

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

APPLICATION REF:	26/01629/FPH & 26/01169/LBC
CASE OFFICER:	WT
APPLICATION SITE:	2 Chequers Cottages, Chequers Lane, Preston Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 7TY
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Installation of EV charger to front elevation.

RECOMMENDATION:

I raise an **OBJECTION** to a tethered charging point (if indeed that is what is proposed) and I offer the following Reason for Reason for the FPH:

No.1 to 6 inclusive, are a block of estate cottages (1913) by E.L. Lutyens. They occupy a prominent position on Chequers Lane within the Preston Conservation Area and are relatively unaltered externally. Whilst the charger casing is not excessively obtrusive, a tethered charging point requires the cable to also be stored on the front elevation. This will lead to unnecessary clutter on the front elevation of a group that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Preston Conservation Area. The presence of cabling permanently attached to the front elevation will fail to satisfy the aims of Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and Section 20 of the NPPF (August 2026).

Note: The same R for R would apply to 26/01169/LBC except for changing 66(1) to 16(2).

SHORT SUMMARY:

Impact on listed building's significance and the character and appearance of the Preston Conservation Area

The proposal will have a small yet noticeable impact upon the building's special character, and upon the appearance of the PCA.

SITE CONTEXT:

Chequers Cottages, numbers 1 to 6 inclusive and 3 linked rear outhouses, 1-6, Chequers Lane are grade II listed and located in the Preston Conservation Area. Both the buildings and the area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 20 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031. The list entry is given at the link below.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1176623?section=official-list-entry>



DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Firstly, I note the Lutyens Trust's response below (my emphasis in bold):

This row of listed cottages, built 1913, was designed by Lutyens for HG Fenwick of Temple Dinsley. The cottages are tile hung above a ground floor of blue and red narrow bricks laid to varied bonds. The row is set well back from the street behind a wide grass frontage.

The proposal is to install an EV charger on the front elevation of number 2. The installation will be a little larger than A4 portrait size and project a little over five inches. The socket will be noticeable but, of itself, not excessively obtrusive. However, in practical use, there will be an impact on the setting of the listed row.

The application offers only the Historic England list description as an inadequate Heritage Statement.

It is uncertain whether a tethered charging cable is intended or whether it will be detachable. The former would be unacceptable permanent clutter.

Charging a car will require either a long cable to be placed across the lawn, or the car to be parked on the grass. The latter would be undesirable, compromising the attractive simplicity of the grassy setting of the row. Whether this can be subject to control, though, is uncertain. If the intention is to charge cars at kerbside, it will be necessary to check that cables of sufficient length are practicable. Long cables can be heavy, unwieldy, and awkward to store. (The weight being comparable to a full watering can.)

Further, it will be necessary to consider the impact of similar installations on the rest of the row.

The need for chargers may now be difficult to deny. However, in the absence of detailed analysis and justification in the Heritage Statement, the proposal is not acceptable.

More information is required. An alternative approach might be to incorporate chargers within a low post and rail fence close to the street or otherwise investigate whether chargers can be grouped in some other way.



I share similar concerns as those raised by LT. The key issue here is whether the proposal is a tethered or untethered charging point. What is the depth of the lawned frontage as the tethered versions of the Cord Zero Range appear to come in 5m and 8m lengths? Notwithstanding that, if a tethered version is proposed, I would conclude that the permanent installation of this amount of cabling at the front of the property (considering also that it is one of six in this range) is likely to have a detrimental impact upon the front elevation of this listed building. A favourable decision may set an unwelcome precedent. I therefore would be more receptive to an untethered charging point where the cable can be stored away from the front elevation.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Sections 16(1) (LBC only), 66(1) (FPH only) and 72(1) (both)

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:

Policy HE1

NPPF (Aug 2026):

Section 20

CONCLUSION:

I note the concerns raised by the Lutyens Trust and whilst LT state that *“it will be necessary to consider the impact of similar installations on the rest of the row”*, I have considered the current proposal on its own merits, mindful however that an approval for a tethered option may set an unwelcome precedent. I have provided an **OBJECTION** recommendation, but I am prepared to review my position if an untethered charging point is proposed and confirmed in writing.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 02/09/2026