



PLANNING STATEMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Fowler Architecture and Planning Ltd. on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. D Tennant in support of the submission of a full planning application for the 'removal of existing dwelling and barn. Erection of replacement dwelling; with associated parking, turning, landscaping, private amenity space and access' at Colt Cottage, Postern Lane, Tonbridge.
- 1.2 It follows pre-application advice that the Applicants received from the Council in July 2022, for a similar form of development (Ref: 22/00796/PAMEET).

2. Site Description, Context & Constraints

Site Description

- 2.1 The site is situated on the northern side of Postern Lane, a rural road which runs from the eastern edge of Tonbridge, south-east away from Tonbridge to meet Tudeley Road.
- 2.2 The site is bound to the south by the existing residential property and curtilage of The Postern (Grade II* listed) and to the west is the residential property and curtilage of Apple Barn. To the north and east is open agricultural land and apple orchards.
- 2.3 The site is currently occupied by the existing unlisted dwelling of Colt Cottage and a barn which has recently been approved for conversion to residential use (as considered further at Section 3 of this Statement below).
- 2.4 The land slopes gently away from the site from south to north; these features are illustrated on the photos below:



Photo1: Colt Cottage and existing barn



Photo2: Existing barn and view north



Photos 3 & 4: Northern boundary wall of The Postern; looking west towards Colt Cottage and east



Photos 5 & 6: Views across orchard looking east and north-east

Site Context

- 2.5 There is a small collection of dwellings along the northern side of Postern Lane, those close to The Postern are generally relatively large detached dwellings set within their own curtilage, although there is a pair of semi-detached dwellings some 350m further north west along the lane. The larger dwellings are generally set back from the road and well screened by mature frontage boundaries.

- 2.6 Within the small collection of buildings of which The Postern forms a part are some large agricultural buildings set back from the road. Whilst the majority of dwellings along Postern Lane are of red brick with clay tile roof, the existing Colt Cottage is timber clad set under a slate roof.

Site Constraints

- 2.7 The site is subject to a number of constraints of both a policy and technical nature. In terms of the former, the site(s) is situated within the designated metropolitan green belt, with related planning policy considerations (considered at Section 5 of this Statement).
- 2.8 The Postern itself is listed at Grade II*, the list description stating:

“1/272 The Postern 20.10.54 II*”

Large house. Dated 1757 with some C19 and C20 modernisation. Flemish bond red brick on coursed sandstone ashlar footings; brick stacks and chimneyshafts; peg-tile roof.

Plan: House faces south onto the garden with its entrance front on the left (west) side. The house is terraced into the hillside so that the ground floor level is buried on the right side. Double depth plan house, 2 main rooms wide and 2 main rooms deep. Central entrance hall from the west side with the stairs rising to rear. Most rooms are heated by lateral stacks although there is one axial stack. Principal rooms on the south (garden) side with service rooms behind. 3 storeys with secondary single storey service blocks to rear.

Exterior: Principal front to the garden (south) has a symmetrical 5-window front. Ground and first floor have 12-pane sashes and second floor 9-pane sashes. Central doorway contains a C20 part-glazed door with a contemporary Georgian-style doorcase with a segmental pediment. Flat brick bands across the front at first and second floor levels, moulded brick eaves cornice and plain parapet. Roof is hipped both ends. In the centre, above the first floor window there, a brick is inscribed with the date 1757 and the initials J.E.

Entrance front has a 4-window front; it would have been symmetrical with a 5th window right of centre. Similar windows but no flat bands or eaves cornice. Central doorway is wide with an almost round-headed segmental arch containing a 6-panel door with sidelights (with internal shutters for security) and a fanlight with an elegant pattern of glazing bars. Opposite (east) side has casement windows with glazing bars, all with low segmental brick arches. Doorway off the staircase half landing contains a probably C20 part-glazed panelled door with a stone panel above carved with Adams-style decoration.

Interior: Has been somewhat modernised in the C20. For instance the principal ground floor rooms are lined with imported fielded panelling in 2 heights and

principal parlour has good but introduced timber chimneypiece. Nevertheless original joinery remains. Roof not inspected.”

List UID: 1253179

2.9 Part of the site falls within the designated flood plain – details of the extent of flood zone 3 are included at Appendix 1 to this Statement. The siting of the proposed replacement dwelling has sought to appropriately reflect this constraint (see Section 6 below).

2.10 The site is not known to be subject to any other constraints. In particular, it is not subject to any specific Tree Preservation Orders or crossed by any Public Rights of Way, the nearest route being WT165 which runs along a track to the east of The Postern, then wrapping around the eastern boundary of the site to join Postern Lane.

3. Planning History

3.1 According to the Council’s on-line record of planning applications, the property of The Postern has been subject to a number of planning applications previously. However, the only planning history relating directly to the site the subject of this application is as follows:

21/03736/PNQCLA: Prior Notification for the change of use of land within its curtilage from an agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (barn)
Granted, 05/01/2022

15/504027/PNQCLA: Prior notification for the change of use of and agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (barn)
Granted, 13/08/2015

04/01324/FUL: Erection of two-storey rear extension (Colt Cottage)
Approved, 07/09/2004

13/02461/FUL: Change of use from agricultural land to residential curtilage (Colt Cottage)
Approved, 26/11/2013

13/00099/FUL: Change of use from agricultural land to residential curtilage (Colt Cottage)
Withdrawn, 06/03/2013

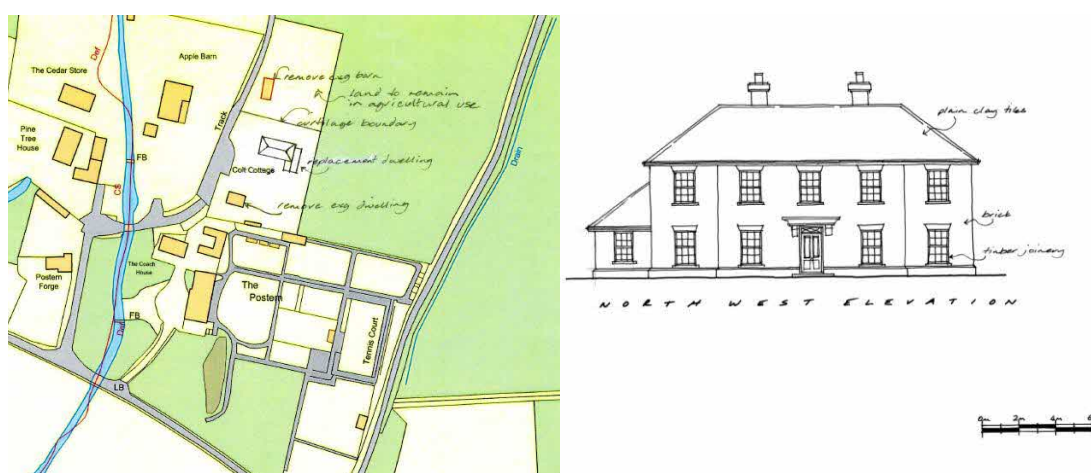
3.2 Based on these, there is no planning history of any direct relevance to this application proposal. The pertinent points from this history are considered to be as follows:

There is an extant Prior Approval for the conversion of the existing barn to residential use (21/03736/PNOCLA).

There was permission granted in 2004 for a rear extension to the existing Colt Cottage. Whilst that extension has not to date been fully implemented, a material start was made to that permission within the deadline and it is therefore considered to remain extant.

4. Pre-Application Enquiry

- 4.1 A Pre-Application Enquiry (22/00976/PREMEET) was submitted to the Council in March 2022, for a similar form of development to what is proposed under this current application. Extracts of the submitted plans are cited below:



Location Plan/Site and Elevation Plan (extracts) submitted under 2022 Pre-Application Enquiry

- 4.2 The proposals were discussed on-site with the Planning Officer and Conservation Officer on the 29th April 2022, after which a revised elevational drawing was submitted to the Council in May. An extract of this is cited below.



Elevation Plan (extract) submitted during the course of the 2022 Pre-Application Enquiry

- 4.3 We received a written response from the Council on the 11th July 2022. This is included at Appendix 2 of this Statement, along with the Conservation Officer's

response. The response was largely positive, although some concerns were expressed in respect of the design, scale, size and position of the new dwelling, as well as its appearance. This current application has sought to address these previous concerns.

5. Proposed Development

- 5.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing dwelling (Colt Cottage) and the existing barn, and the erection of a replacement dwelling.
- 5.2 The new dwelling will be of simple rectilinear form, similar to the existing barn (to be demolished), with accommodation over two floors. It will have four bedrooms, and be of brick and plain clay tile construction.
- 5.3 It will stand roughly equidistance between Colt Cottage and the existing barn, and will be set back a generous distance back from the existing track. Its principal elevation will face north.
- 5.4 The new house will be of a traditional design, with a pitch roof and gable ends, sliding sash windows and an off-set front door and chimney stack.
- 5.5 A modest extension is proposed to the existing residential curtilage, which will incorporate existing agricultural land to the north and east. This will allow the house to site in a more spacious plot, and is considered to be offset by the removal of the existing barn, and the land being returned to agricultural use – rather than changing to residential use under the current Class Q approval.
- 5.6 It is proposed to access the site using the existing access which serves Colt Cottage.

6. Planning Policy and other Material Considerations

The Development Plan

- 6.1 The relevant development plan for the site comprises the Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy (TWBCS, adopted June 2010), along with the Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations Local Plan (TWBSALP, adopted July 2016) and Saved Policies from the Local Plan 2006 (LP).
- 6.2 Within the TWBCS / TWBSALP and LP the policies of most relevance to the consideration of this Enquiry proposal are as follows:

Core Policy 1: Delivery of Development

Core Policy 2: Green Belt

Core Policy 4: Environment

Core Policy 5: Sustainable Design and Construction

Core Policy 6: Housing Provision

Core Policy 14: Development in the Villages and Rural Areas

LBD1: Development Outside the Limits to Built Development (partially superseded)

MGB1: Metropolitan Green Belt

EN1: Development Control Criteria

EN11: Historic Parks and Gardens

EN13: Tree and Woodland Protection

EN18: Flood Risk

EN25: Development Control Criteria for all Development Proposals Affecting the Rural Landscape

H10: Replacement dwellings outside the Limits to Built Development

Other Material Considerations

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework', updated September 2023) is an important material consideration, as is the accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

7. Planning Assessment

7.1 This Section considers the following planning issues:

The Principle of the Proposed Development

Landscape and 'Openness' Impact

Heritage Considerations

Character and Appearance

Flood Risk

Residential Amenity

Ecological and Biodiversity impacts

Traffic and Highways

The Principle of the Proposed Development

7.2 Policy H10 sets a positive presumption for replacement dwellings outside the limits to built development provided three specific criteria are met, as follows:

a) the existing building enjoys a lawful residential use which has not been abandoned – this is the case for the existing Colt Cottage; and the barn benefits from

a recent Prior Approval for conversion to residential use (21/03736/PNOCLA, granted 11/11/2021).

b) the replacement dwelling would be sited on, or as close as is reasonably practicable to, the site of the existing dwelling, unless an alternative position on the plot would result in clear landscape, access or local amenity benefits – the proposed siting of the replacement dwelling seeks to reflect and respond to the range of planning constraints, in particular the setting of the designated heritage assets and the designated flood plain. These are considered in more detail below, but it was recognised by the Council at pre-application stage that there were benefits in bringing the replacement dwelling away from The Postern.

c) the replacement dwelling would be no more obtrusive in the landscape than the dwelling which is to be replaced – see section below.

- 7.3 Clearly, the location of the site within the designated green belt is an important consideration; the impact of the proposal on the openness of the green belt is considered in the following sub-section.

Landscape and 'Openness' Impact

- 7.4 One of the fundamental aims of the green belt is to maintain its openness and to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. Given that, as noted above, the principle of replacement of existing buildings is not 'inappropriate' within the green belt, a key consideration will be how best to ensure the proposal minimises landscape impact.

- 7.5 In this context, consideration has been given to how best to minimise this impact with the most preferable siting of the replacement dwelling, but also set this against the other planning issues and constraints considered elsewhere in this Statement. The siting of the proposed replacement dwelling is not considered to give rise to any particular landscape harm, nor to impact the openness of the green belt given the context and setting of the site. It will sit roughly equidistance between the two existing buildings that are proposed to be removed and will be set back further into the site, in a less prominent location. Furthermore, the footprint of the proposed dwelling is noticeably less than the pre-application scheme, and is actually comparable to the cumulative footprint of the existing barn and house (incl. extant extension) that are proposed to be demolished under this application.

Heritage Considerations

- 7.6 The setting of the grade II* listed property The Postern is an important factor in the consideration of any proposal. In moving the proposed replacement dwelling further

away from the existing listed property, then there are considered to be heritage benefits arising from the proposed siting. This was recognised by the Council at pre-application stage.

Character and Appearance

- 7.7 Following the feedback we received at pre-application stage, the design of the proposed replacement dwelling has been changed accordingly. Indeed, it is now a more modest, rectilinear dwelling of traditional design – rather than a more formal, ‘classically inspired’ two storey house. The new house is considered to be in-keeping with the style of property along Postern Lane and an improvement on what is currently seen at Colt Cottage. The materials will be brick elevations set under clay tile roof, which is entirely consistent with the fabric of the area.
- 7.8 It is also worth noting that the proposed dwelling is well over a metre lower than the scheme that was presented at pre-application stage, and is only some 0.1m higher than the existing Colt Cottage – an increase that is negligible when considering that the new house will be set much further back from the existing track.

Flood Risk

- 7.9 Based on the publicly available flood risk map for the site (as included at Appendix 1), there is a clear benefit from moving the existing built form further to the east such that it is located outside of the designated flood plain. As such, the proposed siting reflects this constraint, being located outside of the designated flood plain but as close to the existing built form as reasonably practicable.

Residential Amenity

- 7.10 This application proposes to position the replacement dwelling between the existing Colt Cottage and the barn, which has been granted approval for conversion to residential use. As such, there is a clear logic to the siting the dwelling in this location. The new house will be positioned some 50m away from Apple Barn, thus ensuring that existing amenity is appropriately respected.

Ecological and Biodiversity impacts

- 7.11 An Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Native Ecology, has been submitted as part of this application.

Traffic and Highways

- 7.12 The existing site benefits from a lawful access to serve the existing Colt Cottage; the recent granting of approval for the conversion of the barn means that the existing

access to the site could potentially serve two separate dwellings. As such, there is not considered to be any issue arising with the retention of the existing access to serve the Site.

7.13 In terms of traffic movements, with the proposal being for the replacement of an existing dwelling there would be no increase in traffic movements to the site, and in fact a reduction over that which could occur if the approval for the conversion of the barn were to be implemented. Parking and turning would be addressed through detailed design consideration.

8. Conclusion

8.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support the proposal for the demolition of the existing dwelling and barn and erection of 1no. replacement dwelling; associated alterations to curtilage area; access and landscaping works. The principle of this proposal is considered to be entirely acceptable in the context of the relevant development plan policies, in particular Saved Policy H10.

8.2 We have drawn on the concerns raised at pre-application stage, with the size, scale, positioning, orientation and design of the proposed dwelling all changing. The result is a new house of modest proportions, which will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, whilst improving the setting of The Postern and removing two existing buildings that are looking tired and outdated.

8.3 There are no technical reasons why this application should not succeed, and it is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted accordingly.