

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposal: Erection of a single storey side / rear extension and replacement detached garage. Erection of acoustic fence along northern boundary of the garden. Repositioning of the vehicle access and erection of new entrance gates. Replacement of double glazed uPVC windows with traditional timber windows.

Site Address: The Oast, Norton Road, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent ME17 3RT

Application Site

The application site comprises a detached residential oast located on a triangular corner plot at the junction of Norton Road and Plough Wents Road. The property benefits from a detached garage adjacent the northern boundary of the site. Vehicle access into the property is from Norton Road via an established access with a turning and parking area located in front of the garage. The north, south and west boundaries of the site contain a high level boundary hedge and trees which provide screening and privacy for the garden.

The application site is located in a non-designated rural area. The countryside to the north of the site is a landscape of local value. The application property is not listed and is not located in a conservation area. There is a grade II listed building (Homewell House) located to the east of the site and The Plough Inn, which is located to the northeast is also grade II listed. The site is located in flood zone 1.

Due to the corner plot location the application site does not adjoin any residential properties.

Proposal

Erection of a single storey side / rear extension and replacement detached garage. Erection of acoustic fence along a section of the northern boundary of the garden. Repositioning of the vehicle access and erection of new entrance gates along the southern boundary onto Norton Road. Replacement of double glazed uPVC windows with timber windows.

Single storey side extension

The extension would project approx. 4.2m from the existing property and would measure approx. 2.2m to the eaves and 3.4m to the ridge with a flat roof and roof lantern hidden behind the pitched roof. The extension would have timber fenestration and facing brickwork and roof tiles to match the existing property.



Proposed single storey extension highlighted

Replacement Garage

The proposed garage would measure 5m to the ridge with an external stair access to a small roof level storage area. The proposed footprint would measure approx. 6m x 6.3m. The garage would have a rural design and appearance and would be finished in natural timber cladding with a plain clay tile roof with solar panels on one roof slope.

The existing garage measures approx. 5.9m to the ridge with a footprint of approx. 6.3m x 5.6m. The replacement garage would therefore have a lower ridge height than the existing garage and would have broadly the same footprint. It is proposed to relocate the garage to the southern boundary to improve the family garden as well as the outlook from the property and proposed extension. The garage would also be located further away from the Oast thus improving the relationship and setting of the Oast house.



Existing Garage front and side elevation



Proposed replacement garage front and side elevation

Acoustic boundary fence

The northern garden boundary of the property abuts the busy Plough Wents Road close to the junction with Sutton Road. The applicants are seeking to reduce the traffic noise in their garden by erecting a section of acoustic fence along the northern boundary of the garden. The fence would be formed of natural timber at 2m in height and would be located behind the high level boundary hedge and would therefore be screened from the road and would have no significant visual impact on the streetscene or rural setting.

Relocation of vehicle access

The replacement garage would be located in front of the existing vehicle access adjacent the southern boundary of the site. As a result the vehicle access would be repositioned slightly to the east of the current position. The existing access would be closed up and planted with a new native hedge along roadside boundary as indicated on the proposed plans.

Replacement of double glazed uPVC windows with timber windows

The Oast currently has unsympathetic uPVC windows which were installed by a previous owner. The applicants would like to replace the existing windows with traditional timber windows which would be more in keeping with the character and appearance of the converted Oast. Timber fenestration is also proposed in the new extension and would match the replacement windows in the Oast.

The replacement of the unsympathetic and prominent uPVC windows with timber fenestration would constitute a betterment and would significantly enhance the character and appearance of the Oast.

Planning History

23/501375/FULL - Section 73 application for variation of condition iv (Permitted development rights) (to allow permitted development rights for Part 1, Class E (buildings etc incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse) and Part 2, Class A (gates, fences, walls etc) and other small scale domestic developments such as electric charging points to be carried out by the owners of the property without requiring planning permission) pursuant to application 74/0065 for conversion of oasthouse into single dwelling unit – Approved 16.05.2023.

21/503572/FULL – Demolition of existing garage and erection of a part single storey, part two storey rear extension to facilitate a two car garage, utility, office, open plan kitchen, and living and dining room. Erection of a front porch extension and new front boundary wall and gates – Refused 15.09.2023.

80/0569 - Detached double garage – Approved 17.06.1980.

74/0065 - Conversion of the oasthouse into single dwelling unit, erection of double garage and landscaping details – Approved.

Planning Policy

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011-2031

Policies: SS1, SP17, SP18, DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM11, DM30, DM32

Maidstone Local Development Framework Residential Extensions SPD 2009 - Section 5
Extensions within the Countryside.

National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Policy Guidance

Planning Assessment

The key planning considerations are design and visual impact in terms of the attachment and relationship to the converted Oast and the visual impact on the character of the countryside.

The most relevant Local Plan policy is DM32 and criteria 2 of this policy covers proposals to extend dwellings in the countryside. In addition, Section 5 of the Council's Residential Extensions SPD provides guidance for residential extensions located in the countryside, including extensions to converted rural buildings such as oast houses.

It is important to note that policy DM32 and the Council's Residential Extensions SPD do not prohibit extensions to converted rural buildings such as oast houses. Rather the SPD advises that new extensions to rural buildings such as oast houses should not have an unacceptable impact on the original form and character of the building. Careful consideration has been afforded to the design and scale of the proposed extension to ensure it complies with the Council's Residential Extension SPD and policy DM32.

Policy DM32 is set out in full below and each aspect of the proposal will be assessed to demonstrate compliance with this policy as well as the guidance contained within the SPD:

Policy DM32 (criteria 2)

Proposals to extend dwellings in the countryside which meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- i. The proposal is well designed and is sympathetically related to the existing dwelling without overwhelming or destroying the original form of the existing dwelling;**

The single-storey extension has been well designed to ensure it forms a subordinate and sympathetic relationship with the host property. The extension would have a traditional appearance and would be well proportioned to the host property and the use of good quality matching materials would ensure the extension forms a harmonious addition to the converted oast.

It terms of scale and size the extension would be a modest single-storey height with a modest footprint. In addition, the extension would form a sympathetic attachment to the converted oast to ensure the historic footprint and form of the oast is retained. In this regard, the flank walls of the extension would be set in to ensure the original form and character of the oast house would be clearly retained. As a result the extension would not overwhelm or destroy the original form of the existing dwelling in accordance with the requirements of policy DM32.

Further, the extension would be located within the existing residential curtilage and by reason of the single-storey scale there would be no adverse impact on the openness of the countryside.

As demonstrated by the architectural drawings and the traditional design, together with the modest scale, appropriate siting and sympathetic attachment to the host property, there would be no unacceptable impact on the original form and character of the converted Oast. The proposal would therefore comply with paragraph 5.14 of the Council's Residential Extensions SPD.

ii. The proposal would result in a development which individually or cumulatively is visually acceptable in the countryside;

Some public views of the extension would be afforded from Plough Wents Road. However, the proposal has been carefully designed to ensure the extension reads as a subordinate addition to the host property, by virtue of the stepped flank elevation, subservient scale and height and use of good quality matching materials. As a result the extension would not appear overly prominent and there would be no demonstrable visual harm to the countryside.

The proposed garage would replace a detached garage of a similar size and scale and would therefore have no greater visual impact than the existing garage. To ensure there would be no unacceptable cumulative visual impact a condition could be used stipulating that the existing garage must be demolished prior to the first use of the replacement garage.

iii. The proposal would not create a separate dwelling or one of a scale or type of accommodation that is capable of being used as a separate dwelling; and

The proposed extension would be attached to the existing houses and would clearly not be of a scale or size that would be capable of being used as a separate dwelling.

In addition, the replacement garage, by reason of the scale and size, would clearly not create a separate dwelling and the applicants have no intention of using the domestic garage as such. The proposed garage would also have a close physical relationship with the host property due to the proximity to the main house and garden and the residential unit would continue to be served by a single vehicle access.

Should the Council have any concerns regarding the future use of the replacement garage a condition could be attached stipulating that the garage shall only be used as a garage and form domestic storage. Although, it is noted that this type of condition would not be wholly necessary as planning permission would be required for a change of use to a separate house.

iv. Proposals for the construction of new or replacement outbuildings (e.g. garages) should be subservient in scale, location and design to the host dwelling and cumulatively with the existing dwelling remain visually acceptable in the countryside.

The footprint of the replacement garage would be broadly the same size as the existing garage, however the new garage would have a lower ridge height and would therefore have a reduced roof mass and bulk compared to the existing garage. In addition, the garage would be an appropriate rural design with natural timber cladding and natural clay tiles which would be in keeping with the character of the rural locality.

The replacement garage would not exceed what might reasonably be expected for the function of a typical garage building, being a two bay garage with a modest storage space within the roof slope.

It is noted that the Council's Residential Extension SPD advises that garages should not exceed a single storey in height. However, the existing garage benefits from a roof level storage area and the proposed garage seeks to replicate this type of roof storage whilst reducing the overall height by approx. 900mm compared to the existing garage. As a result we believe there should be no reason to object to the modest roof level storage area.

Further, the replacement garage would be relocated further away from the host dwelling and would therefore form a better relationship with the converted Oast and improve the setting of the Oast. In addition, the proposed garage would be sited in a similar position to the neighbouring garage / outbuilding located on the opposite side of Norton Road to the south of the site. As such the relocated garage would not appear out of keeping with the prevailing pattern of development or character of the streetscape in the immediate area.

It is acknowledged that the existing vehicle access would allow some views of the replacement garage from Norton Road, however the applicant is committed to screening the garage by planting a new section of native hedgerow to close up the existing vehicle access, as indicated on the proposed site plan. A new section of hedgerow and any new hedgerow planting along the southern boundary can be secured by condition and overtime would screen the bulk of the proposed garage from Norton Road.

Overall, the replacement garage would form a clear ancillary relationship with the host dwelling in accordance with the Council's Residential Extensions SPD and policy DM32.

Repositioned Access

It is proposed to reposition the replacement detached garage to the southern boundary to create more usable space in the family garden as well as improving the outlook from the house. The replacement garage would be located in front of the existing vehicle access and would effectively block up the existing vehicle access into the property.

As a result it is proposed to reposition the vehicle access slightly to the east of the current position. The existing access would be closed up and planted with a new native hedge along roadside boundary, which can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.

The proposed access incorporates a set of timber gates which would be set back 5m from the public highway to ensure vehicles can pull up safely in front of the gates without obstructing traffic along Norton Road. In order to achieve good visibility at the proposed access the hedgerow along the southern boundary will be replanted slightly further back within the site which would achieve better visibility splays than the existing access arrangements and constitute a betterment in terms of highway safety.

Subject to closing up the existing access the repositioned access and proposed entrance gates would be in keeping with similar vehicle access arrangements within the immediate area and would not result in any demonstrable visual harm to the character of the countryside.

Acoustic Fence

As set out above the applicants are seeking to reduce the traffic noise in their garden by erecting a section of acoustic fence along the northern boundary of the garden. The fence would be formed of natural timber at 2m in height and would be located within the garden behind the existing high level roadside boundary hedge which abuts Plough Wents Road. As a result the proposed fence would be screened from the road and there would be no significant visual impact on the streetscene or the rural character of the area.

Replacement windows

The Oast house currently has non-original uPVC windows which were installed by a previous owner. The applicant would like to replace the existing uPVC windows with traditional timber windows which would be more in keeping with the character and appearance of the converted Oast.

The replacement of the unsympathetic uPVC windows with traditional timber windows would constitute a significant betterment and would enhance the character and appearance of the Oast. At this stage we have not submitted any details of the timber windows but it is envisaged that a typical timber casement window would be utilised that would be in keeping with the character of the converted Oast. Specific window details / design could be secured by condition.

Neighbour Amenity

Due to the separation distances involved the proposed development would not cause any adverse neighbour amenity impacts.

Heritage Impact

The application building is not listed and is not located in a conservation area. In addition, the application property is not registered as a local listed building / non-designated heritage asset on the Council's local list or register. As such the Oast has no specific planning, landscape or historic designations that would prohibit the sympathetic extension and replacement garage proposed within this application.

It is acknowledged that the application property is an attractive Kentish Oast and the applicants overall intention is to preserve and enhance the character of the building while improving the living accommodation and family garden. The replacement of the non-original uPVC windows with traditional timber fenestration would clearly constitute a significant enhancement which would visually improve the appearance of the property. In addition, the modest extension and subordinate replacement garage would not have an unacceptable impact on the original form and character of the converted Oast.

Overall, the proposals have been carefully designed to ensure they comply with the Council's Residential Extensions SPD, in particular paragraph 5.14, which permits sympathetic extensions to converted rural buildings.

Due to the separation distances involved, appropriate design and siting, the proposed development would preserve the setting of the nearby grade II listed buildings.

Conclusion:

The proposed extension and replacement garage would constitute a high standard of design and would be sympathetic and subordinate to the host property and proportionate to the size of the residential garden. There would be no unacceptable visual impact on the character or openness of the countryside and the modest extension and replacement garage would not harm the original form and character of the converted Oast. The proposals would therefore be in accordance with Local Plan policy DM32 and the Council's Residential Extensions SPD.

The repositioning of the vehicle access and new entrance gates would be in keeping with neighbouring properties and the proposed section of acoustic fence would be screened by a high level boundary hedge and would not have any significant detrimental impact on the character of the streetscene or countryside.

Finally, the replacement of the non-original uPVC windows with traditional timber fenestration would constitute a significant enhancement which would visually improve the appearance of the Kentish Oast.