

2 Hillside Cottages  
Frank's Hollow Road  
Bidborough  
Kent  
TN3 0UB

**Proposed Extensions & Alterations  
Design and Access Statement**

September 2023

## **Introduction**

This Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs R Poulson in respect of a full Planning Application for the proposed extensions and alterations. This application follows a Pre-Application Enquiry submitted on 14 September 2023 and the response from the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council [REDACTED]. All recommendations from the advice have been incorporated into this design proposal.

## **General**

2 Hillside Cottages is the southern half of a pair of two-storey semi-detached cottages situated on the eastern side of Frank's Hollow Road, a rural lane that links Bidborough village to the hamlet of Stockland Green to the south. Located approximately 500 metres south of Bidborough village, the site is part-way down a south-facing hillside that slopes gently down to Birchett's Wood.

To the west of the lane, at this point, is situated the main entrance to the Bidborough Wastewater Treatment Works belonging to Southern Water.

The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Birchett's Wood is an Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Site.

## **Property**

The building would have been constructed at the turn of the 20th century to accommodate local farm-workers and their families. To the rear is also a single storey lean-to non-habitable structure. Of solid masonry construction, the property has since been rendered and interlocking concrete tiles replace the original slate roof.

The garden extends to the east and south of the dwelling and there is paved terrace area immediately to the rear and a grassed area that slopes down to the southern boundary. A parking-bay for two cars is situated adjacent to the western road frontage.

The dwelling has been extended by a two-storey side/rear extension that links to an original two-storey rear projection under planning permission 98/00957/FUL.

## Proposal

The proposal is for the construction of a single storey side extension to create an entrance and to enlarge the kitchen/dining area. A rear extension is proposed to replace the rear single storey structure.

The side extension is to have a lean-to roof and the rear extension is to have a part flat and part pitched roof.

It is also intended to externally insulate and re-render the dwelling including the proposed extension and to enlarge the existing terrace.

The footprint of the proposed extensions has been reduced by revised plans submitted on 31 July and this enquiry is based on these amended proposals.

## Planning History and Policy Considerations

The property lies outside the Limits to Built Development and within the Metropolitan Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The property did have an extension approved under application 98/00957/FUL.

The Pre-Application Enquiry (23/01654/PAMEET) sets out the relevant Planning Policies and advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant local policies set out in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 and Core Strategy 2010. Policies LBD1, MGB1, EN1, EN13, EN25 and H11 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006 and Core Policies 2, 4, 5 and 14 of the Core Strategy are deemed to be relevant in this case.

## Volume

The property is situated within the Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where national and local planning policies *seek to prevent inappropriate development that would encroach on the countryside and have an adverse impact on its character and openness*. Paragraph 149(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that **'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;'** is an exception to this.

*At Local Plan level, Policy H11 allows for modest extensions to existing dwellings. The pre-ambles to this policy suggests that an extension could be considered as modest providing it would not result in an increase of the original dwellinghouse by more than 50% or 150 cubic metres, whichever is the greater, up to a maximum of 250 cubic metres.*

The original house as it existed in 1 July 1948 has a volume of 300m<sup>3</sup>. The existing two-storey extension approved under application 98/00957/FUL has a volume of 84m<sup>3</sup>. The proposed side and single storey extension have a volume of 59.43m<sup>3</sup> and 120.48m<sup>3</sup> respectively.

This creates a combined proposed volume of 263.92m<sup>3</sup>. This represents an increase of 88%, and exceeds the volume limitations set out in Policy H11.

The volume allowances that can be offset against the total proposed volume are the demolition of the existing lean-to, which has a total volume of 9.19m<sup>3</sup> and the permitted development volume (see Fig.1) of 24.3m<sup>3</sup>. In addition there is a structure located with 5.0m of the original dwelling which has a total volume of 31.8m<sup>3</sup>.

This total offset allowance of 65.29m<sup>3</sup> therefore represents an increase of 66% of the pre-1948 volume of 300m<sup>3</sup>.

It is acknowledged that the increase in volume would exceed the provisions of Local Plan Level policy H11 and we would like to indicate the following;

*However, it is also acknowledged that these stated volume limitations are considered to be guidelines and Policy H11 goes on to state that proposals would be permitted provided ' the extensions 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'.*

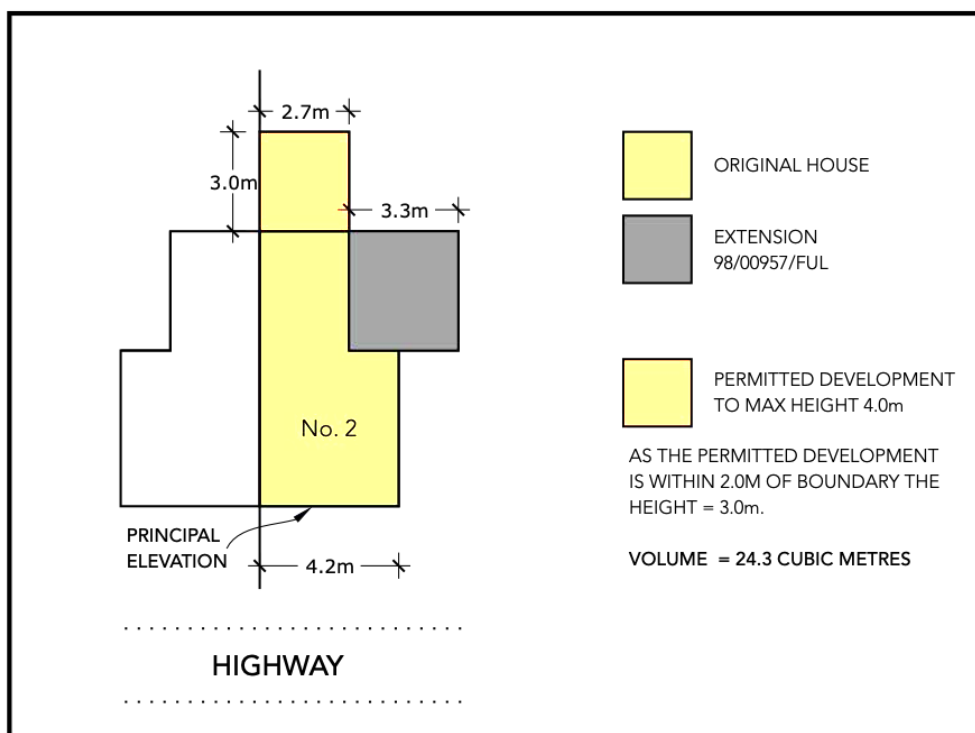


Fig.1 Permitted development allowance

## Visual Impact

*Paragraph 126 of the NPPF supports the importance of good design within developments and paragraph 130 seeks developments to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.*

The dwelling and subsequent extension 98/00957/FUL employ the vernacular language of small scale pitch roof & gable design. It is intended that the proposed design references this existing built form. Every effort has been made to keep the volume of the proposed single storey extension low whilst providing the clients with extra space needed to improve the ground floor layout.

The pitched roof is intended to visually link the side, rear and existing extensions and is designed to be in keeping with character of the dwelling by incorporating a similar shallow pitch.

The proposed extension being single-storey would be within the confines of the garden and would not be highly visible outside of the site.

The entrance to the dwelling is currently on the side elevation. The side extension is intended to create a new hallway and improve circulation space within the dwelling. The new entrance will have access directly onto Frank's Hollow Road.

The main bulk of the extension would be to the rear and this would extend beyond the side elevation of the host dwelling. The majority of the extension is located on the existing rear patio and will also be single storey and of a design that is in keeping with the character of the dwelling.

We suggest that the existing extension, being two-storey, has a greater impact visually on the wider area. Due to the single storey nature of the proposed extensions they would therefore appear more subservient to the existing dwelling and their positioning close to the existing built form on this site would help to limit the impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the wider landscape character of the AONB.

## Residential Amenity

The property most affected by this proposal, specifically the rear extension, would be the attached dwelling at 1 Hillside Cottage. The rear extension would be located close to the shared boundary where the ground levels slope up to the north. A flat roof has been created to reduce the height and impact of the extension on this neighbour.

## Landscaping

There are a number of trees located on the boundary of this property. The majority of these are leylandii which are located outside the site boundary. The boundary to this site is of mixed planting consisting of leylandii interspersed with native trees.

Removal of the leylandii and conservation of the existing native trees is proposed in order to enhance the site and surrounding landscape.

A proposed extension to increase the size of the terrace by enlarging it to the side of the property would enable level access from the proposed rear extension. Solid oak retaining walls allow for areas of planting, with steps and a ramp access from the parking bay and garden. The planting of the beds within the terraced area will visually soften the impact of the change in level between the property and the existing garden.

## Design

The property was extended in 1998 and the choice of rendered concrete blockwork for its construction and the subsequent rendering of the majority of the existing brickwork was made. In addition, the replacement of the existing slate roof with concrete tiles and the installation of poor quality UPVC windows has considerably detracted from the overall look of the property which is now in need of complete refurbishment.

A low-carbon retrofit of the original building is proposed (see drawings) including external wall insulation, solar photovoltaic panels and an air source heat pump for heating and hot water.

## Access

The property fronts directly onto a narrow rural lane which is the main access route for all vehicle, cycle and foot traffic.

Off-road parking for two vehicles will remain unchanged. It is proposed that two permanent electric charging points are installed in the parking bay.

Access to the front entrance from the parking area will be up steps owing to the level changes within the site. A ramp up to the terrace level from the parking bay will allow access to side and rear doors of the property over level thresholds.

The property is within a 15 minute walking distance of Bidborough village where a Primary School, newsagent, pub and garage are to be found. There is a regular bus service from Bidborough to Tunbridge Wells.

## **Summary**

The proposed extensions are of a design that would complement the character of the dwelling while referencing the vernacular of the original dwelling. We submit that the proposals comply with the relevant policies and will provide a significant improvement to the visual appearance of this property and with the addition of a low-carbon retrofit the life of the property will be considerably extended.

September 2023

Tessa Hendrikz  
Rebecca Randall







1 & 2 Hillside Cottages from Frank's Hollow Road



West elevation from Frank's Hollow Road



South-west elevation showing extent of two-storey extension from Frank's Hollow Road



South elevation from garden



South-east elevation and rear of 1 Hillside Cottages to the right of image from garden



South elevation from Frank's Hollow Road