

Application Number	22/00893/AS	
Location	The Coach House, The Street, Brook, Ashford, TN25 5PG	
Grid Reference	606932 / 144744	
Parish Council	Brook	
Ward	Bircholt	
Application Description	Proposed conversion and change of use of the outbuilding (referred to as the Coach House) to a single holiday let	
Applicant	Churchill Property Trading Limited	
Agent	Mr Bax, Kent Planning Consultancy Ltd	
Site Area	0.0236 hectares	
(a) 12/42R & 1S	(b) R	(c)

Introduction

1. This application is reported to the Planning Committee at the request of Councillor William Howard who is a member of the planning committee.

Site and Surroundings

2. Please refer to 22/00892/AS which precedes this application.

Proposal

3. Please refer to 22/00892/AS which precedes this application.

Planning History

4. Please refer to 22/00892/AS which precedes this application.

Consultations

5. **Ward Member:** Is a member of the Planning Committee.
6. **Brook Parish Council:** Objects to the application for the following reasons:
 - The Honest Miller, adjoining land and Coach House is a major hub for the village community and was listed as an asset of community value on 21st January 2021. The Coach House and paddock to the rear of the public house are also included within the listing.
 - It was hoped that the new owner of the Public House would invest and re-open the premises. The applicant appears to wish to maximise the development potential of the entire Public House site, which has led to various housing development applications associated with the Public House.
 - The Public House has remained closed since being bought by the applicant, which is depriving the village of a vital community asset. They question whether the applicant will re-open the Public House.
 - This application is acting as a separate entity to the Public House.
 - The proposal for the refurbishment of the Coach House cannot be treated in isolation to a refurbishment of the Public House.
 - The Coach House enhances the Public House's role as a community asset and is a complimentary use to the Public House. Both should be retained for the benefit of the village.
 - They consider that the granting of the change of use to a holiday let, in the absence of any proposals for the Public House, would impact on the reopening of the Public House as a community asset.
 - Although the Coach House and the Honest Miller are separate grade II listed properties, they should be considered as a whole, and not treated separately in isolation.
 - They suggest that this application could allow a separate residential use (class C3) on site, which could be sold off in the future, to the detriment of the community asset and the setting of the listed buildings.
 - The proposal to convert the Coach House will have a serious impact on biodiversity and the environment.
 - The application fails to demonstrate that the proposed overnight accommodation would be 'nutrient neutral' and would not detrimentally impact upon Stodmarsh Lakes and its associated catchment.
 - The site is opposite a SSSI within Brook, and the scheme could impact the SSSI.
 - Brook does not have any cycle lanes or public transport provision, and the scheme would be reliant solely on the use of car(s) which is not sustainable.
 - The proposed holiday let would add to increased congestion on the local roads.

(Officer comment – the issues raised by the Parish Council relating to the impact of the scheme on the listed building are addressed in the main body of the report. All other issues raised that do not relate strictly to this listed building application have been considered in the report for application reference 22/00892/AS, which is also before Members to consider at this meeting).

7. **Neighbours:** 12 neighbours consulted, as well as a site notice being put up and a press advert placed. 42 letters of objection and 1 letter of support were received in relation to the application. The letters of objection raise the following concerns:

- The application site forms part of the Public House site (together with the Honest Miller and associated land). The site should not be split up and sold off separately.
- No mention has been made of the Public House. However, no application should be determined in isolation from the Public House.
- The Coach House and the Honest Miller are all part of the same listed site.
- Separating the Coach House from the Honest Miller would reduce the value of the site and make the Public House less appealing for anyone to buy.
- Works on the Coach House should only be considered after the Public House has been refurbished.
- The asset of community value designation encompasses everything within the confines of the Honest Miller's land boundary, and this application would flout the terms of the asset of community value. Removing the Coach House from the Honest Miller would harm the Public House and the community asset.
- The proposal is in affect a change of use to a residential property with nothing stopping the holiday let becoming a separate residential dwelling, which would harm the Public House and be out of character with the site and area.
- Parking for the proposal would affect the parking for the Public House.
- The proposal would affect the issue of Stodmarsh, which is unacceptable.
- The proposal may affect the wider environment and water courses.
- The plan for community ownership of the Public House includes many uses for this building which would have a more positive impact on the community than a holiday let (i.e. a village shop).
- The proposal would worsen flooding in the area.
- The windows, roof lights and small lean-to extension to the Coach House would not respect the listed building and are not in keeping with the surrounding area.
- The applicant should confirm that the Coach House would remain as part of the wider Honest Miller site.

- The Coach House is not a good place to locate new tourist accommodation.
- Concerns raised in relation to how the outside space for the holiday let would be screened. A tall fence would not be visually acceptable.
- Any new hedge planting needs to be of native species.

The letter of support makes the following comments:

- The Coach House is a historic and listed building which is currently dilapidated and in danger of falling down. This has been part of the village's character and it would be a shame to lose such a landmark building.
- As the development is within the existing footprint then its conversion to a holiday let would preserve the architecture and give it a sustainable purpose.
- It would be good to encourage people into the countryside to enjoy and share the North Downs.

(Officer comment – the issues raised by residents relating to the impact of the scheme on the listed building are addressed in the main body of the report. All other issues raised that do not relate strictly to this listed building application have been considered in the report for application reference 22/00892/AS, which is also before Members to consider at this meeting).

Planning Policy

8. The Development Plan for Ashford borough comprises the Ashford Local Plan 2030 (adopted February 2019), along with the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan (2013), the Wye Neighbourhood Plan (2016), the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan (2017), the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan (2019), the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Neighbourhood Plan (2021), the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (2022) and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2016) as well as the Kent Minerals and Waste Early Partial Review (2020).
9. For clarification, the Local Plan 2030 supersedes the saved policies in the Ashford Local Plan (2000), Ashford Core Strategy (2008), Ashford Town Centre Action Area Plan (2010), the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD (2010) and the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD (2012).
10. The relevant policies from the **Development Plan** relating to this application are as follows:-
 - SP1 - Strategic Objectives
 - SP6 - Promoting High Quality Design
 - ENV13 - Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets

11. Government Advice

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

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 NPPF. The NPPF states that less weight should be given to the policies above if they are in conflict with the NPPF.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012 and updated in July 2021. It is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The Historic England Good Practice Advice notes provide information to assist in implementing the policies in the NPPF and the guidance in the PPG.

The general approach to considering applications is set out in paragraphs 199 and 200 of the NPPF, and states:

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Paragraph 17 of the Planning Practice Guide states that "Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.

The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm.”

Assessment

Heritage

12. Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
13. The proposal will involve the alteration of historic fabric, internally and externally, including the insertion of a first floor, a rooflight over the bathroom, two windows, a door to the rear, and an extension in the form of a lean to. At present, the building is in a poor-fair condition and is currently vacant. The building is of high heritage significance as it is listed in its own right, and was constructed contemporaneously with the Honest Miller Public House. It is important that any applications for alteration of the building through the change of use do not impact the legibility of the structure as an ancillary building related to the public house. The change of use to a holiday let associated with the Honest Miller Public House will ensure the building remains connected with the Public House, whilst also enabling a viable use that will ensure the building's ongoing conservation.
14. According to the heritage statement, no internal primary phase features remain within the Coach House building. Nevertheless, the external fabric and structure of the building remains much the same as originally constructed. There are features of significance, including the carriage doors at ground floor level and double hoist doors on the first floor. The proposals should seek to ensure the maximum survival of the surviving historic fabric, in addition to ensuring the historic use of the building is still legible.
15. The proposed fenestration makes use of existing openings in most cases, using the existing openings on the north east elevation. The rear (south west) door will utilise a blocked up opening, which is visible from the brickwork

externally. Likewise, the window on the south east elevation will also be created by opening a blocked up window. The only new openings will be the rear window and the rooflight. Both of these openings are necessary for providing light and ventilation into the upper floor, and details of the window joinery can be secured by way of condition. The applicant amended the scheme to remove proposed rooflights from the north west elevation. This amendment in the number of rooflights proposed has reduced the loss of historic fabric.

16. The rear lean to extension should be constructed of brick and cladded in a manner similar to the coach house to reduce the impact of the alteration. The exact details of the materials can be agreed by way of a condition. Due to the very small scale, lean to nature of the design, and the potential to reuse bricks from the host building that are to be removed to facilitate the fenestration, it is not considered that the extension will cause any loss of significance and will not unacceptably alter the character of the heritage asset.
17. There is limited information about the provision of services, which are currently non-existent within the building. However, it is unlikely that the insertion of the required facilities will cause any damage to the historic fabric as these can be fitted to/within the new internal stud wall. The proposed limecrete flooring and the proposed thermofleece insulation are both suitable for use in historic buildings. There is no information about the method of installing the internal floor level and stairs, so this should be included as a condition to ensure that their installation would not impact on the historic fabric of the Coach House building.
18. In light of the above the proposed conversion would facilitate the continued survival and sympathetic re-use of a listed building, thereby preserving this historic building for the future which is strongly promoted in the NPPF and the development plan. It is considered that the development as a whole would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the coach house or the setting of the Honest Miller Public House. Overall, the development would result in less than substantial harm to the heritage asset, where any such harm would be outweighed by the public benefit of ensuring the building is safeguarded and retained in a suitable use.

Human Rights Issues

21. 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

22. In accordance with paragraphs 38 of the NPPF, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and creative approach to development proposals focused on solutions. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and creative manner as explained in the note to the applicant included in the recommendation below.

Conclusion

23. In light of the above I recommend that listed building is granted subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Recommendation

Grant

Subject to the following Conditions and Notes and issues relating to nutrient neutrality being resolved:

(with delegated authority to the Strategic Development & Delivery Manager or the Planning Applications and Building Control Manager to make or approve changes to the planning conditions (for the avoidance of doubt including additions, amendments and deletions) as she/he sees fit).

1. The works to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Full details including source/ manufacturer, and samples (where necessary) of materials to be used and detailed scaled drawings and sections where applicable in respect of all the matters listed below shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is

commenced and the development shall be carried out using the approved external materials.

- Material samples (including those of the proposed fenestrations, the lean-to extension and any repairs to the building).
- Details of rainwater goods which should be black cast iron or aluminium.
- Joinery details for all new windows, rooflight and external doors.
- Details of new first floor and internal stair construction within the Coach House building and its relationship with the existing structure.
- Details of new vents and flues.
- Details of any external lighting.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, and to ensure that special regard is paid to the interests of protecting the special architectural and historic character detailing the integrity of the Listed Building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

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.

Notes to the Applicant

1. Working with the Applicant

In accordance with paragraphs 38 of the NPPF Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and creative approach to development proposals focused on solutions. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by; 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 applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit, and the applicant / agent responded by submitting amended plans.

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). Those papers relating specifically to this application may be found on the [View applications on line](#) pages under planning application reference 22/00893/AS)

Contact Officer: Matthew Apperley
Email: Matthew.apperley@ashford.gov.uk
Telephone: (01233) 330 237