

REFERENCE NO: 19/506137/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL: Addition of first floor with accommodation in roof space		
ADDRESS: 130 Ashford Road Bearsted Maidstone Kent ME14 4AF		
RECOMMENDATION: GRANT planning permission subject to conditions		
<p>SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: Proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to character and appearance of area; and no objection is raised in terms of parking provision and all other material planning matters, including highway safety and residential amenity.</p> <p>Proposal is in sustainable location where Local Plan policy seeks to support and improve needs of existing businesses, and with all planning matters considered against current policy/guidance, a recommendation of approval is made on this basis</p>		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE: Councillor Springett wishes to see application refused and reported to Planning Committee		
WARD: Bearsted	PARISH COUNCIL: Bearsted	APPLICANT: Adkins Consultants AGENT Richard Elliott Architects
TARGET DECISION DATE: 01/06/2020 EOT		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE: 28/01/2020

Relevant planning history

- 19/505779 - Pre-app: Rear extension - General officer support for development
- 19/504179 - Erection of first and second floor rear extension - Refused
 - *Appears excessive in context and would fail to relate to surrounding built form*
 - *Inadequate parking provision for building users to detriment of retail function of locality*
- 19/502249 - NMA to change dormer to Juliette balcony (18/502290) - Approved
- 18/502290 - 2-storey extension: shop (at ground) & office (2nd floor) - Approved
- 17/504173 - Shopfront & change of use from A2 u to A1, A2, and B1 - Approved
- MA/08/1722 - Replacement windows to front elevation with glazed tiles - Approved
- MA/04/0765 - Alterations to entrance access for disabled customers - Approved

MAIN REPORT

1.0 Site description

- 1.01 The proposal site is located on the southern side of Ashford Road, just before the junction with Cavendish Way that is to the east of the site. The main 2-storey element of the site is currently occupied by a separate hairdresser's business and

offices (Applied Broadcast Systems Ltd). To the rear, the ground floor extension is currently occupied by Adkins Consultants who are the applicants for this application. For the purposes of the Local Plan the proposal site falls within the defined urban area and within a defined Local Centre; and the site also falls within a KCC Minerals Safeguarding Area.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.01 This proposal is for the addition of a first floor extension, over part of the existing single storey rear extension to 130 Ashford Road. The proposal would provide a meeting room (at first floor level) and a Directors office (in the roof space) for an existing local consultancy.
- 2.02 The application is clear that the proposal is for increased ancillary accommodation to an existing business, and it would not result in an increase to existing staff numbers. The proposal would have the same height as the existing building to the front of the site; and in terms of external materials, it would be built of bronze Kalzip cladding (or equivalent).
- 2.03 The previous development refused under 19/504179 was for a much larger 3-storey extension to the rear of the site that would have created approximately an additional 200m² of floor space. This proposal would create an additional 55m², a reduction of some 145m² of floor space.

3.0 Policy and other considerations

Maidstone Local Plan (2017): SS1, SP1, SP21, DM1, DM5, DM17
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Kent Vehicle Parking Standards – SPG4

4.0 Local representations

- 4.01 6 representations received raising the following (summarised) issues:
- *Impact upon character and appearance of area*
 - *Residential amenity, including loss of privacy/overlooking*
 - *Overlooking business premises*
 - *Parking provision/traffic generation*
 - *Impact of development at construction phase (including access/parking for construction)*
- 4.02 1 representation received commenting traffic has reduced and parking in area has improved since bank became offices; and there is adequate parking options in area.

5.0 Consultation responses

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

- 5.01 **Councillor Springett:** Wishes to see application refused and reported to Planning Committee for the following (summarised) reasons: *Proposal represents unacceptable overdevelopment of site*
- *Is out of character with existing parade of shops*
 - *Lack of parking provision and development will put additional pressure on situation*
 - *Impact of development at construction phase (including access/parking for construction)*
 - *Development is poor design*

- *Impacts upon residential amenity (loss of privacy/overbearing)*

Recommended conditions if minded to approve application:

- *No builder vehicles to park at anytime in time limited bays, unless unloading*
- *Footpath must be kept clear of obstruction at all times*

- 5.02 **Bearsted Parish Council:** Object to proposal because of its visual impact and lack of parking provision but has not requested for application to be reported to Planning Committee.
- 5.03 Under the previous planning application (19/504179), KCC Highways confirmed that the proposal did not meet the criteria to warrant their involvement, and this current application is for a smaller development.

6.0 APPRAISAL

Main issues

- 6.01 Local Plan policy seeks to support and improve the economy of the borough and provide for the needs of existing businesses. It seeks to achieve this through the retention, intensification, regeneration and expansion of the existing economic development premises in the Maidstone urban area. This is provided the site is in an appropriate location and suited to the economic development use in terms of its scale, impacts and economic viability. Local Plan policy also seeks to ensure that new development will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area; that it will respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties; and that it provides sufficient parking provision. Furthermore, and in accordance with Local Plan policy DM17, the proposal would not result in the loss of any existing retail uses within the designated Local Centre.
- 6.02 Given the planning history, the principle to expand an existing business use in this location is acceptable in principle; and the site is clearly in a sustainable location, close to bus stops serving frequent bus services in and out of Maidstone. The previous reason for refusal is a material consideration in the determination of this application, and the details of the proposal will now be assessed.

Visual impact

- 6.03 The proposal has been substantially reduced in terms of its scale, when compared to the previous refusal, and it is considered that this modest first floor extension (that only goes over part of the existing single storey extension), would no longer represent overdevelopment of the site. Indeed, the proposal would respect the height of the main building; its separation from the main building provides a sense of relief; its pitched roof compliments the surrounding character of buildings in the area; and it would remain set back some 15m from the site's southern boundary, retaining a sense of openness within the site.
- 6.04 The modern approach to the choice of materials is also not objectionable in terms of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area, where there are a variety of property styles; and the shown finish is considered to be of high quality. Furthermore, there would only be a limited view of the proposal from Ashford Road, via the small gap between 130 Ashford Road and the terrace to the east of the site; and again given existing development in the area, there may be only a glimpse of the proposal from Cavendish Way and Shirley Way.
- 6.05 With the above taken into account, the proposal's scale, height and mass is considered to be modest and would not overwhelm the form of the existing property; its modern design is appropriate to its context; and it would not appear

dominant, incongruous or visually harmful from any public vantage point. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Highway safety implications

- 6.06 The proposal is for an additional 55m² of office floorspace. The Kent Vehicle Parking Standards – SPG4 states that offices up to 500m² should provide 1 space per 20m², and this would total 2.8 parking spaces for this application. It should be noted that these are maximum standards; and the SPG also states:

Some B1 office uses will be located in town and district centres. Local authorities will use their discretion in the application of standards in town and district centres, having regard to availability of public off street parking, and need to encourage vitality of centres and investment in them. Less on-site parking provision may be justified for offices located in town centres than those in out of town centre locations.

- 6.07 The site is within the defined urban area (and Local Centre), close to bus stops serving frequent services in and out of Maidstone, and it is less than 1.3km from Bearsted train station. It is accepted that the site is in a sustainable location. It should also be noted that the proposal has noticeably reduced the level of additional office space, when compared to the previously refused planning application; and the applicant has confirmed that the existing level of staff (12 persons) is not set to increase as a result of this proposal. The proposal is to provide more space (including breakout and meeting areas) for the same number of staff. Furthermore, there is unrestricted on-street parking in the wider area, outside the Local Centre.
- 6.08 As such, whilst the proposal site will continue to provide no off-street parking provision, the recommended parking standards are not minimum standards; the existing staff levels are not changing; the existing B1 use here has already been accepted without parking; and the floor space to be created has been significantly reduced from the previous refusal. With this considered, it is difficult to argue that the modest addition of 55m² would be to the detriment of the retail function of the locality in terms of parking provision, and no highway safety objection is raised. The previous refusal was a balanced response to the parking provision issue, and given the significant amendments to this current application, no objection is now raised.

Residential amenity

- 6.09 The proposal is considered to be a modest first floor extension that would be separated from 130 Ashford Road and the terrace in which it sits, and there are no residential (habitable) rooms to the rear of this terrace. The proposal would be sufficiently separated from the properties to the immediate east, to not result in a harmful loss of light and outlook; and a condition will be imposed to ensure the openings in the eastern elevation will be obscure glazed and fixed shut, in the interests of privacy. Furthermore, the proposal would be more than 15m away from any residential property to the west of the site and no openings are proposed to be inserted into the western elevation of the extension; and any residential property (and their immediate garden space) in Cavendish Way and Shirley Way is a significant distance from the proposal (more than 25m away).

- 6.10 It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact upon the residential amenity of any local resident when enjoying their property, in terms of loss of privacy/outlook, loss of light, and in appearing overbearing.

Other matters

- 6.11 Whilst the site falls within a KCC Minerals Safeguarding Area, given the nature of the proposal (first floor extension), no further details are required on this issue.
- 6.12 The representations made by Councillor Springett, Bearsted Parish Council and local residents have been considered in the assessment of this application. It should be noted at this point that any potential impact upon local residents and businesses during the construction phase of the development is not a material planning consideration in the determination of this application; and suggested conditions relating to the construction phase of the development are not considered to pass the planning tests of when conditions are reasonable and necessary.
- 6.13 Due regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.

Conclusion

- 6.14 The proposal has overcome the previous reasons for refusal, in that it would not result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and no objection is now raised in terms of parking provision. Furthermore, no objection continues to be raised in terms of all other material planning matters, including highway safety and residential amenity. The proposal is in a sustainable location where Local Plan policy seeks to support and improve the needs of existing businesses, and with all planning matters considered against current policy/guidance, a recommendation of approval is made on this basis.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION: GRANT planning permission subject to following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission;

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The materials to be used in the external surfaces of the extension hereby approved shall be as stated in the submitted application form and Design and Access Statement. The development shall be constructed using these materials and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

3. Before the development hereby permitted is first occupied, the proposed windows in the eastern elevation of the extension shall be obscure glazed and shall be incapable of being opened except for a high level fanlight opening of at least 1.7m above inside floor level and shall subsequently be maintained as such;

Reason: In the interests of amenity.

4. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the

Planning Committee Report
21 May 2020

following approved plans: 19035 001 P1; 003 P1; 004 P1; and 005 P1

Reason: In the interests of clarification.

Case Officer: Kathryn Altieri