

Report Title	<b>PLANNING APPLICATIONS</b>
Meeting	<b>BARROWFORD AND WESTERN PARISHES COMMITTEE</b>
Meeting Date	<b>8TH OCTOBER 2025</b>
Report Author	<b>NEIL WATSON</b>
Directorate	<b>PLACE</b>
Lead Executive Member(s)	<b>COUNCILLOR L. WHIPP</b>
Wards Affected	<b>BARROWFORD &amp; PENDLESIDE</b>
Public. Part Exempt, or Fully Exempt	<b>PUBLIC</b>
Appendices (if any)	<b>NONE</b>

## **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To determine the attached planning applications.

# REPORT TO BARROWFORD AND WESTERN PARISHES COMMITTEE 08<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025

**Application Ref:** 25/0337/FUL

**Proposal:** Full: Conversion of vacant church (Use Class Use Class F1(f)) into 6 no. residential flats (Use Class C3) and other associated works.

**At** Saint Peter and Saint Paul's Roman Catholic Church, Gisburn Road, Barrowford, Lancashire

**On behalf of:** Mr Tom Friar

**Date Registered:** 29.05.2025

**Expiry Date:** 23.07.2025

**Case Officer:** Negin Sadeghi

## **Site Description and Proposal**

The application site is a disused Roman Catholic Church located on Gisburn Road within the Higherford area of Barrowford. The site is situated within the designated Higherford Conservation Area and lies within the defined settlement boundary. It occupies a prominent, elevated position near the junction with Foreside and adjacent to Higherford Bridge. Due to the site's topography, vehicular access directly to the building is not feasible. The building is bounded to the rear by a tall stone retaining wall along Pinfold. It is a locally distinctive structure and falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3 as designated by the Environment Agency.

The site adjoins Nos. 10 and 259 Gisburn Road to the east and is otherwise surrounded by landscape, highway, and Pendle Water to the west, north, and south. The church building sits approximately 1.8 metres below road level and is partially screened by a stone wall, forming part of a larger green landscape.

The proposal seeks full planning permission for the conversion of the existing church building into six self-contained one-bedroom residential flats (Use Class C3), with associated external alterations, refuse and cycle storage, and parking arrangements. Twelve car parking spaces are proposed off-site under a lease agreement with the Heritage Trust at the Malt Kiln Car Park, located directly opposite the site. The scheme proposes to retain key architectural features of the building, where feasible, and introduces minimal external alterations.

## **Relevant Planning History**

22/0263/FUL; DC: WDN: Full: Change of use from Place of Worship (Use Class F1(f)) to Mixed Use comprising a dental practice (Use Class E(e)) and 3 No. residential dwellings (Use Class C3).

## **Consultee Response**

### **Highways**

summarised Highways consultation responses, clearly numbered for reference:

### 1) Initial Consultation:

- No objection in principle to the proposed conversion to 6 apartments.
- Car parking via a lease for 12 spaces at Malt Kiln car park is adequate but must be secured by condition.
- Cycle storage generally acceptable; concerns over rear access and level differences require amended plans.
- Refuse storage arrangements are inconsistent; must be revised for accessibility and to avoid obstructions.
- A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) is required due to parking restrictions and site constraints.

### 2) Detailed Initial Response After Site Visit (11 June 2025):

- Reaffirms no objection in principle.
- Parking: 12 leased spaces acceptable; must be signed for resident use and secured by condition.
- Cycle storage: Internal spaces acceptable; rear storage problematic due to level differences and retaining wall – alternatives suggested.
- Refuse storage: Discrepancies in documents; rear storage for flats 1–3 problematic (steps, level issues). Recommend relocation to the front of site; revised plans needed.
- CTMP required due to lack of on-site parking and difficult access.
- Conclusion: Further information and amended plans required; final highway conditions will follow.

### 3) Follow-Up Comments (14 July Submission):

- Cycle storage for flats 1–3 still proposed at rear – not supported due to distance and impact on retaining wall. Should be addressed by pre-commencement condition.
- Refuse bins: Revised plan places 9 bins at top of ramp – unacceptable due to space constraints and safety concerns for refuse vehicles.
- Bins for flats 4–6 must be stored internally; placement on ramp not supported.
- Collection from front on collection day is acceptable.
- Pre-commencement conditions recommended for:
  1. Construction Traffic Management Plan
  2. Cycle storage for flats 1–3
  3. Refuse bin storage

### 4) Final Highways Position:

- Cycle storage for flats 1–3 at the front is acceptable, subject to condition.
- Refuse bins for flats 1–3 could also be stored at the front (closer to collection point).

- Bins for flats 4–6 should not be stored on the ramp due to space and refuse wagon safety concerns.
- Urges resolution of bin storage before approval, though it still must be conditioned.

## **Parish/Town Council**

No Objection provided the 12 parking spaces on the Malt Kiln Car Park are Guaranteed and comments addressed: This site falls within the Higherford Conservation Area and is a prominent building in the streetscape situated on the bank of Pendle Water just above Higherford Bridge. The building has some land to the front and side of the building but due to the topography of the site vehicle access is not possible. The buildings' location just past the abutment of Higherford bridge which has a 120° bend to the left lower abutment and a 90° turn into the junction with Foreside preclude safe on street parking near the building. The previous application for a dental practice was totally impactable through the potential amount of parking required. This application for six apartments if backed up by a guarantee of 12 available spaces on the car park opposite would be a sensible reuse of the former church. The design to the basement level frontage could be improved so as not to adversely change the current symmetrical frontage of this most prominent aspect within the conservation area, The Parish Council has concerns regarding the storage of waste bins which if all apartments have grey/brown/green bins could total 18 and if stored in a n inappropriate location could have a detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the conservation area. the Parish Council would like these two matters considered and addressed before approving the application. The Parish Council would like to know if the stained-glass windows to the first floor are to be retained and if not would like the opportunity to record them for the local records?

**Environment Health:** no answer.

**Environment Agency:** no objection.

We have no objection to the proposed development; however, we offer the following comments for your consideration:

Flood Risk Standing Advice – for the Local Planning Authority  
The site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3, as defined in national planning guidance. As the proposal constitutes 'lower risk' development, it falls under our Flood Risk Standing Advice (FRSA), which replaces the need for direct consultation. We recommend the Local Planning Authority reviews the FRSA in full before determining the application. Further information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-for-planning-applications#when-to-follow-standing-advice>

Environmental Permit – for the Applicant

Pendle Water is classified as a statutory main river. Under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, a permit may be required for any works:

- within 8 metres of a main river (or 16 metres if tidal),
- within 8 metres of a flood defence structure or culverted main river (16 metres if tidal),
- within 16 metres of a sea defence,
- involving excavation within 16 metres of a main river or flood defence,
- or within the floodplain if the activity may affect flood flow or storage and is not controlled by planning permission.

Further guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>

Alternatively, contact our National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506.

Applicants are advised not to assume that a permit will automatically be granted following planning approval and should engage with the Environment Agency at the earliest opportunity.

## **Public Response**

The nearest neighbours have been notified by letter, and site and press notices were posted. A number of objection letters (3+) were received, raising the following concerns:

- **Construction Access and Safety:**  
The site is located on a constrained road with no provision for skips or delivery vehicles. There is a lack of a Construction Traffic Management Plan and risk assessments.
- **Traffic and Parking:**  
Inadequate visitor parking. The car park is shared with the public and often full. Parking pressures already exist locally.
- **Design and Conservation:**  
Concerns about alterations to the symmetrical front façade and whether stained glass windows will be retained.
- **Refuse Storage:**  
Potential visual harm and operational difficulty with the proposed bin storage.

## **Related Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023)

Pendle Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2011–2030):

- Policy ENV1: Protecting and Enhancing Our Natural and Historic Environments
- Policy ENV2: Achieving Quality in Design
- Policy LIV1: Housing Provision and Delivery
- Policy LIV5: Designing Better Places to Live
- Policy SUP1: Community Facilities

Saved Policies of the Replacement Pendle Local Plan (RPLP):

- Policy 31: Parking
- Policy 13: Quality and Design of New Development

Higherford Conservation Area Appraisal

National Design Guide (2021)

## **Officer comments**

The proposal involves the change of use of a vacant community church within the defined settlement boundary to a residential use. The main considerations of this application are as detailed below:

### **Loss of a Community Facility**

Policy SUP1 of the Local Plan deals with the Loss of Community facilities and states that:

With the exception of sports and recreational facilities, which are addressed in Policy ENV1, the Council will resist the loss of community facilities that require a change of use application unless:

- an appropriate alternative is provided, OR
- evidence is presented that the facility is no longer required or financially viable and that the facility cannot provide for an alternative community use (including health and education facilities) identified as being needed in the area, OR
- it can be proven the property has been vacant and actively marketed for a community use for over one year

The application was taken to Development Management on the basis that there had been insufficient information given to assure the Council that the development was compliant with policy SUP1 of the adopted Local Plan.

Further details have been given looking at the long term use of the facility that demonstrate that it was no longer needed or viable to be operated as a church. No other viable community use has been identified.

The applicant has demonstrated that the loss of the facility is compliant with policy SUP1.

### **Heritage and Visual Impact**

The site lies within the Higherford Conservation Area and comprises a building of local architectural merit. The scheme proposes to retain and convert the existing structure, thereby preserving its contribution to the character of the area. Minimal external alterations are proposed, including the reuse of existing openings and preservation of the principal symmetrical frontage.

Concerns raised by the Parish Council regarding the basement-level design are noted. Conditions can cover this aspect to maintain the visual balance of the elevation.

### **Residential Amenity**

To the north, west, and south, the building is separated from neighbouring properties by landscaping, a road, and a river, and therefore has no immediate neighbours on these sides. To the east, it adjoins the roofs of Nos. 10 and 259. Given its lower ground level, the building is further screened by the surrounding stone boundary wall.

The conversion would not result in unacceptable overlooking, overbearing, or loss of privacy to adjoining properties. Given the site's layout and orientation, the proposal does not result in harm to neighbouring amenity.

### **Highway Safety and Parking**

Twelve parking spaces are proposed within an existing car park opposite the site under a formal lease arrangement. This provision exceeds the minimum standard of one space per unit and would ensure that on-street parking pressure is mitigated.

The Highway Authority raises no objection in principle but requests that the parking arrangement be secured by condition and clearly marked for residents' use.

Cycle storage provision is generally acceptable, but amendments are required to ensure accessibility and avoid undue intervention into the public highway or retaining walls. An amended site plan is required, and relevant conditions should secure full details of cycle parking.

Subject to conditions and receipt of an acceptable Construction Traffic Management Plan, the proposal would not result in harm to highway safety and would comply with Policy WRK5.

## **Flood Risk**

The site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and falls within the scope of the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Standing Advice. It is therefore acceptable subject to compliance with mitigation measures set out in the FRA.

The development would be required to adopt appropriate floor levels, drainage measures, and evacuation strategies to minimise residual risk.

## **Others:**

### **1. Construction Access and Safety:**

The lack of on-site access and constrained nature of the road is acknowledged. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) is required by condition to ensure safe and managed construction activities, including deliveries, vehicle routing, and timing.

### **2. Traffic and Parking:**

The scheme provides 12 dedicated off-site parking spaces under a formal lease, which exceeds the minimum policy requirement. The spaces will be conditioned for exclusive resident use, thereby mitigating on-street parking pressure. Visitor parking demand is expected to be low for one-bedroom units.

### **3. Design and Conservation:**

The proposal retains the principal symmetrical façade, with only minimal and reversible changes. A condition ensures all materials and details match the existing building. Stained-glass windows will be recorded and documented prior to any removal, as secured by condition, to preserve local heritage.

### **4. Refuse Storage:**

Initial concerns over refuse storage have been addressed. A condition requires a revised refuse storage and collection plan, to ensure that bins are stored appropriately off the highway and do not harm the conservation area's visual amenity.

## **Planning Balance**

The council is in a position of housing undersupply and therefore the tilted balance applies to the consideration of the application, the benefits of the development and level of undersupply must be balanced against the adverse impacts of the development and the application approved unless the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The development would provide economic and social benefits from contribution to the economy from the construction of housing, the provision of new housing and would contribute towards addressing the 2.2-year deficit in the borough's 5-year housing supply. The applicant has demonstrated the church is no longer viable and is not viable for another community use.

### **RECOMMENDATION: Approve**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1056-BOW-A1-00-DR-A-2003, 1056-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-2002, 1056-BOW-A1-ZZ-DR-A-200, 1056-BOW-A1-00-DR-A-2000-P1,

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The external materials of the development shall be as specified in the submitted application form and plans.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to preserve the character and appearance of the rural area in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the Pendle Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2011–2030).

4. The residential units hereby approved shall at no time be occupied unless and until the car parking spaces shown on approved plan 1056-BOW-A1-00-DR-A-2003 have been provided in their entirety and are available for use by the residents of the converted church..

Reason: In order to ensure adequate off street parking is provided to prevent parking on the highway which would be inimical to highway safety.

5. No part of the development shall be commenced unless and until a Construction Code-of-Practice has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The code shall include details of the measures envisaged during construction to manage and mitigate the main environmental effects of the relevant phase of the development. The submitted details shall include within its scope but not be limited to:

a) A programme of works including phasing, hours of operation and measures for the control of traffic to and from the site, and within the site, during construction.

b) The areas and methods of loading and unloading of plant and materials.

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**On behalf of:** Mr Tom Friar

**NW/MP**

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025**