

REFERENCE NO - 19/504103/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Proposed single storey side extension and new canopy to the north elevation. Single bay oak framed extension to existing garage. (Revised scheme to 19/500679/FULL)		
ADDRESS Mole End, Forsham Lane, Chart Sutton, ME17 3ER		
RECOMMENDATION – REFUSE for the reason set out in Section 8.0		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION It is concluded that the proposal would destroy the original simple, functional and compact form of the building and would thereby harm its rural character and appearance and diminish the positive contribution which it makes to the character and appearance of the countryside, contrary to the NPPF and Local Plan policies.		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE The Parish Council have requested the application be presented to the planning committee should the officers recommendation differ from their recommendation for approval as they are of the opinion that the application is policy compliant.		
WARD Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Chart Sutton	APPLICANT Mr Paul Ward AGENT Julian Bluck Designs Ltd
TARGET DECISION DATE 11/10/19		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 24/09/19

Relevant Planning History

19/500679 : Underground extension to barn with lean to staircase enclosure and oak framed carport extension to garage – approved

17/502635 : Single-storey side extension with lantern – Withdrawn

87/2106 : Conversion of barn to single dwelling and stables to garage and erection of new garage to adjoining farm house – Approved

MAIN REPORT

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 This application relates to a detached, former agricultural barn which has been converted to a dwelling. The building is of a modest scale and has a compact form, with a steeply pitched tiled roof with gables and dark stained weatherboarded walls upon a fairly deep brick plinth. The building has 3 bays, and the appearance of a threshing barn, with the central bay having the appearance of the threshing bay with large former cart entrance.
- 1.02 The site lies in the open countryside in the parish of Chart Sutton. Forsham Lane has a scattering of dwellings along its length and maintains a general rural appearance.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.01 Planning Permission is sought for the erection of a single-storey side extension to provide an additional 2 bedrooms and bathroom, the addition of an open porch to the North elevation and an extension to an existing detached garage.

3. POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Development Plan: DM1, DM3, DM4, DM30, DM32, SP17, SP18
Supplementary Planning Documents: Residential Extensions

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

Local Residents:

4.01 None

5. CONSULTATIONS

(Please note that summaries of consultation responses are set out below with the response discussed in more detail in the main report where considered necessary)

5.01 Conservation Officer

Object to the proposal on the grounds of harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

Chart Sutton Parish Council

5.02 Recommend approval of the proposal

6. APPRAISAL

Main Issues

6.01 The key issues for consideration relate to:

- Principle of development
- Visual Impact
- Impact on Non-designated heritage asset
- Residential Amenity
- Highways
- Biodiversity

Principle of Development

6.02 Policy SP 17 of the local plan states that development must not result in harm to the character or appearance of the countryside. Policy DM 30 also relates to development within the countryside. This policy states that, where an extension or alteration to an existing building is proposed, it should, inter-alia, have no significant adverse impact on the form, appearance or setting of the building and that it should respect the architectural and historical integrity of any adjoining building or group of buildings of which it forms a part.

6.03 Policy DM 32 specifically relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside. This policy requires, inter-alia, that householder development does not overwhelm or destroy the original form of the existing dwelling and that it is visually acceptable in the countryside.

6.04 The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document "Residential Extensions"

generally resists extensions to converted traditional rural buildings such as barns and oast houses in principle, due to their adverse impact upon the form and character of such buildings. It states:

“Extensions to dwellings in the countryside which have been converted from buildings originally in non-residential use, such as oast houses, barns and other farm buildings, will not normally be permitted where this would have an unacceptable impact on the original form and character of the building. Many rural buildings have a simple form such as a rectilinear floor plan which fits well with their original function and the character of the countryside and others have an historic form and character which should be retained. In granting consent for conversions the Council seeks to preserve the original form and character of the building. Proposals for extensions to such buildings should not therefore destroy that form or character and will not normally be considered acceptable” (paragraph 5.14).

- 6.05 Paragraph 5.20 states “Extensions will not be permitted to dwellings created from traditional rural buildings including oast houses, barns and other farm buildings where they would have an unacceptable impact on the form or character of the original building”.
- 6.06 In this case it is noted that permitted development rights for all extensions and alterations to the building were removed at the time of conversion by condition 6 planning permission of 87/2106 - a situation specifically referred to in paragraph 5.14 of the residential extensions guidelines. Indeed, the removal of these rights gives control over future extensions in order to preserve the form and character of the building.
- 6.07 It is noted that an extension to the existing detached garage is sought. This has already been approved under application reference 19/500679 and is not considered to result in any significant harm. The following therefore concentrates on the changes to the former barn.

Visual Impact

- 6.08 The host building is a modest converted barn which exhibits a clear sense of balance and proportion through its simple, compact and symmetrical form and dominant roof. These are considered to be the key elements of its character. It is a good quality example of a traditional vernacular building of this locality and, although not listed, is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.09 The building has kept its simple rectilinear floor plan which fits well with its original function and its simple form and proportions are considered fundamental to its understanding as a former agricultural building and therefore to its character. Whilst additional openings have been added at the conversion and domestic planting and hard surfacing are present, it is nevertheless considered that the original form and much of its rural character and appearance have been retained and are very apparent on site. Its form, as a former agricultural barn, is highly recognizable and apparent.
- 6.10 The proposed extension, which would be attached to the building, would fundamentally change its form and alter its proportions and symmetry. Indeed, the

appearance of the building to the West elevation is very symmetrical and it displays a compact form, with the proposed extension unbalancing the elevation and destroying that simple and compact form. It would extend both to the South and to the East and in this position, would add a domestic form of extension to the building which would be out of character. Whilst the design and access statement refers to some previous additions upon an historic map, there is no clear evidence of their appearance and indeed, this proposal is not for the reinstatement of a missing part, as the proposed extension would not be in the same location as the previously existing elements shown upon the historic map. It would therefore not reinstate any historical form or appearance of the farmstead but would instead extend the building in a manner which is out of character with the historic layout of the former farmstead.

- 6.11 The scale of the extension is additionally considered to render it particularly harmful. Whilst in itself, it might be seen as a subservient addition to the building as a whole, its position, physical attachment and proportions would harm the form and proportions of the existing building. Indeed, its depth would be approaching 60% of the depth of the original building and its length would be around 90% of the length of the original building – this is considered to be clearly disproportionate to the barn and would adversely affect its form, scale and proportions.
- 6.12 The harm would be exacerbated by the addition of a porch to the North elevation of the building. This would be of resolutely residential character, which would be out of keeping with what you would expect to see upon a former agricultural building.
- 6.13 The design and access statement refers to the fact that barns might often have such extensions, however, it is not considered that within this rural area of the borough it is typical to have extensions to barns such as this, especially a small barn of this scale. Often further agricultural needs might have been met through a new, separate building rather than an extension of this scale and position, attached to such a building.

Impact on Non-designated heritage asset

- 6.14 The building is also considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. The conservation officer has stated that he considers the barn of local significance due to its historic interest and simple vernacular form, as well as its group relationship with the former farmhouse.
- 6.15 Policy SP18 requires development to be sensitive to heritage assets and their settings. Policy DM 4 also requires development affecting all heritage assets (designated or non-designated) to incorporate measures to conserve, and where possible enhance, the significance of the heritage asset. It states also, in paragraph 6.33, that, in the determination of planning applications, the relevant assessment factors, including weighing of potential harm against wider benefits of the development, are set out in detail in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 131 – 135 and that these tests will be applied.
- 6.16 Since the adoption of the local plan, a revised NPPF has come into force, with the relevant section being chapter 16.
- 6.17 Paragraph 184 of the NPPF states that heritage assets “are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so

that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”.

6.18 The National Planning Policy Framework requires a balanced judgement to be made upon applications affecting non-designated heritage assets having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset.

6.19 The conservation officer has commented that the extension would harm the significance of the building and have the effect of fragmenting the site beyond its historic enclosed layout, and that while there is historic evidence for a projecting wing, the current proposal does not seek to reinstate this element, but rather to add an incongruous element which would be inconsistent with the form and historical development of the site. He states:

“The barn forms part of a historic farmstead grouping which 19th century maps indicate previously had an enclosed courtyard plan form. There is insufficient information to date the building conclusively, but it was in existence by the 1870s and the form of the roof indicates it could be earlier than 1700 in date. The barn has local significance due to its historic interest and simple vernacular form, as well as its group relationship with the former farmhouse...

The proposed single storey extension would detract from the coherent form and character of the building and its historic relationship with the farmhouse. While there is historic evidence for a projecting wing, the current proposal does not seek to reinstate this element, but rather to add an incongruous element which would be inconsistent with the form and historical development of the site. Furthermore, the footprint of the extension would be excessively large in relation to the modest proportions of the barn. The extension would have the effect of fragmenting the site beyond its historic enclosed layout, detracting from the simple form of the barn, and causing harm to its significance...”.

6.20 Whilst this is indeed a minor proposal, it is considered to result in a detrimental impact upon the significance of the heritage asset and significant visual harm, because it would be out of character with this simple, former functional farm building and it would destroy its simple original form and proportions. It is not considered that there are any significant wider benefits arising from this proposal. Indeed, whilst it is accepted that the dwelling currently provides a modest level of accommodation, the level of accommodation available is not considered to preclude its viable use as a dwelling and there is certainly no evidence provided with the application to demonstrate that this is the case.

6.21 A previous application to extend the building was going to be refused (but was withdrawn) since it was considered to destroy the very distinct form and character of the building. The applicant subsequently engaged in 2 rounds of pre-application advice and secured consent for additional accommodation underground under planning permission 19/500679. The plans and section drawings for the approved “extension” showed it to be sited wholly underground, with its roof structure covered with soil and grass and only a very modest area to provide access into this area being provided above ground. Whilst the application states that there are concerns regarding implementing that consent due to potential flooding, the site does not lie in a floodplain and there is no significant evidence within the submission to clearly demonstrate that the previously approved development would not be suitable or viable, nor that accommodation needs could not be met in a less harmful way. Therefore, having regard to the fact that a balanced decision is required to be made upon non-designated heritage assets, considering the very significant

adverse impact upon the form, scale, proportions and appearance of the barn, it is concluded that the balance weighs in favour of refusing the application on the grounds that the harm is not outweighed by the wider benefits.

Residential Amenity

- 6.22 Policy DM1 of the local plan states that proposals should respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses and provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development by ensuring that development does not result in, or is exposed to, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movements, overlooking or visual intrusion, and that the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties.
- 6.23 In this case it is considered that the proposed extensions would be a significant distance away from neighbouring properties such that no harm would result to neighbouring amenity.

Highways

- 6.24 Policy DM1 of the local plan states that proposals should safely accommodate the vehicular and pedestrian movement generated by the proposal on the local highway network and through the site access, and provide adequate vehicular and cycle parking to meet adopted Council standards.
- 6.25 Local plan policy DM23 states that car parking standards for residential development will:
- i. Take into account the type, size and mix of dwellings and the need for visitor parking; and
 - ii. Secure an efficient and attractive layout of development whilst ensuring that appropriate provision for vehicle parking is integrated within it.
- 6.26 The proposal would not adversely affect parking or highways matters.

Biodiversity

- 6.27 It is not considered that the application proposal would cause sufficient ecological harm to warrant the refusal of this application. Any biodiversity mitigation or enhancement could be satisfactorily dealt with by condition should the application be considered acceptable in all other respects.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.01 It is concluded that the proposal would destroy the original simple, functional and compact form of the building, which is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset, and would thereby harm its rural character and appearance and diminish the positive contribution which it makes to the character and appearance of the countryside. Refusal is recommended.

8. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE planning permission for the following reason(s):

- (1) The proposed extension and alterations to the existing barn, which is considered

a non-designated heritage asset, would destroy the simple, functional and compact form and symmetrical appearance of the barn, harming its rural character and appearance and diminishing the positive contribution which it currently makes to the character and appearance of the countryside, contrary to policies SP17, DM30, DM32, SP18 and DM4 of the Maidstone Local Plan 2017, the advice given within the adopted Supplementary Planning Document "Residential Extensions" and paragraphs 184 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Case Officer: Louise Welsford