

Delegated Report

Application No: 20250582

Location: The George Inn Hever Court Road Gravesend Kent DA12 5UQ

Description: Application for Listed Building Consent for the internal alterations to install a disabled toilet.

Applicant: Mitchells & Butlers Retail Limited

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Application Form.
- Supporting letter dated 11th June 2025.
- Design & Access and Heritage Statement June 2025.
- Drawing no. 102 Rev A – Existing Ground Floor Plan.
- Drawing no. 201 Rev A – Proposed Site Plan.
- Drawing no. 203 Rev C – Proposed Accessible WC Plan Option 2
- Drawing no. 401 Rev B – Proposed Finishes & Builders Works Plan
- Drawing no. 501 – Proposed Window Detail

Relevant Planning History

This property has a very long planning history. The most recent history is summarised below:

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20240040	Application for Listed Building Consent for the alteration and refurbishment of existing advertisements and signage.	Permitted	20.03.2024
20240035	Erection of new double sided post mounted Corex sign and refurbishment of existing signage and signwriting.	Consent	20.03.2024
20130268	Application for approval of condition 3 attached to planning permission reference number 20130021 relating to the details and samples.	Permitted	05.06.2013
20130021	Internal alterations including installation of timber and glazed	Permitted	19.03.2013

	screens, re-decoration, new vanity units in toilets, new meet and greet counter to replace coffee service bar and new internal double doors.		
20090455	Erection of a covered timber pergola to provide a covered dining area.	Permitted	03.08.2009
20070987	Display of internally illuminated double sided free standing pole mounted sign on A2 frontage.	Refused	31.12.2007
20070802	Application for Listed Building Consent for the attachment of two wall lights at ground floor level and six mini floodlights at first floor level on the front elevation facing Hever Court Road; four wall lights at ground floor level and three mini floodlights above ground floor level on the rear elevation; wall light adjacent to the fire exit doors on the eastern side elevation; internal alterations and refurbishment of the bar and restaurant areas; external decoration; attachment of signwritten lettering at 1st floor level on the front elevation externally illuminated by the three of the aforementioned mini floodlights, non-illuminated signwritten panels on both side elevations at first floor level and a signwritten panel above the entrance door on the rear elevation; erection of new fencing to the western side boundary; new 1m high fencing facing the car park at the side; new willow fencing facing the car park at the rear.	Refused	06.11.2007
20070801	Installation of two wall lights at ground floor level and six mini floodlights at first floor level on the front elevation facing Hever Court Road; four wall lights at ground floor level and three mini floodlights above ground floor level on the rear elevation; wall light adjacent to the fire exit doors on the eastern side elevation; internal alterations and refurbishment of the bar and restaurant areas; external decoration; erection of new	Refused	06.11.2007

	fencing to the western side boundary; new 1m high fencing facing the car park at the side and new willow fencing facing the car park at the rear.		
20070481	Construction of covered pergola at the rear and installation of a jumbrella at rear.	Permitted	17.07.2007

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS19 – Design & Development Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- TC2 – Policy for Listed Buildings
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 First Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places.
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design for Gravesham – Design Code SPD (2024).

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

GBC Conservation Officer

No response.

National Amenity Societies

One response received from the Gardens Trust who raised no comment.

Site and Press Notices

One response has been received which raises objection on the following grounds:

- The proposal will alter the character and ambience of the pub.
- The installation of the toilet facility will significantly reduce the seating capacity affecting the pubs ability to accommodate its patrons and impact its revenue and the overall customer experience.
- It will interfere with the flow of the space and detract from the aesthetic appeal of the pub.
- Urge the licensing board to reconsider this proposal and explore other options that would better preserve the historical and aesthetic value of the George Inn while still providing necessary accessibility improvements.

Analysis

The application site lies on the south-western side of Hever Court Road. It comprises The George Inn, a two storey detached grade II listed building. The front elevation of the property can be seen in the following photograph:



The list description is set out below:

The front elevation is outwardly C18 but there is a timber-framed portion to the rear. 2 parallel ranges. The front range is of 2 storeys, the ground floor painted brick, the 1st floor pebbledashed on the front elevation and plastered on the side elevation. Tiled roof. 5 sashes with verticals only. 2 doorcases with pedimented hoods over. The rear range is weatherboarded with a slate roof and 1 sash window to the side elevation. To the rear is a 2 storey timber-framed portion at right angles.

Orchard House, Corner Cottage, Chapel Farmhouse and the George Inn form a group.

This proposal involves internal alterations to install a disabled toilet. The proposed location of the toilet in relation to the remainder of the building can be seen in the following extract from the

proposed floorplan (the location of the proposed disabled toilet is indicated by the red arrow):



Character and Appearance

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to “achieving well-designed places” and sets out the Government’s requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 131 is particularly relevant:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

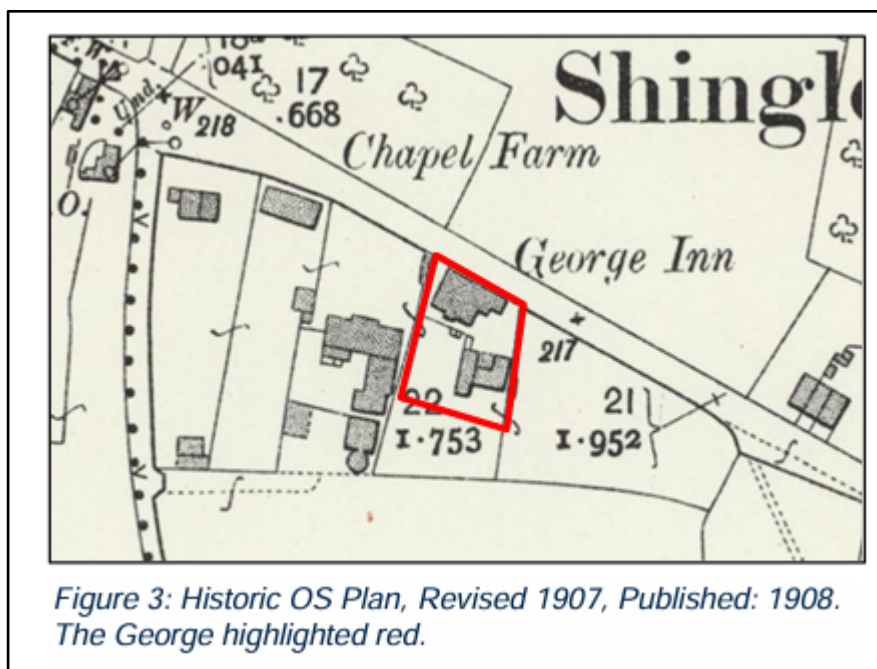
The aims set out in paragraph 131 of the NPPF are reflected in Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy. This requires new development to be “visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive” and to “conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment”.

As the property is a grade II listed building, Section 16 of the NPPF is also relevant. This sets out requirements relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 197 is of particular relevance and states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

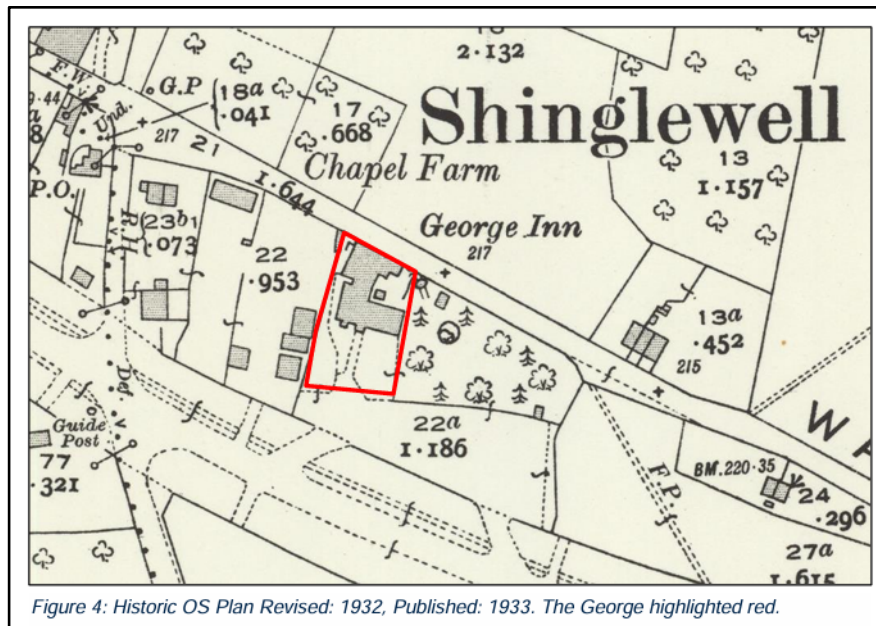
Policy CS20 of the Council's Core Strategy and saved Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 are also relevant. Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy places a high priority on the preservation, protection and enhancement of the Council's heritage and historic environment. Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 sets out the Council's approach to applications affecting listed buildings. It states that in the case of applications for development involving alterations or extensions to listed buildings or affecting the setting of listed buildings, the primary consideration of the Borough Council will be the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals will also need to be sympathetic to the listed building in terms of massing, scale, appearance and materials.

The submitted Design, Access and Heritage Statement includes extracts from Ordnance Survey plans which provide an insight into the historic development of the site. The following extract shows the building in 1907. The main building fronts the highway and there are outbuildings to the rear.

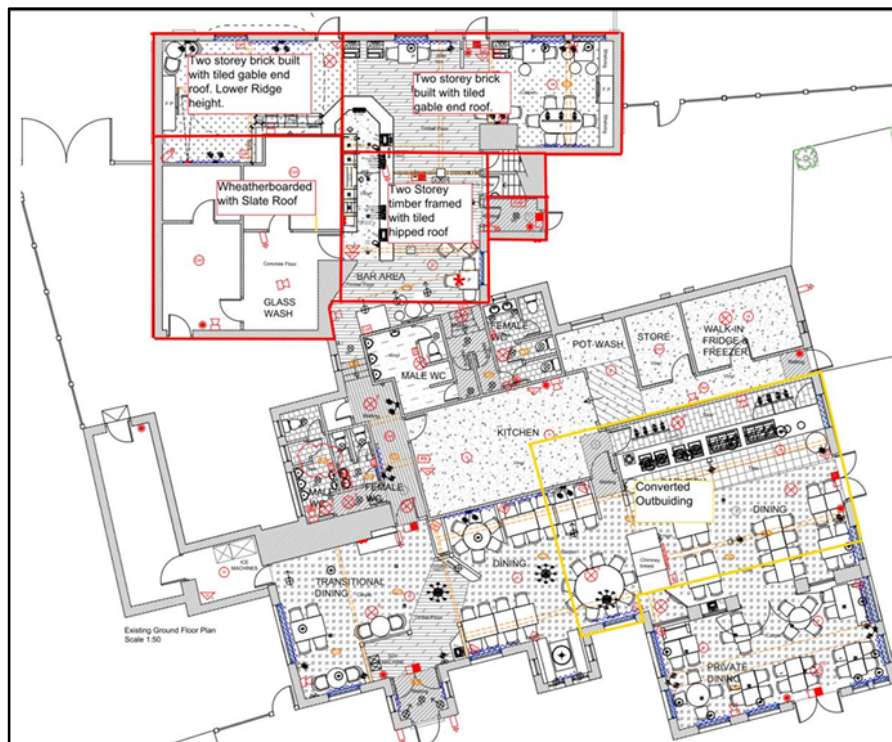


*Figure 3: Historic OS Plan, Revised 1907, Published: 1908.
The George highlighted red.*

The following extract shows the building in 1932. It shows that subsequent to 1907, the building was extended to the rear. The extension incorporated the rear outbuildings shown on the 1907 plan:



The following drawing from the Design, Access and Heritage Statement shows the current layout of the building and identifies the historic core of the building (edged in red) and the converted outbuildings (edged in yellow):



It is noted that the area where the proposed disabled toilet is to be located does not lie within the historic core of the building or the converted outbuildings. It would be located within the most recently extended part of the building.

The proposed works are described in the Statement as follows:

The Applicant proposes to remove an existing timber screen and make good the disturbed surfaces, relocate a radiator, and block up one window and the section of another (internally only) to facilitate the construction of the accessible toilet. Metal stud walls, aligned with the central mullion in the window will create the toilet enclosure.

The proposed disabled toilet does not sit entirely comfortably within the building particularly given that it would involve internally blocking an existing window on the rear elevation of the building and internally blocking part of a second window on the side elevation. Notwithstanding this, given the layout of the building and the number and location of window openings, the number of alternative locations for the proposed disabled toilet is very limited.

The Statement addresses the impact on the heritage significance of the building as follows:

The new toilet will be at the rear of the building in a relatively modern, early C20th extension, which makes no contribution to the heritage significance of the public house.

The proposed alterations are minor and, with the exception of the installation of the new ventilation fan, all works will be carried out internally. No original features will be removed. The existing flooring and wooden screen to be lost are modern additions, and existing windows will be blocked up internally, but the external elevation will remain unchanged.

The NPPF refers to proposals which lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset and those which lead to less than substantial harm. With the current proposal the harm to the existing listed building would be defined as “less than substantial”.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF provides the following guidance with such proposals:

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

In assessing the harm to the listed building it should be noted that this would be confined to the most recently extended part of the building. It would not impact the historic core of the building or the converted outbuildings. Furthermore, none of the features set out in the list description would be impacted by the proposal.

In terms of public benefits, these are set out in the Design, Access and Heritage Statement as follows:

It will deliver public benefit in that it will provide additional facilities for disabled and non ambulant customers, so allowing them to enjoy the facilities of the building on an equal basis with ambulant customers.

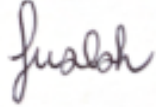
This clearly meets the requirements of paragraph 130 of the NPPF which requires planning decisions to, *inter alia*, “create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible”. In addition, Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy states that new development “will be designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community”

In this particular case the harm to the listed building and the public benefits are finely balanced. Given the lack of harm to the historic core of the building and given the important public benefit of providing accessible toilet facilities within the building, it is considered that on this occasion, this proposal can be supported. The “less than substantial harm” to the significance of the listed building would be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. The proposed development would therefore meet the tests set out in the NPPF, Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Council’s Core Strategy and saved Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994.

Recommendation:

GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT subject to conditions.

See draft Decision

Case Officer: Gary Edwards	Team Leader: Faye Walsh
Signed: <i>G. Edwards</i>	Signed: 
Dated: 16 October 2025	Dated: 20 October 2025