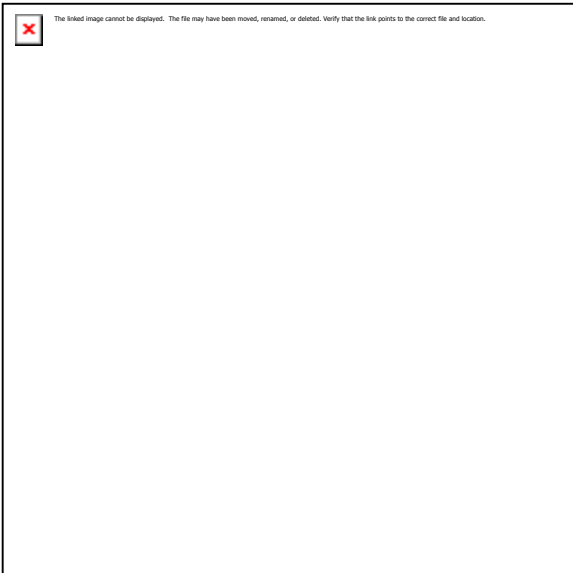




Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20220739

Location: Abbey Farm Church Street Higham Rochester

Description: Insertion of bi-fold doors into dining room

Applicant: Mr T Love

Site Visit Date: Desk top

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Drawing no. BDS-AF-P01 – Existing & Proposed Plans & Side Elevations;
- Design & Access Statement;
- Heritage Statement

Relevant Planning History

None.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- None

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021);
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009);
- Church Street Higham Rural Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Management Plan Rural Conservation Area Appraisals Supplementary Planning Document (2016)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

GBC Conservation Officer

First comment

No objection.

Second comment

Considers that the possibility of medieval fabric should be taken into account, but it can only be considered as a non-designated heritage asset with regard to the demolition of the wall to form a large opening. Have never been comfortable with the lack of statutory designation for this building and would recommend that Heritage England are contact for comment and consideration for listing.

However the current listing schedule specifically omits the buildings on the Schedule Ancient Monument;

Excluded from the scheduling are the occupied buildings, garden sheds, aviary, other outbuildings, gates, fences and fence posts, but the ground beneath all these features is included.

Heritage England

Thank you for your email. It is possible that a relatively late building might be listed on the grounds of it incorporating medieval fabric, whether re-used from the site or in-situ. However, it would be impossible to give a steer in this case as we have so little understanding of the extent of this fabric. The StreetView image gives no clue – I assume it must all be round the back?

We might be able to discuss with you, or Allan, whether submitting a listing application was worthwhile if we had some clear images to illustrate this early fabric and how or where it is incorporated, but it is not something we could pursue off our own bat. A listing application would need to be submitted to us before

we could consider making a full assessment.

Neighbouring properties

3 surrounding properties were consulted plus site and press notices – the overall consultation expiry date was 12 August – no responses.

Officer's Analysis

The application site consists of a two storey detached dwelling situated in the Green Belt, the Church Street Higham Conservation Area, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (St Marys Priory, Higham) and the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area.

Whether inappropriate development in the Green Belt and openness

The proposed development would relate to the installation of bi-fold doors in the south elevation of the single storey element of the dwelling to serve the dining room. Due to this being the placement of an opening in the flank wall of part of an existing dwelling and the dwelling itself would not be any larger, it is considered that this would not result in a more intensive form of development and would still maintain the character of openness that is prevalent within the site and its surroundings. In this respect the proposal is compliant with Policy CS02 (LPCS) and section 13 of the NPPF (2021).

Landscape Character

The site is situated in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. Due to the nature of the proposals, i.e. the installation of bi-fold doors in an existing dwelling it is considered there would be no materially greater impact on wider landscape character and as such the proposal would be compliant with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Design, Character and Appearance including Heritage

The building is described as such in the Conservation Area Appraisal:

Abbey Farmhouse

The early 19th century Abbey farmhouse, disproportionately tall for its plan area, sits close up to medieval basements and incorporates very significant medieval fabric in its walls. Not quite a square in plan, the house has a low pitched and short ridged roof designed for natural slate. The chimney is at one end of the ridge. The north elevation is blank and rendered. The west elevation has two tall double hung sash window openings above and a tall front entrance and a window below. The south elevation has four windows, two up, two down and the east has one only. The house is unfortunately not listed and this has allowed its recent 'upgrading', externally with new unsympathetic plastic double glazed windows and shiny modern synthetic roofing slates. From a distance it remains important in the landscape but closer to the conservation area character is let down by these unfortunate changes. Extending from its north east corner at right angles is a single storey pitched-roof former agricultural range joined to it by a short two storey section under a mono-pitch roof. The lower part of this structure shows much re-use of medieval material. The mono-pitched part incorporates a tall and very thick flint-faced masonry wall, part of the priory buildings, with a panel of external alternating, chequerboard, stone and flint-work in one side.

The bi-fold doors would be a modern insertion into the building but it is considered they would be discreetly

sited being in the southern flank elevation of the single storey element of the dwelling and therefore facing into the site and not facing the streetscene. There would still be masonry surrounding them above and either side of the doors so they would overwhelm the whole of that elevation. It is therefore considered the doors would not be harmful to the character of the dwelling and would preserve the character and appearance of the Church Street, Higham Conservation Area.

Given the property's location within the St Mary's Priory Schedule Ancient Monument, there is the potential of the application property having significant medieval fabric, specifically the single storey pitched roof former agricultural range showing much re-use of medieval material. However the property itself is not listed and so the property can only be considered as a non-designated heritage asset. As reference in paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2021);

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing application that direction or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The Schedule Ancient Monument specifically omits the buildings from the schedule by stating the following;

Excluded from the scheduling are the occupied buildings, garden sheds, aviary, other outbuildings, gates, fences and fence posts, but the ground beneath all these features is included.

Given the above and that fact that the building wasn't considered worthy of listing at the time of the original listed, it is considered on balance that the proposal is acceptable and will not cause detrimental harm to the non-designated heritage asset. Although the site is within an area of archaeological potential, a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief in the event for any below ground works is not required as there are no below ground works, but the following condition will be including in relation to the historic fabric;

The applicant shall undertake a watching brief during construction in case any historic and medieval fabric is encountered during the demolition required to create the opening. If during development any historic or medieval fabric is found, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) should be informed as soon as practical and the work shall not continue until written agreement is provided by the LPA.

Reason: *To protect the architectural and historic character of the non-designated historic asset and in accordance with Policy CS20 of the Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

It is therefore considered on balance, that the proposal is acceptable and in accordance with Policy CS20 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and para.204 of the NPPF (2021).

Amenity of Occupiers

The NPPF (2021) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land. The impact on neighbours will be assessed in the next section of the report.

The proposal will enable more natural light into the existing dining room. There is no enlargement of the structure itself and no loss of garden area.

The proposal is not detrimental to residential amenity and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014.

Neighbouring Amenity

As outlined above, it is important that any development safeguards the amenity of neighbouring properties

and land. Following a period of consultation with neighbouring properties one objection to the proposal was received.

The propose doors will not impact on any neighbouring property as they face into the garden area of the application site only.

The proposal is not detrimental to neighbour amenity and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and it is recommended that subject to conditions, permission is granted. The proposal is considered to be well design and will not effect the non-designated heritage or conservation setting. As such the property is in accordance with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) as well as paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2021).

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions / reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Miss Faye Hobbs	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	01 September 2022	Dated:	1st September 2022