

Stone Cross Farmhouse

Ashurst Road

Ashurst

Tunbridge Wells

TN3 9SX

Demolition of the existing single storey side projections and the erection of a single storey side extension, the infill of an existing rear door opening and various internal alterations.

Planning Statement

July 2021

Contents

1.0 The Application Site & Surroundings

2.0 Relevant Planning History

3.0 Proposed Development

4.0 Policy Framework

5.0 Assessment

6.0 Conclusions

1.0 The Application Site & Surroundings

1.1 The application site comprises a large detached grade II listed, three storey dwelling, and associated outbuildings situated upon a large irregularly shaped plot. The property is located on the northern side of Ashurst Road, between the junctions with Broad Lane and Groombridge Road.

1.2 The site is partially screened from the lane by neighbouring properties and a mature and well-established hedgerow and mature trees. The remainder of the site is bounded by a mixture of close boarded and post and wire fencing and hedgerows.

1.3 Neighbouring properties lie to the north and west of the site and beyond the boundaries to the east are open fields.



Fig 1 Photo of the site from Ashurst Road to the east (Google)



Fig 2 Photo of the site from Ashurst Road to the west (Google)

1.4 The site is located outside of the limits to built development, within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

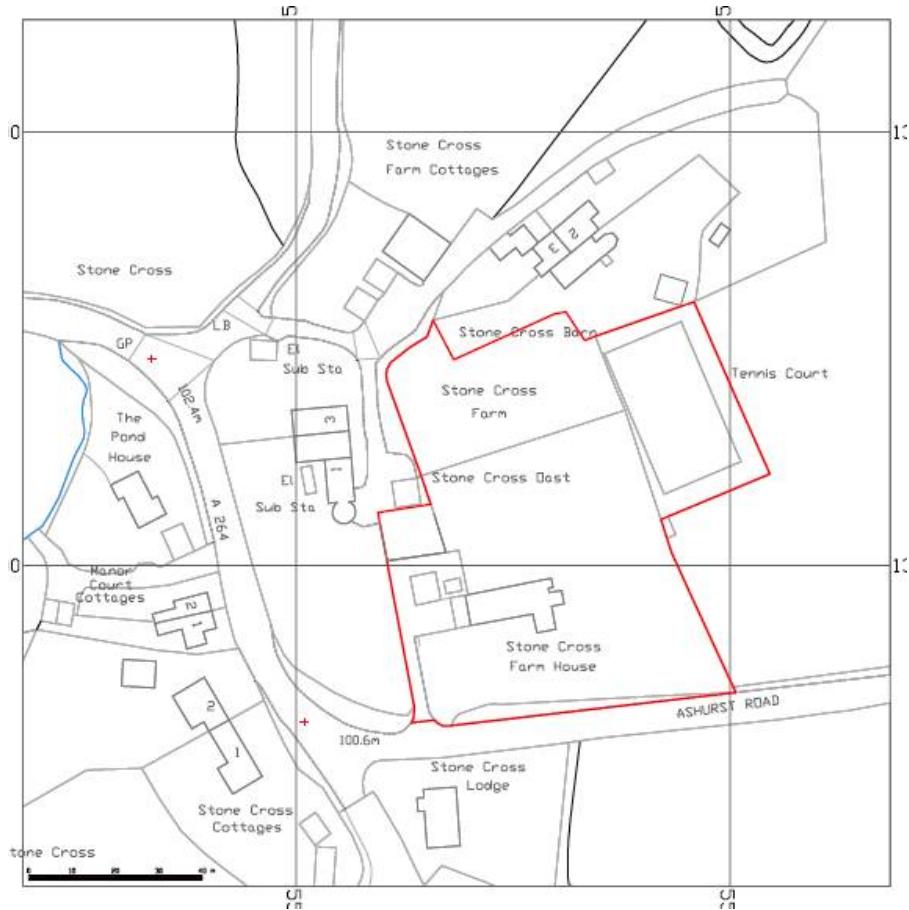


Fig 3 Site location plan



Fig 4 An aerial view of the site (Google)

2.0 Relevant Planning History

2.1 No planning history exists on the Council's website that relates directly to this proposal.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The proposals seek to further the enjoyment of the dwelling for the Client through the demolition of existing external W.C., boiler room and chimney breast to the eastern side elevation and the erection of a single storey side extension to the same side elevation.

3.2 It is also proposed to infill an existing door opening to the rear of the house and carry out various internal alterations to the property.



Fig 5 Existing front elevation



Fig 6 Existing rear elevation



Fig 7 Existing eastern side elevation



Fig 8 Existing western side elevation

3.3 The proposed single storey side extension will project off the eastern flank elevation and will be approximately 5m wide, approximately 11m deep, will be set approximately 0.9m back from the front wall of the house and will be approximately 4.3m high. The extension will have a pitched roof.

3.4 The extension will be finished in brickwork and hanging tiles to match the existing dwelling, and a slate tile roof.

3.5 The windows and doors of the extension will be formed of painted timber frames.

3.6 New and repositioned cast iron soil pipes and vents will be provided to the new and existing upper floor bathrooms.



Fig 9 Proposed front elevation



Fig 10 Proposed rear elevation



Fig 11 Proposed eastern side elevation



Fig 12 Proposed western side elevation

3.7 Internally, the new extension will provide a new kitchen and utility room. The kitchen area will be relocated from an adjacent room to the extension, and the relocation will allow for an open link through to a new dining area within the existing house.

3.8 At ground floor level it is also proposed to install secondary glazing to the two existing front bay windows.

3.9 At first floor level, the existing en-suite bathroom and dressing rooms are to be switched. The floor of the new en-suite has settled creating an uneven floor. The existing floor boards are proposed to be retained and a new plinth will be laid over the existing floor to create a level floor. The door between the existing bedroom and en-suite is also proposed to be fixed shut.

3.10 Within the existing roof space an existing storage area is proposed to be altered to become a new shower room.

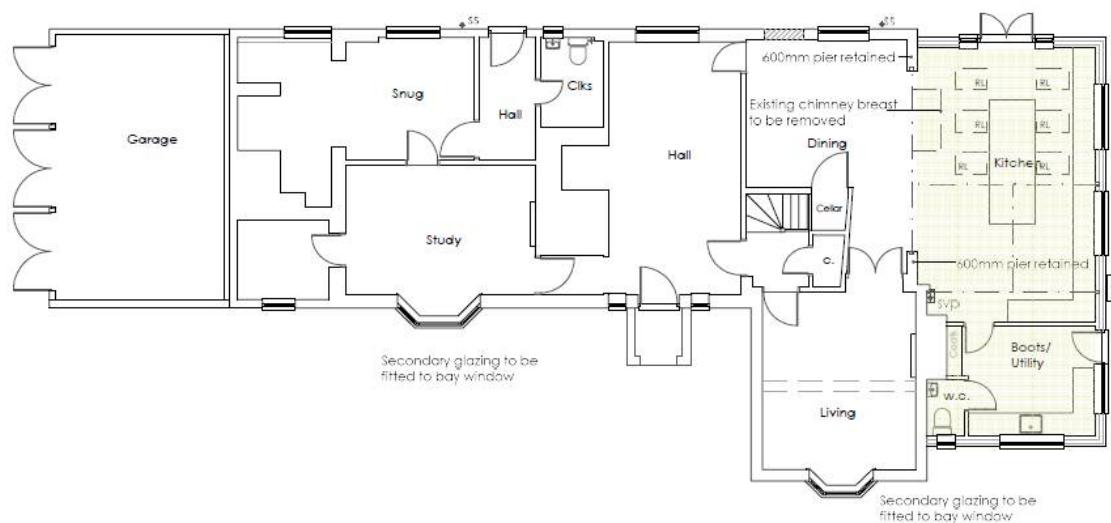


Fig 13 Proposed ground floor

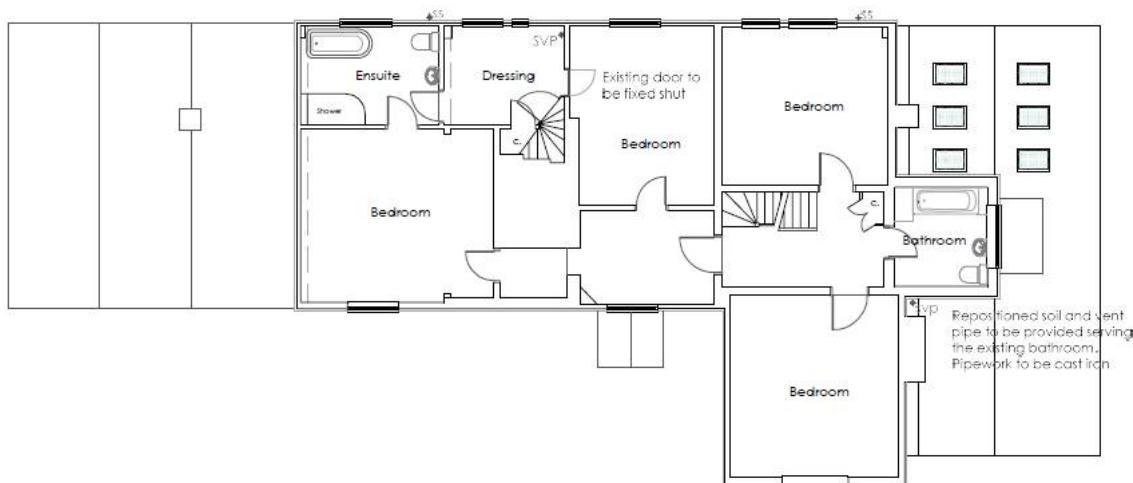


Fig 14 Proposed first floor

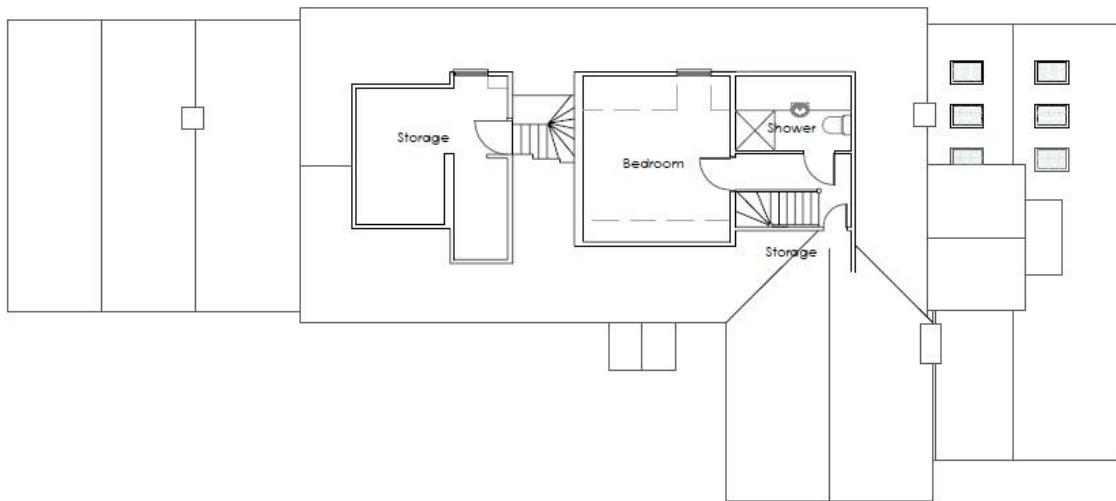


Fig 15 Proposed second floor

3.11 Hard and soft landscaping of the site is proposed to be retained as existing.

4.0 Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.1 So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. (para.10)

4.2 This presumption means:

- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. (para.11)

4.3 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF confirms that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

4.4 Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (para.109).

4.5 At paragraph 124 the NPPF states that the creation of high quality buildings is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

4.6 Paragraph 127 goes on to state that development should be:

- visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment; and
- create a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

4.7 Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

4.8 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

4.9 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

4.10 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The Development Plan

4.11 The Council's development plan is made up of the Site Allocations Local Plan, the Core Strategy and the saved policies of the Local Plan.

4.12 The relevant policies of the Core Strategy include:

- Core Policy 2 - Green Belt
- Core Policy 4 - Environment
- Core Policy 5 - Sustainable Design and Construction
- Core Policy 14 - Development in the Villages and Rural Areas

4.13 The relevant policies of the Local Plan include:

- Policy MGB1 - Metropolitan Green Belt
- Policy LBD1 - Development outside the Limits to Built Development
- Policy EN25 - Development control criteria for all development proposals affecting the rural landscape
- Policy H11 - Extensions to dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development

5.0 Assessment

Principle of the Development

5.1 The site comprises an established residential dwelling within an area comprising an established ribbon of residential development.

5.2 The proposal comprises a modest extension and modest alterations to the existing house, which will not alter the established residential use of the site or the residential character of the site.

5.3 Policy H11 of the Local Plan confirms that outside the Limits to Built Development, extensions to an existing dwelling will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The existing dwelling was designed, constructed or converted for residential use and was built on permanent foundations on the site;
2. The extension would be modest and in scale with the original dwelling and would not dominate it visually or result in a poorly-proportioned building or detract from its character or setting; and
3. The dwelling as extended would not lend itself to future sub-division to form a separate dwelling.

5.4 As confirmed by the listing description for the property, the existing dwelling was designed and constructed for residential use, and it was built on permanent foundations on the site.

5.5 The proposed single storey extension will be modest and in scale with the original dwelling. The extension will also not dominate the original dwelling visually or result in a poorly-proportioned building or detract from its character or setting.

5.6 The existing house remains largely unaltered from its original form. The volume of the proposed extension will therefore clearly represent an increase of less than a 50% of the original dwelling.

5.7 Lastly, due to the modest nature of the proposed extension, the dwelling as extended would not lend itself to future sub-division to form separate dwellings.

5.8 The proposal will therefore wholly comply with policy H11 of the Local Plan and the principle of the development is one that can be accepted provided the proposal complies with all other relevant planning policies.

Impact on the Metropolitan Green Belt

5.9 As noted above, the proposal comprises a modest extension to the existing, original building, which will be a proportionate addition to the original building.

5.10 The proposal therefore represents appropriate development in the Green Belt that will preserve the openness of the area. This is in accordance with the NPPF.

Impact on the listed building

5.11 The Client has had a heritage statement produced to assess the proposed works to the listed building.

5.12 The statement outlines the lengthy listing description for the property, provides an outline of the history of the property and provides an archaeological assessment.

5.13 The statement moves on to outline the proposals and carries out a detailed discussion surrounding the proposed works in relation to the significance of the listed building.

5.14 The heritage statement confirms that the form of the proposed extension will continue with the 'rhythm' of the evolution of the building and is considered to be in keeping with it.

5.15 The proposal would remove part of the 19th century wall of the building, and redundant chimney, to enable an opening through into the new extension and create a modern internal layout for the Client and their modern living requirements.

5.16 Whilst this wall would appear to follow the line of the medieval wall, the heritage statement confirms that this wall has been replaced between ground and first floors with 19th century brickwork. The wall above is presumed to be original timber frame but will not be disturbed by the proposals.

5.17 In removing this wall, short nibs will remain either end to make clear that the wall has been removed and thereby maintain the understanding of the building.

5.18 Whilst the 19th century fabric is of some significance, it is of a lower level than other, unaffected, parts of the fabric.

5.19 The internal alterations to provide en-suite bathrooms to the first and second floors do not require listed building consent, but the related works do.

5.20 In respect of the first floor, the existing floor is extremely uneven but is, probably, the medieval oak plank floor. The proposal is to 'fir' on top of the existing boards, in line with the joists beneath to enable a level board floor to be laid over.

5.21 This will leave all the early fabric untouched but enable a useable floor to be provided.

5.22 Careful consideration has been given to drainage and this would be provided with internal connections, which would not interfere with historic fabric, connected to a new cast iron external downpipe and vent.

5.23 It is therefore submitted that there will be no harm to the listed building resulting from these internal works.

5.24 Overall, the proposals are considered to be at the low end of less than substantial, as defined in the NPPF. This harm is clearly justified by optimising the viable use of the building, which is use as a residential dwelling.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

5.25 The property is sited on the A264, the main road between Langton Green and Ashurst and is visible within the street scene. The proposed single storey extension will be attached to the eastern flank elevation of the house, where existing projections are found. As well as being single storey in design, the extension will be 5m wide.

5.26 In terms of visual amenity, the proposal is considered to be complementary in terms of built form and scale to the host dwelling. The extension will be lower in height compared with the existing property and will be set back from the front elevation of the dwelling at the eastern end of the building, thereby presenting a subservient appearance.

5.27 The proposed materials will match and complement those on the existing house.

5.28 Overall, in terms of design and impact on the street scene, the proposal is acceptable.

5.29 The modest nature of the development and the use of high quality matching and complementary materials means that the proposals will conserve and enhance the landscape character of the AONB.

5.30 The development will therefore comply with the NPPF and the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

Impact on residential amenity

5.31 The proposed single storey extension will be located at the eastern end of the house and will generally project away from the adjoining and nearby neighbouring properties. The development will retain a distance of over 40m from these neighbouring and nearby houses.

5.32 At these retained distances of separation the proposed extension will not have a material impact on the residential amenities currently enjoyed by the occupiers of the adjoining and nearby dwellings.

5.33 The development will also provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the application site, wholly in accordance with the NPPF and the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

Highways safety and parking

5.34 The site will retain sufficient parking and will also provide sufficient space to provide the turning of vehicles. The existing vehicular access to the site will also be retained. Highways safety will therefore be preserved and parking provision will be wholly acceptable.

5.35 The development will therefore comply with the NPPF and the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The scheme represents an appropriate development outside the Limits to Built Development.

6.2 The proposal also represents a proportionate extension to a dwelling in the Green Belt, which means that the proposal will be appropriate in the Green Belt, preserving the openness of the area.

6.3 It is acknowledged that the works will have less than substantial harm to the listed building. However, this harm is clearly justified by optimising the viable use of the building, which is use as a residential dwelling.

6.4 The development is of a high quality design, preserving the prevailing character and appearance of the area.

6.5 The development will also ensure that existing and future residents of neighbouring property will be safeguarded, at the same time as preserving the amenities of the existing and future occupiers of the application site.

6.6 The proposal is also wholly acceptable in terms of preserving highways safety and providing parking.

6.7 The Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development.