
OUR REF: JB/3339

DESIGN, ACCESS, HERITAGE AND PLANNING STATEMENT

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION TO DEMOLISH AN EXISTING
SHED AND REPLACE IT WITH A GARDEN ROOM FOR USE AS A HOME
OFFICE.**

30 THE STREET, COBHAM, KENT, DA12 3BZ

AUGUST 2021

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This statement is prepared in support of an application for the erection of a replacement garden room for use as a home office.
- 1.2** The existing garden shed to be removed is a simple timber building and is clearly of no historic merit. It post dates 1949 and Listed Building Consent is not required for its removal.



Photograph 1: Photograph showing the shed to be removed.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1** Cobham is a small village to the south-east of Gravesend at the lower end of the Cuxton/Luddestown Valley. Watling Street (the A2) is less than a mile to the north and the village lies within a network of ancient roads set in farmland to the south of the A2. The village has a rural setting and to the east (beyond the application site) is the open parkland of the West Park of Cobham Hall which is screened from the village by trees and hedgerows.
- 2.2** The origins of Cobham are uncertain, but the name is Saxon and there are mentions of Cobbba hamm in 939AD and Cobbeham in 1195 according the Cobham Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 2.3** ‘The street’ is an east–west spine road through the village on an imperceptible ridge which reaches its highest point just to the west of the application site where there is a prominent ‘pinch point’ in the road, with buildings crowding the roadside.

- 2.4 The majority of buildings in the village are of red brick. Other traditional building materials include weather boarded timber frame, tile hanging on timber frame, timber frame lath and plaster, as well as more modern such as pebble dash. Roofs are generally hand-made clay tiles, although there are some examples of more modern synthetic materials. The general character follows the common traditional timber and brick vernacular in Kent. External joinery is predominantly traditional, but there are examples of plastic windows and doors that are harmful to the character of the locality.
- 2.5 The application site forms one of a group of buildings known as 26, 28 and 30 the Street. Number 30 sits behind number 28, and is accessed by walking past the front door to number 28 on the west facing elevation and then through a garden gate.
- 2.6 Designations relevant to the site include the Cobham Conservation Area and The Kent Downs AONB. The site, including the garden is inset from the Green Belt. There are numerous listed buildings in the locality, including Nos 26, 28 and 30 The Street which are Grade II Listed as a group.
- 2.7 The garden to 30 The Street extends to a rectangular piece of land to the north of the dwelling, which contains raised beds, paving, trees and shrubs, a greenhouse and garden shed. There is a laurel hedge to the rear of the shed and an oak tree close to the south-east corner of the building.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 The applicant is a solicitor who has become accustomed to working from home over the last 18 months. She intends to make this arrangement permanent and proposes the erection of an ancillary home office in the garden of her home. She would benefit from a more comfortable and dedicated accommodation. There will be two desks because colleagues may join her on occasion. In the same way, although clients may visit infrequently (as they do now), most contact is by telephone and zoom/teams/skype. A change of use is not required because the residential character of the existing residential use will not change. The building will remain ancillary to the dwellinghouse.
- 3.2 The building will be constructed using panels clad in black stained timber cladding. The roof is flat in form and the building will be discretely located at the rear of the garden. A slab will be created for the building with minimal disturbance to the ground surface to protect tree roots.

4.0 Planning and Development History

- 4.1 Relevant planning history includes the following:

Ref. No: 20010593 | Status: Application Permitted [Application for Listed Building Consent for the conversion of existing detached barn into a dining room involving repairs and refurbishment and erection of a single storey glazed walkway linking the kitchen to the proposed dining room.](#)

Ref. No: 20010592 | Status: Application Permitted [Conversion of existing detached barn into a dining room involving repairs and refurbishment and erection of a single storey glazed walkway linking the kitchen to the proposed dining room.](#)

Ref. No: 20151213 | Status: Not Make a Tree Preservation Order [The removal of one large Eucalyptus Tree.](#)

Ref. No: 20170706 | Status: Not Make a Tree Preservation Order [Fell one Holly tree in garden.](#)

- 4.2 This application does not seek to describe a permitted development, such that the term 'curtilage' is not relevant. It is worth noting, however, that the parcel of land to the north of the site in which the proposed building is located has a separate title number. It is not clear when the land in title number K70594 began its use as garden land associated with 30 The Street (Appendix 1). It is certainly evident from aerial photographs that the 'garden land' use has occurred for a very long time, such that if the land was not the original curtilage for 30 The Street, it appears so now. Curtilage is not necessarily static. Most relevant to this case, the use is clearly residential garden land.

5.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Buildings known as 26, 28 and 30 the street form an L-shaped group and are Grade II Listed. The group is immediately to the west of a short terrace of three Victorian dwellings with rendered fronts set well back from the road. 26, 28, 30 The Street mark the point at which the building line steps forward to the back of the highway, to form a significant 'pinch point'.
- 5.2 The group of 3 dwellings dates from the C18. One elevation looks east, and the other looks west over a garden which also abuts the road. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes that this arrangement of spaces has existed for at least 140 years. The map below shows the arrangement in 1897 – 1900.



Map 1: 1897 – 1900
(Klis Map)

- 5.3 The dwelling to the west of the site, set back from the road, is a modern dwelling which has been extended to the rear. A short distance further west, is a wide fronted timber hall house dating from 1411. Opposite 26, 28 and 30 The Street is another group (29 – 39) of Victorian (late C167/ early C18) cottages. Number 41 is wider than the others and contains a shop window and door.
- 5.4 The Cobham Conservation Area Appraisal describes this group of buildings (**Nos. 30, 28 and 26 The Street**) as follows:

“This building is three two storied structural units of which two adjoin corner to corner, forming a building line set-back to the east, while a third fills-in a mirror image of the set-back on the west side. This produces an ‘L’ shaped overall ground plan of great townscape value. The publicly visible elevations of the eastern house, no 26, comprise tile hanging over red brickwork to the east and thin ashlar stone-facing to the south. This combination is highly unusual, possible unique. The ashlar elevation has two pairs of iron casement windows above, each with very narrow stone mullions. One of these is repeated below with the front door below the other one. The peg tiled roof is in two parts, a double hipped section parallel to The Street at the front, with a long hip-ended peg tiled rear roof at right angles. No 30 steps forward to the edge of the highway. It is red brick under a peg tile roof sloped to all sides and with short lengths of ridge to east and south. The east elevation has single pairs of wooden casement windows one above the other, set centrally. The Street elevation has two sets up and two sets down of paired timber casement windows with leaded lights and a front door at the east end.”

- 5.5 The **significance of this group buildings** primarily relates to their evidential and historic value which are considered to be ‘medium/high’. The unusual facades visible from the road have a high evidential interest due to the unusual composition and arrangement of materials. Likewise, the plan form of the buildings have evidential value. The relationship to the road is very important. Due to the prominent position, the importance in certain vistas and the coherent survival of character and materials, the buildings also have a high aesthetic value.



Photo 4: Photograph 2: West facing elevation of 30 The Street

6.0 DESIGN AND PLANNING CONSIDERATION

- 6.1** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2** Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) reiterates this, whilst paragraph 12 of the Framework is clear that the development plan is the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.3** Paragraph 38 of the Framework states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, as well as work with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. They should also seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.4** The adopted planning policy for Gravesham consists of the Core Strategy (2014) and the saved policies of the Gravesham Local Plan (1994). There is emerging policy in the ADMP. This has not yet completed its public consultation and is some way off formal adoption. It is therefore to be afforded limited weight.
- 6.5** The applicant has sought to manage the impact of the shed on the significance of the listed buildings and the character of the Conservation Area by means of a sensitive location for the building, as well as by using appropriate materials. This statement describes that the timber outbuilding in the domestic setting does not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, nor the historic significance of the group of listed buildings.
- 6.6** In our view the proposed garden building satisfies national policies in the NPPF, Policy TC2 (Listed Buildings) of the Gravesham Local Plan and Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) in the Gravesham Core Strategy. The reasoned justification to Policy TC2 states that the Council's approach is to resist unsympathetic development and the policy seeks to ensure that development is sympathetic in terms of massing, scale, appearance and materials. In this case the building is small in scale, designed as a discrete timber clad outbuilding and is in a sensitive location. There is no intervisibility with the listed building and it seems very unlikely that it could be considered to be harmful to its significance.
- 6.7** The proposal also preserves and enhances the Cobham Conservation Area, as required by Policy TC3 (Development affecting Conservation Areas) of the Gravesham Local Plan. The materials are appropriate and the building will not have an undue impact on spaces, views and historic character. Removal of the existing building will not be harmful to the Conservation Area. The new building will have an overall positive impact.
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- 6.8** Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Core Strategy requires new development to be attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes that the local vernacular is typical of Kent generally, and it is our view that that black stained cladding would be appropriate. The building will not be visible from the street or the wider countryside, but is in keeping with the character of the neighbours dwelling and the Conservation Area generally. In terms of amenity, although the building is proposed to sit close to the boundary with the neighbour, there are no window openings in the relevant elevation of the neighbours dwelling. There will be no impact on privacy or outlook and the building will not have an impact on the amenities enjoyed by its occupants.
- 6.9** The development will protect biodiversity as also required by Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Core Strategy. The existing hedgerow (which provides shelter, nesting and feeding opportunities for a wide range of insect, mammal and bird species) to the rear of the building will be retained, as will the oak tree close to the south-east corner of the building. The base for the building will be prepared to sit on the surface of the ground so that there is minimal disturbance to roots. The applicant is keen to retain the tree and has not proposed its removal. It is worth pointing out that this tree is only 20 – 25 years old, and is unlikely to be a candidate for a TPO and should not act as a constraint on the erection of the garden building. In the event that the council is concerned about the proximity to the tree, the applicant would be happy to agree the species and location of an additional tree to be planted. As further biodiversity enhancements, bat, sparrow, hedgehog and insect boxes have been proposed in the vicinity of the shed. The applicant enjoys the wildlife in her garden.
- 6.10** The NPPF indicates that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONB's. In terms of the protected landscape, there will be imperceptible impact on the natural beauty and tranquility of the AONB. The small building is located in an existing garden and is closely related to existing buildings.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1** The proposed development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, is not harmful to the significance of this group of listed buildings, protects the amenities enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring dwelling and is appropriate in design terms. The Council are respectfully requested to grant planning permission for this development.

Appendix 1

