
Planning Statement

The Former Congregational Church, Street Lane,
Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6UB

Prepared for:

Pentas Property Ltd

Prepared by:

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Planning Statement

The Former Congregational Church, Street Lane, Ardingly, West Sussex RH17 6UB



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills to accompany a Full Planning Application, submitted to Mid Sussex District Council (**MSDC**) on behalf of the applicant, Pentas (Property) Ltd, ("**The Applicant**") at the Former Congregational Church, Street Lane, Ardingly, West Sussex RH17 6UB (herein referred to as ("**the site**") for the following development proposal;

Change of Use and Conversion of former Congregational Church building to provide a single dwellinghouse with associated secure cycle storage provision, vehicle parking, bin storage and private amenity space.

- 1.2. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following plans and documents:

- Suite of drawings prepared by HNW Architects;
- Design and Access Statement prepared by HNW Architects;
- Statement of Significance prepared by HNW Architects
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by GreenLink Ecology
- Energy & Sustainability Statement prepared by B Sussed

- 1.3. The above supporting documents which collectively form part of the planning application are required by the Council's validation list.

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2. Site and Surroundings

The Site

- 2.1. The 0.037 hectare site is located on the southern side of Street Lane in the centre of the village of Ardingly, as shown in Figure 2.1 below. The brownfield site comprises a former Congregational Church which was most recently occupied by a wellness centre.
- 2.2. The building dates to the 1880's and forms a modestly sized former red brick-built chapel with a gabled tiled roof. It retains many period features including gothic arched stained-glass windows, the original brick and timber porch with gothic arched doorway, polychrome brickwork with decorative terracotta insets, eaves detailing, and brick buttresses to the side elevation.
- 2.3. The building was extended to the rear in the mid-20th century in the form of a single storey addition.



Figure 2.1: Site Location within Ardingly.

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Surroundings

- 2.4. The Site falls within the administrative areas of MSDC and Ardingly Parish Council (**APC**), and is located within Ardingly's Built Up Area Boundary, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (**AONB**) and the Ashdown Forest 7-kilometre (km) Zone of Influence.
- 2.5. Haywards Heath is located 4 km to the south, East Grinstead 10km to the north east and Crawley 10km to the north west.

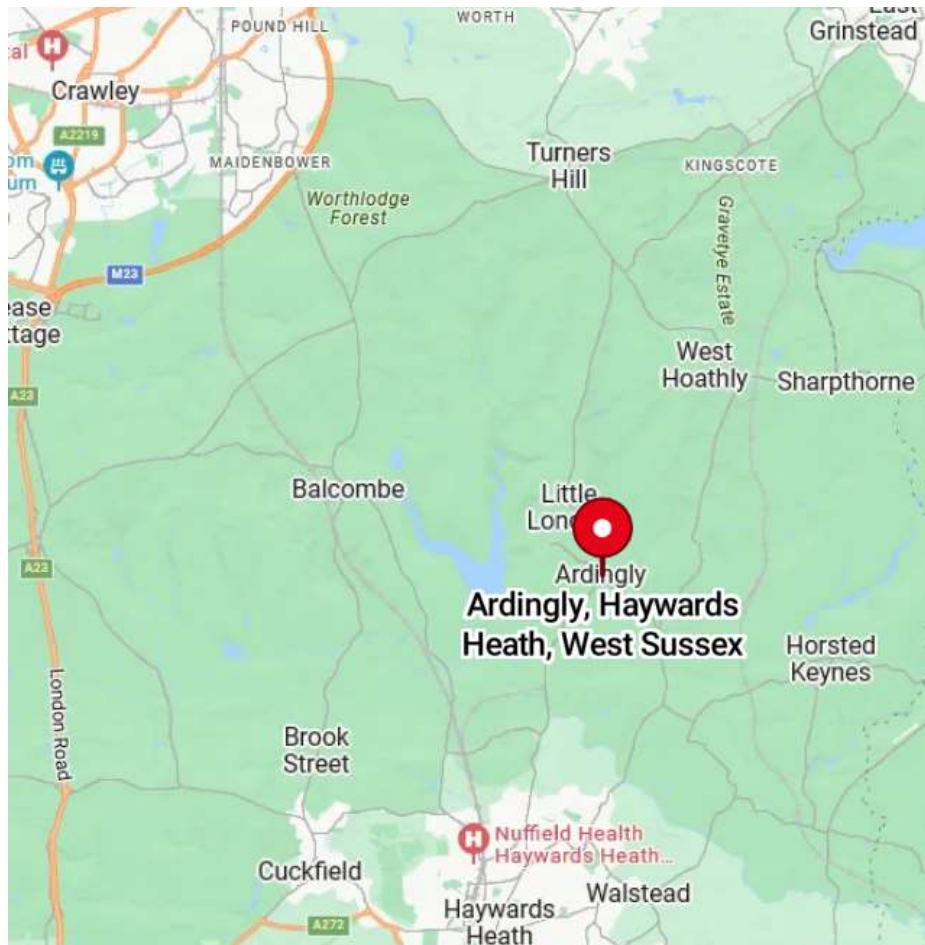


Figure 2.2: Wider Site Locational Context (Bing Maps)

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Transport Context

- 2.6. In terms of transport, Balcombe and Haywards Heath Train Stations are both approximately 5.5 kilometres away and provide regular trains towards London and Brighton.
- 2.7. The nearest bus stops can be found approximately 130 metres away on Lindfield Road, these are served by bus route 272 which provides regular services between Crawley Town Centre and the Royal Sussex Hospital Brighton via Haywards Heath. These public transport links allow travel throughout the wider locality and beyond.
- 2.8. The M23 which provides road links between Brighton and London is located 7 km to the north west.

Amenity Context

- 2.9. The site is located within Ardingly village centre and within short walking distance of a range of local shops, facilities, and amenities, including;
- Fellows Bakery, 20 metres
 - Ardingly Inn, 70 metres
 - Hapstead Hall Community Centre, 100 metres
 - Ardingly News Shop, 200 metres
 - Ardingly Recreational Ground 350 metres.
 - St Peter's C of E Primary School, 500 metres

- 2.10. Ardingly College, a leading independent school, is located approximately 1.5 kilometres to the south of the site.

Heritage Context

- 2.11. With regard to designated heritage assets, the site falls within Ardingly's Conservation Area (**CA**) and is immediately east of Brickyard Cottages which a Grade II Listed Building.
- 2.12. The Ardingly Conservation Area was designated in 1984 (extended 1990) and encompasses the 2 distinct centres that form an intrinsic part of the character of the settlement – The older Saxon settlement in the west around the church and the later mediaeval trading settlement around the intersection of two routeways in the east (High Street and Street Lane). The Site is located within the eastern part of the CA close to the Street Lane / High Street junction.

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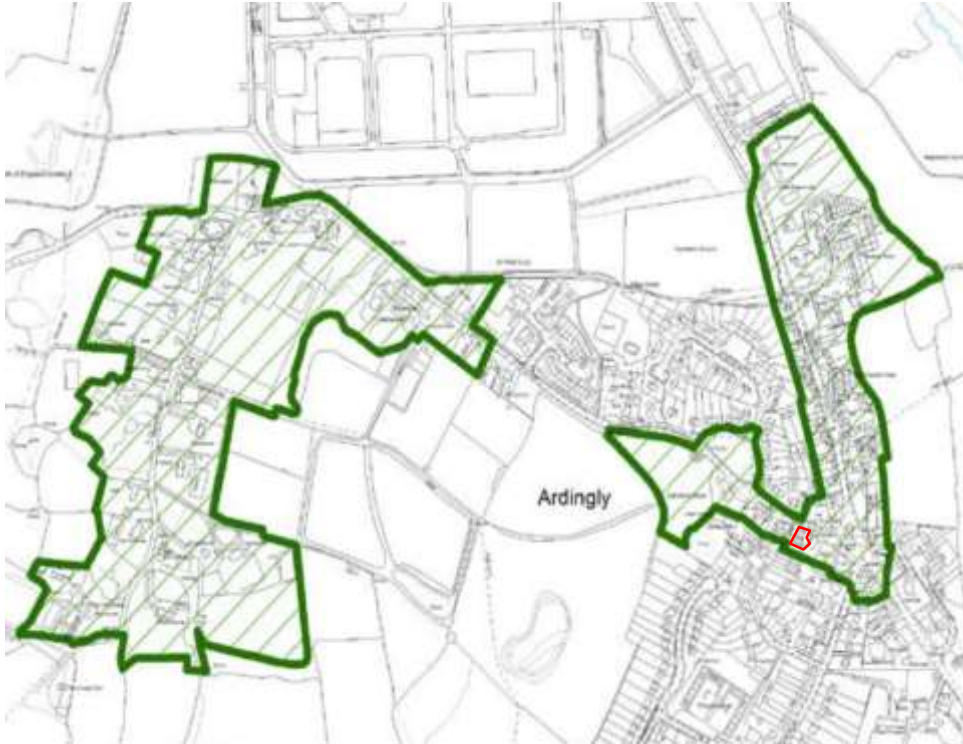


Figure 2.4: Extract from Ardingly Conservation Area Map (Approx site location marked with red outline)

Flood Risk Context

- 2.13. The Environment Agency mapping system shows the site to be within Flood Zone 1 which has the lowest probability of fluvial/tidal flooding. It is also within an area that is at low risk of surface water flooding (Figure 2.5).

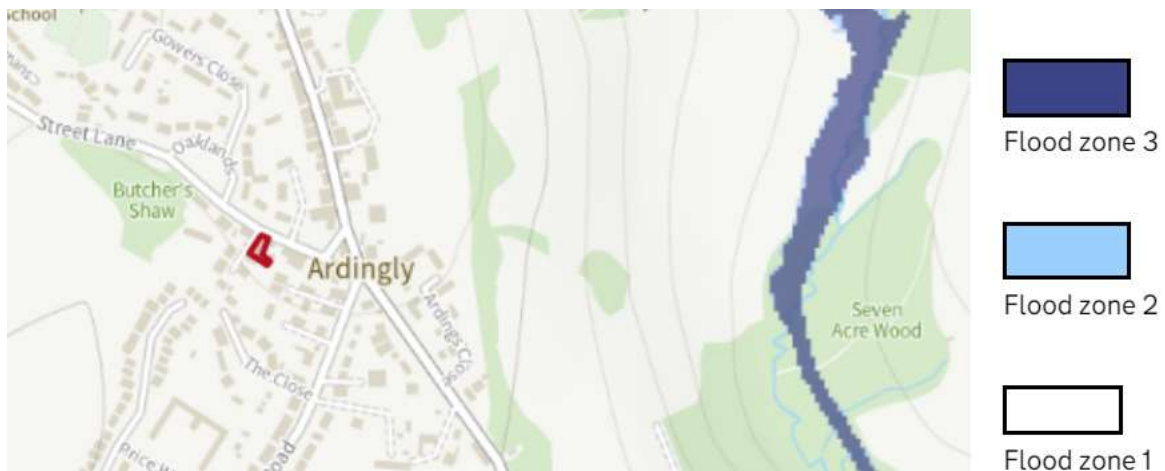


Figure 2.5: Extract from EA Flood Map for Planning (Approx site location marked with red outline).

3. Site and Planning History

Site History

- 3.1. The former congregational church is understood to date from 1885. The building was subsequently extended to the rear during the mid-20th century by a single storey gabled addition.
- 3.2. By 2003 the building was no longer actively serviced and by 2010 had formally closed. Following renovation in 2012 the building has been occupied by a private business as a wellbeing centre. Rental terms have not been renewed as the rental return has become so marginal that it does not even cover the costs arising from the upkeep of the building.

Planning History

- 3.3. There are no planning applications associated with the site, listed on the online records displayed by MSDC.

Pre-application Advice

- 3.4. Paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (**NPPF**) states that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community. It is for this reason that the Applicant has taken a pro-active, collaborative, and comprehensive approach with MSDC prior to the submission of this planning application.
- 3.5. Pre-application advice was sought from MSDC on the basis of a residential conversion project. Advice from MSDC was sought in relation to the following:
 - The principle of development;
 - Key design matters that should be considered for the proposal;
 - Additional technical and supporting Information required to support the planning application;
 - General planning matters and technical considerations applicable to the site;
 - Confirmation of planning obligations and/or financial contributions that will be required; and
 - Any other planning matters which apply to the application site and proposals.

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3.6. A site visit was undertaken on 21 July 2023 and written feedback was received on 18 September 2023 (Reference DM/23/1730).

3.7. The key points emerging from the feedback received on 18 September 2023 have been summarised below.

Principle of development

3.8. MSDC support the reuse of buildings for new residential units within the built-up area of Ardingly. The proposal is considered to represent a sustainable form of development in a village location.

3.9. Concerns were raised regarding the potential internal and external remodelling and the impact of these upon the character of the building.

Loss of Business Floorspace

3.10. MSDC request that an application should explain the nature of the former use, the type/level of employment it created and the hours of use that the building was open whilst in use as a wellbeing centre, and details of any similar facilities locally.

Impact upon Heritage Assets – non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), Conservation Area and setting of Listed Buildings.

3.11. The scheme presented as part of the pre-application discussions proposed a first-floor extension to the rear of the building. Concern relating to scale and bulk when compared against the original chapel and its impact upon the original building, its setting within the Conservation Area and within the wider AONB was raised by the Conservation Officer with regard this element of the pre-application scheme.

4. The Development Proposal

- 4.1. The development proposes the change of use of the Former Congregational Church to residential (Use Class C3).

Use

- 4.2. It is proposed to convert the existing building to create a 3-bedroom dwelling.

Size and Scale

- 4.3. The existing building has a ground floor Gross Internal Area (GIA) of 179 square metres (sqm) which will be slightly reduced to 163.2 sqm facilitated through a slight reduction of the existing rear extension on the western elevation. No new additions to the building are proposed, and its overarching form remains.
- 4.4. The proposed floor area of 178.3 sqm over ground and mezzanine floors comfortably exceeds the Nationally Described Space Standards (**NDSS**) of 93sqm for a 3 bed 5 person dwelling over 2 storeys.

Layout

- 4.5. The proposed conversion will create an open plan family room within the main vaulted hall, with a partial mezzanine floor installed between the southern wall and existing roof truss structure, accessed via a new staircase also within the main hall.
- 4.6. The existing opening to the rear part of the building will be retained providing access to a Kitchen / Dining Area with direct access to the retained private rear garden via new bi-fold doors.
- 4.7. A new opening is also to be created through the existing archway into the rear portion of the building to a separate bedroom and bathroom area.

Access & Parking Provision

- 4.8. The property will continue to be accessed via the existing primary access off Street Lane. The existing side passage on the southern elevation will provide access to the rear garden.
- 4.9. The reduction in size of the rear part of the building on the western elevation and subsequent levelling of this area via the removal of the existing ramp will enable the incorporation of a new paved off-street parking space within the curtilage of the plot accessed from the shared access to the west of the building.

Waste

- 4.10. A dedicated refuse store will be provided within the rear garden, with space along the western edge of the site provided for on-street collections.

5. Planning Policy and Guidance

- 5.1. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires all development proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. The relevant documents that comprise the Development Plan are:
- Mid Sussex District Plan (2018); and
 - Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan (2014).
- 5.3. In accordance with National Policy and a commitment in the adopted District Plan, the District Council have commenced a review of the District Plan. The Draft District Plan 2021-2039 was submitted for independent examination in July 2024, with Stage 1 examination hearings scheduled to take place in October 2024.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (NPPF)

- 5.4. The currently adopted NPPF was published in December 2023. It sets out the national planning policy which guides Local Planning Authorities (**LPA**) on plan making and decision taking.
- 5.5. The Government places great emphasis on the presumption in favour of sustainability and for decision taking, this means proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay [paragraph 11]. .
- 5.6. In order to achieve sustainable development, the planning system should seek to deliver three overarching objectives – an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective. Any application submitted to MSDC should ensure they pursue these three overarching objectives as well as adhering to other policies set out in the NPPF.
- 5.7. The National Planning Practice Guidance (**PPG**) provides additional guidance to support the NPPF and policies therein. In addition, a National Design Guide (**NDG**) has been published and provides further guidance on design matters to consider in new development.

Draft NPPF (July 2024)

- 5.8. On 30th July 2024, the incoming Labour Government published a consultation draft of the revised NPPF, this was also accompanied by an updated Standard Method formula and Written Ministerial Statement (**WMS**). The updated NPPF removes the use of the Standard Method as “an advisory starting point for establishing a housing requirement of an area” with the key aim to increase the supply of new homes in England to meet the Government’s 1.5m homes target (the equivalent of 300,000 homes per year).
- 5.9. The WMS proposes a strategic sequential led approach to the release of land, with authorities asked to give consideration first to brownfield land.
- 5.10. The proposal will remain compliant with the thrust of the principles of the NPPF post adoption.

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Mid Sussex District Plan (2018)

- 5.11. The Mid Sussex District Plan (**MSDP**) was adopted in March 2018 and provides the overarching guide for development management across the District. The key policies are summarised below alongside an extract of the Ardingly Inset Policies Map (Figure 5.1)
- 5.12. Policy DP4 (Housing) states that an average of 876 dwellings per annum (dpa) should be delivered until 2023/24. Thereafter an average of 1,090 dpa will be delivered between 2024/25 and 2030/31, subject to there being no further harm to the integrity of European Habitat Sites in Ashdown Forest. Category 3 Settlements (there are 13 listed) are targeted to deliver 122 dpa over the plan period. Ardingly is expected to contribute 9.4 dpa towards this.
- 5.13. Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) states, amongst other things, that development will be permitted within towns and villages with defined built-up area boundaries. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale and not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement.
- 5.14. Policy DP16 (High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) states that development within the High Weald AONB will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular:
- The identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;
 - The traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;
 - Character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and
 - The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.
- 5.15. Policy DP17 (Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)) states that in order to prevent adverse effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, new development likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other development, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Within a 7km Zone of Influence, residential development leading to a net increase in dwellings will be required to contribute to mitigation through the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) or a financial contribution. Additionally, a financial contribution to the Ashdown Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy is required.
- 5.16. Policy DP21 (Transport) supports development that encourages travel by sustainable transport modes, limit vehicle movement numbers, provide adequate car/bicycle parking and protects the safety of road users and pedestrians.
- 5.17. Policy DP25 (Community Facilities and Local Services) states, *inter alia*, developments proposals that lead to the loss of a community facility must provide evidence that demonstrates:
- That the use is no longer viable; or
 - That there is an existing duplicate facility in the locality which can accommodate the impact of the loss of the facility; or

- That a replacement facility will be provided in the locality.
- 5.18. Policy DP26 (Character and Design) is a general design policy. It seeks to govern the scale, form, site coverage, density, use of materials, landscaping, and design of development with the aim of respecting the character of the area.
- 5.19. Policy DP27 (Dwelling Space Standards) confirms that the nationally described space standards for internal floor space and storage space will be applied to all new residential development.
- 5.20. Policy DP28 (Accessibility) states that all development, including changes of use, will be required to meet and maintain high standards of accessibility so that all users can use them safely and easily.
- 5.21. Policy DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets) requires all new development to protect listed buildings and their settings. Development that retains buildings which are not listed but are of architectural or historic merit, or which make a significant and positive contribution to the street scene will be permitted in preference to their demolition and redevelopment.
- 5.22. Policy DP35 (Conservation Areas) states that development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. Extensions are to be sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials.
- 5.23. Policy DP38 (Biodiversity) states, amongst other things, that development proposals must protect and enhance priority habitats/species and provide net gains. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures.
- 5.24. Policy DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction) confirms that development proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development and should where appropriate/feasible according to the type and size of development and location, incorporate the following sustainable features.
- 5.25. Policy DP41 (Flood Risk and Drainage) states that development proposals will need to follow a sequential risk-based approach, ensure development is safe across its lifetime and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

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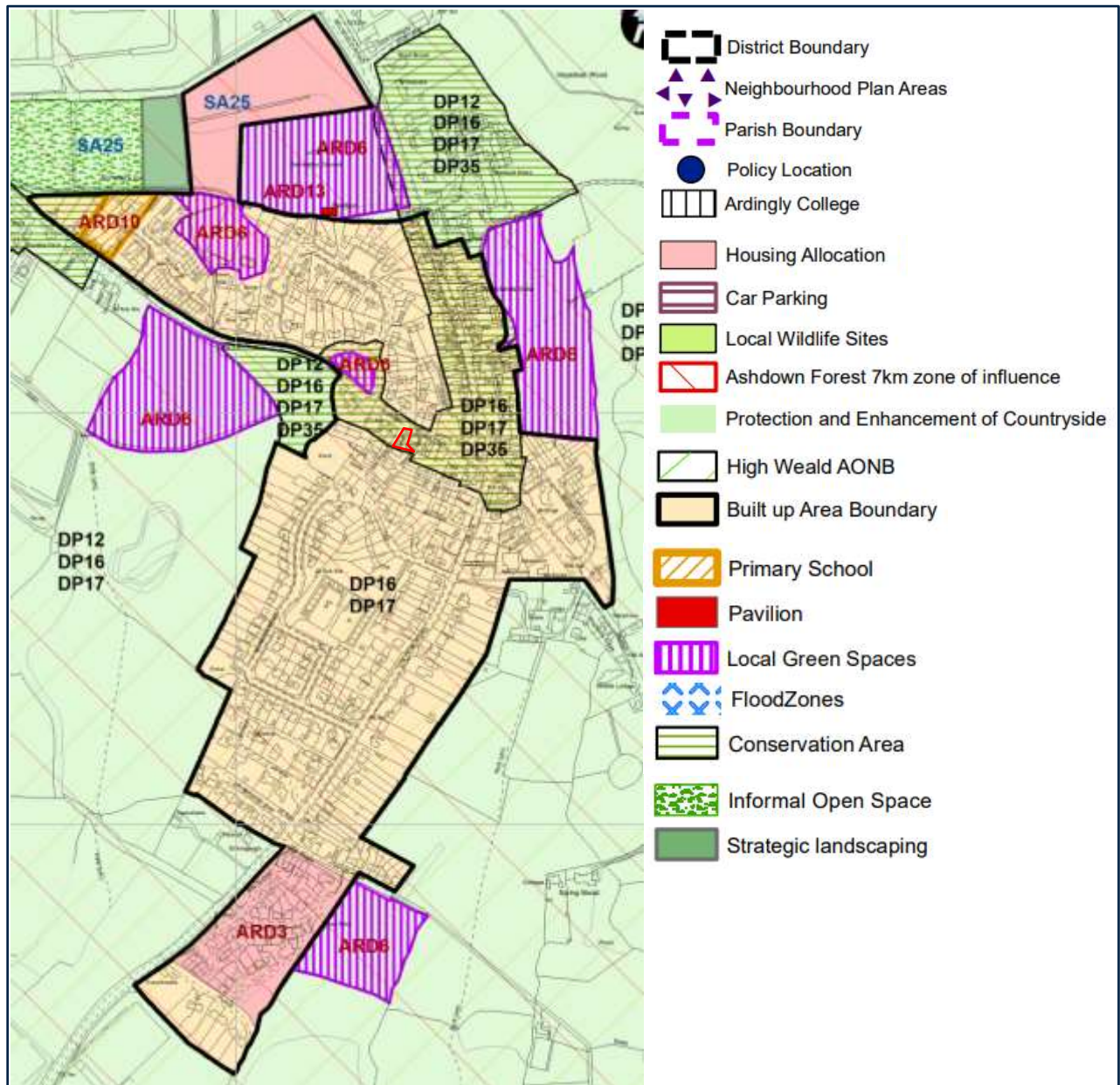


Figure 5.1: Extract from MSDC Policy Map (Ardingly Inset Map) (Approx site location marked with red outline).

Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan (2014)

- 5.26. The Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) was made on 19 March 2015 and provides the overarching guide for development management in Ardingly.
- 5.27. Policy ARD 1 (The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) states APC will take a positive approach to its consideration of development proposals. APC will seek to work with applicants and other stakeholders to encourage the formulation of development proposals that can be approved.
- 5.28. Policy ARD 2 (A Spatial Plan for the Parish) directs future housing, economic and community-related development within the parish to within the revised built-up area boundary.
- 5.29. Policy ARD 3 (Housing Supply & Site Allocation) confirms that APC will support proposals for windfall development defined as schemes of 6 or fewer dwellings within the built-up area boundary, provided:
- The quantum of dwellings and their site coverage will not be an over-development of the plot in relation to neighbouring plot characteristics in respect of built form, massing and building line;
 - A satisfactory road access and off street car parking can be achieved; and
 - The scheme will not result in the loss of valuable trees, hedges or other natural features that form part of the character of the village.
- 5.30. Policy ARD 5 (Housing Design) requires all developments, including alterations to existing buildings, to be sympathetic of the character and scale of surrounding buildings and landscape.
- 5.31. Policy ARD 9 (Heritage Assets) requires development proposals affecting a listed building or conservation area or their setting to conserve or enhance the special quality and distinctive character of Ardingly.

Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents

- 5.32. MSDC and West Sussex County Council (**WSCC**) have adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (**SPDs**). Those pertinent to the site include;
- Mid Sussex Design Guide (2020);
 - WSCC: Guidance on Parking at New Developments (2020);
 - Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex (2018)

Mid Sussex Design Guide (2020)

- 5.33. The Mid Sussex Design Guide provides clear design principles that aim to deliver high quality new development across Mid Sussex. This includes the conversion of existing buildings, upon which it is noted that the primary objective of all conversions of traditional buildings must be to retain the character and appearance of the original building, and its defining architectural characteristics.

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WSSC: Guidance on Parking at New Developments (2020)

- 5.34. The WSSC Guidance on New Parking Developments document outlines the approach to parking within new developments and the guidance to help determine the level of parking within new developments.
- 5.35. Table 2 outlines the expected residential parking demand (spaces per dwelling) per Parking Behavioural Zone (PBZ). The Site is located within PBZ 1, within such locations the guidance expects residential schemes comprising 3 bedrooms to provide a maximum of 2 residential spaces.
- 5.36. The planning application scheme provides 1 car parking space along the western elevation. The level of parking provided upon the Site is reflective of the constraints of the Site and represents an increase upon the number of parking spaces currently provided. Unrestricted on street parking is also readily available in close proximity to the site.

Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex (August 2018)

- 5.37. The Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex document provides a description and boundary map for each of the 36 designated Conservation Areas within MSDC.
- 5.38. The document defines a Conservation Area as an area *'of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*.
- 5.39. The following features are identified as contributing to the character of the eastern half of the Ardingly Conservation Area.
- The significant presence of individual trees and tree groups in Street Lane, Butchers Shaw and Oaklands Green;
 - Sandstone walls, especially along the front boundaries of Hapstead Farm and Fairlight Cottages, Fairlight House and along to Hapstead House, High Street.
- 5.40. No reference is made to the former Congregational Church building or its setting within this document.

6. Other Material Considerations

Housing Delivery Test

- 6.1. The Housing Delivery Test measurement 2022 was published by the Government in December 2023. The measurement confirms that MSDC was required to deliver 2,261 homes over the last 3 years, and has delivered, over the same period, a total of 3340 homes. The Council have therefore delivered 148% of its requirement.

Housing Land Supply

- 6.2. The most recent Housing Land Supply Statement (July 2023, updated October 2023) identifies that MSDC were able to demonstrate a housing land supply of 5.04 years.

Standard Methodology

- 6.3. The previous Conservative Government introduced the Standard Method for assessing housing need, setting out the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for in each local authority area. As part of the ongoing NPPF consultation the new Labour Government have introduced an updated methodology for the calculation of the Standard Method in August 2024.
- 6.4. The current Standard Method figures identify that MSDC has a housing requirement of 1,039 dwellings per annum (dpa), this is increased to 1,276 dwellings as part of the updated methodology.

Ashdown Forest 7km Zone

- 6.5. The Ashdown Forest 7km zone affects the easternmost part of MSDC which encompasses Ardingly. Within the 7km zone of influence a financial contribution to the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (**SAMMS**) is set at £1,170 per dwelling. A contribution of £5,253 towards Suitable Alternative Natural greenspace (**SANG**) is also expected.
- 6.6. The SAMM and SANG contributions will be collected via a s106 agreement.

7. Planning Assessment

7.1. The pre-application response identifies the following material planning considerations associated with the proposed conversion of the building to a residential dwelling.

- Principle of residential development
- Loss of business / community floorspace
- Design and visual amenity.
- Impact upon Heritage Assets – non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), Conservation Area and setting of Listed Buildings
- Impact on neighbouring amenities
- Highways and access considerations
- Sustainable design
- Drainage
- Ecology
- Archaeological impact

Principle of Residential Development

- 7.2. In principle, the building falls within Ardingly's Built Up Area Boundary where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development as established via MSDP Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) and ANP policy ARD 2. Furthermore, the NPPF seeks to direct rural residential development away from isolated countryside sites [paragraph 84] noting "*To promote sustainable development in rural areas housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities*" [paragraph 83].
- 7.3. The scheme will also help contribute to Mid Sussex's housing target and that of Ardingly itself in accordance with MSDP Policy DP4 (Housing).
- 7.4. The scheme which retains and reduces the scale of the existing building does not constitute overdevelopment of the plot, satisfactory access and parking is provided and no trees/hedges will be impacted by the development, ensuring compliance with ANP policy ARD 3 (Housing Supply & Site Allocation).
- 7.5. In addition to the above, Paragraph 119 of the NPPF confirms that decisions should promote an effective use of previously developed land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. This is built upon by Paragraph 120 (d) which promotes the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained, and available sites could be used more effectively.
- 7.6. Overall, it is considered that the proposal meets a very significant number of the aims and objectives within the development plan and the NPPF. It is therefore considered that the development proposal is acceptable in principle.

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- | ● Hallway ● Reading Room ● Book Hall ● Stripes for unconfirmed bookings | | | | | | | |
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Catch Up | 1
08:30 - 11:00 ●
Clinic
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Bookends and Bookends
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Strategic Goals
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Priority Page | 2
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Top Cover Training | 2 November | 3 November | |

7.11. Two halls are also provided within the **St Peters Church Centre** –The Main Hall can seat up to 120, while the small hall can accommodate up to 40 people, alongside access to kitchen facilities. The centre hosts a weekly daytime pre-school and toddler group but is otherwise available for general hire.

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- 7.12. The Scout Hut and the Recreation Ground Sports Pavilion, which underwent refurbishment in August 2024 provide further options within the village.
- 7.13. By virtue of its age, layout, and lack of available external space to accommodate the necessary levels of dedicated car parking provision, it is not considered that the Former Congregational Church building represents an attractive proposition for alternative business or community use.
- 7.14. The conversion of the building to residential use will ensure the long-term future of the building is protected with the minimal level of intervention upon the building, and no amenity impact upon neighbouring residents.

Design and visual amenity.

- 7.15. A key aspect of sustainable development is the good design of buildings and places, as set out in Paragraph 126 of the NPPF. The NDG expands on this, stating that 'the long-standing, fundamental principles for good design are that it is; fit for purpose; durable; and brings delight.
- 7.16. MSDP Policy DP26 (Character and Design) seeks to govern the scale, form, site coverage, density, use of materials, landscaping, and design of development with the aim of respecting the character of the area, and this is reiterated by Policy ARD 5 (Housing Design) of the ANP. Policy DP27 (Dwelling Space Standards) of the MSDP confirms that the nationally described space standards for internal floor space and storage space will be applied to all new residential development.
- 7.17. The existing building provides an attractive frontage onto Street Lane at the heart of the eastern section of the Ardingly Conservation Area. No changes to the elevations of the main hall are proposed, retaining the existing visual setting.
- 7.18. The proposed internal layout has been designed to respond sympathetically to the characteristics of the building, with the former main hall forming a spacious living area, with only limited intervention in the form of a small mezzanine floor and staircase proposed to this space.
- 7.19. Externally the site has an existing area of paved surface wrapping around the northern and western elevations. The existing ramped access to be demolished, levelled, and resurfaced to provide a new parking space. Amenity and horticultural space in the form of gardens to the front, side and rear are proposed.
- 7.20. Overall, it is considered that the design of the development proposal meets the aims and objectives of the MSDP, ANP, NPPF and the NDG.

Impact upon Heritage Assets – non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), Conservation Area and setting of Listed Buildings

- 7.21. The NPPF sets out a presumption against development which causes harm, to a designated heritage asset, unless public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss can be demonstrated [207] .
- 7.22. Policies DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets) and DP35 (Conservation Areas) of the MSDP alongside Policy ARD 9 (Heritage Assets) of the ANP require development proposals affecting a listed building or Conservation Area or their setting to conserve or enhance the special quality and distinctive character of Ardingly.
- 7.23. The building sits within the Ardingly Conservation Area and within the setting of the Grade II listed 1 and 2 Brickyard Cottages, and within the wider setting of the Grade II listed former Oak Inn to the west, all of which date from the 17th century, and 7 High Street, an 18th century or earlier cottage a short distance to the east.
- 7.24. The lack of external interventions to the main hall alongside the partial loss of the existing rear extension will ensure that the proposal has minimal impact upon these heritage assets and their existing setting is conserved by virtue of the lack of external intervention.
- 7.25. An Initial Statement of Significance has been prepared by HNW. This document provides an overview of the history of the building alongside an assessment of its architectural features and significance. This document considers that the proposed development provides an opportunity to preserve and enhance the building, ensuring its longevity and continued contribution to Ardingly's Conservation Area and with careful and sensitive design, the Former Congregational Church can be successfully transformed into a residential home that contributes positively to the village.

Impact on neighbouring amenities

- 7.26. MSDP Policy DP26 (Character and Design) states, that development proposals should not cause significant harm to the amenities of nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, noise, air, and light pollution.
- 7.27. Due to the distances between the proposed dwelling and closest surrounding properties, there will not be an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of future incumbents / neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, noise, odour, light intrusion, or activity levels.
- 7.28. Amenity space is provided via the retention of the existing garden to the rear. In addition to this, there are six Local Green Spaces in Ardingly which are protected by Policy ARD 6 (Local Green Spaces) of the ANP. Butcher's Field, Street Lane and Land East of the High Street are within walking distance of the site (150-200 metres away), while the wider landscape setting within the designated High Weald National Landscape and close proximity to Ardingly Reservoir and a network of Public Rights of Way provide substantial recreational opportunities locally.
- 7.29. The development is therefore considered to comply with the amenity standards set out in DP26 (Character and Design) of the MSDP.

Highways and Access Considerations

- 7.30. MSDP Policy DP21 (Transport) of the MSDP supports development that encourages travel by sustainable transport modes, limits vehicle movement numbers, provides adequate car/bicycle parking and protects the safety of road users and pedestrians. Policy DP28 (Accessibility) states that all development, including changes of use, will be required to meet and maintain high standards of accessibility so that all users can use them safely and easily.
- 7.31. The building does not currently benefit from any dedicated car parking provision by virtue of the extent of the footprint and the siting of the building within the plot. To ensure that the proposed dwelling is able to benefit from a dedicated car parking space the existing rear extension has been reduced in size along the western elevation with access to a new dedicated car parking space provided direct from the existing lane running along the west of the building.
- 7.32. Notwithstanding the physical constraints of the Site, which would make the provision of any additional car parking spaces difficult without substantial alteration to the existing built form upon the Site. The level of car parking provision is considered acceptable for the following reasons;
- There will be a reduction in the volume of cars frequenting the site when compared to the existing lawful use which park on street;
 - The proximity of the site to public transport links;
 - The site is well located in proximity to a range of services and facilities as outlined within Section 2 above. The local facilities can be accessed on foot or by cycle, without the immediate need to use a private car.



Figure 7.1: Existing access, with location of proposed parking space annotated

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- 7.33. The recent installation of 3 EV charging points on Street Lane for general use by WSCC is also noted.
- 7.34. The primary entrance to the building is on Street Lane, with a secondary pedestrian access leading to the rear garden from the access lane to the west.
- 7.35. In addition to the above, occupants will be encouraged to replace short car journeys with cycling via the provision of 2 cycle parking spaces.

Sustainable design

- 7.36. The NPPF is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development [7]. This can be achieved by the securing net gains across economic, social and environmental objectives. The Environmental objective can be achieved by mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy [8]. In determining applications significant weight should be given to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings [164].
- 7.37. Policy DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction) of the MSDP confirms that development proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development and should where appropriate and feasible according to the type and size of development and location, incorporate various sustainable features.
- 7.38. The development will include upgrades to the building fabric and some new efficient double glazing. An air source heat pump (ASHP) is proposed, providing heating and hot water to maximise carbon savings for the site, along with waste water heat recovery and a solar thermal panel to boost hot water efficiency, Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) and the retention of the existing 3.64 kWp PV array along with a new 4kW storage battery.
- 7.39. The Planning Application is accompanied by Energy & Sustainability Statement prepared by B-Sussed, this document demonstrates that the measures proposed will result in an improvement of 43.97% reduction in CO2 emissions for residential over the existing building case for the development.

Drainage

- 7.40. Policy DP41 (Flood Risk and Drainage) of the MSDP states that development proposals will need to follow a sequential risk-based approach, ensure development is safe across its lifetime and not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 7.41. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and has the lowest probability of fluvial/tidal flooding. It is also within an area that is at low risk of surface water flooding according to the Government flood maps for planning. As such and by virtue of the reduction in built area within the Site it is considered highly unlikely that the scheme will cause an increase in flood risk.

Ecology

- 7.42. Policy DP38 (Biodiversity) of the MSDP states, amongst other things, that development proposals must protect and enhance priority habitats/species and provide net gains. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures.

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- 7.43. The NPPF [185] requires plans promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 7.44. The site falls within the High Weald AONB, however as the site is previously developed land (PDL) it is considered highly unlikely that any adverse effects to this area will result from the scheme.
- 7.45. The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (**PEA**) prepared by GreenLink Ecology. This document demonstrates;
- The site contains common/widespread habitat types that are not of conservation concern.
 - Mitigation measures for habitats are not required since the proposals to convert the building will not impact on any of the habitats.
 - The detailed bat survey has determined that bats do not use the building for roosting purposes and the level of bat activity associated with the site and immediate surrounding area is low.
 - Mitigation measures are not required for breeding birds.
 - The proposals are exempt from the need for a BNG assessment, since the site is dominated by the building/hard standing, which are assigned a zero score in the statutory biodiversity metric and the proposals will not impact a priority habitat type, or >25m² of non-priority habitat.
 - Enhancement measures have been recommended for bats and birds, which are appropriate to the site and proportionate to the scale of the proposals.

Archaeological impact

- 7.46. As a project primarily involving the conversion of an existing building no substantive ground disturbance works are proposed.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Planning Statement is written in support of a Full Planning Application by Pentas Property Ltd. The description of development is as follows;

Change of Use and Conversion of former Congregational Church building to provide a single dwellinghouse with associated secure cycle storage provision, vehicle parking, bin storage and private amenity space.

- 8.2. It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with national, local and neighbourhood policy, notably:

- **Principle of Development** - In principle, support for the development proposal stems from Policy ARD 3 (Housing Supply & Site Allocation) of the ANP, Policy DP4 (Housing) of the MSDP and Policy DP25 (Community Facilities and Local Services) of the MSDP.
- **Design** - It is considered that the design of the development proposal meets the aims and objectives of the MSDP, ANP, NPPF and the National Design Guide.
- **Residential Amenity** - The development will not cause unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, noise, odour, light intrusion, or activity levels. Sufficient amenity space will be provided in the form of a private garden.
- **Heritage** - The site falls within Ardingly's Conservation Area and is immediately east of Brickyard Cottages which is a Grade II Listed Building. It is considered that by virtue of the sensitive conversion, design, and layout, including reduction in scale of the rear extension, their setting will be conserved, in accordance with the principles of the NPPF, MSDP policies DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets) and DP35 (Conservation Areas) and Policy ARD 9 (Heritage Assets).
- **Transport** – The reduction in scale of the rear extension allows for the incorporation of one additional car parking space helping to reduce car parking pressures upon neighbouring roads, in accordance with MSDP Policies DP21 (Transport) and DP28 (Accessibility).
- **Sustainability** - The scheme is in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and MSDP Policy DP39 (Sustainable design and construction) through the incorporation of a comprehensive range of sustainability measures. This includes the provision of heating and hot water via ASHP, waste water heat recovery and solar thermal panel to boost hot water efficiency MVHR and retention of the existing PV array alongside new storage battery.

- 8.3. The proposal seeks the revitalisation of the existing vacant building with a high-quality residential dwelling within a sustainable location at the heart of Ardingly. This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposal represents appropriate and sustainable development and should be approved.

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