

Heritage Statement

Site: Pond Pasture, Church Street, Walmer, CT14 7RP

Proposed: Render the existing elevations and paint them white, and replace the clay roof tiles with Cembrit Westerland slates



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1 Introduction

This report will discuss the site and location, details of the proposal and justification, relevant legislation, policies and guidance, identify the significance of any heritage assets, and then evaluate the impact of the proposals on their significance.

The design of the current scheme has been an iterative process, which has been informed by the constraints and opportunities of the site, the needs of the applicant and the national and local policy guidance.

This statement takes into account the advice given by Historic England in their advice note 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' 2019. Additionally, it complies with the requirement set out in paragraph 12.7 of the Draft Dover District Local Plan.

2 Site and Location

Pond Pasture is located to the south of Church Street in Upper Walmer, set back from the road behind two pairs of semi-detached bungalows, in a short cul-de-sac. It is an irregular shaped site, with modern houses to the north, east and south, whilst to the west is a church yard.

The building is two storeys, with accommodation in the roof space. It is of soft redbrick construction, under a plain clay tiled roof. It has a symmetrical front elevation, dominated by projecting Dutch styled gables to either end, with a central projecting porch. The rear elevation has a two storey Dutch styled projecting gable to the south, with a chimney stack, whilst the main roof has a large flat roofed dormer, clad in plain clay tiles, with a Juliet balcony. To the north is a single storey extension, again with a Dutch influence, whilst to the south is a detached single storey garage. The house has a number of PVC-u windows with multiple glazing bars' (see Figs 1&2).

The house was built in 1963, but has a much older appearance, and falls within the Upper Walmer Conservation Area.



Figure 1



Figure 2

3 Details of the Proposal and Justification

Full details of the proposals are given on the plans accompanying this application, but in summary they include;

1 Render all external elevations of the house and paint them white

The property was constructed in soft red bricks, which are now delaminating and allowing the ingress of water. Whilst various solutions to solving this problem have been explored, including the use of a stabilizing solution on the brickwork, the only long-term practical solution is to render the walls, thus consolidating the brickwork. The render would then be painted white.

2 Replace the existing plain clay tiles with Cembrit Westerland slates

The existing tiles on the roof and dormer are in a very poor state of repair; they are delaminating and are no longer watertight, it is therefore proposed to replace them with Cembrit Westerland slates. This will prevent water getting into the property and as such help to secure the long-term future of the building.

4 Relevant Legislation, Policies and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Sections 66(1) and 72(1)

Dover District Local Plan Core Strategy 2010: Policies CP1, DM1

Draft Dover District Local Plan (2023)

The submission Draft Local Plan is a material planning consideration in the determination of applications. At submission stage the policies of the draft plan can be afforded some weight, depending on the nature of objections to them and consistency with the NPPF.

Draft policies PM1 (design), HE1 (heritage assets) are relevant

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Paragraphs 8, 11, 60, 82, 83, 126, 130, 134, 194, 195, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 208

The National Design Guide 2021

The National Planning Practice Guide

Dover District Heritage Strategy 2013 (updated 2020)

Making Changes to Heritage Assets, 2016: Historic England

The Kent Design Guide (2005)

Walmer Design Statement 2006

5 Heritage Assets and their Significance

The proposals would have an impact, to a greater or lesser extent, on the character and appearance of the host building and the Upper Walmer Conservation Area, the latter of which is classed as designated heritage asset in the NPPF.

The NPPF defines significance as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from the heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting’.

Setting is defined in the Framework as follows:

‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

It should be noted that paragraph 200 of the NPPF, also states that ‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by the setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.

Significance of the Upper Walmer Conservation Area

This conservation area is focused around the historic core of Upper Walmer, with part of Dover Road connecting Church Street, Grams Road and Belmont.

As with many conservation areas there are a number of different character areas within it. In this instance Church Street comprises one such character area, (see Figs: 3-11) and its significance includes the following elements;

1. A large number of historic buildings, several of which are listed, which together form the core of the conservation area. However, it should be noted that there are several modern buildings which actually detract from the special character of the area.
2. A wide variety in the age, style and design of buildings, and architectural details.
3. A mixture of materials including red and yellow stock bricks, flint, tile hanging, weatherboarding, both natural and man-made, render in a variety of colours, clay tiles, concrete tiles, and natural and synthetic slates. This variety in materials is an important part of the special character of the area, and this is noted in the Walmer Design Statement 2006, page 24.
4. A mixture of one, two and three storey buildings.
5. Generally residential in nature.
6. Retention of the historic street pattern, but there is also an example of a modern cul-de-sac.
7. Tight street enclosure in places.
8. Mature soft landscaping.
9. The main street elevations have a formal appearance with well mannered facades, creating a coherent character, however the rear elevations are far more irregular and organic in appearance.



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5 Note Pond Pasture can be glimpsed from Church Street between the modern bungalows



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 11



Figure 10 Note the rendered Dutch gable

Significance of the host building

This is a modern building, built in 1963, it is not listed, nor is it of listable quality when judged against current standards, nor could it be classed as a non-designated heritage asset as defined by the NPPF and in the District Councils Land Allocations Local Plan 2015. The most important part of the building, from an architectural point of view are its Dutch gables.

6 Impact of the Proposals on the Significance of Designated Heritage Assets

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that when considering planning applications which affect a listed building, special regard shall be given to preserving the building and their settings. Section 72(1) of the same Act requires that special attention shall be paid to preserving the character and appearance of conservation areas.

The NPPF outlines at paragraph 205, that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more important the asset the greater weight should be given. Any harm or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. The NPPF, at paragraph 200, requires the local planning authority, when assessing an application, to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal.

Draft policies HE1 of the emerging Dover District Local Plan, seek to protect heritage assets, whilst Policy PM1 promotes a high quality of design, and these policies are broadly reflective of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The National Planning Practice Guide, offers more detailed advice on conserving and enhancing the historic environment, and states that 'The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle'. 'Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every-day use, to as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest'.

Further national guidance is provided by Historic England in 'Making Changes to Heritage Assets' February 2016. This provides more detailed guidance on alterations to heritage assets, the aim of which is to 'recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the change necessary to ensure that people can continue to use and enjoy them'.

Assessment of the proposals

1 Rendering of all external elevations and painting them white

The red brickwork is now in a very poor state of repair as a significant proportion of the bricks are spalling allowing moisture into the house, there is therefore an urgent need to address the problem. The owner has tried to solve the problem, by treating the brickwork with a stabilising solution, but this has not been successful.

A significant number of bricks now need totally replacing, but this would not prevent the remaining bricks from crumbling in the same way. The decision to apply to render the elevations has not been taken lightly, due to the high-cost implications, but in reality it is the only practical, long term solution to the problem.

The overall shape and form of the building would remain the same, and in particular the Dutch gables would remain the most important architectural features of the building.

There are a large number of rendered buildings in the conservation area, in a wide variety of colours, including one on Dover Road with a Dutch gable painted pink, (see Fig: 10), and another painted red (see Fig: 11). The variety in colours forms an important part of the special character of the conservation area.

Bearing in mind that Pond Pasture is located within a cul-de-sac, to the south of Church Street, and is only glimpsed between buildings from Church Street, it is considered that the proposal to render and paint the elevations white, will have minimal impact, and will not detract from the special character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

2 Replacement of existing plain clay tiled with Cembrit Westerland slates

The existing tiles on the roof and dormer are now in a very poor state of repair as many of them are delaminating and allowing the ingress of water. It is therefore proposed to replace the tiles on the roof and the dormer with Cembrit Westerland slates. There is a wide variety of roof materials in the conservation area, including clay and concrete tiles and natural and man-made slates. This variety in roofing material is all part of the special character of the area.

In view of the above it is considered that the substitution of the clay tiles with Cembrit Westerland slates, which have the appearance and texture of natural slates, will be entirely sympathetic to the host building and the special character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

9 Wider Public Benefits

The proposed works to the building will not only help to stop its deterioration but will also help to improve its thermal efficiency, thus helping to reduce greenhouse gases; securing the long term future of the building for the benefit of the wider community.

10 Conclusions

The national and local planning policy context does not prevent all changes to historic buildings but moreover seeks to recognise what is truly significant about a particular heritage asset, whilst at the same time accommodating changes which allow people to continue to use them. This approach is stressed by Historic England in their publication 'Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2015). This states that 'An unreasonable, inflexible approach will prevent action that could give a building a new life: indeed it can eliminate that use. A reasonable and proportionate approach to owners' needs is therefore essential'.

Conservation areas should not be frozen in time, or preserved in aspic, but should be allowed to change and evolve over time reflecting the needs of today's society, if they are to remain

relevant and vibrant places in-which to live and work. These proposals will halt the deterioration of the building without detracting from its appearance or from what is truly significant about this part of the conservation area, or from the wider setting of any listed buildings in the area.

It is therefore considered that the proposed works would meet the requirements of Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; the requirements of the NPPF in relation to the historic environment and design; Policies PM1 and HE1 of the Draft Dover District Local Plan together with national and local policy guidance on the issues raised by this application.

The Local Planning Authority is therefore invited to support this application which would bring tangible benefits to both the building and the wider community.

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