adjacent to and accessed from the Sandhills Lane Car Park, which is under Copeland Borough Council control.
- 2.2 The site is within the Whitehaven Conservation area.

## **3.0 Pre-submission advice**

- 3.1 Advice on this submission has been received from Sammy Woodford, Planning Conservation Officer, which states as follows:

*'It is certainly debateable whether replacing these with tarmac could be considered to preserve the character of the conservation area, although given that this location is a fairly uninteresting car park on the site of a couple of demolished historic buildings (there used to be houses all along both sides of Sandhills lane), and that it's not visible from the main streets of the conservation area, it's a pretty minor level of harm.*

*However, my first thought is that it may well be possible to lift the existing slabs and re-lay them on a new bed, adding a small number of extra slabs of the same design to replace any broken ones. This might well be both cheap and clearly a preservation of the existing character.'*

## **4.0 Proposal Justification**

- 4.1 The Church has previously applied for Planning Permission to resurface their car park in 2014 (Planning Application 4/14/2171/OF1). This application was to tarmac the area to match the existing Sandhill's car park that it is adjacent to and accessed from. The Sandhill's Car Park is a tarmac finish, although it has been patched several times, even within view from the Church Car Park area. The Copeland Borough Council Conservation Officer at the time however considered that the area should be finished with paving.
- 4.2 No further work in implementing this was undertaken due the cost of the approved materials. The work however still needs undertaken, as the paving slabs currently covering the area are broken and uneven in places, and the area adjacent to the front gate is a public right of way. The Church however are now reapplying for resurfacing in this application, but on the basis of a tarmac finish only.
- 4.3 They have got quotes for the work for both finishes, which can be confidentially submitted to the Planning Officer if required. To resurface the area in new paving would costs £1000's more that a new tarmac finish, which the Church cannot afford, when they are especially so

intent on keeping the Church Building in as good condition as possible in terms of maintenance, repainting and repair and renewal of timber sash sliding windows. The on-going maintenance (and associated cost) is also another factor to consider with this. The current condition of the parking area has caused this process to be restarted, as they have concerns that someone could injure themselves because of the uneven surface. They have also been advised by the groundworks contractor that the area should be then put on a 5-year maintenance schedule, which again will impact the Church's financial situation for the future.

- 4.4 The only other longer life option for paving would be to utilise a similar construction to the surface that has recently been used around Tangier Street currently, but the supply and lay on this particular type of surface is around £150.00/m<sup>2</sup> so the costs are far too excessive for the church.
- 4.5 Given the above, it is considered that the development can be considered acceptable in terms of the comments from the Conservation Officer, and the justification provided.

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