

DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF OPEN PLANNING MEETING

An Open Planning Meeting will be held at Beau Sejour Centre, Cambridge/Delancey Rooms, on **Tuesday 4 August 2020 starting at 14:30hrs.**

The following application will be considered at the Open Planning Meeting:-

APPLICATION NUMBER:	FULL/2019/2294
APPLICATION ADDRESS:	The Little Chapel Route De St Andre St. Andrew
DESCRIPTION OF WORK:	Erect interpretation centre gazebo, entrance shelter and toilets, relocate and extend shed, provide pathways, railings, benches, lighting, cameras and signage and carry out landscaping. (Revised proposals)
NAME OF APPLICANT:	The Little Chapel Foundation

The agenda for the open planning meeting, along with the planning application report relating to the above application, are made available five working days before the date of the Open Planning Meeting on the States' website. The planning application report contains a summary of any consultation responses and of any representations received on the application from third parties.

There will be provision for **public speaking** at the open planning meeting. The opportunity to speak is afforded only to persons who:

- a) have submitted a representation in writing within the period specified for publicity of the application under section 10 of the Land Planning and Development (General Provisions) Ordinance, 2007, along with the applicant and/or their agent for the application; and
- b) who have notified the Planning Service in writing (by letter or by e-mail addressed to Planning@gov.gg) of their intention to speak which is received by the Planning Service by 12:00 Noon two working days prior to the date of the Open Planning Meeting (i.e. **by 12:00 Noon on Monday 27th July for the OPM held on Wednesday 29th July**).



PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: FULL/2019/2294
Property Ref: K00484B000
Valid date: 20/11/2019
Location: The Little Chapel Route De St Andre St. Andrew Guernsey GY6 8XY
Proposal: Erect interpretation centre gazebo, entrance shelter and toilets, relocate and extend shed, provide pathways, railings, benches, lighting, cameras and signage and carry out landscaping. (Revised proposals).
Applicant: The Little Chapel Foundation

RECOMMENDATION - Grant: Planning Permission with Conditions:

1. All development authorised by this permission must be carried out and must be completed in every detail in accordance with the written application, plans and drawings referred to above. No variations to such development amounting to development may be made without the permission of the Authority under the Law.

Reason - To ensure that it is clear that permission is only granted for the development to which the application relates.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within 3 years from the date of grant of this permission.

Reason - This condition reflects section 18(1) of the Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005 which states that planning permission ceases to have effect unless development is commenced within 3 years of the date of grant (or such shorter period as may be specified in the permission).

3. The development hereby permitted and all the operations which constitute or are incidental to that development must be carried out in compliance with all such requirements of The Building (Guernsey) Regulations, 2012 as are applicable to them, and no operation to which such a requirement applies may be commenced or continued unless (i) plans relating to that operation have been approved by the Authority and (ii) it is commenced or, as the case may be, continued, in accordance with that requirement and any further requirements imposed by the Authority when approving those plans, for the purpose of securing that the building regulations are complied with.

Reason - Any planning permission granted under the Law is subject to this condition as stated in section 17(2) of the Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005.

4. Notwithstanding the submitted information, no permission is hereby granted for the proposed toilets which shall be omitted from the plans and the design of the Lych Gate

entrance shall be amended accordingly. Precise details of the amended Lych Gate entrance shall be submitted to and approved by the Authority prior to works to erect this structure being commenced. The beech tree to the east of the Lych Gate shall be retained and shall be protected in accordance with Conditions 6, 7 and 8 below.

Reason - The provision of the toilets would require the felling of a Category A beech tree and excavation into the hillside. This element of the overall development would detract significantly from the landscape character of the area and have an unacceptable visual impact. This condition is required to mitigate the adverse impacts by requiring omission of the toilets and revision of the adjacent building design.

5. No development shall begin until an ecological mitigation strategy has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Authority. The works shall be carried out on site only in accordance with the agreed strategy.

Reason - To make sure that important features of ecological interest are protected and satisfactory mitigation is completed.

6. No development, including site works, shall begin on site until each tree shown to be retained on the approved plan along with the beech tree to the east of the Lych Gate entrance which is required to be retained by Condition 4 above, have been protected, in a manner previously agreed in writing by the Authority. Each tree shall be protected in the agreed manner for the duration of building operations on the application site. Within the areas agreed to be protected, the existing ground level shall be neither raised nor lowered, and no materials or temporary building or surplus soil of any kind shall be placed or stored thereon. If any trenches for services are required in the protected areas, they shall be excavated and back-filled by hand and any tree roots encountered with a diameter of 5cm or more shall be left unsevered.

Reason - The trees are important features in the area and this condition is imposed to make sure that they are properly protected while building works take place on the site.

7. A scheme for arboricultural oversight by a retained qualified and experienced arboriculturist (which shall include oversight of preparation before construction and during the building work itself to minimise construction injury to trees and ensure compliance with BS5837:2012) shall be submitted to and approved by the Authority before any work is commenced on the site. Works shall not be carried on other than in complete accordance with the approved scheme and its recommendations.

Reason - The trees are important features in the area and this condition is imposed to make sure that they are properly protected while building works take place on the site.

8. No development, excluding demolition and site works, shall begin until a landscaping scheme, to include those details specified below, has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Authority:

- i) the treatment proposed for all ground surfaces, including hard areas;
- ii) full details of tree and hedge planting;
- iii) planting schedules, noting the species, sizes, numbers and densities of plants;
- iv) finished levels or contours;

- v) any screen walls or similar structures;
- vi) any other structures to be erected or constructed;
- vii) functional services above and below ground; and
- viii) all existing trees, hedges and other landscape features, indicating clearly those to be removed.

Reason - To make sure that a satisfactory landscaping scheme for the development is agreed, in order to help assimilate the development into its surroundings.

9. The landscaping scheme shall be fully completed, in accordance with the details agreed under the terms of the above condition, in the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development or completion of development whichever is the sooner, or in accordance with a programme previously agreed in writing by the Authority. Any trees or plants removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased, within 5 years of planting shall be replaced in the following planting season by trees or plants of a size and species similar to those originally required to be planted.

Reason - To make sure that the appearance of the completed development is satisfactory and to help assimilate the development into its surroundings.

10. No part of the development, hereby permitted, shall be occupied or used until details of any external lighting proposed for the site along with the proposed times during which the lighting shall be operated have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Authority. Any lighting to be installed shall only be in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason - To make sure the level of lighting is not excessive in order to secure a sustainable form of development and one which respects the rural character of the area.

INFORMATIVES

Your attention is drawn to The Animal Welfare (Guernsey) Ordinance, 2012 and the need to comply with its provisions. The building is located in an area where bats may be roosting and measures may therefore need to be taken (including consideration of the timing of the works) to ensure that any protected species present are not impacted by the works. It is recommended that you contact La Société Guernesiaise for advice or to arrange a site visit. La Société can be contacted on 07781 166924 or email societe@cwgsy.net.

OFFICER'S REPORT

Site Description:

The site consists of a long and relatively narrow section of land running northward perpendicular to the Route de St Andre, with a parking area parallel to the highway at the southern end. The site contains The Little Chapel and its associated land, which includes several pedestrian paths and copious vegetation throughout the site.

The site is bounded by a workshop/shop to the north (referred to below as the 'Clockmaker's premises'), an access track to the west which provides access to the adjoining property and also currently provides access to the application site, and a school which occupies large buildings situated on higher ground to the east. Beyond the track to the west is open agricultural land, beyond which is sporadic residential development.

The site is located within an Agriculture Priority Area and is Outside of the Centres in the Island Development Plan.

Relevant History:

FULL/2015/1007 – remedial work at entrance
Approved – 12/05/2015

FULL/2017/0781 – interpretation boards
Approved (temporary for two years) – 16/05/2017

FULL/2019/0925 – retain interpretation boards
Approved (temporary for four years) – 10/06/2019

FULL/2019/1215 - Erect timber storage shed to north of site (retrospective)
Approved (temporary for two years) - 06/08/2019

Existing Use(s):

The Little Chapel – Chapel and visitor attraction

Brief Description of Development:

The original submitted application was received as valid on 20 November 2019 and was described as to "Erect interpretation centre, entrance building and gate way, toilet block and wheelchair access. Create footpaths, install railings, benches and erect new signage. Install lighting and cameras." An amendment was subsequently made to this submission to omit the proposed 'hobbit hole'. The amended plans included the addition of a footpath link to the boundary of the site with the Clockmaker's premises.

Following deferral, the application was substantially amended by revised proposals received on 2 March 2020. These revised proposals relate to works to erect an interpretation centre gazebo, entrance shelter and toilets, relocate and extend shed, provide pathways, railings, benches, lighting, cameras and signage and carry out landscaping.

In particular, the revised proposals omit many of the previously proposed pathways, limit tree removal and relocate the proposed toilets to adjacent to the proposed lych gate.

Letters have been submitted by the applicant and their agent in response to comments made by, primarily, La Societe Guernesiate and more generally in support of the application.

Relevant Policies of any Plan, Subject Plan or Local Planning Brief:

Island Development Plan Policies:

OC5(A): Agriculture Outside of the Centres – within the Agriculture Priority Areas (APAs)

OC2: Social and Community Facilities Outside of the Centres

OC9: Leisure and Recreation Outside of the Centres

GP1: Landscape Character and Open Land

GP8: Design

Representations:

Original proposals, received as valid on 20 November 2019

55 letters or emails of representation have been received from members of the public and three States' Deputies objecting to the application on the principal grounds summarised below.

In addition to the summaries of representations contained within this report, full copies of all letters/emails of representation are provided to the D&PA Committee members to be read prior to a decision on the application being made.

- Entrance gates and fences controlling access will alter character and may lead to restricted opening hours and future proposals to charge entrance fees
- Restriction on access to open areas and amenities
- Proposed toilet block is unnecessary as toilets exist at adjacent premises
- Railings, benches and footpaths will dominate the site
- Use of modern materials for railings, fences and paths
- Concerns about the impact of development and possible commercialisation on the site's quaintness and simple beauty, charm, atmosphere, ambiance, tranquillity and spiritual aspect
- Size and extent of the development
- Effect on natural beauty, landscape character and local distinctiveness
- The Little Chapel is of local and international importance due to its charm and unique character; any unnecessary overdevelopment will have a detrimental impact on the relatively unspoilt valley
- The proposals would result in a change of use from a place of public worship to a visitor attraction
- Parking facilities should be considered
- Increase in visitor numbers and traffic
- Safety issues with coach parking in road
- Runs contrary to the type of tourism and image Guernsey wishes to develop
- The Little Chapel should be protected and until the listing process starts stricter standards should be adopted
- Effect on ecology and bats and request for professional ecological survey and mitigation
- The 'Hobbit Hole' had no relevance to the site or Guernsey
- Increased facilities will encourage visitors to prolong their stay increasing congestion
- Picnic area is unnecessary and would lead to litter and attract vermin

- Fences and glass barriers would be unsympathetic
- Japanese pagodas and a water feature would be incongruous
- The large gazebo would detract from the Chapel which should remain the only building
- Design and visual impact of lych gate is of concern
- The totality of the proposed development would urbanise the immediate surroundings of the Little Chapel and result in unacceptable loss of the rural character of the area
- Visual impact of fencing and impact of lighting on wildlife
- The collection box and concrete seating area are large and ugly
- Lighting should be carefully considered to avoid pollution
- Questions adequacy of space at entrance area and inclusion of 'performance space'
- Proposals to block the present steps and access from the driveway to the west with a crescent wall and bench would remove the open aspect and views, cause congestion and limit opportunities for assembly. At least the wall and bench should be in two sections allowing aspect and access between
- Proposals to block free pedestrian access to the north end towards the Clockmaker's would impact on the adjacent business and prevent sharing of facilities such as toilets. This passage should be required to remain free and unobstructed
- The proposals would not have satisfied policies in the previous Rural Area Plan
- The proposals conflict with the aims of and a number of planning policies in the IDP
- The proposals conflict with IDP Policy OC9 as they are not proportionate to the nature and scale of the existing site and would open up the woodland escarpment causing greater visual impact
- The proposals would not respect the landscape character of the area in conflict with Policy GP1
- The proposals do not satisfy Policy GP8 as the design does not respect the character of the landscape or setting
- Les Vauxbelets valley set within the upland plateau is one of the Island's most unique and pleasant rural contributors; the proposals prejudice this environment
- Concerns regarding potential future development, such as car and coach parks and development of a commercial retail site

It is stated in the representation from Blanchlande College that the Little Chapel is still in regular use by the Catholic community and by the College, and that for several years the gardens were tended by volunteers and the fabric of the building monitored by suitable professionals. It was only in 2015 that this monitoring revealed new issues such that significant works were required and the Foundation arrangements were put in place and managed transfer of responsibility arranged. The College also notes that it has no objection to the on-going use of the driveway as at present and has not received complaints from users about congestion.

Many of the representations applaud the works already undertaken to preserve and restore the Little Chapel building itself. Some representors support the principle of disabled access and one supports the provision of toilet facilities at the site.

Revised proposals omitting 'Hobbit Hole'

An amendment to the application was made in December 2019 to omit the proposed 'hobbit hole'. The amended plans included the addition of a footpath link to the boundary of the site with the Clockmaker's premises. All previous representors were informed of this change and 21 further letters or emails of representation were received to the application. Most reiterate objections contained in their previous letters. In addition, objections are raised to the following:

- Inclusion of a gate and fence between the Clockmaker's and Little Chapel land
- Omission of access from Blanchlande College to the site via existing pathways
- Effect of proposed lighting on bats

Revised proposals received on 2 March 2020

All previous representors were informed of this change and 18 further letters or emails of representation were received. 17 of these contain objections to the revised application on the principal grounds summarised below.

- The proposals are disproportionate and detract from the landscape character, natural beauty and local distinctiveness of the area contrary to a number of IDP policies
- The site has spiritual sanctity and natural beauty which should both be respected
- Increase in visitor numbers and traffic
- Parking for coaches is a major problem and has not been addressed
- Runs contrary to the type of tourism and image Guernsey wishes to develop
- Unnecessary and inappropriate development of large entrance gate, visitor centre structure, toilet block and any fencing or walls
- Proposals to block the present steps and access from the driveway to the west which would remove the open aspect and views
- Too much excavation is proposed
- Cluttering of the appearance of the site, detracting from the gem of the Chapel which will lose its presence and impact
- Lych gate is unnecessary, overbearing and may lead to future proposals to charge entrance fees
- The interpretation centre structure is too large, of incongruous design and will commercialise the tranquil site
- The pavilion and interpretation centre would destroy the aesthetic charm of Deodat's castle, the surrounding area and link to the Chapel
- Toilets are unnecessary and will require maintenance
- Railings and glass barrier are out of keeping with the site and its ambience
- Handrails should be wrought iron, discreet and traditional, modern metal fencing is not appropriate and would conflict with the scale of the Chapel
- Cast iron railings have no place in the design as originally conceived and would split the site in views from the memorial seat
- Glass panels would reflect light and sun in photographs of the Chapel, a rustic wooden fence would be appropriate
- Paths will cause problems for users and the width of 1.5m is inadequate

- One path is adequate; the existing roadway is wide enough to be subdivided for safe pedestrian traffic and the existing access point capable of modification to provide disabled access
- Fences and gates to restrict access will commercialise the site and destroy its tranquil, sacred atmosphere
- The current wooded bank provides continuity to the rural valley setting and softens the building mass above it; its landscape value should be improved through appropriate management but the walkways and reception building would leave insufficient room for this
- Tarmac blends better with the surroundings than resin bonded gravel
- The clinker wall is an important reminder of the horticultural industry
- Omission of access from Blanchlande College to the site via an existing pathway
- Position of sheds at the northern end of the site and impact on maintenance of a play platform and boundary wall of Blanchlande College
- Proposals to block the present steps and access from the driveway to the west with a crescent wall and bench would remove the open aspect and views, including from the existing memorial bench, decontextualize previous photographic history and exacerbate congestion
- The Little Chapel and its site should be protected
- No power or water supply
- Planting of 100 trees would make the grounds over planted
- Laurel and ground planting respects the Chapel as 'star of the show' and requires less maintenance than that proposed
- Increased facilities will encourage visitors to prolong their stay increasing congestion
- The proposals encourage crowding, not movement
- The proposals would demolish existing original features and require excavation which would change the look and feel of the grounds
- Netting beneath the walkways would look unattractive, trap litter and attract vermin
- Installation of an exterior wheelchair lift would overcome accessibility issues in a more appropriate way
- The first sight of the Chapel from the proposed access will not be as attractive as from the lane
- The proposals are excessive and will leave the Island with increased ongoing maintenance and management costs which do not exist today
- Lack of public consultation by the applicant regarding the proposals

Some representors applaud the works already undertaken to preserve and restore the Little Chapel building itself and support the principle of disabled access.

One representor considers that the revised plans appear to have responded to previous criticisms and supports the application.

A further letter of support for the application has been received from a States' Deputy in her capacity as States' Champion for Disabled People, citing principally the following:

- Access for all is presently restricted by the difficult terrain and lack of even surfaces. The plans are a well-researched and sympathetic approach which will make a marked improvement to enjoyment of this piece of Guernsey heritage;
- The proposed parking, entrance shelter and paths, seating and toilets are all welcome additions;
- The path is sympathetic to the terrain and will improve access for many who would not be able otherwise to do so, including those with cognitive impairments;
- The improvements to Deodat's Castle are welcome and will provide clear information and space to dwell away from the Chapel so as not to detract from its serenity;
- Surface improvements around the Chapel and addition of handrails will improve accessibility.

Consultations:

Marketing & Tourism

Marketing & Tourism is supportive of the significant investment this application represents into a key part of the current visitor product offering on Guernsey. This support is consistent with the strategic aims of the Committee *for* Economic Development to maintain and grow the value of the visitor economy to the Island.

In particular, the proposals will significantly improve access and accessibility for all visitors. The development of new facilities, plantings, and additional points of interest and useable spaces within the existing site, should also enhance the overall visitor experience. These developments may serve to widen the appeal of the site as a place to visit, and could increase the average dwell time for some visitors.

However, it is important that the gradual development of an experience better aligned with modern visitor expectations does not detract significantly from the unique character and ambience of this site, which are clearly the main reasons for its ongoing popularity.

The supporting information provided with the application by Lovell Ozanne cites the sudden, and unpredictable, simultaneous arrival of large numbers of visitors, and the subsequent overcrowding of the site at these times, as key reasons supporting the application.

Marketing & Tourism notes that the application proposals do not seek to address the management of issues relating to the influx of visitors to, rather than within, the site:

- The control of visitor flows to the site, including the management of coach tour scheduling at predictable periods of high demand.
- The management of consequent traffic and pedestrian issues on the public highway.
- The physical supervision of visitor flow into and out of the site.
- The management and supervision of the site and associated facilities on a daily basis (e.g. servicing of public toilets, collection and disposal of waste, safety and security of visitors).

These are considerations which Marketing & Tourism would suggest are integral to the ongoing operational viability of the site as a publicly accessible attraction.

Plans provided (Lovell Ozanne drawing number AA11-10257-S1-01) with the application indicate that there are areas of land immediately adjacent to either side of the Route de St Andre which are in the "site owners control". With the appropriate planning permissions in place these could potentially offer solutions to coach traffic issues at peak times.

States' Disability Officer

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to review and give comments on the proposals for the Little Chapel site.

You will be aware that the Disability and Inclusion Strategy, agreed by the States in 2013, promoted the inclusion and accessibility as two of its key principles.

I think the proposed changes to the Little Chapel site support these key principles.

I have had the opportunity to review these plans before, and am pleased that consideration has been made to improve accessibility across the site.

The current layout of the site and the challenges to access it mean that for many with physical disabilities, there is little chance of them being able to visit the chapel, apart from viewing it from the roadway. This puts anyone with a physical disability at a disadvantage.

I think the proposed changes will do many things:

- The introduction of a path parallel to the road way will improve pedestrian safety for all visitors to the site.
- The changes to the entrance, including the introduction of toilets and the provision of shelter, will be a welcome addition for those with different abilities and needs.
- The redesign of the pathway to the chapel, working with the constraints of the site, but still meeting the guidance gradients of the relevant building guidelines, will allow many more people to access the chapel without the need to climb numerous steps. It should be noted that the improved access will benefit not just wheelchair users, but people with different physical limitations and also parents with children in buggies etc.

The provision of handrails, additional seating and clear path boundaries all add to the ease of use of the site for many people.

It is unfortunate that there will be limited access to the lower levels within the chapel, but I think that is understandable. It would be impossible to make these areas accessible to all. The improvements that have already been made to the doorway and the proposed additional changes will allow better access to the main chapel area.

Careful consideration seems to have been made to the walkway construction for both safety and usability. The width of the walkways will also improve the flow of pedestrians around the site.

I think these proposed changes have been done sympathetically and will benefit the many visitors to this popular venue.

States' Arboricultural Officer

Since much of the development will necessarily take place within Tree Protection Areas of many of the trees it is imperative that a robust level of arboricultural oversight would need to be applied during the construction to minimise construction injury. This by necessity would require a retained, qualified and experienced arboriculturist to be present in the preparation before construction and during the building itself to ensure compliance with BS5837:2012.

The addition of the toilet block behind what I believe is an interpretation area would make a significant visual impact, amplified because it would be sited right at the entrance. I note that the excavation into the slope, to accommodate the toilets will require the loss of the tree immediately behind and this again will amplify the significant visual impact at and from this point. Opportunities to mitigate the visual impact of any development at this point, especially when viewed from the public road, are limited because it will be located at the juxtaposition of the point of entry, the service road to the Little Chapel and the car park. Much of the rural character of the slope could be perceived to be lost as a consequence of development at this point simply because this end of the site is adjacent to a public highway.

The use of elevated walkways using simple posts into the ground to minimise damage in RPAs is to be commended and this system should be used to the full to reduce to an absolute minimum any excavation on site.

Finally some notes on the landscaping plan as submitted by Simon Welch. I note and commend the retention of ivy and dead wood on site as a means to conserve biodiversity. It would be helpful to have an idea of location and proportion of species being considered. There is a danger of creating a dolly mixture planting which loses cohesion and unity in the design. There did appear to be a large number of species listed (around 15 or 16?) which could detract rather than enhance the site. I note that the idea is to use colours which chime with the mosaics of the Little Chapel. Care should be taken to avoid the "patterned furniture on a patterned carpet" scenario which results in a confusion to the eye. For this reason I would recommend mass planting of single species and where a mix is employed in the same area restricting species to 2 or 3 at a time. Personally I would avoid Buddleia (noting it is good for butterflies) because it can become obtrusive and invasive. I would also question whether Primrose would work here as it is a dry and shady site. Foxglove would be worth considering perhaps?

I hope these comments prove helpful.

La Societe Guernesiaise – initial response

The Scientific Committee of La Societe Guernesiaise fully support the proposed use of native hedging plants and removal of understorey plants which do not offer any value to the biodiversity of the site, and recommend that additional native and 'pollinator friendly' plants be considered where possible throughout the planted areas. They support provision of an area of woodland that is not managed as garden and encourage retention of dead

wood as a valuable habitat. It is recommended that artificial roost structures for bats, such as bat boxes, be installed in the woodland and elsewhere where possible.

La Societe Guernesiale – response to revised proposals

We have met with the representatives of the Little Chapel Foundation over recent months although not in relation to these revised plans. [A representative of the applicant] had tried to set up a meeting between interested parties but this was not finalised. Many of the issues had been previously raised with the group.

Our main comments are as follows -

1. The development is extensive – there will surprisingly little left of the existing area so local biodiversity will be negatively impacted at least in the short to medium term. The site is an important ‘edge habitat’ which also supports the wider landscape including the adjacent agricultural fields, freshwater streams, mature wooded boundaries and traditional earthbanks – work at the Little Chapel will affect the biodiversity of both the actual site and that of the wider local vicinity. Ideally, **more semi-natural habitat would be retained** if possible.
2. The use of amenity and non-native species is dominant throughout the scheme. In order to support a wider range of local biodiversity, we suggest that a **higher proportion of native species be used**.
3. La Societe does not support the use of allergy-friendly plants anywhere in the design. We do not feel that this type of environmental engineering is appropriate for the rural heart of St Andrews as this is not an urban site where people live – they are only visiting for short periods and therefore the perceived need to limit the natural sources of pollen at the site is not justified. **Pollen-producing plants should be freely incorporated into the planting** in order to encourage pollinating insects.
4. In considering point 3, there is a direct conflict between the aims of the Pollinator Project and Legacy Guernsey. The former wish to encourage the planting of a range of plants to provide pollen and nectar on the site whereas the latter wish to restrict or prevent the planting of a range of trees and shrubs, many of which are entirely native and in addition to encouraging invertebrates, support a wide range of other wildlife such as birds, lichens, fungi etc.
5. Some of the species listed as native trees, shrubs and understory plants are at best near-natives e.g. Sweet Chestnut and at ‘worst’, amenity species e.g. Snowberry. This is rather misleading and **we would be happy to help advise the applicants** accordingly.
6. The dedicated wildlife corridor is just a 2m strip. Whilst we welcome this inclusion of this feature, we feel that there is **ample space on the site to provide a more substantial wildlife corridor**.
7. Although bird and bat boxes are mentioned, no specifications are given. **We recommend that the details are specified** so that we can be confident that they are suitable to the site and for the species found locally.

8. The glazed pinnacle to the Interpretation Centre means that there is no provision for a dedicated false ceiling to create a roost space for bats, particularly grey long-eared Bats, as we had previously discussed with the Foundation. Grey long-eared and common pipistrelle bats were previously using the Little Chapel building for roosting and were effectively evicted as a result of the renovation works. **It is vital that suitable measures be included within the plans to encourage bats to return to the area.**

9. The plans include some external lighting which we feel is inappropriate to this rural location. As the site is unlikely to be visited or used after dark, there is little or no reason for the provision of lights. If installed, they would add to the problem of light pollution, perhaps encourage vandalism and most importantly, disrupt the natural rhythms of wildlife. In particular, they would affect the foraging behaviour of bats in the area. We would **recommend that such lighting be removed from the proposals.**

La Societe Guernesiais – further response following applicant's feedback on comments
The Scientific Committee of La Societe would like to respond to the feedback from TLC as follows, taking each of our points in turn -

1. The development is extensive – there will surprisingly little left of the existing area so local biodiversity will be negatively impacted at least in the short to medium term. The site is an important 'edge habitat' which also supports the wider landscape including the adjacent agricultural fields, freshwater streams, mature wooded boundaries and traditional earthbanks – work at the Little Chapel will affect the biodiversity of both the actual site and that of the wider local vicinity. Ideally, more semi-natural habitat would be retained if possible.

TLC response

'We would not regard the development as 'extensive'.

- The walkways are essential to provide a safe and disabled friendly access to the Chapel to avoid the conflict with traffic on the existing access road.
- The two buildings are open sided, oak framed structures with Cedar shingle roofs to blend into the landscape. The entrance is a gateway with a covered pergola behind. The Interpretation Centre is to replace a former building and provide essential cover'.

LSG reply

It remains the case that, based on the plans, little of the site would remain intact or undisturbed by the proposals. 20-25% of the site would be directly impacted by the walkways and the disturbance related to installation and associated tree removal will extend to an estimated 50% of the area. The semi-mature woodland edge habitat already supports a range of native flora and there may not be any net ecological gain from disturbing existing areas of ground flora and ferns in order to undertake further planting. It would therefore be of benefit if disruption or disturbance could be limited or prevented from much of the area, perhaps with 'no go' sections marked off. Also 11 trees are marked for removal - we would strongly recommend that the trees be surveyed for bats prior to felling or any significant tree works by undertaking a visual inspection survey in order to identify potential roost features - this would likely have a small associated cost and we could arrange this.

2. The use of amenity and non-native species is significant throughout the scheme. In order to support a wider range of local biodiversity, we suggest that a higher proportion of native species be used.

TLC response

'Predominantly native species such as will be used. We are happy to continue discussion with all parties as there is a conflict of opinions and currently a selection of all is proposed. The proposal for new native hedging along the access road, the wildlife corridor on the eastern boundary and the regenerated woodland to the north will all improve biodiversity and link with similar scheme undertaken at Blanchelande College'.

LSG reply

Whilst we acknowledge the potential ecological contribution of the wildlife corridor, its biodiversity value would be increased by using a great proportion of native species and also by disregarding allergy-friendly stock. We would therefore welcome the opportunity to continue discussions to ensure that opportunities to enhance biodiversity are fully realized.

3. La Societe does not support the use of allergy-friendly plants anywhere in the design. We do not feel that this type of environmental engineering is appropriate for the rural heart of St Andrews as this is not an urban site where people live – they are only visiting for short periods and therefore the perceived need to limit the natural sources of pollen at the site is not justified. Pollen-producing plants should be freely incorporated into the planting in order to encourage pollinating insects.

TLC Response

'Pollinating plants will of course be extensively included in any planting. The consideration of allergy friendly planting does not exclude these. Species with high allergenic properties will be minimised or planted in areas where the Public do not pass by in accordance with our holistic approach'.

LSG reply

Whilst assurances have been given regarding a restricted use of allergy-friendly plants, we still feel that their inclusion in this rural location is not justified, particularly as it would reduce the available food source for invertebrates. If TLC feel they must be included, we would welcome confirmation of which specific areas these are.

4. In considering point 3, there is a direct conflict between the aims of the Pollinator Project and Legacy Guernsey. The former wish to encourage the planting of a range of plants to provide pollen and nectar on the site whereas the latter wish to restrict or prevent the planting of a range of pollinating trees and shrubs, many of which are entirely native and in addition to supporting invertebrates, host a wide of other wildlife such as birds, lichens, fungi etc.

TLC response

(as Point 3 above)

LSG reply

(as Point 3 above)

5. Some of the species listed as native trees, shrubs and understory plants are at best near-natives e.g. Sweet Chestnut and at 'worst', amenity species e.g. Snowberry. This is rather misleading and we would be happy to help advise the applicants accordingly.

TLC response

'Predominantly native species such as will be used. We are happy to continue discussion with all parties as there is a conflict of opinions and currently a selection of all is proposed'.

LSG reply

We would welcome the opportunity to continue discussions to ensure that opportunities to enhance biodiversity are fully realized. This would extend to concerns over the use of native species which might be sourced from the UK or the Continent as such stock can be genetically very different to local specimens - this can result in reduced benefit for biodiversity or some species becoming quite invasive in a local setting. It can often be beneficial to allow a site to recover naturally as the existing seedbank will typically contain suitable local species.

6. The dedicated wildlife corridor is just a 2m strip. Whilst we welcome this inclusion of this feature, we feel that there is ample space on the site to provide a more substantial wildlife corridor.

TLC response

'The proposal for new native hedging along the access road, the wildlife corridor on the eastern boundary and the regenerated woodland to the north will all improve biodiversity and link with similar scheme undertaken at Blanchelande College'.

LSG reply

We fully support the concept of a wildlife corridor and we would like to discuss amendments to the planting scheme to maximise the ecological value, for example, replacing holly with 'better' species. Also, we would recommend that any opportunities to widen the corridor in places be identified.

7. Although bird and bat boxes are mentioned, no specifications are given. We recommend that the details are specified so that we can be confident that they are suitable to the site and for the species found locally.

TLC response

'We would appreciate advice on the siting and type of bird and bat boxes from La Societe members'.

LSG reply

We would welcome this opportunity.

8. The glazed pinnacle to the Interpretation Centre means that there is no provision for a dedicated false ceiling to create a roost space for bats, particularly grey long-eared Bats, as we had previously discussed with the TLC. Grey long-eared and common pipistrelle bats were previously using the Little Chapel building for roosting and were effectively evicted

as a result of the renovation works. It is vital that suitable measures be included within the plans to encourage bats to return to the area.

TLC response

'The glazed pinnacle to the Interpretation Centre is necessary for natural lighting to enable the information boards to be clearly seen. The structure will also be used for educational visits with additional detachable setting.

The open sided structures were specifically chosen to encourage bat roosting.

LSG reply

Whilst the open-sided structure allows free access for bats, the proposed design is not deemed suitable for roosting bats, especially grey long-eared bat, which is a locally rare species. This is a major concern as bats were evicted from the Little Chapel during renovations and we have also received an unsubstantiated report that a grey long-eared bat was found dead in the chapel after doors were fitted. We would recommend that TLC seek further expert advice from LSG and possibly also invite a representative from the Jersey Bat Group to assist with this matter.

9. The plans include some external lighting which we feel is inappropriate to this rural location. As the site is unlikely to be visited or used after dark, there is little or no reason for the provision of lights. If installed, they would add to the problem of light pollution, perhaps encourage vandalism and most importantly, disrupt the natural rhythms of wildlife. In particular, they would affect the foraging behaviour of bats in the area. We would recommend that such lighting be removed from the proposals.

TLC response

'The lighting has been included to the main pathways to the Chapel so that they can safely be used during the winter months or on dull days. It is not the intention for this to be on during evenings or through the night unless for a specific event'.

LSG reply

The limited existing lighting is already used into the evenings, seemingly when events are not being held (for example, photo taken 30 April 2020 attached). Although insurances that its future use would be limited, we remain concerned that this will not turn out to be the case and once more extensive infrastructure is in place, it would be used frequently in the long term. The nature of the site is that light pollution extends widely across the rural valley and this would deter bats due to the higher risk of predation. We would recommend that proposals for additional lighting be removed from the plans and any evening events be limited to using the roadway and chapel only, during which times road traffic to nearby businesses would not be an issue.

Constables of St Andrew -

Original proposals, received as valid on 20 November 2019

At our latest Douzaine meeting held on Monday 9 December 2019, the matter of the plans submitted in relation to the Little Chapel by the Little Chapel Foundation were discussed.

Whilst the Douzaine has taken a neutral view on these plans numerous people have called into the office and passed comment in relation to them and the general feeling has been

that whilst the Foundation has done a superb job of restoring the Chapel that these latest works are a step too far.

The Douzaine still maintains a neutral view on these works, but would like to raise the strongest objection to any further work being undertaken on the site, until such time as the traffic situation has been resolved as this is a serious accident in the waiting.

It has been known for six coaches to be parked up Le Bouillon Road reducing the traffic to single file on this major trunk road. Whilst the speed limit is supposed to be 25mph this is not monitored and vehicles regularly travel at far greater speed on this straight section of road. It is normal for these coaches to be facing the wrong way and therefore passengers having to alight and board into the traffic flow.

According to Guides who show parties around the Chapel they have a 25 minute slot at the location which regularly overruns, and we are surprised that no serious accident has happened as yet.

Furthermore, the proposed plan is to have the entry and exit from the site into the existing car park right on the turning point, is a further accident waiting to happen.

Another point that was raised and which is not within your remit is, who actually owns the site, is it the Little Chapel Foundation on behalf of the people of Guernsey or not? A point that we will be taking up with the Foundation.

As this is an Island asset, it is believed by the Douzaine that an open planning meeting should be held on the subject, and that the Foundation should be asked to lay down its long term plans for the site at this meeting.

It is also questionable if sections 6.2.2 and 7 of the Conveyance dated 11/05/2017 in relation to Covenants are being broken by the plans submitted, in particular with regards to the building of a toilet block and work sheds.

Constables of St Andrew

Revised proposals received on 2 March 2020

At our latest Douzaine meeting held on Monday 24 February 2020, the matter of the plans submitted in relation to the Little Chapel by the Little Chapel Foundation was again discussed.

Whilst the Douzaine has taken a neutral view on these plans, numerous people have called into the office and passed comments in relation to them and the general feeling has still been that, whilst the Foundation has done a superb job of restoring the Chapel, and the current plans have been scaled down vastly that it is still a shame to destroy the natural grounds around the site.

The Douzaine still maintains, that it would like to raise the strongest objection to any further work being undertaken on the site until such time as the traffic situation has been resolved; this is a serious accident in the waiting.

The Little Chapel Foundation have implied to us that it is for us to sort this matter out, as you will be aware it is not within our mandate, however we can make recommendations but it would be up to the Foundation and the States [Traffic & Highways] to come up with solutions to this problem.

It has been known for anything between 3 and 12 coaches to be parked up Le Bouillon Road reducing the traffic to single file on this major trunk road. Whilst the speed limit is supposed to be 25mph this is not monitored and vehicles regularly travel at far greater speed on this straight section of road. It is normal for these coaches to be facing the wrong way and for passengers having to alight and board into the traffic flow.

We have spoken with Island Coachways with regards of our concerns, and as it transpires they have the same concerns. The company do try and stagger their coaches but you only have to have one passenger 5 minutes late and it knocks the whole system out of sync.

The Constables agree with [Island Coachways] that the Little Chapel Foundation should make application to the Police to have some of their members appointed as Special Constables in order that they could wear suitable clothing marked as Special Constables and have jurisdiction over the grounds of the Chapel and the adjacent road in order that they could assist passengers' safe passage on and off the coaches.

Their mere presence would encourage traffic to slow down in the area and they would have the power to stop vehicles whilst passengers were moving in the area if they felt it necessary. These Special Constables would only be needed when we have a large cruise liner in or on the odd occasion when we have more than one ship in, and from what we have been told, would be no more than 10/15 days per season.

However they could be utilised in their own car park with parking vehicles correctly and around the grounds with "crowd" control particularly in the area of the entrance to the site on other occasions. Special Constables would also negate the need to put any further traffic calming measures in the area (raised tables or signage), making a saving on any traffic budgets.

Summary of Issues:

- Principle of the proposals
- Improving accessibility
- Effect on landscape character
- Ecology and biodiversity
- Traffic and parking

Assessment against:

1 - Purposes of the law.

The objectives set out in Section 1(2) of The Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005, 'the Law', have been considered and this report forms part of the assessment, with policy issues set out in Section 2 below.

2 - Relevant policies of any Plan, Subject Plan or Local Planning Brief.

Principle of the proposals

The Little Chapel does not fall within any specific planning use class and essentially has a dual function as a place of worship and a visitor attraction. Its function in the latter respect has expanded very significantly over a number of decades and now it is generally regarded as one of Guernsey's top visitor attractions. The pressures on the site as a result of the large visitor numbers have become particularly acute in recent years particularly as a result of expansion of cruise liner visits. The longer term impact on this of COVID-19 is not currently known, however it is nevertheless likely that the site will continue to attract visitors in substantial numbers.

The current application does not include any works that directly affect the Little Chapel building. However works are proposed that affect the landscape grounds of the Chapel. These grounds were designed to complement the Little Chapel by providing a processional route to the Little Chapel as well as spaces for tranquillity and contemplation. More recently, however, the grounds, where accessible, are used predominantly for informal recreation purposes by visitors to the Little Chapel site.

The site is within an Agriculture Priority Area defined in the IDP. However, it is not a farmstead or existing agricultural holding, and it is accepted that it cannot positively contribute to commercial agricultural use as a result of its current recognised usage along with its physical configuration and topography. There is therefore no policy objection to the proposals on this basis.

Having regard to the dual function of the site as a place of worship and a visitor attraction, albeit with the latter predominating in terms of intensity of use, elements of IDP Policies OC2 and OC9, relating to social and community and leisure and recreation uses respectively, will be relevant. Both policies support in principle works to extend, alter and redevelop existing facilities, provided that the works are of a scale appropriate to the setting or proportionate to the nature and scale of the use, and that visual impacts are acceptable or are mitigated to respect the character of the locality. Subject to these criteria, and compliance with other IDP policies, the principle of the proposals is supported in policy terms.

Improving accessibility

The main driver behind the proposals as stated by the applicant is to improve accessibility for all people who visit the site and also help to manage the large number of visitors within the site. Key elements of this within the application are the lych gate entry point, which facilitates managed access to the site and a congregation area to help deal with a large influx of visitors at any one time, the new raised boardwalk style pathways within the site which allow access avoiding steps which will in particular assist less ambulant people or those with buggies or prams, and also those with cognitive impairments, and the larger area created to the rear of the Little Chapel building through realignment of the existing clinker wall and alterations to the steps to the front, which together will assist the management of visitors around the building and improve public safety for everyone using

the site. It is also proposed to provide disabled parking spaces as part of a rationalised car park, disabled toilet facilities in a convenient location close to the entrance of the site, and a dedicated visitor information and interpretation centre within an open-sided oak framed 'gazebo' structure in the location of Deodat's Castle, set a respectful distance away from the Chapel building.

Whilst there is currently no statutory duty on the applicant to improve the accessibility of the site, disability discrimination legislation is in the pipeline with the potential to be enshrined in Law by 2022 and IDP Policy GP8(f) requires an applicant to demonstrate accessibility to and within a building for people of all ages and abilities. It therefore is reasonable for the applicant to seek to improve the accessibility to the Little Chapel site and building, subject to balancing the effect on the local built environment and wider landscape character. Of course, there will be limitations on what is feasible and reasonable given the inherent interest in the site and the buildings, however the proposals to improve accessibility and also provide facilities for the better management of people visiting the site are supported.

The States' Disability Officer confirms that the current layout of the site and the challenges to access it put anyone with a physical disability at a disadvantage, and supports the proposals, noting that:-

- The introduction of a path parallel to the road way will improve pedestrian safety for all visitors to the site.
- The changes to the entrance, including the introduction of toilets and the provision of shelter, will be a welcome addition for those with different abilities and needs.
- The redesign of the pathway to the chapel, working with the constraints of the site, but still meeting the guidance gradients of the relevant building guidelines, will allow many more people to access the chapel without the need to climb numerous steps. It should be noted that the improved access will benefit not just wheelchair users, but people with different physical limitations and also parents with children in buggies etc.
- The provision of handrails, additional seating and clear path boundaries all add to the ease of use of the site for many people.
- Careful consideration seems to have been made to the walkway construction for both safety and usability. The width of the walkways will also improve the flow of pedestrians around the site.

The proposals are also supported by the States' political Champion for Disabled People, who has written in support of the application citing a number of the features of the proposals which will improve accessibility and overcome issues which presently restrict or exclude participation and enjoyment of the site for those with a disability or impairment.

Effect on landscape character

The existing trees form an important part of the local built character (IDP Policy GP8c) and are distinctive features in the wider landscape character (Policy GP1). The application is supported by a Tree Survey (Tree Dimensions, September 2019). This report finds there are a wide variety of grades of trees on the site.

The application proposes two winding routes through the trees which lead to the Little Chapel. The route from the North (i.e. the Clockmakers premises) includes a 'gazebo' structure that will provide shelter for interpretation boards. The route from the south (i.e. the car park) includes a structure that forms a gateway to the site as well as toilets. Both routes include gardens/landscape areas that draw from the themes of the Little Chapel.

An existing shed is to be relocated and a further shed proposed to form a gardener's store for ease of future maintenance of the site. It is considered that this is a reasonable aspiration and in the location proposed the sheds would not have any significant adverse effects.

Due to the relatively small scale and the proposed materials of the structures, retaining walls, and surfaces, the routes and structures will have a negligible negative effect on the local built environment as well as the wider landscape character. Although there have been a substantial number of objections to the proposals on grounds of the scale and impact of the proposed work, it is considered that they are generally proportionate to the scale of the existing site and respect the landscape character of its setting. The one exception to this conclusion is referred to immediately below.

The application has been revised since originally submitted in order to retain many more of the existing trees on the site. Of the eight to be removed, seven are either dead or of poor quality where their removal will help better specimens to thrive. However, one further tree, a beech tree categorised in the tree survey as Category A, is proposed to be removed to facilitate the siting of the proposed toilet, which is excavated into the hillside.

The States' Arboricultural Officer comments on this element of the application as follows:

The addition of the toilet block behind what I believe is an interpretation area would make a significant visual impact, amplified because it would be sited right at the entrance. I note that the excavation into the slope, to accommodate the toilets will require the loss of the tree immediately behind and this again will amplify the significant visual impact at and from this point. Opportunities to mitigate the visual impact of any development at this point, especially when viewed from the public road, are limited because it will be located at the juxtaposition of the point of entry, the service road to the Little Chapel and the car park. Much of the rural character of the slope could be perceived to be lost as a consequence of development at this point simply because this end of the site is adjacent to a public highway.

Whilst the provision of toilet facilities on the site would be a welcome addition for many visitors, the effect of loss of the existing high quality tree and visual impact of this element as currently proposed is considered too great to support. Furthermore, as pointed out by some representors, toilet facilities which can be used by the public exist at the nearby Clockmaker's premises. A condition is therefore recommended to omit this specific element from any permission granted.

Conditions relating to landscaping and tree protection should be imposed should planning permission be granted, including a requirement for arboricultural supervision as recommended by the States' Arboricultural Officer who advises that:

Since much of the development will necessarily take place within Tree Protection Areas of many of the trees it is imperative that a robust level of arboricultural

oversight would need to be applied during the construction to minimise construction injury. This by necessity would require a retained, qualified and experienced arboriculturist to be present in the preparation before construction and during the building itself to ensure compliance with BS5837:2012.

Ecology and biodiversity

There has been extensive correspondence on this point from both La Societe Guernesiaise and the applicant, as each have been afforded the opportunity to respond to the other's comments. The States' Arboricultural Officer also offers helpful suggestions in relation to the planting scheme. The outcome of this process is an evident willingness on the part of all parties to discuss improvements to the submitted landscape and ecological proposals in order to arrive at an appropriate scheme for the site. This willingness and positivity is very much welcomed and can be harnessed and facilitated by planning conditions relating to both landscaping and the preparation of a formal ecological strategy, which should include recommendations for mitigation where appropriate. The strategy ought to set ambitious targets to provide a 'biodiversity net gain' for the site in line with the recent Guernsey Strategy for Nature and also to serve as an exemplar for other similar projects in the future.

The application indicates some low-level bollard lighting which is required for safety along the pathways. However details of any additional lighting and of the times when lighting would be operated should be required by condition and an informative added in relation to the presence of bats in the area having regard to the advice of La Societe Guernesiaise.

Traffic and parking

The proposals include rationalisation and improvements to make the most efficient and effective use of the existing available car parking area including providing convenient parking spaces for disabled people. The proposals to improve access within the site will also avoid potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles on the access road serving the Clockmaker's premises, representing a safety improvement.

A number of representors and consultees, including the Parish Constables, refer to the traffic problems on the main road when a number of coaches arrive at the site together. This issue, and any means to resolve it, are outside the scope of this particular application and cannot form a material planning consideration in its determination. However it is recommended that further discussions involving the applicant, Traffic & Highway Services and the Parish Constables take place independent of this application and following any decision on it to seek to find a resolution to address the safety concerns in respect of coach parking on the public highway in the vicinity of the site.

3 - General material considerations set out in the General Provisions Ordinance.

All material considerations as set out in the Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005 and the Land and Planning (General Provisions) Ordinance 2007 have been taken into account in the assessment of this application.

4 - Additional considerations (for protected trees, monuments, buildings and/or SSS's).

There are no protected trees, scheduled monuments or protected buildings on the site, and there are no Sites of Special Significance on or surrounding the site.

On the above basis, the application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

Date: 24/07/2020

