

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



67 Park Lane, Knebworth, Hertfordshire SG3 6PW

**Erection of building for church hall use, with car parking, column
lighting and landscaping**

October 2025



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by INTOUCH PLANNING Ltd, to support an application for planning permission for: Erection of building for a church hall, with car parking, lighting and landscaping. The site address is: 67 Park Lane, Knebworth, Hertfordshire SG3 6PW.
- 1.2 The Statement provides an assessment of the planning policy framework relevant to the proposal, as well as other relevant material considerations and explains the design process and principles based on a contextual understanding of the site and the locality.

2. Site description

- 2.1 The site comprises part of the residential curtilage of 67 Park Lane in Knebworth. The triangular shaped area of garden land is located west of the dwelling and has been in residential garden use for decades. The site is the last residential plot on this side of the road, before the A1 motorway close to the west of the site.
- 2.2 The site land used to be within the Green Belt but has since been removed in the new Local Plan process. There are no nearby listed buildings and the site is not located within, or adjacent to a conservation area. Access is provided by a wide crossover serving the site and driveway for 67 Park Lane.
- 2.3 The only neighbouring dwelling is No. 67, located east of the site and set within a very spacious remaining garden. The following images show extract of the site Location plan, with photographs of the site.





Figure 1 – Location plan of the site and surroundings



Figure 2 – View of the main central area of the site





Figure 3 – View of the site from the southern corner looking north



Figure 4 – View towards No. 67 Park Lane from centre of the site





Figure 5 – View of wide crossover from Park Lane for No. 67 and the site

3. Planning history

- 3.1 There is no specific planning history of the site itself, having been in residential garden use for decades, as part of No. 67 Park Lane. Of note however is the recently granted permission on the opposite side of the road at the site of Martletts, for a development of nine dwellings. This is following the removal of that land from the Green Belt, as part of the new Local Plan, which also applies to the application site.
- 3.2 Pre-application submission - 25/01345/PRE – No objection to the principle and all other material considerations. Highway pre-application also received of no objection to the use, visibility splays and comments on minor details.

4. The proposal

- 4.1 The proposal is for erection of a building for use as a church hall for the East Herts Gospel Hall Trust, together with car parking, lighting and landscaping.



The building would measure 14.3 metres in length, 9.6 metres in width, with a shallow pitched roof ridge height of 6.8 metres.

- 4.2 The internal layout will provide a foyer entrance, with open plan main hall area, a kitchenette / store, with two WCs and one as accessible. Materials are proposed of red multi stock brick plinth, black fibre cement boarding, with windows and doors in black aluminium. Roof tiles are proposed of Marley 'Ashmore' double plain concrete interlocking tiles in Old English Red colour. Fascias and rainwater goods are proposed in black upvc.
- 4.3 A formal parking area for 10 parking spaces plus one accessible space is proposed, with driveway and turning area in tarmac and the main parking spaces in permeable block paviours. A further 8 parking spaces are proposed in grasscrete for occasional use. The building and parking area would be sited towards the centre of the site. Cycle stands are proposed close to the entrance doors of the building.
- 4.4 Lighting columns are proposed to the car parking area, to provide a lit and safe area for users. These will be downlit only and a typical specification is provided with the documents. Together with 1m high bollard lighting. The lighting will be timed to only be used while the building is in use. To the periphery of the site will be enhanced landscaping works, for tree and shrub planting.
- 4.5 The existing gated access into the site would be widened to 4 metres, with a granite setts line between the site and No. 67, from the current wide crossover to the highway of Park Lane.
- 4.6 The plans and documents to accompany the application comprise the following:



Drawings:

Location Plan (planning portal)

872-03 Rev B – Proposed site plan, floor plan and elevations

Supporting documents:

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Ecological Appraisal

Statutory Biodiversity Metric

Lighting column specification

Air source heat pump specification - Model WH-MXC09J3E5

- 4.7 The following images show the Proposed site plan extract, floor plan and elevations of the proposed development.

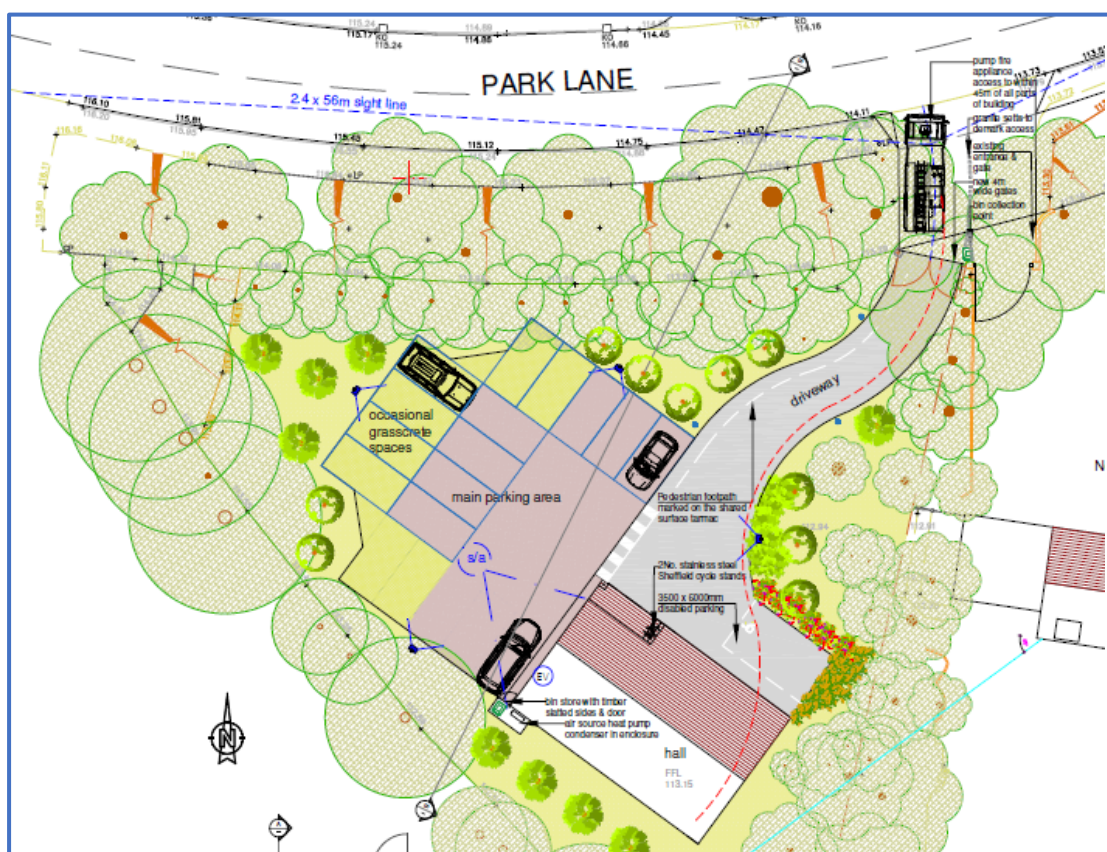


Figure 6 – Proposed site plan extract



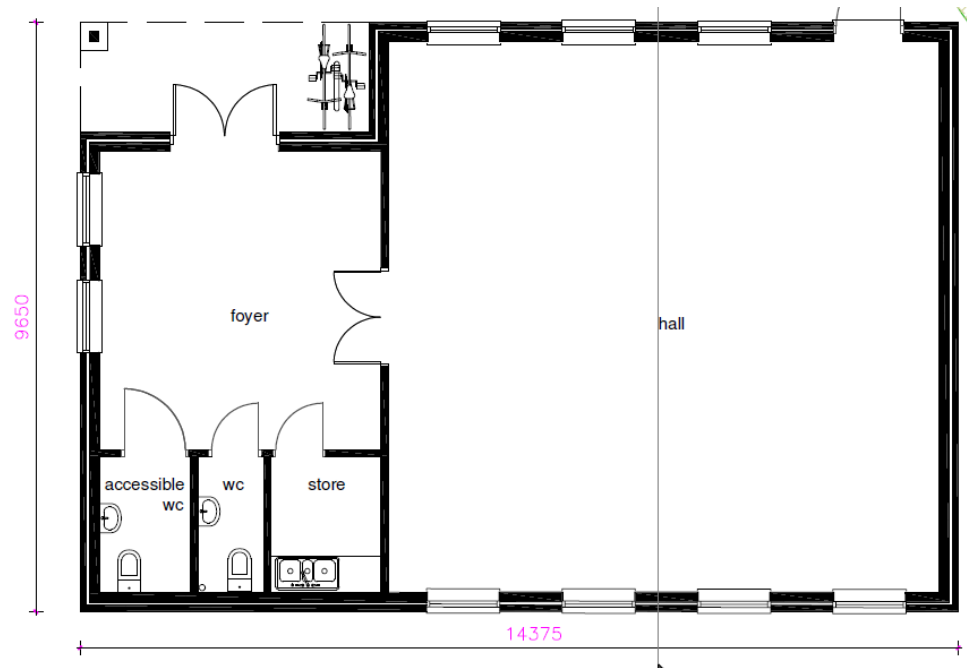


Figure 7 - Proposed floor plan



Figure 8 - Proposed front elevation



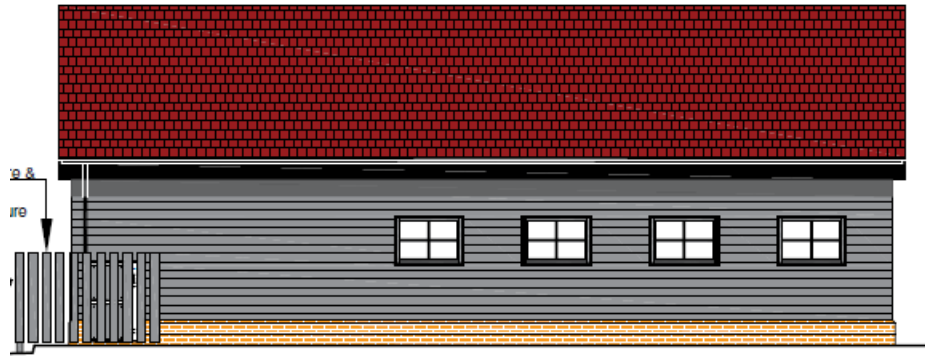


Figure 9 - Proposed rear elevation

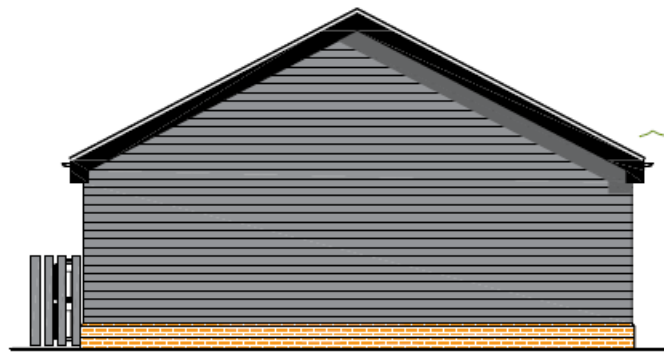


Figure 10 - Proposed left side elevation

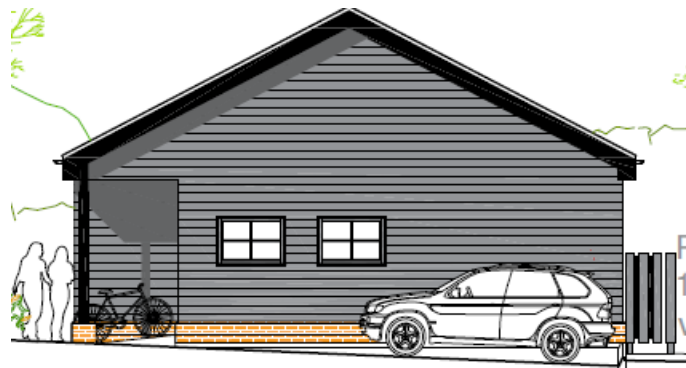


Figure 11 - Proposed right side elevation



5. Relevant planning policy

5.1 The relevant planning policies at the local and national level, are as follows:

North Herts Local Plan:

Policy SP2 Settlement hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

Policy T1 Assessment of transport matters

Policy T2 Parking

Policy D1 Sustainable design

Policy D2 House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings

Policy D3 Protecting living conditions

Policy D4 Air quality

Policy NE2 Landscape

Policy NE4 Biodiversity and Geological Sites

Policy NE8 Sustainable Drainage Systems

5.2 Supplementary Planning Document

Design

Vehicle Parking at New Development

5.3 The Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan

Policy KBBE2 - Sustainable Buildings

Policy KBBE4 – Design

Policy KBEF1 – Biodiversity

Policy KBEF4 – Important Views and Character Areas

Policy KNBT1 – Sustainable Modes of Travel

Policy KBW1 - Community Facilities and Services

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Section 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

Section 11. Making effective use of land

Section 12. Achieving well-designed places



Section 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6. Principle of the use

- 6.1 In regard to the principle of this use and building in this location, the site used to be located within the Green Belt, but is now removed from the Green Belt, as part of the new Local Plan for North Hertfordshire. The site is now within the village boundary for Knebworth, as shown on the following extract from the Policy mapping of the Local Plan.

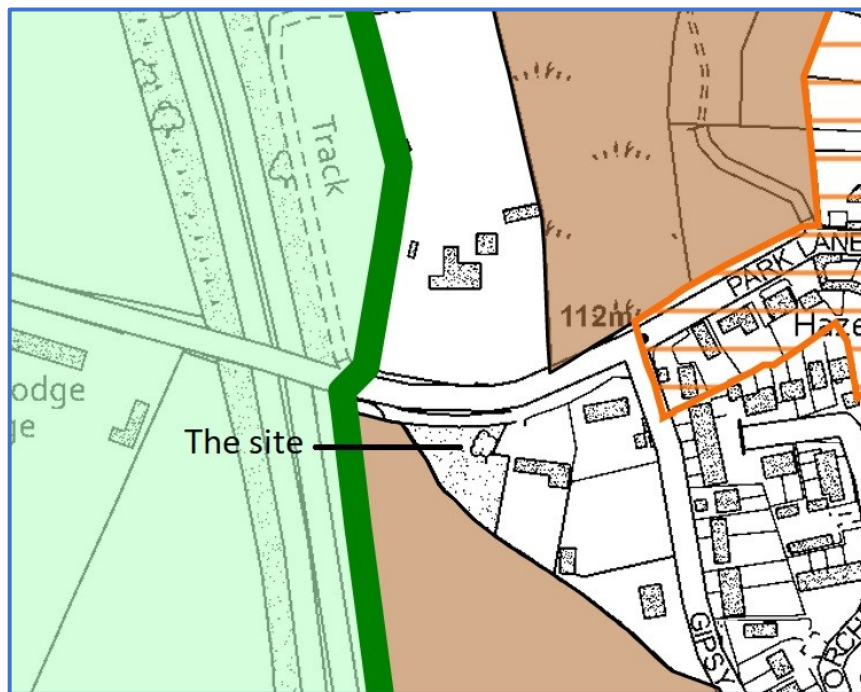


Figure 12 – Policy mapping extract for the site, in context of Knebworth village boundary and the Green Belt

- 6.2 The development would therefore simply infill this last parcel of land on this side of Park Lane, close to the A1 motorway. As such, the development presents no issues in regard to the Green Belt, as it is not within the Green Belt.



- 6.3 In regard to the proposal providing a new community facility, Policy HC1 – Community facilities states the following,
“Planning permission for new community facilities will be granted provided that they are:
a) Appropriate in scale having regard to their local context;
b) Accessible by a range of transport modes; and
c) Would meet an identified need in the local community”.
- 6.4 In addressing the requirements of this policy, firstly the proposal is entirely appropriate in scale. The local context is that this is a large parcel of residential garden land, adjacent the donor dwelling of 67 Park Lane. The proposed single storey building would have a massing and ridge height entirely suitable for the site and this context. The ridge height would be lower than that of the two storey dwelling of No. 67, together with set back position from the highway and comfortably located within this central area of the site.
- 6.5 Secondly, the site is accessible by a range of transport modes. Visitors of the church hall can travel to the site by train to Knebworth station, then to walk or cycle from there to the site. Alternatively travel by bus is available, which runs through Knebworth. The transport mode of private car will likely be the usual, but these other modes are available as modal choices. Cycle stands are proposed on the site, for the secure parking of cycles.
- 6.6 Thirdly, the facility would indeed meet an identified need in the local community. The church hall would be a place of worship for East Herts Gospel Hall Trust. The primary or original base of parishioners has been in East Hertfordshire, with a main larger facility at Colliers End. Over recent years however, there has been an increasing population of parishioners in North Hertfordshire and in particularly in Knebworth. Meetings have had to be held in households of Knebworth which, although has attracted no complaints, is not suitable and needs a dedicated building to attend.



- 6.7 The proposed building would provide this much needed small place of worship, in order to address the localised need from the local population of Knebworth and the local surrounding area.
- 6.8 In regard to the general use and operation of the building, the proposed meeting hall use would be for occasional gathering for approximately 3-4 hours per week. The core meetings for the local congregation are Holy Communion on Sunday mornings and a prayer meeting on Monday evenings. These meetings are expected to have a duration of approximately one hour.
- 6.9 Regular attendees are expected to number from 40 to 50 and, due to high vehicle occupancy, only around 8-12 cars would arrive and depart from the site. Vehicle occupancy rates of 5 people are typical for these gatherings and rise to around 7 people if necessary. Walking and cycling is encouraged and car sharing is well established in the Brethren community in which there is a high use of MPV type or large family sized vehicles. Typically, attendance is by family / household unit who would normally travel together in the same vehicle for the visit. The congregation may also wish to hold a gospel preaching on Sunday afternoon and a Bible reading on some Friday evenings for around one hour at a time.
- 6.10 Therefore, the small scale nature of the proposal, being a small place of worship to serve an identified local need, is entirely appropriate in scale and use, for the local context, at the end of this residential area of Knebworth village.
- 6.11 At the national policy level, the NPPF states at paragraph 98,
"To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:
- plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;".



- 6.12 The development should therefore be supported as it does promote social and cultural facilities and services that the community needs. The proposal accords with the provisions of Policy HC1 of the Local Plan, Policy KBW1 of the Neighbourhood Plan and, with Section 8 of the NPPF.

7. Size and Design

- 7.1 In regard to the size and design of the proposal, this has been formulated to sensitively reflect the context of the site. The development consists of high quality materials of black fibre cement weatherboarding in timber effect, , over a red brick plinth. This was suggested as an enhancement on the pre-application comments, in order to reflect the rural nature of the area. Marley concrete tiles in Old English Red are proposed for the roof, with windows and doors in black aluminium frames. This is to reflect the semi-rural setting. The size of the building is not larger than the function need for the building. The simple layout of the entrance foyer, main hall and welfare facilities, is entirely of a reasonable size for the function of this small place of worship.
- 7.2 In regard to the impact upon the character and appearance of the area, the application site is bounded by mature trees and shrubs, which are to be retained. The building would nestle very comfortably into the centre of the site, set well back from the highway. The design, size and position of the building and parking area would therefore have no harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area.
- 7.3 The development would therefore make a positive contribution to the character of the area, by being appropriate development for the host site. The scheme would be entirely appropriate for the site context and character of the locality, in accordance with Policy D1 of the Local Plan.
- 7.4 Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, (relevant points to this proposal only):



"Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping".*

- 7.5 It is considered the proposed development is well designed, well located and responds very positively to local context and character, whilst being of a sensitive and complementary design. The building will indeed function well for the lifetime of this development, as a small place of worship use. It is therefore considered that the proposal would accord with Policy D1 of the Local Plan and, with Section 12 of the NPPF.

8. Layout and amenity for occupiers

- 8.1 The proposal would provide a high standard of amenity for users of the building. A spacious main hall area, kitchenette and toilet facilities are provided, with ample natural light from the numerous windows. A pleasant surrounding environment would be retained from the current established trees and planting. A large garden area would remain for No. 67, with no affect upon the occupier living conditions of that property.

9. Impact upon neighbouring living conditions

- 9.1 In regard to this issue, the only dwelling to be potentially impacted by the proposed development is 67 Park Lane. There would be a good distance between buildings of some 16 metres, with the parking spaces further away. The proposed church hall use is compatible to be adjacent a residential use,



especially of this modest size and when used for only a small proportion of any given week, in this low impact way.

9.2 In addition, the specification for the lighting columns is provided. These will 6 metres in height and face inwards to the site only, to light the parking area. They will only be used while the building is being used and only when needed in the darker evening times of the year. Low level bollard lighting is also proposed at 1m in height. The locations are plotted on the Proposed site plan, together with a light spill diagram in relation to the only neighbouring property of 67 Park Lane. There would be no adverse impact from the modern LED, downward facing lighting in this case.

9.3 Attendees will be highly respectful at all times and in regard to this and general use and function of the building, the applicant has provided the following support statement:

“The Gospel Hall will be used for spoken prayer and thanksgivings, bible meetings and some singing, without amplification or accompanying musical instruments and no clapping. Due to the nature of use of this hall, any noise transmitted outside the walls is negligible. A trial was undertaken at another similar hall and someone standing outside double UPVC doors could hear singing when standing close to the doors. When moving away 4 metres or more the noise levels were so low that they became submerged in other background noise.

The proposed gospel hall is a ground floor only building and there will be a 1.8m high close boarded fence separating the gospel hall and the nearby residential property, in addition to the existing high, well established tree screen. Furthermore, there is considerable background noise at this location due to the proximity of the A1 (M) lying 75m to the West.

It is also in mind to ensure that the acoustic envelope requirements are of a good quality for the proposed use in the context of intrusive noise from



adjoining road network, paying particular attention to ceiling and roof level treatments and window and escape door design".

- 9.4 As such, the proposed use would cause no unreasonable noise or light impact, or loss of privacy for occupiers, with no sense of dominance or loss of daylight and sunlight. The scheme accords with Policy D3 and, with Section 12 of the NPPF.

10. Heritage assets

- 10.1 The site does not lie within or adjacent to a Conservation Area and there are no near listed buildings to be affected in their setting by the proposal. Therefore, there would be no harmful impact upon heritage assets and the scheme does not conflict with any provisions of the Local Plan, or Section 16 of the NPPF.

11. Access and parking

- 11.1 The site is accessed from the main highway of Park Lane. The proposed use will not generate any material increase in traffic using Park Lane. Visibility splays are achieved in both directions. These are demonstrated on the Proposed site plan.
- 11.2 The splays are achieved to match those required by the Highway Authority at the opposite site of Martletts. These comprise 50 metres in the eastern direction and 56 metres in the western direction. The frontage of the site is highway owned land and so is maintained for visibility splays already. Photographs of the excellent current sight lines in both directions are shown in the following photographs.





Figure 13 – Sight line exiting the site looking east



Figure 14 - Sight line exiting the site looking west





Figure 15 – Current wide crossover serving No. 67 and the site access

- 11.3 In regard to parking provision, there is provision of 11 main parking spaces, inclusive of one accessible space. There are also a further 8 spaces proposed in grasscrete to retain green landscaping and these are only needed for occasional increased attendees to the building, over a handful of events per year.
- 11.4 For places of worship, the SPD for Parking at New Development requires one parking space per 10sqm of floorspace. The gross floorspace of the whole building is 115sqm, which requires 11.5 spaces or 12 when rounded. The provision of 11 main spaces (including one disabled space) and 8 occasional spaces, therefore exceeds the parking requirements under the minimum adopted standards of the SPD. Cycle parking is also provided with cycle stands close to the building entrance.
- 11.5 All vehicles, including service vehicles visiting the site, can adequately turn and exit the site in forward gear, with turning area provided as denoted on the proposed site plan. Therefore, access and parking provision are considered



to be acceptable for the proposed building and use in this case, with no impact upon the local highway network.

12. Flood risk

- 12.1 In regard to any flood risk, the application site is deemed at very low risk of flooding by the Environment Agency. The site is in Flood Zone 1 (FZ1) which is the zone of lowest flood risk. The site is also not in an area identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems. It is reasonable to conclude that the site is not at risk of flooding and that the proposed development would not result in an increase in flooding.
- 12.2 The following image shows the flood risk for the site, from the Environment Agency web site for rivers and surface water flood risk. Given the location of the application site and the separation distance to areas at risk, the proposal is considered to be at low risk of flooding.

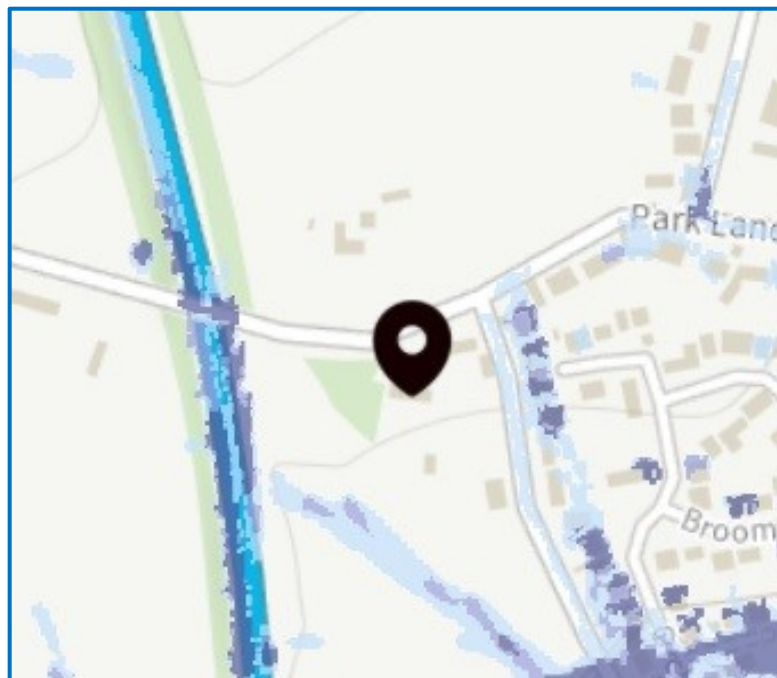


Figure 16 - Flood risk for the site (very low as Flood zone 1)



13. Ecology

- 13.1 In regard to ecology of the site, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment has been undertaken, with BNG metric. There are no protected species present and ecological value mainly consists of periphery established trees and planting, with low level value to the central open area of the site, where the building and parking is proposed.
- 13.2 Enhancement of the current very low ecological value of the site, will be achieved through increased tree planting to the edges of the site, which will provide habitat and increase ecology value of the site, in accordance with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan and, with Section 15 of the NPPF. The remainder of the gain will be achieved at an off site habitat bank, to be secured by planning condition.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 In summary of the proposal, the principle is acceptable for provision of this small community facility, within this accessible location and within the village boundary for Knebworth. The small place of worship as a church hall, would serve a current local need for East Herts Gospel Hall Trust, as a social and cultural community facility, which is accessible by a range of transport modes.
- 14.2 The highly appropriate size and design, in combination with the use of high quality materials, is considered to be highly fitting for site and its surroundings. The proposed size is only that required to provide this small church hall building, as a modest single storey building.
- 14.3 Ample parking provision would be provided on site for vehicles, together with suitable turning area. Access is highly suitable as existing and requires only minor alteration in width, with excellent existing visibility splays in both directions.



- 14.4 Amenity for users of the building would be of a high standard and welfare facilities included. No harmful impact would result upon the living conditions of any nearby occupiers.
- 14.5 The proposal is entirely in accordance with the North Herts Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents, the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan and, with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable for the grant of planning permission accordingly.

