



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20221350

Location: The Coach House West Down Farm Shipley Hills Road Meopham

Description: Erection of single storey side extension

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Ripley

Site Visit Date: 16/02/2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
1783/1A – Existing Floor Plan
1783/2 – Existing Elevations
1783/3 A – Proposed Floor Plan
1783/4 A – Proposed Elevations
1783/5 – Existing and Proposed Block Plan
Planning Statement
Cover Letter

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19750028 (GR/75/28)	Details pursuant to conditions 1 and 2 of the Appeal Decision by the Secretary of State under ref. TH/6/72/411 and being conversion of stables to form single storey dwelling house.	Permitted	26.05.1975
TH/6/72/411	Conversion into living accommodation of stables at West Down Farm, Shipley Hills Road, Meopham	Permitted at appeal	01.06.1974

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles
- CS20 - Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 - Policy for Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- TC2 - Policy for Listed Buildings
- T4 - Development outside the Built-Up Area
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

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)

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 - Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- Section 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- Section 7 - Restriction on works affecting listed buildings
- Section 8 - Authorisation Of works: listed building consent

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors: No comments received.

Meopham Parish Council: Meopham Parish Council objects to this planning application on the grounds of inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

GBC Conservation Officer: No comments received.

Neighbouring properties

1 surrounding property was consulted and 0 responses were received. A site and press notice was also displayed and the overall expiring date for comments was 03/02/2023.

Officer's Analysis

The relevant considerations for this application are:

- Principle of Development (Green Belt Policies inclusive)
- Heritage, Design, Character and appearance
- Amenity (Future Occupiers)
- Amenity (Neighbours)

- Planning Balance and Conclusion

Officer Note: It is noted that the plans provided do not show the existing rear extension or the garage which do not have the benefit of planning consent. Whilst this would not be a material planning consideration, it is important to note that these works have been referred to the planning enforcement team for investigation.

Principle of Development (Green Belt)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 147-151 of the NPPF address proposals which would affect the Green Belt. It seeks to ensure that inappropriate development in the Green Belt would not be approved except in very special circumstance.

The relevant exceptions to this policy are as follows:

Paragraph 149(c) identifies *'the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building'*, as an exception to this policy. Paragraph 149(g) identifies another exception as;

'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
- *not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority'*

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

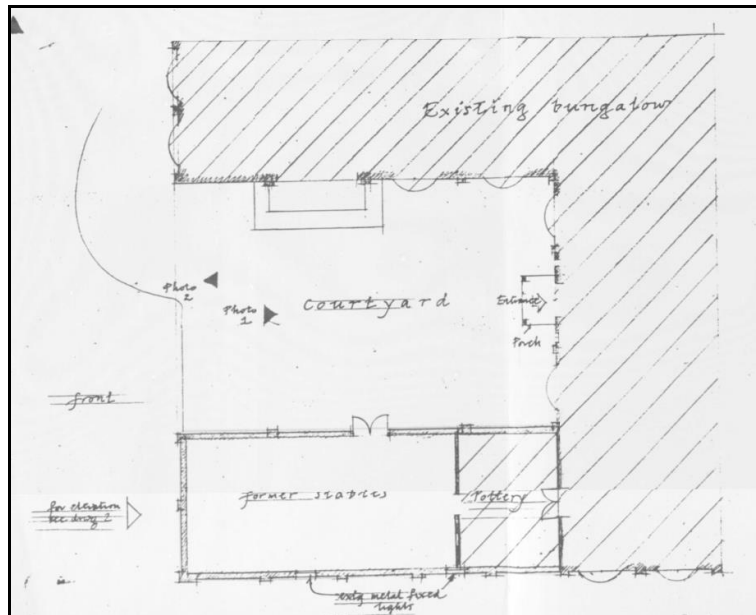
Core Policy CS02 sets out where development should be distributed in the borough. Preference is given to those urbanised area as sustainable locations. Outside urbanised areas, those rural settlements which are inset from the Green Belt would also be considered acceptable in principle. This site is in a rural area, in the Greenbelt **NOT** forming part of settlement inset from the Greenbelt. In this context the policy states that developments; *'will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan.'*

Scale and Size:

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

Policy C13 sets out the requirements for extensions to dwellings. Of particular consideration and to assist in assessing whether the addition would be disproportionate, this policy limits the increased floorspace to one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling. However, this policy does pre-date the NPPF, and greater weight should be given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 the NPPF 2021. "Original dwelling" for the purpose of Policy C13 means the building in permanent residential use at 1st July 1948. As this building was converted following consent in 1972, the original dwelling will be referred to as it stood at the point of conversion. Only part of the entire building was converted to become a dwellinghouse and the remainder was converted following planning consent in 1997 under ref 19970347.

The below site layout shows the area which was originally converted to a bungalow;



Based on this, the originally internal floor area was approximately, 191.3m². This has overtime increased to 249.3m² (with the exception of the rear extension which is without planning consent). The building has already been increased by 58m² (30.3%). This addition would add a further 30.8m² which would result in a total increase of 88.8 (46%). This exceeds the requirements of this policy. It is noted that the existing extension to the rear which did not receive planning consent would further increase this harm, subject to the outcome of the enforcement investigation.

The proposed development would result in significant increase to the scale of the dwellinghouse from its original conversion, in the Green Belt. It would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building which would contravene paragraph 149(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Saved Policy C13 of Gravesham Local Plan first Review (1994)

Impact on Openness

Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of surrounding area. This application is located in a rural area within the protected Metropolitan Green Belt. Whilst there are some areas of built form, such as this existing dwellinghouse, the landscape of the area is overwhelmingly rural and open, without built form. This site in particular forms part of the Meopham Downs, Landscape Character Area. In this area there is a gently undulating topography with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland. The settlements have traditional village centres. In addition, traditional vernacular architecture can be found scattered across the landscape. (As described by the Landscape Character Assessment 2009). The Landscape Character Assessment identifies that the positive features of the Landscape in this area should be conserved and reinforced. One such feature describe is the Traditional architecture surrounding village greens. Also relevant within the landscape character area are the following guidelines:

- Conserve traditional character of built environment by drawing on traditional building materials and techniques for new development.
- Reinforce village identity, keeping villages distinct and separate from one another.

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF refers to the open character of Green Belts:

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

As has been assessed, there is an existing dwellinghouse in this area, and the proposal would result in a

significant increase in mass and scale of the building and in particular a significant increase in footprint of over one third. The following section on Heritage, Design, Character and Appearance will also address how the proposed extension would fail to conserve the traditional character of the built environment, harming the traditionally rural and agricultural setting of the area. As such, it is considered that there would be significant harm to the rural, open character of the Green Belt within this location.

The application would therefore fail to comply with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and therefore also paragraphs 137 and 149(g) (Section 13) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 in terms of its impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Heritage, Design, Character and Appearance

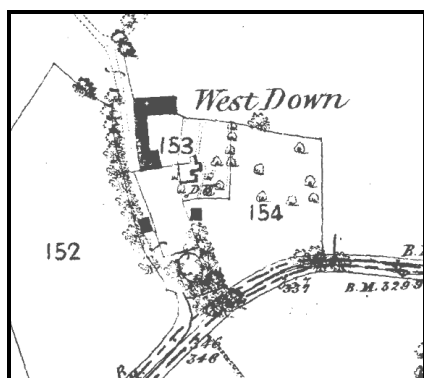
Curtilage Listed Buildings

Historic England, Listed Buildings and Curtilage (Advice Note 10), found here: [Listed Buildings and Curtilage | Historic England](#), provides guidance on ascertaining whether a building has Curtilage Listed status. It states that three factors should be considered when assessing this;

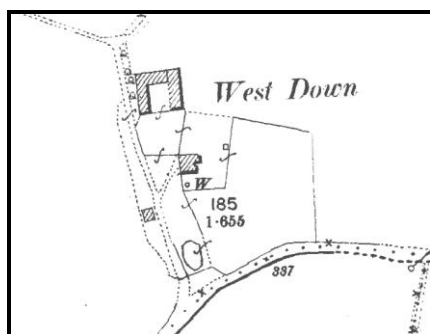
- The physical layout of the listed building and the structure;
- Their ownership, both historically and at the date of listing; and
- The use of function of the relevant buildings again both historically and at the fate of listing

Facts relevant to this case:

Date of Buildings: The List Entry for West Down Farmhouse dates this building as C16 building. The earliest heritage map available (1871-1890) shows both the Listed Dwellinghouse and a building to the north but this appears to have been rebuilt in the later map (1897-1900), which is when the subject building first appears.



Date 1 (1871 - 1890)



Date 2 (1897 – 1900)

Date of Listing of Principle Building: West Down Farmhouse was Listed as a Grade II Listed Building from 21st November 1966.

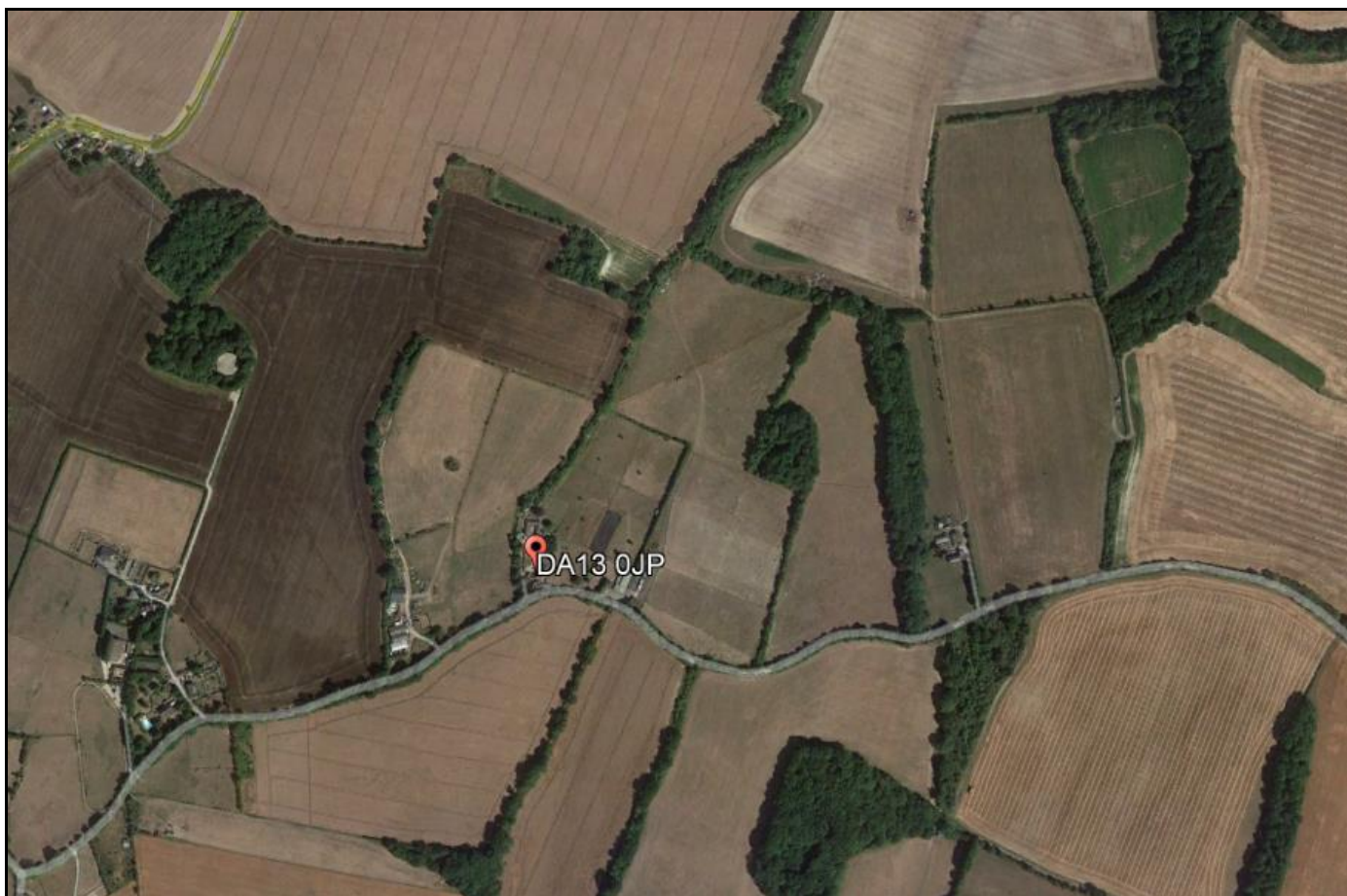
Physical Layout:



The Coach House lies 17 metres to the North, which in such a sparse area, is closely linked.

As the below aerial image taken in 1940 and that taken in 2022 shows, buildings in the area were sparse and have remained so. The boundaries of those plots were edged with planting and in 1940 the farmhouse and stables clearly fall within the confined of the boundary edges.





Whilst some modern demarcation has taken place from new planting within that original boundary as per the image below from 2022, there are no significant changes at ancillary form, appearance and nature of the original stables servicing this dwellinghouse have remained. As can be seen following the loss of the stables servicing West Down Farmhouse, new stables were erected to the south to meet this need.



Past and Present Ownership: Given that both buildings were associated with the same land in 1975 when The Coach House sought planning consent for conversion to an independent residential building, it would be reasonable to surmise that the ownership of both West Down farmhouse and the Coach House were at the time of Listing the same. The plots have since been divided and are owned by different people currently.

Previous and Current Uses: The Coach House is a former stable building used in conjunction with West Down FarmHouse to the South. Both have become independent dwellinghouses. The Coach House was converted following planning consent in 1974, after the date the Farmhouse was Listed.

Conclusions:

Based on the evidence available, there is a close physical layout between West Down Farmhouse and The Coach House. Although there is a currently separation between the plots by means of hedging and planting, at the time of Listing there was a clear ancillary relationship between the building. Of further note is that the buildings continue to share a singular access point from Shipley Hills Road.

In terms of the ownership, at the time of Listing and historically, the buildings fell under the same ownership under the same plot of the land. The land ownership would have changed at some point after the stable building was converted following consent in 1974. This was after the Farmhouse was Listed in 1966.

The functional relationship between the buildings historically and at the time of listing is clear. Given that the Coach House is recorded as being a stable building prior to 1974, when consent for its alteration was achieved. Therefore, up until this point its use as ancillary stables to West Down Farmhouse is undeniable.

In the case of *Skerritts of Nottingham Ltd v SOS & another* 25/02/2000, the court of appeal identified that the curtilage of a listed building is a matter of fact and degree. In that case, they stated that the curtilage was *"likely to extend to what are, or have been, in terms of ownership and function, ancillary buildings."* This is relevant to the case at hand and based on relevant caselaw and the assessment of the link ownership, function and physical relationship at the time of the buildings listing, concluding that there is a

strong argument that The Coach House, is a Curtilage Listed Building to that of Grade II Listed West Down Farmhouse under Listed Building Entry Number 1372097. However, given that the building has been considerably modernised, with rendered external walls and upvc windows (which would have required listed building consent), with the exception of its traditional form, it has lost its historical character and so the significance of the asset has already been seriously deteriorated and this is also relevant to the extent which the asset should be preserved.

Historic Farmstead and Impact on the Curtilage Listed Building

Advice on historic farmsteads can be found here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/rural-heritage/farm-buildings>. Historic England state:

'Traditional farmsteads are heritage assets which, through conservation and reuse, make a significant contribution to rural economies and communities.'

This is a historic farm building within an historic farm complex which is considered important in terms of its architectural and historic interest and contribution to the landscape. Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, recognises the importance of preserving the heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, which once lost, cannot be replaced. This particular converted stable building uses a traditional courtyard layout, where historically, working buildings are arranged around one or more yards. The working buildings are traditionally low form, and simple in design, allowing the farmhouse, to be the dominant and more complex feature. The proposal to erect this extension jutting out from the side of the existing arm of the courtyard layout, whilst reasonable in scale, would appear incongruous given the sites rural setting and its current reflection of the clearly identifiable traditional farmstead form and layout. Whilst the development is in residential use, it has retained its simple, traditional and rural character (with the exclusion of the single storey rear extension for which planning consent has not been obtained), and extension such as that proposed, would undermine this resulting in an unduly domesticated appearance, eroding the rural character and permanently altering the traditional courtyard form of the farmstead complex. This impact is evident regardless of the status of the Listing of the building.

Whilst the building has been altered over time in terms of having a more residential aesthetic, the true form and layout of the historic stable building has been maintained (with the exception of the extension which has not gained consent which is currently under enforcement investigation) and this is a vital feature of the significance of this building and its contribution to the setting of the Listed Building. The proposed extension would remove this traditional form and would result in substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Paragraph 201 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

201. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

(a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

(b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

(c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

(d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

The extension to this dwellinghouse would result in a greater level of space for the occupiers of the property. However, it does not demonstrate any other public benefits which would outweigh the substantial harm and great weight which is given to the Designated assets conservation. However, referring back to paragraph 199, it states that the more important the asset, the greater weight should be given to its Conservation. This is relevant given the unfortunate degradation to the asset, and thus there is a lesser importance in this instance in retaining the assets conservation. On balance, little weight shall be given to the preservation of the curtilage listed status of the building.

Nonetheless, the proposal would still be inappropriate in terms of its harm to the form and character of the historical farmstead arrangement and would be contrary to the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The intended use of the room as extended has not been provided. However, the proposed addition would have a floor area of 30.8m². This is larger than any of the minimum space standards applied by SPG – Residential Layout Guidelines.

The new room meets the required minimum space standards and the depth and area of the rear garden and its requirement would not change as per SPG2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020.

Neighbouring Amenity

Given the spacing and single storey nature of this dwellinghouse and the proposed extension, it would be unlikely for this minor scale extension to overbear on the neighbouring properties in terms of physical bulk, overshadowing or direct overlook. There are also no concerns raised with regard to direct overlook.

The proposal is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in compliance with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Other Material Planning Considerations

Within the Planning Statement provided as part of this assessment, an argument has been made that development which would be similar could be undertaken under Permitted Development Rights, at a lower height but the proposed scheme would be preferred as a more appropriate design. However, given that the Coach House as assessed would be a curtilage Listed Building, any extension to this dwellinghouse would require Listed Building Consent at least regardless of whether or not the alternative scheme would comply with Permitted Development Rights. Given that as assessed one of the reasons for refusal of this scheme would be related to the harm to the curtilage Listed Building from an extension which would interfere with the traditional form of the stable building and that the building already forms three arms, the possibility of an alternative scheme which would not comply with Permitted Development Rights and overcome the harm to the Listed Building when assessed under a Listed Building Consent Application, is not a likely possibility. For this reason, little weight can be afforded to this argument.

Conclusion

The proposed extension would be located in the Metropolitan Green Belt. It would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and would result in substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt would fail to comply with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and therefore also paragraphs 137, 149(c) and 149(g) (Section 13) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) in terms of its impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposed extension due to its harsh interruption to the traditional form and character of the building within a historical farmstead, would result in significant harm to the character and setting of the rural area

within which this building sits and so it would therefore be contrary to the requirements of; Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Recommendation

Refusal

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

Case Officer:	Ms Lisa Williams	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	7 th March 2023	Dated:	07 March 2023