

RESPONSE TO CONSERVATION OFFICER

Application Ref: 2026/01199

Site: Land South of Tudor Cottage, Park Lane, Cherhill

Applicant: Robert Willis

1. Introduction

The applicant welcomes the detailed feedback provided by the Conservation Officer and has carefully considered the concerns raised in respect of scale, massing, design approach, access, and the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of Tudor Cottage.

The proposal has been reviewed and amended where appropriate, with the aim of delivering a scheme that responds positively to the site's constraints and reflects the character of the immediate area.

The applicant also wishes to clarify that reference has been made to a previous application for three dwellings and a pre-application submission relating to the site. Neither submission was commissioned by, or made on behalf of, the current applicant, and no details of the pre-application advice have been made available. As such, that advice has not informed the development of the current proposal and cannot be relied upon in the assessment of this application.

The applicant has, however, taken professional advice in the preparation of this scheme, including in relation to a previous application PL/2025/06552 submitted by the applicant and subsequently withdrawn in December 2025. The current proposal has evolved from that process and has been further refined in direct response to the Conservation Officer's comments on both the previous and current application. It should therefore be considered on its own merits, having regard to the specific characteristics of the site and its context.

2. Scale, Massing and Layout

A key concern raised relates to the scale and perceived overdevelopment of the site, particularly in relation to the previously proposed garage building.

In response, the applicant has made the following amendments:

- The detached garage has been removed in its entirety, significantly reducing the overall built form on the site
- It has been replaced with a simple, open-sided two-bay timber carport, reducing visual impact

In addition, the dwelling has been designed from the outset to minimise its visual impact through its form and siting.

The design has been further refined through the reduction of built form at first floor level, with part of the dwelling now expressed as a single-storey element. This reduces the overall massing of the building and lowers its apparent height, resulting in a dwelling that reads as smaller and less visually prominent within the landscape.

The building is proposed as a 1.5 storey structure rather than a full two-storey dwelling, which reduces its visual prominence and ensures a more modest appearance.

It is also noted that previous advice from the Conservation Officer indicated that a 1.5 storey form would be appropriate for this site. The proposed dwelling follows this guidance, and the combination of reduced height and integration with the landform ensures that the building presents as modest in scale and appropriate to its setting.

Furthermore, the dwelling is set down into the natural landform, which reduces its apparent height in both immediate and longer-distance views and assists in integrating the building into the landscape.

In terms of footprint, the dwelling measures approximately 17m in length, which aligns with the 15–18m range identified within the Conservation Officer's comments as characteristic of traditional cottages in the area.

While the dwelling is modestly wider than some historic examples, this is balanced by the reduced height and simplified form, resulting in a building that reads as appropriately scaled within its plot.

The dwelling is also set back approximately 45 metres from Park Lane, which further reduces its visual prominence within the street scene and limits its impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

The proposed development occupies approximately 5.1% of the overall plot area, further demonstrating that the scheme does not represent overdevelopment of the site.

It is also noted that the site currently contains an existing garage and workshop building constructed in red brick with a double Roman tiled roof, which is to be demolished as part of the proposal.

The previously proposed garage has been removed and replaced with a simple, open-sided two-bay timber carport, reducing built form and visual impact.

Taken together, these design features ensure that the development does not appear excessive in scale or massing.

3. Design Approach and Local Character

The design approach has sought to create a simple, modest dwelling that responds to the character of the immediate surroundings along Park Lane.

It is noted that the Conservation Officer's comments refer to the site as being located within the centre of the village. However the site occupies a position on the edge of the village rather than within its historic core. As such, the character of the immediate area is more transitional in nature, with a mix of building forms and materials. This context differs from the more tightly defined historic centre and is reflected in the varied and evolved character of development along Park Lane.

It is noted that the local context is not uniform and includes a range of dwellings, many of which are constructed in brick with tiled roofs and exhibit straightforward, unadorned forms.

The proposal reflects this established and evolved character, rather than seeking to replicate a purely historic or vernacular building type.

The applicant considers that the character of this part of the Conservation Area is varied and has developed over time, and that a well-proportioned, simply detailed dwelling can sit comfortably within this context without appearing incongruous.

The applicant has a strong personal connection to the village, having grown up in Cherhill and maintaining close family ties within the village. This familiarity has informed the understanding of the site and its surroundings and has helped shape the design approach.

4. Access

The comments regarding the use of the existing access to Tudor Cottage are noted. However, it is respectfully clarified that the current access is not the access created under the 2008 planning permission as suggested in the Conservation Officers comments.

Plans submitted as part of the 2008 application (Ref: N/08/02734/FUL) (see Appendix A) clearly demonstrate that the existing driveway represents the original historic access to the site.

This access is constrained in nature, being approximately 3.5m in width and located on a bend in Park Lane. While a right of way exists, it does not function as a practical shared access and is not considered suitable to safely serve an additional dwelling.

In this context, the provision of a separate access is considered both reasonable and necessary to ensure safe and appropriate access to the site.

In respect of the frontage boundary where the proposed new access is to be formed, the existing vegetation comprises predominantly ivy and bramble growth, which is unmanaged, of limited landscape value, and has been subject to previous disturbance. It does not represent a well-established native hedgerow characteristic of the Conservation Area.

The proposed access has been designed to minimise intervention. The width of the access has also been reduced to approximately 4.5 metres, further limiting its visual impact within the street scene. The existing ivy and bramble vegetation will be removed to facilitate the formation of the access, and the original proposal for Thuja Plicata hedging along the site frontage has been revised to native hedgerow planting. This will provide a more appropriate and higher-quality boundary treatment in keeping with the rural character of the area.

The current proposal for a tarmac apron will be revised to natural cobble setts in order to provide a softer and more sympathetic edge treatment at the entrance and reduce the domestic appearance of the access.

It is also noted that the proposed access arrangements have been accepted by the Highway Authority, confirming that the access is appropriate in terms of safety and function.

It is further noted that the recently approved village hall development in close proximity to the site includes the formation of a new access onto Park Lane, involving alteration to the existing roadside vegetation. This demonstrates that such changes can be accommodated where appropriately designed, without resulting in harm to the character of the Conservation Area.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would, over time, represent an enhancement to the existing boundary condition.

5. Boundary Treatment and Landscaping

The application site is in separate ownership from Tudor Cottage and is defined by an established physical boundary comprising fencing and existing planting. This reflects the current lawful subdivision of the land and cannot be altered in terms of ownership or plot configuration.

It is also noted that, as part of the original transfer of the land, a condition was imposed requiring the erection of a close-boarded fence between Tudor Cottage and the application site, with a maximum height of 6ft (see Appendix E). The existing

fence is lower than this maximum height. This reinforces the established nature of the boundary and confirms that its presence is an inherent characteristic of the site.

It is therefore not feasible to incorporate the wider field or create a unified plot as suggested.

However, the applicant acknowledges the concern regarding the visual impact of the existing boundary treatment.

At present, the boundary between the application site and Tudor Cottage is defined by close-boarded fencing and a recently established Thuja Plicata hedge. This form of boundary treatment has a distinctly domestic character and does not reflect the traditional hedgerow patterns that contribute to the rural character of the Conservation Area.

In response, the proposal includes the removal of the existing Thuja Plicata planting and its replacement with a native hedgerow. This will provide a softer and more natural boundary treatment, reinforcing the landscape character of the area and allowing the boundary to read as part of the wider rural setting rather than as a domestic subdivision.

6. Materials

The applicant acknowledges the preference for traditional materials within Conservation Areas and has carefully considered the proposed material palette.

It is noted that the character of Park Lane is not uniform and includes a number of simple brick-built dwellings with tiled roofs, reflecting the evolution of the area over time.

In particular, a recent planning approval at Crossways (Ref: PL/2024/08976, decision notice dated 02/02/2026) demonstrates that a simple red brick and Roman tile dwelling is considered acceptable within the immediate context.

The proposed dwelling adopts a restrained and consistent palette that reflects the established character of surrounding properties. The external walls will be constructed in brick. The roof will be finished in reclaimed clay double Roman tiles, which provide a more traditional and visually appropriate finish in the context of the Conservation Area.

It is also noted that the existing building on the site is constructed in red brick with a double Roman tiled roof, reflecting the established use of these materials within the site itself.

The proposed windows will be constructed in timber, in a heritage colour, with a flush casement design and traditional proportions to ensure that they sit comfortably within the overall composition of the building.

The proposed carport will be constructed as a simple open-sided timber structure, with a roof incorporating photovoltaic panels. The roof covering will utilise reclaimed clay double Roman tiles salvaged from the existing garage and workshop building to be demolished, ensuring material continuity and reducing waste.

7. Heritage Impact

The proposal has been revised to reduce its impact on both the setting of Tudor Cottage and the wider Conservation Area.

The proposed dwelling is positioned approximately 47 metres from Tudor Cottage, providing a clear degree of physical separation that further reduces its impact on the setting of the listed building.

The removal of the garage, reduction in visual height, integration with the landform, improved boundary treatment, and justified access arrangement collectively result in a scheme that is sensitive to its surroundings.

The replacement of the garage with a lightweight carport structure further reduces the visual impact of built form within the site.

In addition, the proposal includes a range of biodiversity enhancements, including the provision of bat and bird boxes, a wildlife pond, wildflower meadow planting, and the rejuvenation of native hedgerow planting along the site boundaries. These measures will provide a clear ecological benefit and contribute positively to the environmental quality of the site.

It is therefore considered that the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and respects the setting of the listed building.

In line with paragraph 208 of the NPPF, the proposal has been carefully designed to minimise any potential harm through a reduction in built form, use of appropriate materials, and enhanced landscape treatment, and the scheme delivers clear environmental and ecological benefits that further support its acceptability.

8. Conclusion

The applicant has engaged positively with the Conservation Officer's comments and has made meaningful amendments to the proposal.

The revised scheme represents a proportionate and contextually appropriate form of development that responds to both the site and its surroundings.

9. Supporting Information

The following supporting information has been submitted:

- Appendix A – Tudor Cottage - 2008 approved plan N/08/02734/FUL confirming the position of the existing access
- Appendix B – Photographs of the site frontage and boundary vegetation
- Appendix C – Photographs of surrounding properties along Park Lane
- Appendix D – Photographs of the existing access
- Appendix E – Transfer Clause (Boundary Requirement)