



Old Rectory Luddesdown Road Luddesdown DA13 0XE38

PLANNING & DESIGN STATEMENT



Demolition of existing orangery and erection of two-storey side and rear infill extension; installation of new timber sash windows to replace all existing windows; erection of link structure connecting the main dwellinghouse with the existing outbuilding at the front.

PP-12605499
DECEMBER 2023

SITE AND DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The Old Rectory is a large, detached, 19th-century dwellinghouse located on the eastern side of Luddesdown Road. The well-defined curtilage of the dwellinghouse takes up only a small proportion of the application site, which also consists of stables, paddocks, stable buildings, tennis courts and an enclosed swimming pool (all of which are located outside of the residential curtilage).
- 1.2 An original (pre-1947) outbuilding is situated at the front of the dwellinghouse, within the residential curtilage, and is connected to the host building by a tall wall, forming a semi-enclosed courtyard.
- 1.3 A public footpath runs behind the application site; nevertheless, there is a substantial distance of over 100 meters between the rear wall of the dwellinghouse and the footpath. Additionally, the footpath is bordered by dense tree growth, effectively concealing the rear and side elevations of the dwellinghouse from public views. Generally speaking, the application site is reasonably well screened by hedges and trees on all sides.
- 1.4 The dwellinghouse, as originally constructed, has only once been extended in the past, namely in form of a single-storey conservatory extension at the side and rear of the property (ref: 2009/0320). Whilst planning permission was granted under 2016/0966 for the complete reconstruction of and extensions to the original outbuilding at the front of the property, no material start was made to the approved works and hence the permission has lapsed.
- 1.5 Planning permission was sought in early 2023 (ref: 2023/0656) for the erection of a single-storey side extension, a car port at the front of the property and the replacement of all existing windows. After a call-in from Councillors expressing concerns about the impact of the car port on visual amenity, the proposals were revised to exclude the car port. Following this revision, the call-in was withdrawn, and the application was provisionally recommended for approval by officers. Unfortunately, due to rising costs associated with the considerable footprint of the proposed side extension (and associated excavation works to create a sunken terrace), it was decided to withdraw the application in order to explore less obtrusive options for extending the dwellinghouse.
- 1.6 No structures located within the application site are subject to a local or statutory listing; furthermore, the site is not situated within a conservation area. However, it should be noted that the application site is designated as part of the Green Belt and falls within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 1.7 The application site is not subject to a Direction under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (GPDO); as a result, certain extensions and alterations can take place within the confines of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse without the need for planning permission, subject to the limitations applicable to properties located within an AONB, also known as Article 3(2) land.

1.8 The application site is not subject to any Tree Preservation Orders. Existing trees could therefore be removed without the need for planning permission.

1.9 The currently proposed development is for:

- (A) The installation of new timber sash windows to replace all existing windows attached to the dwellinghouse.
- (B) The demolition of the existing orangery and the erection of a two-storey side and rear infill extension.
- (C) The erection of a 'link structure' connecting the main dwellinghouse with the existing outbuilding at the front.

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1.10 The building operations referred to above will take place within the confines of the curtilage of the existing dwellinghouse; as such, some of the works could be undertaken without the need for planning permission under Article 3 of the GPDO 2015, notably the replacement of the existing windows (provided they consist of materials similar in appearance to existing).



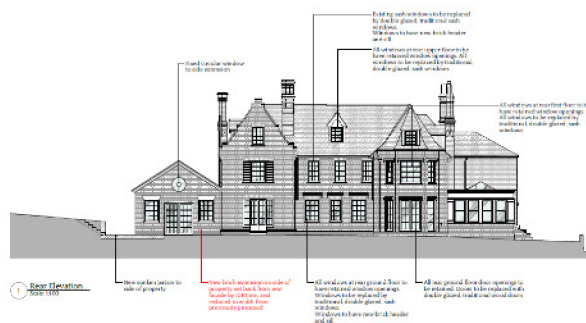
The proposed side/rear infill extension, replacing the existing orangery, is depicted in relation to both the curtilage of the dwellinghouse and the overall application site. The outline of the side extension previously sought under ref: 2023/0656 (withdrawn on request of the applicant) is also shown.*

DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

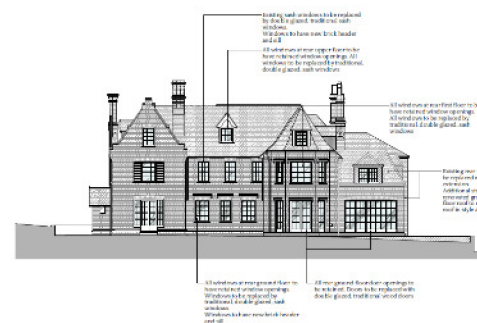
Two-storey side/rear infill extension replacing existing orangery

- 2.1 Planning permission was sought in early 2023 (ref: 2023/0656) for the erection of a single-storey side extension, a car port at the front of the property and the replacement of all existing windows. After a call-in from Councillors expressing concerns about the impact of the car port on visual amenity, the proposals were revised to exclude the car port. Following this revision, the call-in was withdrawn, and the application was provisionally recommended for approval by officers.
- 2.2 The previously-sought side extension would have had an external volume of approximately 245 cubic metres, a maximum height of 5.5 metres and a footprint measuring roughly 62 square metres. It would also have necessitated the excavation of a sunken terrace with a volume of 45 cubic metres
- 2.3 Unfortunately, due to rising costs associated with the considerable footprint of the proposed side extension (and associated excavation works to create a sunken terrace), it was decided to withdraw the application in order to explore less obtrusive options for extending the dwellinghouse.
- 2.4 Further design appraisals identified the existing single-storey orangery situated at the side/rear of the current dwellinghouse as a potential site to accommodate some of the additional floorspace previously sought under ref: 2023/0656. Selecting this location was influenced by several factors, including the absence of excavation needs (with no risk of impacting existing trees or landscaping), the opportunity to confine development within the existing footprint by repurposing a non-original extension, and its relatively discreet position to the side and rear of two existing building elevations, resulting in a diminished impact on the public realm compared to the previous proposals.
- 2.5 It is therefore proposed to demolish the existing orangery at the side and rear of the dwellinghouse and replace it with a two-storey infill extension confined to exactly the same footprint.
- 2.6 The ground floor element of the proposed infill extension will share a comparable volume with the existing orangery and will feature brickwork to match that used in the construction of the current dwellinghouse. The proportion of glazing in the proposed elevations (32%) will be akin to the existing arrangement (36%) – approximately one-third.
- 2.7 The demolition of the orangery itself is not deemed contentious, as it constitutes a recent (non-original) addition with unremarkable external finishing and lacks significant architectural value. In addition, it is noted that the existing building is not subject to a heritage designation within the development plan.
- 2.8 Unlike the side extension supported by officers under 2023/0656, the proposed infill extension would not result in the widening of the existing building beyond its widest points, nor would it extend beyond any existing walls; as a result, the proposals will retain the proportions and overall scale of the existing dwellinghouse.

REAR ELEVATION UNDER 2023/0656



REAR ELEVATION UNDER CURRENT PROPOSALS



FRONT ELEVATION UNDER 2023/0656



FRONT ELEVATION UNDER CURRENT PROPOSALS

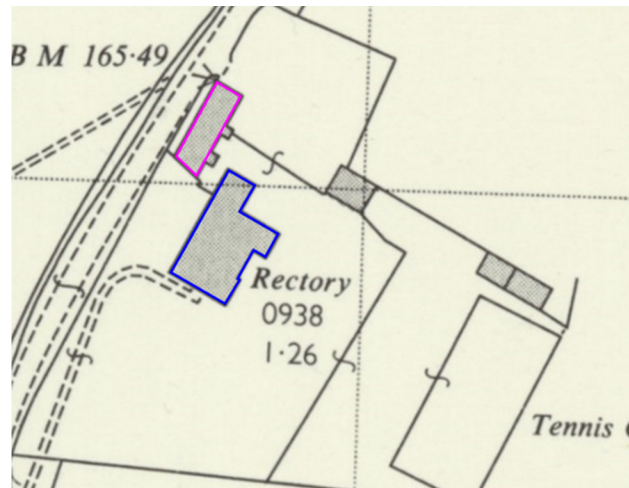


The current proposals, when compared to those previously sought under planning application 2023/0656, are deemed more proportionate in relation to the original dwellinghouse and necessitate significantly fewer associated excavation works.

- 2.9 The first-floor section of the proposed infill extension will feature a combination of part hipped and part flat roof, with the latter having no material impact on the appearance of the building. It will utilize roof tiles matching those used in the construction of the existing house. The introduction of dormer windows at the side and rear of the building is also not considered contentious, as the existing building, as originally constructed, already contains several dormer windows on the same elevations.
- 2.10 The total external volume of the proposed two-storey infill extension is approximately 200 cubic metres, which contrasts favourably with the roughly 245 cubic metre volume of the side extension previously sought under ref: 2023/0656. To maintain a sense of subordination, the total height of the proposed infill extension will be lower than that of the main part of the dwellinghouse and the original two-storey side addition (while the eaves height will be comparable to the height of the existing orangery).
- 2.11 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF permits 'appropriate' extensions to dwellings located within the Green Belt provided that such enlargements do not result in "disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building". Paragraph (ii) of Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan (Saved Policies, 2014) limits

householder extensions within the Green Belt to no more than 33% of the gross external floor area (GEA) of the original dwellinghouse.

- 2.12 According to historic Ordnance Survey maps and planning records, the original dwellinghouse has undergone only one extension since 1947, specifically in the form of the side and rear 'orangery' extension (ref: 2009/0320), which is proposed to be demolished as part of the current scheme. In other words, with the exception of the orangery extension, the existing dwellinghouse is as originally constructed. Historic maps also confirm that the outbuilding at the front of the property is original (pre-1948).



*Original dwellinghouse shown in blue;
original outbuilding shown in purple (circa 1948)*

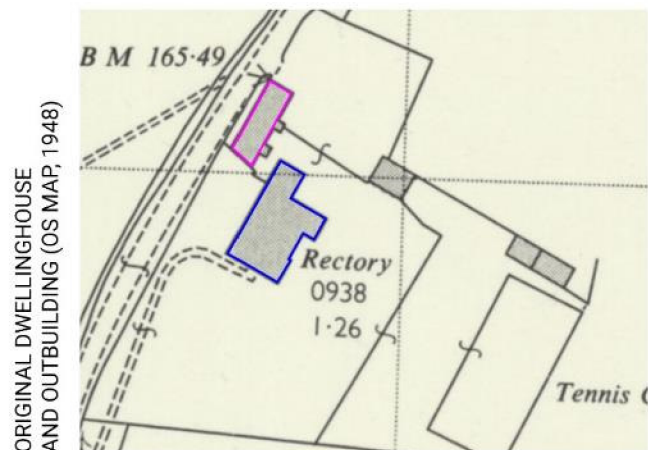
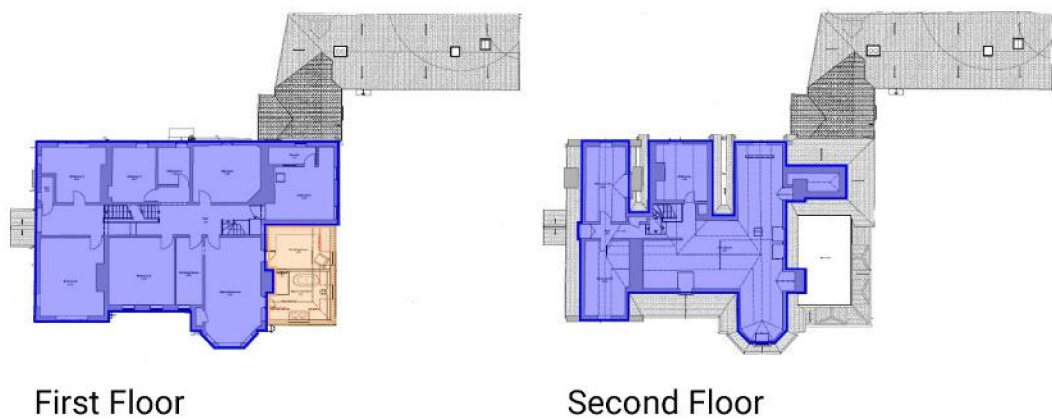
- 2.1 The following table and associated diagram affirm that the Gross External Area (GEA) of the proposed side and rear infill extension would make up no more than 13% of the GEA of the original dwellinghouse, even when considering the proposed link structure. Additionally, the floor area of the original cellar has been excluded from the original GEA (otherwise the figure would have been even lower):

Structure	GEA	Colour on Plan
(1) Original dwellinghouse	660.0 sq.m. (*)	Blue
(2) Original Front Outbuilding	84.0 sq.m.	Purple
(3) Proposed infill extension	65.4 sq.m.	Orange
(4) Proposed link structure	20.6 sq.m.	Green
(3+4) Total extensions	86 sq.m. (**)	
Total extensions as % of (1)	13.03 % (**)	
(2+3+4) Total extensions	170 sq.m. (***)	
Total extensions as % of (1)	25.75 % (***)	

(*) excl. original cellar (which measures 57.50 sq.m. GIA)

(**) disregarding original outbuilding

(***) treating original outbuilding as enlargement (hypothetical scenario; no material impact on external appearance)



- 2.2 Crucially, due to its confinement within the existing building footprint (and therefore within the existing residential curtilage) and its placement between existing side and rear facades, the proposed infill extension would be screened from views on two sides, thereby avoiding any impact on the openness of the countryside. Additionally, the proposed extension would have a lesser impact on the countryside compared to the extension previously sought under 2023/0656. While the latter was still carefully positioned to avoid any impact on open views to or from the countryside, it would

nonetheless have had *some* impact on the openness of the countryside, albeit perhaps not to a degree that it could have been considered harmful.

- 2.3 Equally important, the proposed infill extension, unlike the previous proposals, will not necessitate substantial excavation works, pose a potential threat to trees or landscaping, nor require any encroachment into the existing gardens.
- 2.4 The applicant has also explored fall-back options available under permitted development legislation, which would permit the construction of a single-storey, 4m deep, 4m high rear extension along part of the original rear elevation. However, it is deemed that the current proposals would have a lesser impact on the appearance of the building, leaving the original rear façade largely unaltered.
- 2.5 In light of this fallback position, the applicant is prepared to accept a planning condition restricting future extensions under Class A of the GPDO in the event that planning permission for the proposed side extension were to be granted.

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Due to its concealed position at the side and rear of the property (where the existing orangery is located), the proposed infill extension will be invisible from the majority of viewpoints surrounding the property.



Additionally, the bulk of the proposed infill extension will be shielded from south-westerly views at the rear due to the presence of the existing stable buildings (circled above).



Mock-up of existing and proposed long-distance views towards the rear of the application site from the rear footpath; the proposed alterations, due to their concealed position, are scarcely noticeable and would have no material impact on the openness of the countryside.

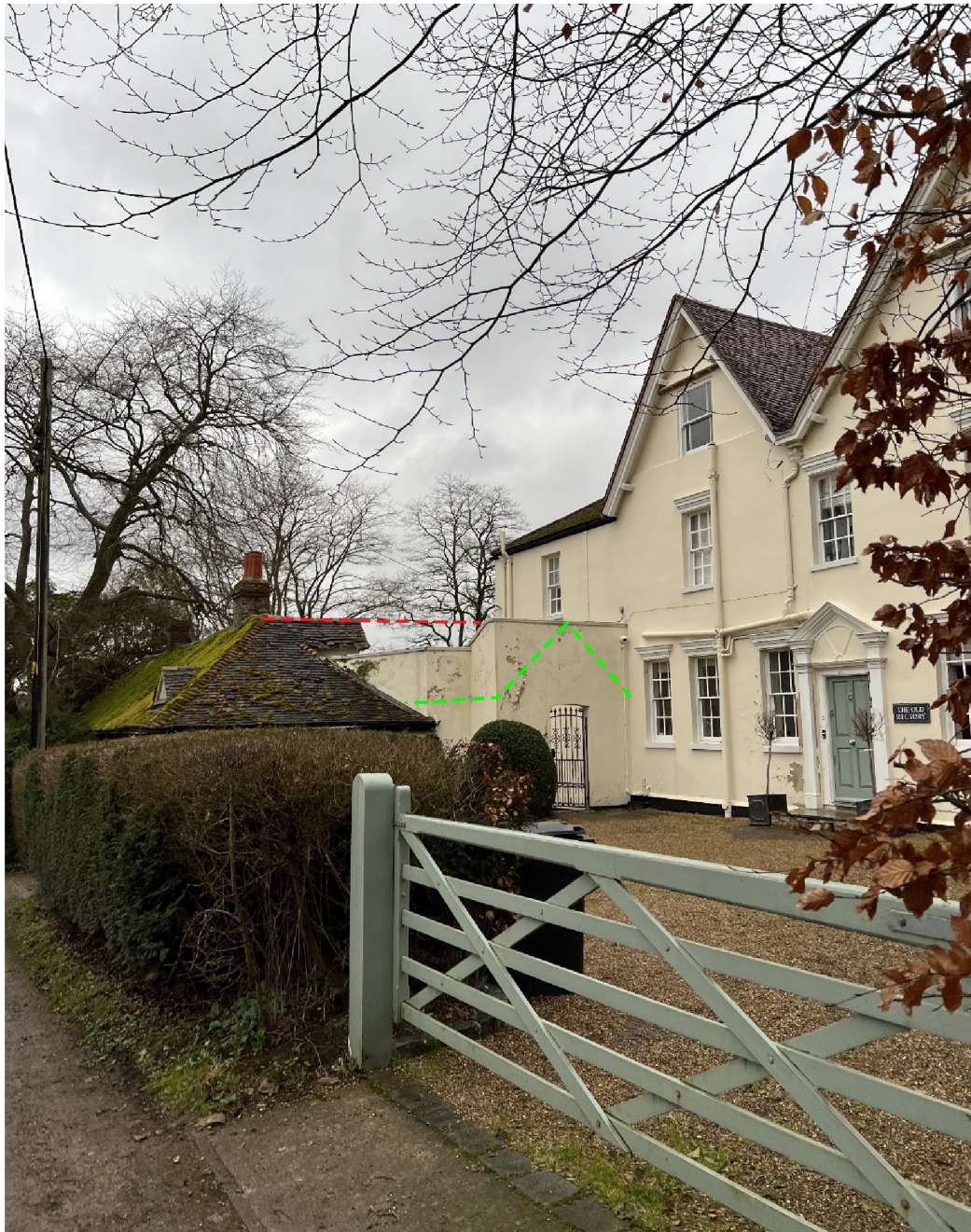


Mock-up of existing and proposed infill extension from the only road-side vantage point where glimpses of the extension would be visible; the proposed alterations would neither detract from the appearance of the streetscene nor have any material impact on the openness of the countryside.

Link structure between dwellinghouse and outbuilding at the front

- 2.6 The existing outbuilding at the front of the application site is physically linked to the main dwellinghouse by a 4m tall wall, zigzagging over a 4.5m span. This freestanding wall, rendered in the same colour as the front facade of the dwelling house, forms a semi-enclosed courtyard unseen from public perspectives. It is bordered on the remaining sides by the exterior walls of the front outbuilding and the main dwelling house.
- 2.7 The outbuilding itself is currently used as a kitchen pantry, storage area and domestic garage in connection with the existing dwellinghouse.
- 2.8 It is proposed to construct a discreet, covered 'link' structure connecting the front outbuilding with the dwellinghouse by repurposing the existing freestanding wall and fully enclosing the area behind it. This would be accomplished by erecting a new wall on the open side of the current semi-enclosed courtyard and extending the roof of the outbuilding to cover the newly enclosed area.
- 2.9 The new link structure would comprise a gabled roof with roof tiles matching those used in the construction of the existing outbuilding, seamlessly blending with it. The repurposed freestanding wall would retain its rendered finish, while the new north-facing wall would feature brickwork to match the construction of the existing outbuilding and incorporate traditional timber doors.

- 2.10 The existing freestanding wall, which currently has a height of 4 metres, would be lowered to a height of 2.6 metres to form the eaves of the proposed link structure. Consequently, when viewed from the front of the dwellinghouse, the visual impact of the proposed link structure on the appearance of the application site would, at worst, be comparable to the existing arrangement or, at best, lessened compared to the existing freestanding wall.



The eaves of the new link structure (green) would be lower than the existing freestanding wall, while the ridge (red) would be no taller than and seamlessly blend in with the roof of the existing (original) outbuilding. This design ensures a structure of lesser massing when seen from this vantage point, which is the only public viewpoint from which the proposed link structure would be visible.

2.11 Due to the concealed position of the proposed works behind the existing outbuilding, not part of the new rear (north-facing) wall of the proposed link structure would be visible from the public realm. In fact, the new wall would have little-to-no impact on private views (from within the application site) as well.

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2.12 Consequently, the proposed link structure would not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the building or the openness of the countryside.

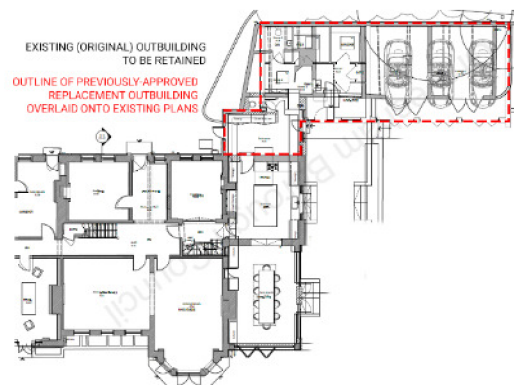


Position of new north-facing wall (highlighted) of the proposed link extension, as seen from this private vantage point.

- 2.13 Despite the minimal impact of the proposed link structure on visual amenity (aided by the lowered existing freestanding wall), the proposals technically constitute an extension to an existing dwelling within the Green Belt.
- 2.14 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF permits 'appropriate' extensions to dwellings located within the Green Belt provided that such enlargements do not result in "disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building". Paragraph (ii) of Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan (Saved Policies, 2014) limits householder extensions within the Green Belt to no more than 33% of the gross external floor area (GEA) of the original dwellinghouse.
- 2.15 The proposed link structure would enclose an existing area of hardstanding that is already partially enclosed (on three sides) and which would (once fully enclosed) have a Gross External Area (GEA) of approximately 20.6 square metres. This represents an increase of only 3.12% above and beyond the GEA of the original dwellinghouse. As the existing outbuilding is an original structure that is not being altered (other than to incorporate the new link structure), it is not considered reasonable to include the GEA of the outbuilding to assess compliance with paragraph (ii) of Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan. This is because only the net additional floor area that is to be created through the link structure could potentially have a material impact on the openness of the countryside or the appearance of the building.
- 2.16 In any case, even if (though deemed unreasonable) the GEA of the existing outbuilding were to be included in calculating compliance with Policy C13, the total additional floorspace would still not exceed 33% of the original GEA of the dwellinghouse. Compliance is also achieved if the GEA of the proposed side and rear infill extension is taken into account (c.f. summary table in Section 2.1).
- 2.17 Furthermore, officers are reminded that planning permission was granted in 2017 (ref: 20160966) within a virtually identical policy context for a similar link structure. This permission also allowed the complete demolition and reconstruction of the existing front outbuilding, with a marginal increase in height (see below). Consequently, it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission for similar proposals that would, in fact, have a lesser impact on the appearance of the building on account of the retention of the original outbuilding at the front.



APPROVED UNDER 20160966



CURRENTLY PROPOSED

- 2.18 The following conclusions were drawn by officers during the determination of ref: 20160966 with regards to the impact of the proposals on the appearance of the building and the openness of the Green Belt and AONB (extracts from delegated report):

The application seeks planning consent for a single storey front extension providing triple garage, enlarged kitchen W.C utility/dog room and boot room, a detached outbuilding for a workshop and replacement entrance gates and front boundary wall.

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The proposed front extension is replacing an existing large outbuilding in front of the dwelling and adjacent to the road to be demolished and which currently provides garaging and storage and is of brick construction and part render with a peg tiled roof over the main part and which is at present linked to the house with walling and an open courtyard.

In terms of new floorspace at the front of the property the proposals would create an approx. additional net area of 42m², albeit that overall the size of the extension/outbuilding is more significant being in the region of 127m².

Within the context of the overall size of the existing dwelling at the Old Rectory it is not considered that this proposal is significant or disproportionate. The current ground floor footprint of the dwelling (excluding the linked outbuilding and excluding the more recent sun room) is approx. 250m² and with overall floorspace over 600m². It is not necessary to consider the impact on or harm to openness of the Green Belt.

The other argument in its favour are that the extension/outbuilding is being built on the footprint of an existing building and the addition to the kitchen will be constructed on a walled courtyard which is already effectively a hard surfaced area.

The height of the building in comparison to that to be demolished would only be marginally higher overall and thus not add significantly to the bulk of the building.

The application site is located in the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area and as such, Policy CS12 of the Local Plan Core Strategy is relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications.

More critically the site is within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and policies of the adopted Kent Downs AONB Management Plan are a relevant consideration.

In landscape terms the front extension/outbuilding is effectively replacing an existing outbuilding of similar form, height and bulk and in an identical location. It is not considered that the frontage development would result in material harm to the landscape character.

- 2.19 Consequently, the impact of the proposed link structure while retaining the original outbuilding is considered acceptable in relation to its impact on the appearance of the building and the openness of the AONB and Green Belt.

Window alterations

- 2.20 It is proposed to replace all existing single-glazed timber sash windows with double-glazed equivalents of similar appearance. At the same time, it is proposed to address design inconsistencies that affect the existing fenestration.
- 2.21 Most of the timber-sash windows contained within the front elevation consist of Georgian-style glazing bars; however, some windows stand out negatively because they feature different glazing patterns. These windows have been identified in the following photograph:

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- 2.22 It is therefore proposed to alter the identified windows in order to match the predominant fenestration style. These works are considered an improvement over the existing arrangement.
- 2.23 The proposed replacement windows will be timber sash painted white. As such, the proposals already benefit from deemed consent under Article 3 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 pursuant to Class A ('enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse'), Part 1, Schedule 2 of that Order. The proposed alterations therefore could be undertaken without the need for planning permission.
- 2.24 On all other sides of the building, a similar melange of different window styles is evident, and it is also proposed to replace some of the nonconforming windows with windows that more closely match the predominant style.
- 2.25 Whilst the drawings indicate that the front façade is to be re-rendered and subsequently painted, the application of new render to replace the existing render is considered outside the scope of development control as it will not materially affect the appearance of the building. The subsequent application of paint is permitted development under Class C, Part 2, Schedule 2 of the GPDO.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

- 3.1 There are no neighbouring properties within the vicinity of the proposed works. Matters pertaining to neighbouring amenity are therefore not material to the application.

OTHER MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst part of the application site is located in an area with a high risk of flooding from surface water, there is no risk of flooding from surface water within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse (where the works are proposed). The proposed extension will therefore have no material impact on flood risk. Additional evidence in form of mapping data is contained within the submitted Flood Risk Statement.
- 4.2 In contrast to the proposals previously sought under planning application ref: 2023/0656, the current proposals would not have any material impact on existing trees or landscaping. All works would be confined to the existing footprint or areas of hardstanding.

ADDITIONAL SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

6.1 Overleaf.



Front elevation of the dwellinghouse; no part of the proposed side/rear infill extension would be visible from the front. Additionally, by lowering the height of the freestanding wall to accommodate the roof of the proposed link extension, there will be an overall perceived reduction in massing at the front of the property.



The original outbuilding at the front of the application site, which is to be retained, will ensure that the proposed works are largely screened from roadside views.



Left: existing freestanding wall (to be reconstructed and lowered in height to accommodate the roof of the proposed link structure.

Right: concealed area at the back of the freestanding wall (to be incorporated into the proposed link structure, similar to the works approved under ref: 20160966.



The existing orangery is a modern addition of little architectural value, subtly diverting attention from the rest of the dwellinghouse rather than seamlessly blending in with it.



The bulk of the proposed infill extension will be shielded from south-westerly views at the rear due to the presence of the existing stable buildings.