

Application Number	PA/2023/0209
Location	Westover, Smarden Bell Road, Smarden, TN27 8NT
Parish Council	Smarden
Ward	Weald North
Application Description	Conversion works to existing garage and workshop outbuildings to facilitate their use as holiday lets.
Applicant	Mr I Coppins
Agent	Mr Simon Hoyle
Site Area	0.26 Hectares

Introduction

1. This application is reported to the Planning Committee because the agent is the spouse of a member of staff.

Site and Surroundings

2. The application site comprises the main dwelling known as “Westover” which is a detached two storey grade II listed building, as well as several outbuildings in the southern section of the site (including the existing garage and workshop buildings which are the subject of this application). The site is located outside the built confines of the village of Smarden, and sited on the south eastern side of Smarden Bell Road and within the Smarden Bell Farmlands Landscape Character Area.
3. The subjects of this application are the two historic outbuildings in the south west of the overall site which are both considered curtilage listed, and currently used as a garage and a workshop. Both outbuildings are timber framed buildings with brick infills and tiled roofs. They are significant for their surviving historic fabric, character and relationship to the main house, Westover.
4. There are two existing accesses serving the site; one to the southwest which provides access to the existing garage and also to a neighbouring property

(Boorolong House) and one to the northwest which serves the main dwelling.

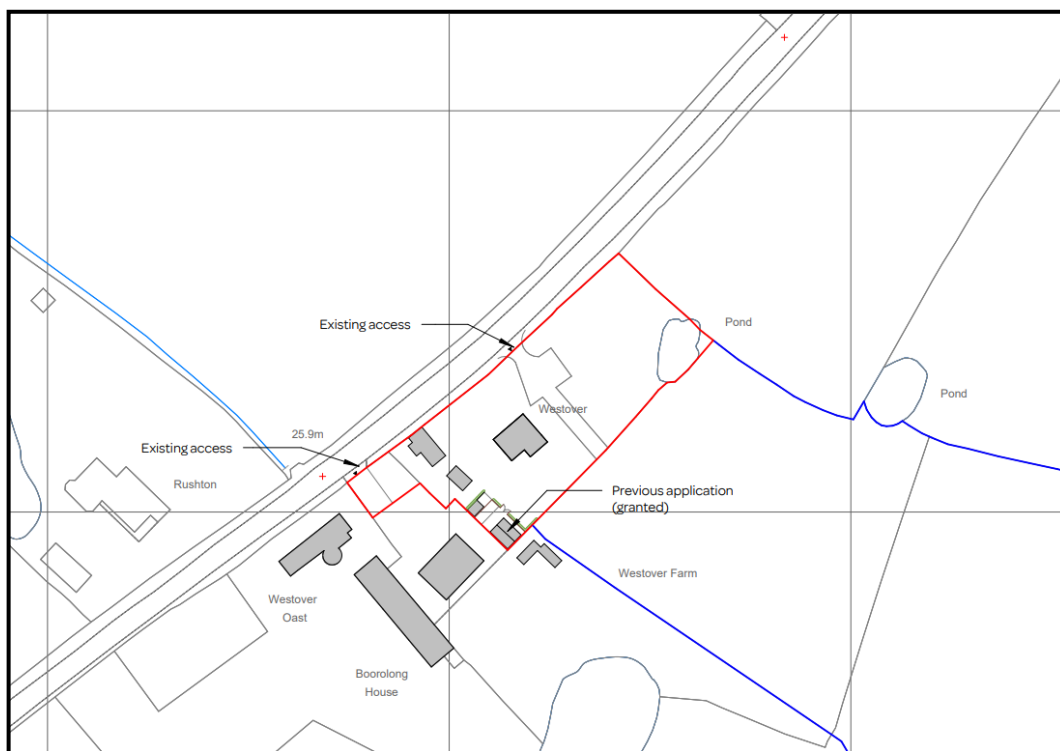


Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

Proposal

5. Listed building consent is sought for conversion works to the existing garage and workshop outbuildings to facilitate their use as holiday lets. Each of the buildings will provide one bedspace. The workshop outbuilding would have an internal stud wall built and internal insulation added to create an open plan dining / bed space and kitchenette area and a separate wet room. The garage outbuilding would also have internal stud walls built and internal insulation added to create an open plan living / dining / kitchen area, a separate bedroom, storage and a separate wet room.
6. The proposals would also make alterations to the fenestrations and doors of the garage and workshop outbuildings. Following concerns raised by officers in relation to the amount of glazing proposed in the conversion of the garage outbuilding, the applicant has reduced the amount of glazing proposed to the entrance gable end (i.e. now retaining the weatherboarding on the gable) and has also removed an additional window in the north east elevation of the garage outbuilding.

7. A separate application for planning permission is also for consideration under planning reference PA/2023/0200.



Figure 2 Proposed Site Layout Plan

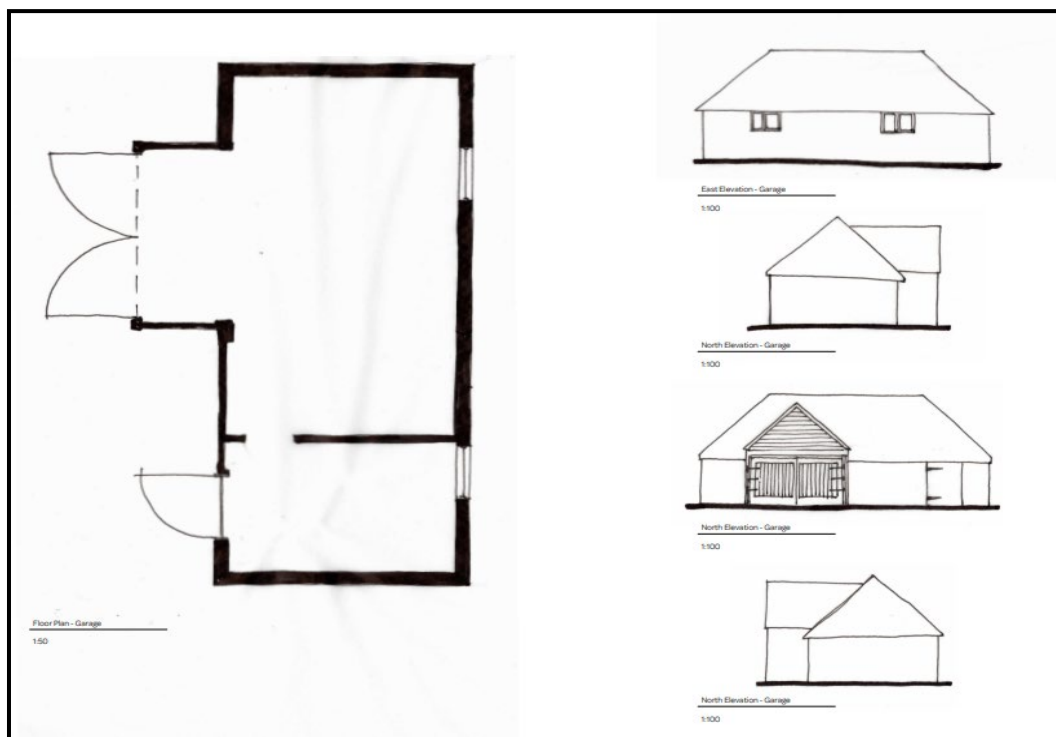


Figure 3 - Existing Garage Plan / Elevations

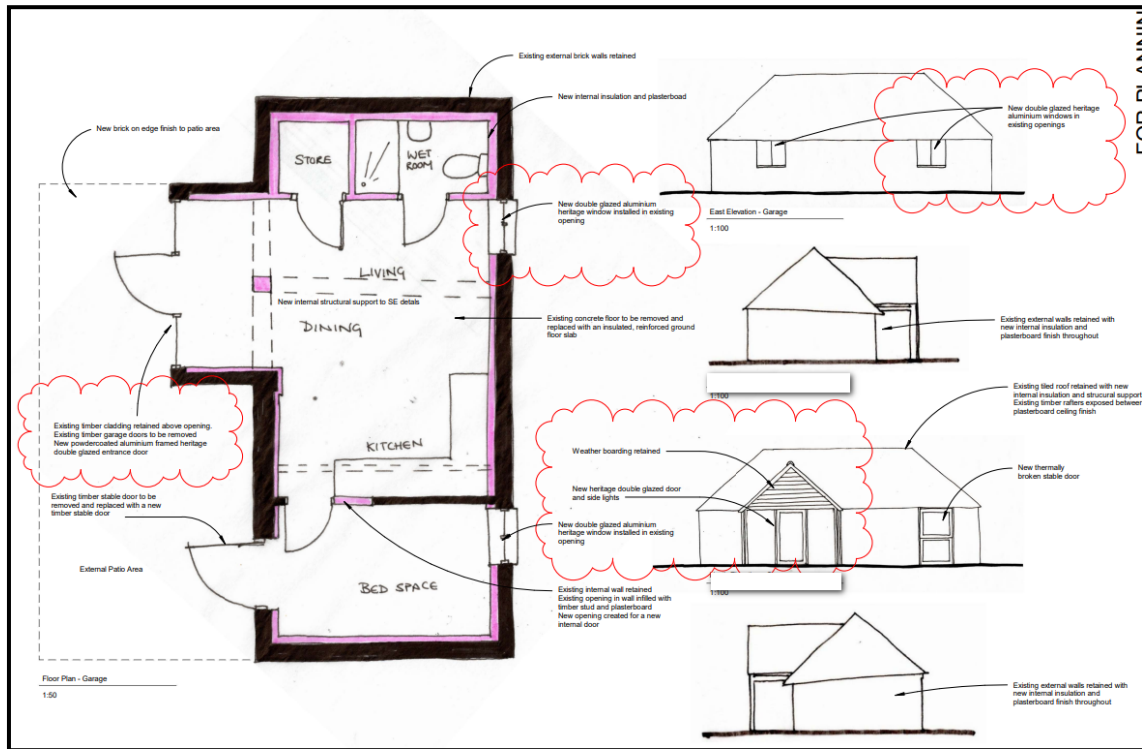


Figure 4 - Proposed Garage Plan / Elevations

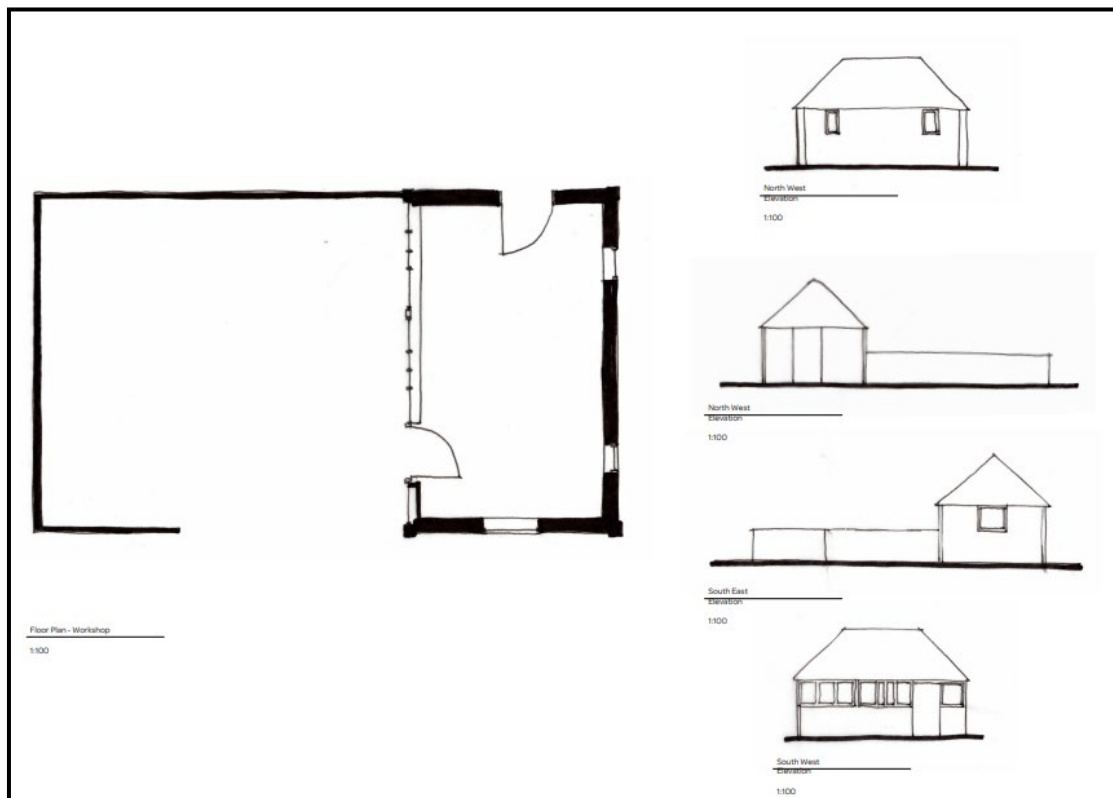


Figure 5 - Existing Workshop Plan / Elevations

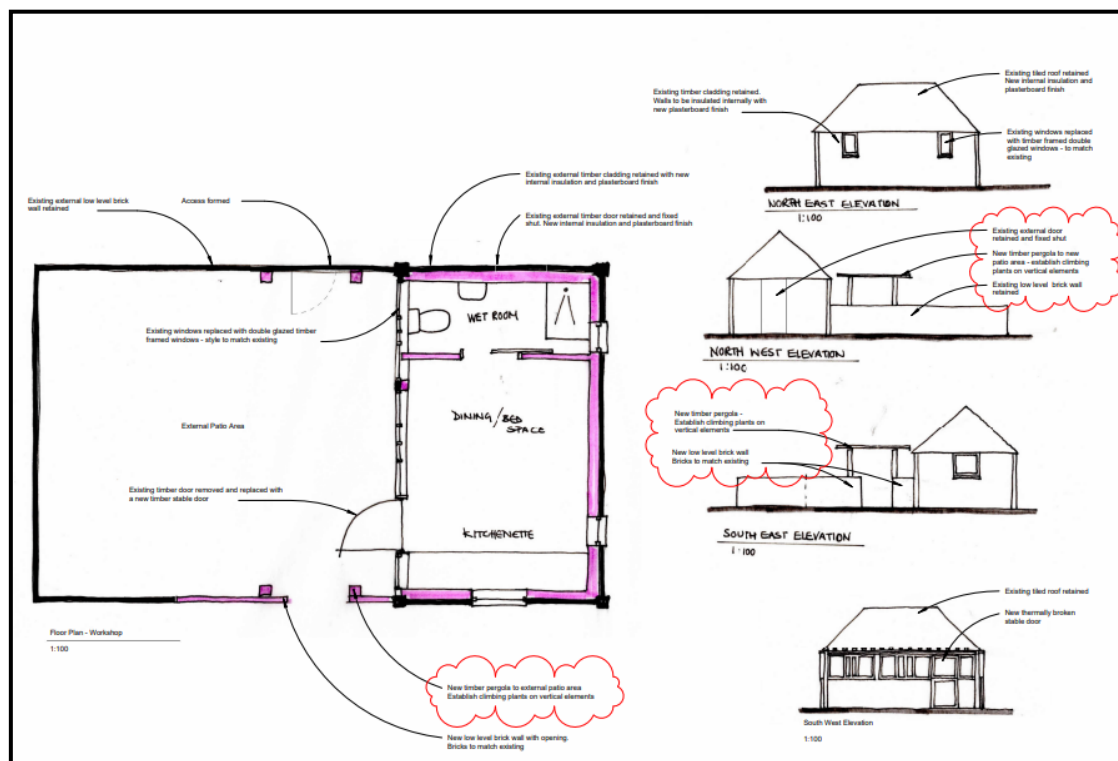


Figure 6 - Proposed Workshop Plan / Elevations

Planning History

8. The following is relevant relating to the application:-

- 17/00491/AS “Reinstatement of vehicular access and creation of parking area” – planning permission granted 22/05/2017

(NB – this access reinstatement relates to the main access to serve the dwelling northwest within the wider site)

Consultations

9. **Ward Member:** Cllr Kayleigh Brunger-Randall, who is a member of the Planning Committee. (N.B. the previous ward member, Cllr Mulholland, raised no issues with the application).
10. **Smarden Parish Council** – They refer this application to Listed Buildings. (*planning officer note: applications are considered by the Local Planning Authority and all necessary internal consultations were carried out with the Conservation Officer*).
11. **Historic England** – No comment received.

12. **Amenities Societies** – No comment received.
13. **Neighbours** – 4 neighbours consulted. As well as a site notice put up and a press advert placed. No representations received from neighbours but a comment was received from Headcorn Aerodrome highlighting the proximity of the development to the aerodrome, and that there is noise connected with the aviation activity of the existing and established use/activity of the aerodrome. They do not wish to inhibit the development.

Planning Policy

14. 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), the Charing Neighbourhood Plan (2023) and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2016) as well as the Kent Minerals and Waste Early Partial Review (2020).
15. 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).
16. The relevant policies from the Development Plan relating to this application are as follows:-

SP1 – Strategic Objectives
SP6 – Promoting High Quality Design
ENV13 – Conservation & Enhancement of Heritage Assets
17. The following are also material considerations to the determination of this application.

Government Guidance

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 following sections of the NPPF are relevant to this application:-

Paragraph 197 (Proposals Affecting Heritage Assets).

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 paras.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.”

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.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Assessment

18. The key areas for consideration in the assessment of this application are:
- Visual Amenity / Heritage

Visual Amenity / Heritage

19. 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.
20. The garage and workshop outbuildings which are the subject of this application are both curtilage listed outbuildings within the site. The proposal would not harm the historic plan form or appearance of the said buildings. The internal works and accommodation proposed are acceptable, with the proposed insulation and insertion of new internal partitions in both outbuildings being appropriate in heritage terms. The exact details of insulation (including its breathability) would be agreed by way of a condition.
21. The impact to the historic fabric of the outbuildings would be minimal, with the existing tiled roofs being retained and actually improved with better insulation (details to be agreed by way of a condition), and the replacement windows and doors utilising existing openings. Furthermore, with the amended plans provided showing the retention of the weatherboarding to the gable end entrance of the garage outbuilding and the information submitted to ensure heritage compliant glazing and proposed replacement timber stable doors, the proposed works to the buildings can be undertaken with limited intervention and less than substantial harm to the curtilage listed buildings. Exact

fenestration details (including the means of attaching the windows) should be secured by way of a condition on any consent.

22. In light of the above the proposed works would facilitate the continued survival and sympathetic re-use of curtilage listed buildings, thereby preserving these historic buildings for the future which is strongly promoted in the NPPF and the development plan. I consider that the development as a whole would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the curtilage listed outbuildings or the setting of Westover. As a result, the proposal would allow the buildings to continue to be used in a manner consistent with their conservation and which provides a public benefit in the form of tourist accommodation. Overall, the development would result in less than substantial harm to the heritage assets, where any such harm would be outweighed by the public benefit of ensuring the buildings are safeguarded and retained in a suitable use.

Human Rights Issues

23. 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

24. 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

25. The proposed development would comply with the requirements of Development Plan policy and Central Government guidance and I recommend that listed building consent permission is granted subject to the conditions listed.

Recommendation

Permit

Subject to the following Conditions and Notes:

(with delegated authority to the Strategic Development and Delivery Manager or Development Management 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. Standard 3 year time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Materials as shown
4. Detailed drawings to scale 1:5 and 1:1 of typical details of all new fenestration. In addition, sections shall be to a scale of 1:1 or 1:2 and will show means of fixing glazing
5. 1:10 scale drawings illustrating proposed eaves and ridge detailing, indicating the provision of eaves and ridge level ventilation and the specification of any roofing felt and insulation where proposed
6. 1:10 scale section through all external walls which is proposed to alter the existing details to achieve better insulating, weatherproofing or for other purposes

Notes to applicant

- Working with the Applicant

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 PA/2023/0209)

Contact Officer: Sally Hodgson
Email: sally.hodgson@ashford.gov.uk
Telephone: (01233) 330724