

<b>Application Number</b>	17/01377/AS
<b>Location</b>	18 Chester Avenue, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent, TN26 3BN
<b>Grid Reference</b>	92817/40011
<b>Parish Council</b>	Bethersden
<b>Ward</b>	Weald Central
<b>Application Description</b>	Recladding of existing external walls with rendered finish
<b>Applicant</b>	Ashford Borough Council Community & Housing Department
<b>Agent</b>	N/A
<b>Site Area</b>	0.05 ha

## Introduction

1. This application is reported to the Planning Committee because the applicant is Ashford Borough Council Community & Housing Department.

## Site and Surroundings

2. The application site comprises a two storey semi-detached property within the village in an area that forms part of the Bethersden Mixed Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA). The boundary of the designated Bethersden Conservation Area (CA) is just within the southeast end of the site covering part of the garden.
3. This property forms part of a cul-de-sac of near identical WW2 Airey style dwellings, 22 of which formed part of a recent planning application (17/00719/AS) for the same form of development which was granted planning permission in July of this year. This particular property was not included because at the time the occupant had exercised their right to buy, however, this has since been relinquished and the Council will therefore be carrying out the work.
4. The property is externally finished in precast slatted panels with an exposed aggregate finish.

5. A site location plan is attached as an annexe to the report.

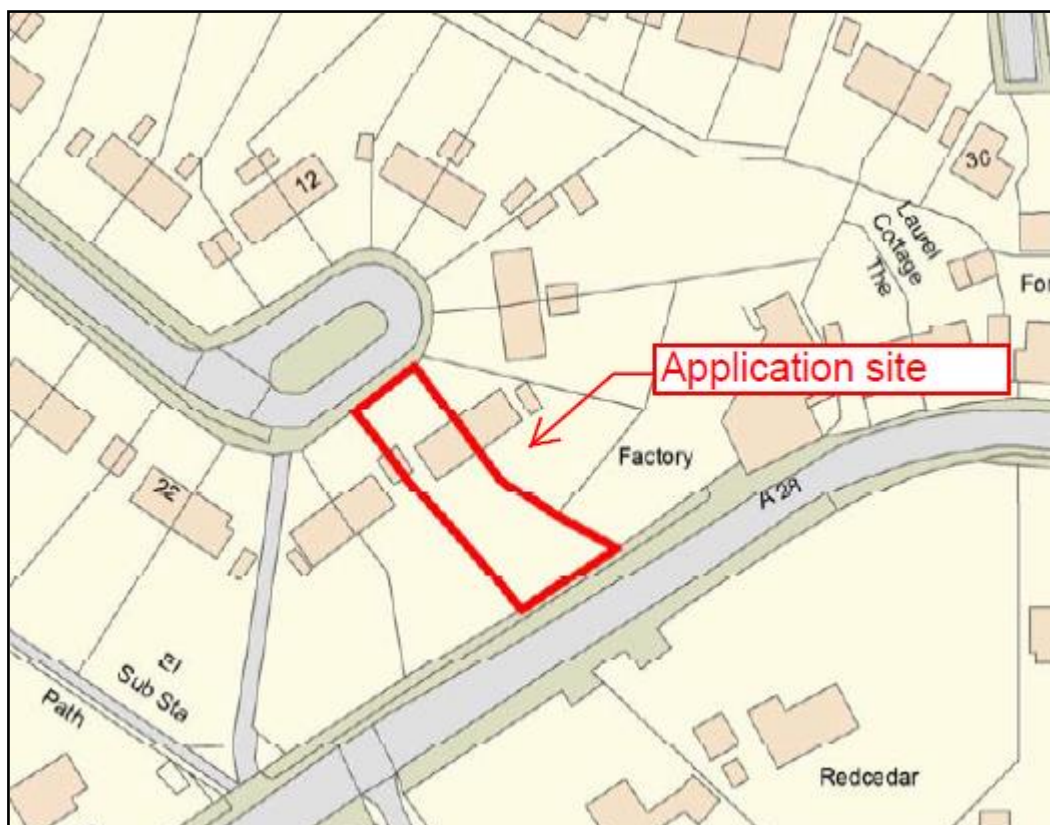


Figure 1 - Site location plan

## Proposal

6. Full planning permission is sought for a change of external materials from precast concrete slatted panels to plain rendered finish in a cream/off-white colour.
7. The applicant has stated that the proposed development would:
- Improve the thermal efficiency of the structure. This will realise associated benefits to the residents and more widely the environment as a whole.
  - Improve the weather-tightness of the existing structure and prolong the useful life of the Council's asset.
  - Negate the need for maintenance, in particular to stabilise the structure, in the foreseeable future.
  - Improve the external appearance of the dwellings.



**Figure 2 - existing elevational treatments**

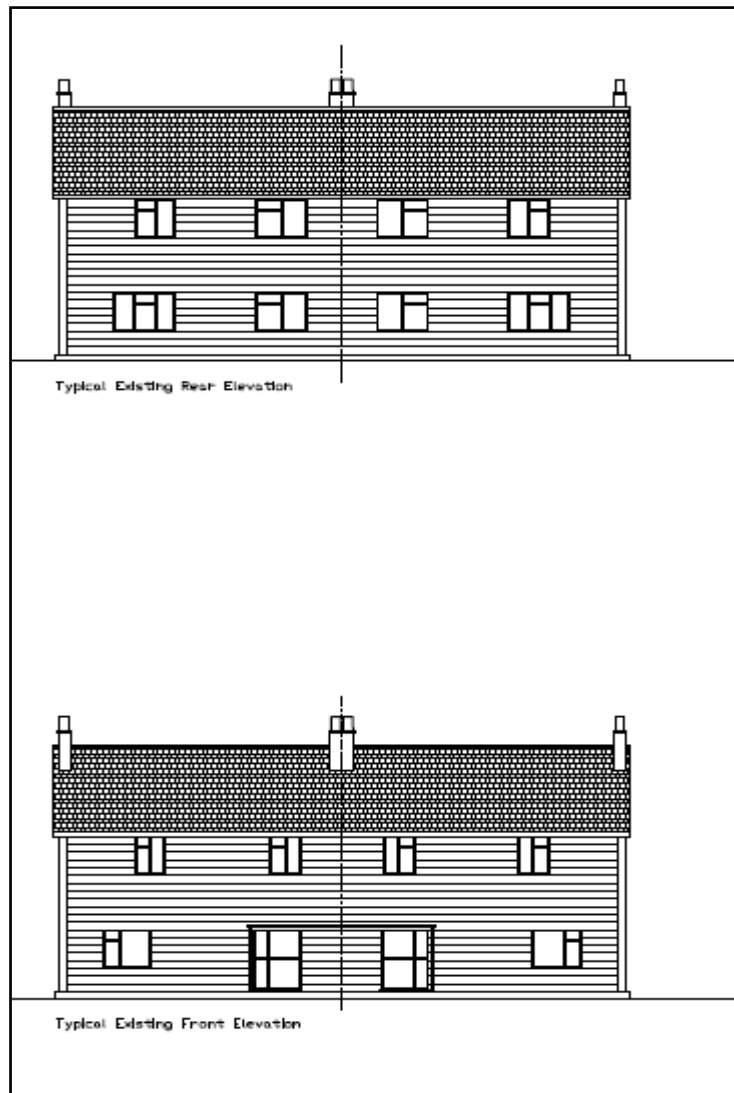


**Figure 3 - for information and comparison - rendering work in progress on near neighbour**

8. The intention is to roll out the scheme across the Borough over time. The Council has about 70 Airey Style houses dotted around the Borough primarily in rural locations. Although the houses were structurally improved in the late 80's early 90's and had some insulation upgrade then, they still fall well short in thermal performance when compared to other forms of more traditionally built housing.
9. Of note is the previous application recently granted approval in Chester Avenue (for 22 properties) and an identical scheme granted approval at

Downs View, Westwell in 2016. Of note also are other identical schemes currently under consideration in Smarden and Charing on this agenda.

10. The adjacent neighbours (nos 17 & 19) formed part of the previous application.



**Figure 4 existing front and rear elevations**



**Figure 5 - proposed elevations**

## **Planning History**

11. There is no relevant planning history for this particular property.

## **Consultations**

**Ward Members:** No representation received at time of writing

**Bethersden Parish Council:** supports the application

**Neighbours:** 4 neighbours consulted; no representations received at time of writing

## **Planning Policy**

12. The Development Plan comprises the saved policies in the adopted Ashford Borough Local Plan 2000, the adopted LDF Core Strategy 2008, the adopted Ashford Town Centre Action Area Plan 2010, the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD 2010, the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD 2012, the Chilmington Green AAP 2013 the Wye Neighbourhood Plan 2015-30 and the Pluckley

Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 30. On 9 June 2016 the Council approved a consultation version of the Local Plan to 2030. Consultation commenced on 15 June 2016 and closed after 8 weeks. Proposed changes to the draft Local Plan were approved for further consultation by the Council on 15 June 2017 and this ended on 31 August 2017. At present the policies in this emerging plan can be accorded little weight.

13. The relevant policies from the Development Plan relating to this application are as follows:-

**Ashford Borough Local Plan 2000**

EN16 Development in Conservation Areas

**Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008**

CS1 Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development and High Quality Design

CS9 Design Quality

**Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD 2010**

TRS17 Landscape Character and Design

**Local Plan to 2030**

SP1 Strategic Objectives

SP6 Promoting High Quality Design

ENV3 Landscape Character & Design

ENV14 Conservation Areas

14. The following are also material to the determination of this application:-

**Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2011

Bethersden Village Design Statement 2002

## **Government Advice**

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

15. Members should note that the determination must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A significant material consideration is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF says that less weight should be given to the policies above if they are in conflict with the NPPF. The following sections of the NPPF are relevant to this application:-

Paragraph 14 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

Paragraph 17: Inter alia, one of the 12 core planning principles include:

*“always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”.*

## **Assessment**

16. The main issues for consideration are:

- Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity

### **Visual Amenity**

17. As stated above permission was granted for the same development on 22 other properties within this part of the cul de sac. It is also of note that Members approved a similar scheme in 2016 for near identical properties in a location in Westwell, within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The change of external materials to a light coloured render, whilst being a different material and colour to some of the other dwellings within this frontage, would not represent an incongruous contrast and thus be significantly out of character with the context of the site.
18. In turn, the development will improve the thermal efficiency of these properties as a whole. On balance, the development would not be visually harmful to the street scene and would preserve the character of the adjacent Conservation Area.

## **Residential Amenity**

19. Given the nature of the development proposed, there would be no impact upon the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties.

## **Human Rights Issues**

20. I have also taken into account the human rights issues relevant to this application. In my view, the “Assessment” section above and the Recommendation below represent an appropriate balance between the interests and rights of the applicant (to enjoy their land subject only to reasonable and proportionate controls by a public authority) and the interests and rights of those potentially affected by the proposal (to respect for private life and the home and peaceful enjoyment of their properties).

## **Working with the applicant**

21. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner as explained in the note to the applicant included in the recommendation below.

## **Conclusion**

22. The objective of the development is to facilitate a better form of insulation for the properties, prolonging the life of the Council asset as well as reducing future maintenance costs.
23. For the reasons above, I therefore recommend that the application is approved as it accords with the relevant Development Plan policies and there are no overriding material considerations to suggest otherwise.

## **Recommendation**

### **Permit**

#### **on the following grounds:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

**Reason:** To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.



2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details of external materials specified in the application which shall not be varied without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In the interests of visual amenity.

3. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed in the section of this decision notice headed Plans/Documents Approved by this decision, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approval and to ensure the quality of development indicated on the approved plans is achieved in practice.

4. The development approved shall be made available for inspection, at a reasonable time, by the local Planning authority to ascertain whether a breach of planning control may have occurred on the land (as a result of departure from the plans hereby approved and the specific terms of this permission/consent/approval).

**Reason:** In the interests of ensuring the proper planning of the locality, the protection of amenity and the environment, securing high quality development through adherence to the terms of planning approvals and to ensure community confidence in the operation of the planning system.

## **Note to Applicant**

### **Working with the Applicant**

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by;

- offering a pre-application advice service,
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application
- where possible suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome,
- informing applicants/agents of any likely recommendation of refusal prior to a decision and,
- by adhering to the requirements of the Development Management Customer Charter.

In this instance

- The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

## **Background Papers**

All papers referred to in this report are currently published on the Ashford Borough Council web site ([www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk)). Those papers relating specifically to this application may be found on the [View applications on line](#) pages under planning application reference 17/01377/AS.

**Contact Officer:** Sally Hodgson

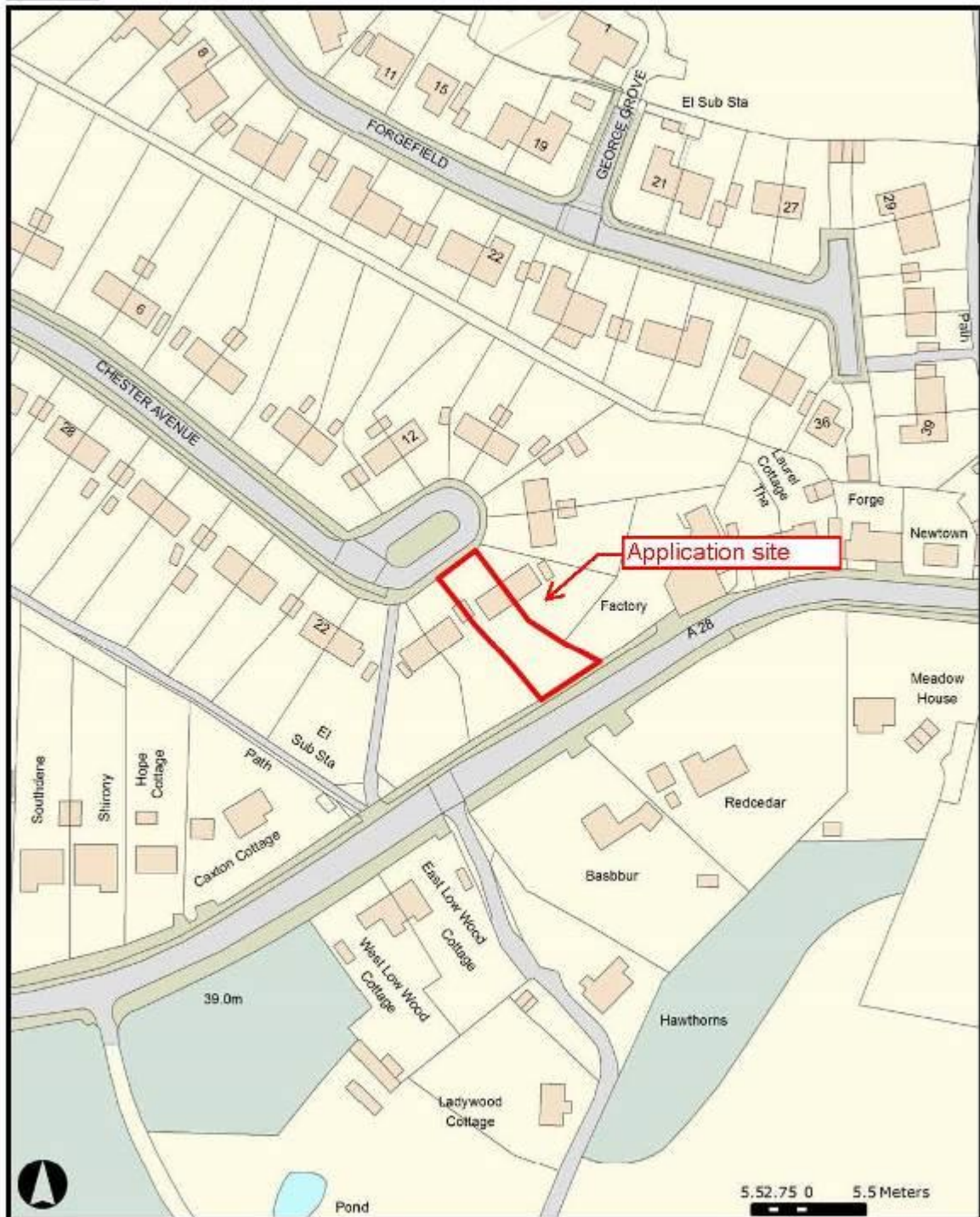
**Telephone:** (01233) 330724

**Email:** [sally.hodgson@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:sally.hodgson@ashford.gov.uk)

Annex 1



# Ashford Borough Council



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