

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Point and Associated Works

Brook House, Wimland Road, Faygate, RH12 4SS

Listed Building Consent Application

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a Listed Building Consent application for the installation of an electric vehicle (EV) charging point and associated cable infrastructure at Brook House, Wimland Road, Faygate, RH12 4SS.

The statement identifies the significance of Brook House as a designated heritage asset, sets out the relevant national and local planning policy framework, and assesses the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the listed building. It has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Historic England's guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets.

2. Description of the Heritage Asset

2.1 Designation

Brook House is recorded on the National Heritage List for England as a Grade II Listed Building (List Entry No. 1027040). Grade II listing denotes a nationally important building of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve it. The building is situated within the parish of Colgate, Horsham District, West Sussex.

2.2 Physical Description

Brook House is a detached dwelling of exceptional historic interest, comprising three distinct phases of construction spanning approximately five centuries. The building presents a rare and well-preserved example of multi-period domestic architecture in the Horsham district.

The main range comprises two bays of a medieval open hall, the origins of which are estimated to date from the early sixteenth century or earlier. Additions were made during the sixteenth century and again around 1900, reflecting the building's continuous adaptation and occupation over time. The structure is of two storeys with two windows to the principal elevation.

The ground floor is of red brick construction, with tile-hanging above. The roof is finished in Horsham slab, a distinctive local material characteristic of the vernacular building tradition of the Weald. Casement windows are retained throughout. A nineteenth century wing with a tiled roof has been added to the north, with gable ends to each wing.

Internally, the building retains a crown post roof structure and smoke-blackened rafters, indicative of its origins as a medieval open hall in which an open hearth would have been the primary source of heat. Remains of sooted wattle and daub partitions survive, providing direct physical evidence of the building's earliest form. A stone chimney stack of sixteenth or early seventeenth century date backs onto the hall, marking the transition from open hearth to enclosed fireplace heating.

2.3 Significance

The significance of Brook House as a heritage asset derives from several overlapping values, which together justify its designation as a Grade II listed building.

Architectural significance: The building is a fine example of the Wealden vernacular building tradition, retaining characteristic materials including Horsham slab roofing, red brick, and tile-hanging. The retention of casement windows and the crown post roof structure further demonstrates the survival of architectural elements of considerable age and rarity.

Historic and evidential significance: The survival of the medieval open hall structure, smoke-blackened rafters, sooted wattle and daub partitions, and the early chimney stack gives Brook House exceptional evidential value. These fabric elements provide direct, physical evidence of medieval domestic life and building practice that is increasingly rare in the region. The building's multi-period development, legible in its form and fabric, also contributes to its historic significance as a record of evolving patterns of occupation and use over five centuries.

Communal significance: As one of the older surviving domestic structures in the Horsham district, Brook House contributes to the local community's sense of place and historic identity.

The works proposed are not located in, on, or near any of the character-defining features identified above. The internal cable route passes through a bathroom and along skirting boards in an area that does not contain any surviving historic fabric of significance. The external penetration is a single small hole positioned in close proximity to existing modern service infrastructure and away from the principal elevation or any historic features of note.

3. Planning Policy Framework

3.1 National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) sets out the government's policy on the historic environment in Chapter 16. Paragraph 199 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. Paragraph 205 states that when considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 207 distinguishes between less than substantial harm and substantial harm, with the former to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

It is submitted that the proposed works will cause no harm to the significance of Brook House. The interventions to the listed fabric are minimal, reversible, and do not affect any of the character-defining features or elements of significance identified in section 2 above.

3.2 Local Policy

Horsham District Council's Local Plan includes policies relating to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment. Policy 26 (Historic Environment) seeks to protect and enhance designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. The proposed works are considered to be fully consistent with this policy, given the minimal and reversible nature of the interventions proposed and the absence of any harm to the significance of the listed building.

3.3 Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. It is submitted that the proposed works are consistent with this duty. The works preserve the building and its setting, and do not affect any features of special architectural or historic interest.

4. Assessment of Impact on Significance

4.1 Scope of Works Affecting the Listed Structure

The following elements of the proposed works directly affect the fabric of the listed building: a 25mm diameter hole through an internal wall between the meter cupboard and the adjoining bathroom; a 25mm diameter hole through the external wall of the bathroom; and the fixing of a small Wiska weatherproof junction box to the external wall using four fixings. All other elements of the proposed works — the consumer units within the existing meter cupboard, the underground cable trench, and the EV charging unit — are either contained within existing spaces without alteration to visible fabric, located within the curtilage, or fixed to a post-1948 boundary wall that does not form part of the listed building.

4.2 Impact Assessment

The proposed interventions to the listed fabric are assessed as causing no harm to the significance of Brook House for the following reasons.

The two drilled penetrations are of minimal dimension (25mm diameter each) and are located in areas of the building that do not contain or adjoin any of the character-defining features or elements of significance identified in section 2. They are not located in proximity to the crown post roof, the smoke-blackened rafters, the wattle and daub partitions, the chimney stack, or the principal elevations. Both penetrations will be sealed on completion — the internal penetration made good with lime putty surface filler finished in white to match the existing wall colour, and the external penetration sealed with weatherproof silicon. The use of lime putty is specifically appropriate for a building of this age and construction, as it is breathable and fully compatible with historic fabric.

The Wiska junction box is a small, compact component fixed to the external wall using four minimal fixings. It will be positioned discreetly behind existing downpipes, rendering it effectively invisible from the public highway and from the principal elevation. The fixings are reversible and their removal would cause negligible disturbance to the masonry.

The works are substantially reversible. All cables, trunking, and the junction box can be removed without damage to the historic fabric, and the drilled penetrations can be filled and made good. The underground cable trench will be reinstated to its original appearance on completion.

In summary, the proposed works are assessed as causing no harm — or at most negligible, less than substantial harm — to the significance of Brook House as a Grade II listed building. There is no impact on any of the architectural, historic, or evidential values that underpin the building's designation.

4.3 Public Benefit

In the event that the local planning authority considers any element of the works to constitute less than substantial harm, the NPPF requires that this be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The installation of an EV charging point supports the national transition to zero-emission vehicles and contributes to the reduction of carbon emissions. It enables the sustainable use and occupation of a listed building, supporting the long-term viability of a heritage asset. These are considered to represent clear public benefits that outweigh any negligible impact on the significance of the listed building.

5. Conclusion

Brook House is a Grade II listed building of considerable architectural and historic significance, retaining exceptional medieval fabric including a crown post roof, smoke-blackened rafters, sooted wattle and daub partitions, and an early stone chimney stack. Its multi-period construction spanning approximately five centuries makes it a rare and important survivor of Wealden vernacular domestic architecture.

The proposed works for the installation of an EV charging point and associated cable infrastructure have been carefully designed to minimise intervention in the listed fabric. The interventions directly affecting the listed structure are limited to two small drilled penetrations of 25mm diameter and the fixing of a compact weatherproof junction box to the external wall. None of these works affects any of the character-defining features or elements of significance of the listed building.

The works are reversible, use materials appropriate to the historic fabric, and will have no material impact on the appearance, character, or significance of Brook House. It is submitted that the proposal is fully consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the relevant policies of the Horsham District Local Plan, and that Listed Building Consent should be granted.

*Prepared on behalf of the Applicant
Brook House, Wimland Road, Faygate, RH12 4SS
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