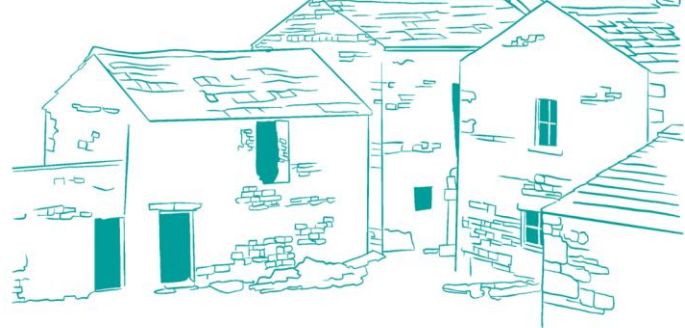




BUILDINGS ARCHAEOLOGY CASEWORK TEAM

A National Amenity Society

Ms Rebecca Harrison
Planning Case Officer
Gravesham Borough Council
By email: planning.reps@gravesham.gov.uk

08 November 2025

Elizabeth House , The Street, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0AJ. Planning application no. 20251136.

Dear Rebecca,

Thank you for notifying the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) of this application. Based on the information supplied with the proposals, we offer the following observations and advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

The CBA request that **additional detail and amended plans** are provided to allow us to fully assess the impacts of the proposals and to minimise the harm to the historic building. If sufficient information is not provided and the more invasive elements of the proposal are not amended or fully justified, we recommend that the application be **refused**.

Significance

The importance of the Elizabeth House (The Post Office) is established by its Grade II listed status (NHLE No. 1350241). The NHLE describes the front as '17th-century rendered', although the Design and Access Statement supplied erroneously describes the house as early eighteenth century. As shown in the photograph in the Design and Access Statement, the house served as the Post Office from the early 20th century until 2003. At present, the house is converted into a single residential dwelling.

The building has historic and evidential value in its historic fabric, legible phases of evolution, and the traces of successive private and communal uses.

Comments

The CBA cannot support this application in its current form, as it fails to meet the requirements of the NPPF. As per paragraph 207 of Section 16 of the NPPF, the application

lacks a Heritage Statement that establishes the significance of the heritage assets with ‘a level of detail that is proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.’

As per paragraphs 212 and 213 of the NPPF, the application lacks an impact assessment of all the works proposed for the building. The application involves demolition work, changes to the roof profile, replacement and removal of internal doors and windows on the front elevation, removal of the existing floor finish, removal of the wrought-iron fire grate, relocation of the basement staircase, and removal and replacement of the existing staircase. However, the application does not provide a clear and convincing justification for the demolition, replacement, relocation, and removal.

The application also seeks to replace the existing timber post with a new steel post; however, CBA advises considering conserving the timber post rather than replacing it, as per paragraph 208. As modern fabrics such as steel behave differently in response to changing environmental conditions, the insertion of steel within timber framed buildings can lead to stress and damage in the long term. Moreover, a detailed structural assessment of the existing post, including any reasons for its deterioration, should be undertaken prior to any works to identify existing structural or conservation issues which should be addressed. This may allow for the possibility of repairing and retaining the existing historic fabric.

CBA understands the need to insulate the building. However, the proposal does not provide details on the thermal insulation materials, external or internal, or their impact on the historic fabric. As mentioned in the proposed drawings, lining the external walls with insulation using the dot-and-dab method is unsympathetic to the historic fabric.

The CBA advises choosing an insulation material, both externally and internally, that is sympathetic to the historic building and does not harm its fabric by locking moisture into the walls, which is likely to lead to long term damp and decay.

The proposal also seeks to sandblast all the existing exposed timbers; however, sandblasting to restore them to their original condition is an aggressive treatment, and we recommend alternative options with less potential to damage the historic fabric.

The CBA advise that details of the service runs and ventilation for new bathrooms should be sought prior to the commencement of any works, to ensure that these avoid damage to the building’s historic fabric where possible.

Recommendation

The application does not meet the requirements of paragraphs 207, 208, 212, and 213 of NPPF Section 16. We advise that a proper Heritage



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Statement be included that establishes the significance of the elements affected by the proposals, and that an impact assessment for the proposed works be provided. The proposed works should be revised to include materials and methods appropriate to the building.

If revised details are not submitted, we recommend that the application be **refused**.

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

Kind Regards,

Dr Alison Edwards
Listed Buildings Caseworker

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in, **Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification To Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of state (England) direction 2021**.

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