

Application Number	PA/2023/0225
Location	36 Hurst Road, Kennington, TN24 9PS
Grid Reference	Easting (x) 601106 / Northing (y) 145040
Parish Council	Kennington Community Council
Ward	Bockhanger
Application Description	Proposed conversion of a 4-bedroomed house to No.2 self-contained 1-bedroomed flats including elevational alterations
Applicant	Ashford Borough Council
Agent	ABC - Housing Development and Regeneration
Site Area	0.014 Hectares

Introduction

1. This application is reported to the Planning Committee because Ashford Borough Council (ABC) is the applicant.

Site and Surroundings

2. The application site comprises a two-storey end-of-terrace property that is located on the southern side of Hurst Road in Kennington. The property currently comprises a lounge, kitchen, and W.C. on the ground floor and 4 bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. There is no off-street parking associated with the dwelling; however, there is on-street parking immediately in front of the house. There are no parking restrictions in the surrounding streets.
3. The street scene includes properties of a similar style/design with a mix of terraced and semi-detached dwellings with facing brickwork and tile hanging. There is a degree of landscaping in the immediate vicinity of the site with some established mature trees and grassed amenity areas.

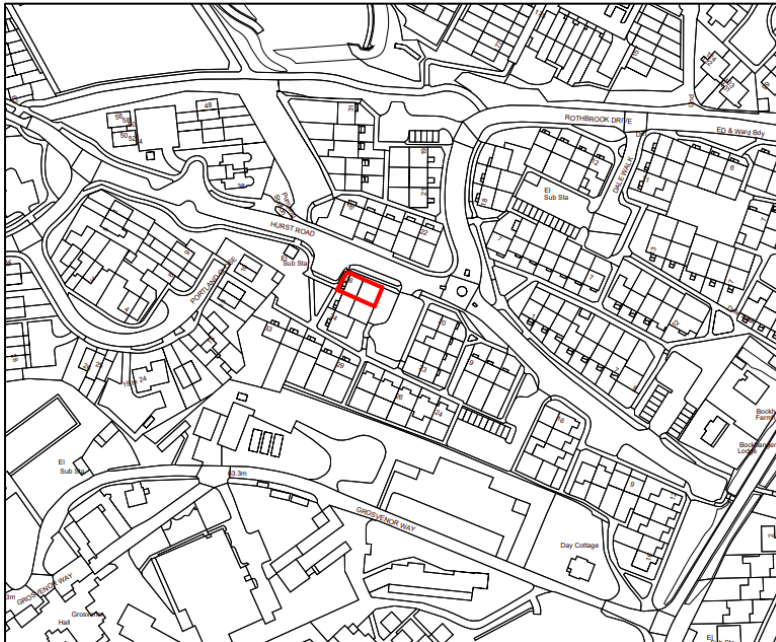


Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Figure 2: Photo of Front of Existing Property

Proposal

4. Full planning permission is sought for the proposed conversion of the existing dwelling to 2 self-contained 1 bedroom / 1 person flats. The proposed external alterations include the removal of a small (front) window and repositioning of a ground floor (rear) door, minor changes to window heights and the addition of external wall insulation to meet Building Regulation requirements. The

proposed development would include solar panels and water butts to increase its overall sustainability and to meet Council requirements.

5. The conversion of this property is part of a Government scheme to help rough sleepers rebuild their lives and the property was bought by the Council specifically for this project. It has been confirmed this property will be for single-person occupancy of each unit only.
6. It is of note that 36 Hurst Road is one of a number of properties being converted to provide housing for rough sleepers in the Borough. At this time, Ashford Borough Council has identified that a minimum of 15 properties are required to accommodate the needs of this project in the Ashford Area. A similar application was heard by the Planning Committee in August 2023 under application reference PA/2023/0218 at 15 Warwick Road and also in December 2022 under application reference 22/00569/AS at 240 Beaver Road, Ashford. It was resolved to permit these applications subject to the resolution of Stodmarsh concerns.
7. In support of this application, the Development & Regeneration Manager, Housing has set out the context behind this proposal.
 - The property has been purchased by ABC specifically for the conversion.
 - The conversion is part of a nationwide programme to provide rough sleeper accommodation.
 - Two units of accommodation next to each other provides a concentration of provision for management without being excessive.

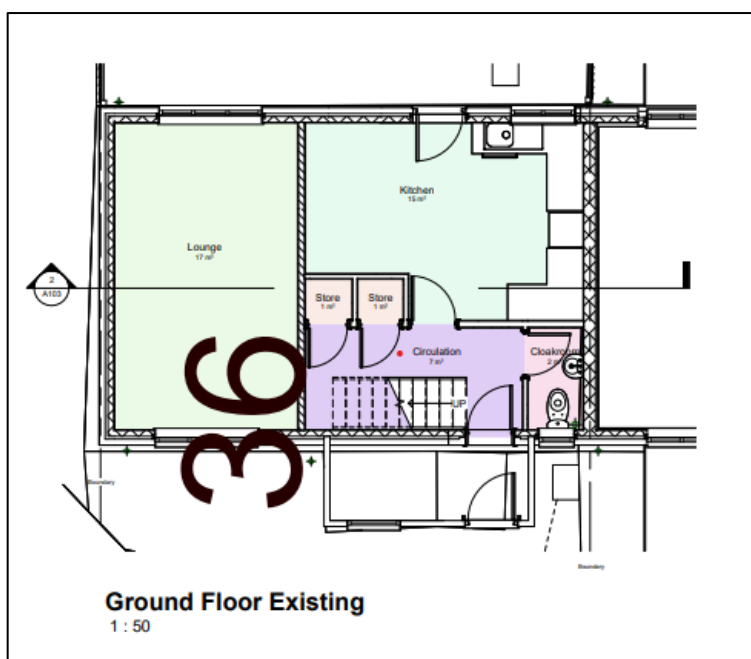


Figure 3: Existing Ground Floor Plans

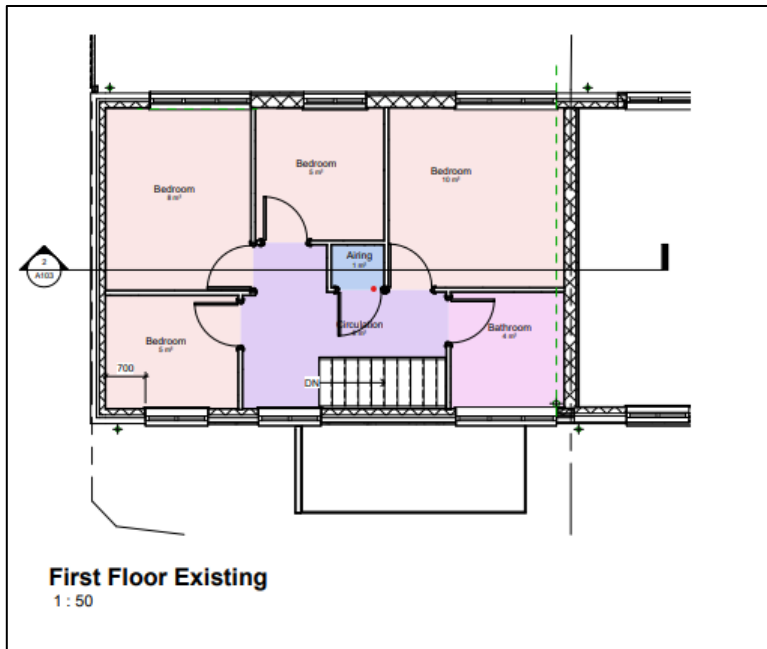


Figure 4: Existing First Floor Plans

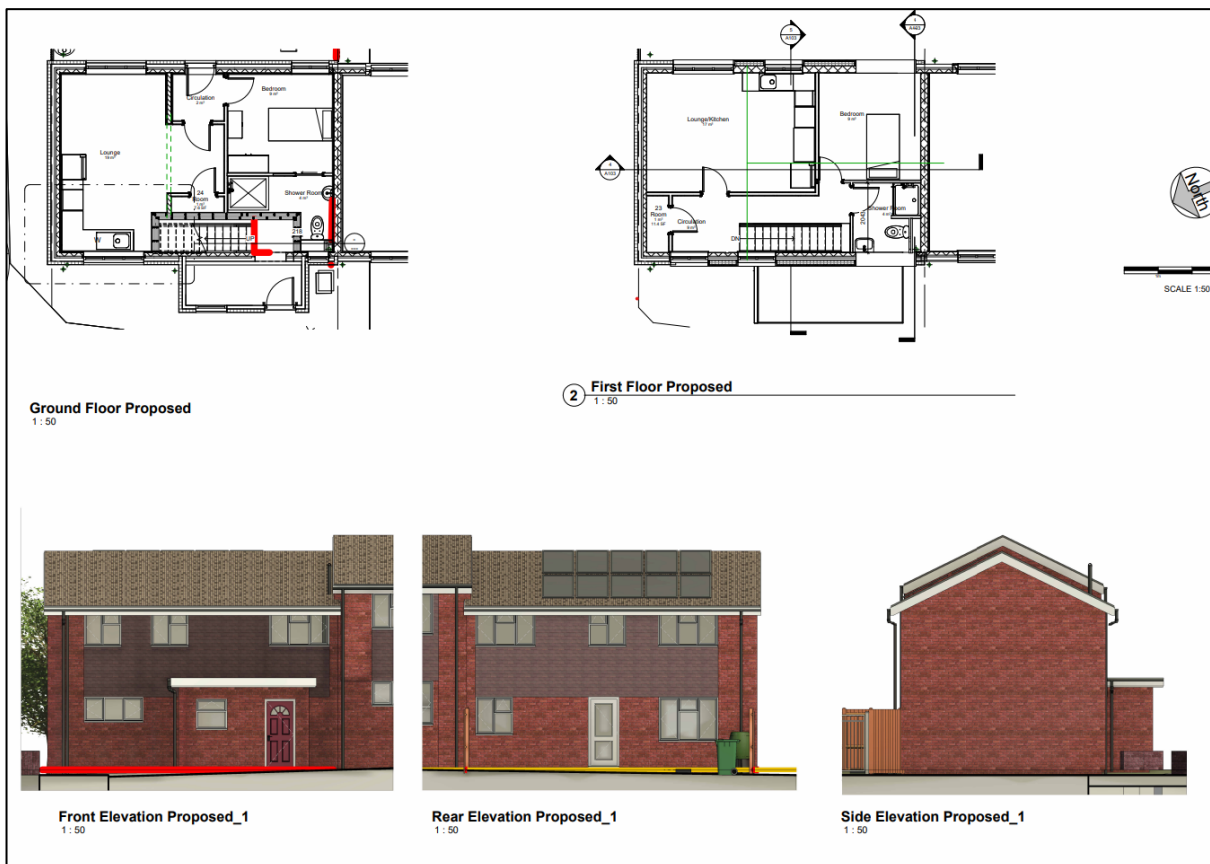


Figure 5: Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Planning History

8. There is no relevant planning history for the site.

Consultations

9. The application has been subject to formal statutory and non-statutory consultation.
10. **Kennington Community Council** – No response received.
11. **Natural England** – No objections subject to appropriate mitigation being secured through reduced occupancy.
12. **Neighbours** – Notification letters were sent to the occupiers of 6 properties in the vicinity of the application site and 1 representation has been received with the following comments:
 - Lack of parking in the area;
 - Skips will take up parking spaces
 - Impact on neighbours during construction phase, including noise for people that work night shifts and sleep in the day

Planning Policy

13. 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).
14. 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).
15. The relevant policies from the Development Plan relating to this application are as follows:-
 - SP1 – Strategic Objectives
 - SP2 – The Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery
 - SP6 – Promoting High Quality Design

ENV1 - Biodiversity
HOU3a – Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements
HOU12- Residential Space Standards Internal
HOU15 - Private External Open Space
TRA3a - Parking Standards for Residential Development
TRA6 - Provision for Cycling
TRA7 – The Road Network and Development

16. The following are also material considerations to the determination of this application.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Residential Space & Layout (External space standards) 2011
Residential Parking & Design SPD 2010
Sustainable Drainage SPD 2010
Climate Change Guidance for Development Management

Informal Design Guidance

Informal Design Guidance Note 1 (2014): Residential layouts & wheeled bins
Informal Design Guidance Note 2 (2014): Screening containers at home
Informal Design Guidance Note 3 (2014): Moving wheeled-bins through covered parking facilities to the collection point

Government Advice

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

The NPPF reflects the statutory provision at section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 that mandates the determination of all planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 47). The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 but has been amended on several occasions, with the most recent in July 2021. Paragraph 11 of the Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following headings and content of the NPPF are relevant to the consideration of the current proposals:

4. Decision-making
5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well-designed places

Planning Policy Guidance: In March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched its planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning policy guidance documents cancelled

when the NPPF was launched. PPG contains a range of subject areas, with each area containing several subtopics. Those of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application comprise:

- Design
- Determining a planning application

Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards

Assessment

17. The main issues for consideration are:

- Principle of Development
- Design, Character and Appearance
- Residential Amenity and Standards
- Parking Provision and Highway Safety
- Other Matters

Principle of Development

18. The site lies within the settlement boundary of Ashford. As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable subject to site-specific considerations.

Design, Character and Appearance

19. Local Plan policies SP1 and SP6 require good design and state that all development should seek to create a distinct character, with a strong sense of place and identity. These policies are broadly consistent with the NPPF which attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and seeks to safeguard heritage assets.

20. The proposed external alterations to the building include minor changes to windows and a door, together with external wall insulation to meet Building Regulation requirements. The proposed development would also feature solar panels on the rear elevation in order to meet Council requirements. On the whole, it is considered these proposed amendments are minor in nature and would have a limited impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and surrounding area. Therefore, the proposal is considered acceptable and would comply with policies SP1 and SP6 of the local and paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity and Standards

21. Regard must be had to paragraph 130 of the NPPF which amongst other things, requires the planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
22. The proposal would not result in any harm to the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties. The proposed residential use would be in keeping with the surrounding area and the proposed external alterations would not be harmful to the living conditions of the adjacent occupiers.
23. In terms of the proposed internal layouts, the ground floor flat would feature an open plan kitchen / dining / living room, single bedroom and en-suite bathroom, totalling 35sqm. This flat would be accessed from the rear garden. The first floor flat would feature an open plan kitchen / dining / living room, single bedroom and separate bathroom, totalling 40sqm. This flat would be accessed from the front porch. Both flats have been suitably arranged in terms of stacking with the first floor bedroom positioned above the ground floor bedroom. As such, the relationship between the 2 flats would be acceptable.
24. Although the proposed ground floor flat would fall marginally short of the national housing space standards by approximately 2sqm in order to accommodate the stairwell to the first floor, it is considered this would be unlikely to impact the overall quality of the living environment being provided and a grounds of refusal on this basis would be unreasonable.
25. The property benefits from a garden which is approximately 8m deep and this will be shared between the two units, including for the entrance to the ground floor flat. It is understood that the tenants will have joint responsibility for taking care of the property. In order to ensure that ground floor flat would be afforded with appropriate levels of privacy, it is considered that defensible spaces (immediately outside of the rear facing bedroom window and living room window) should be provided by suitable landscaping, which could be secured by way of a condition. Overall, the external amenity space is considered acceptable for the 2 non-family units that are designed for single persons and accords with the aims and objectives of policy.

Parking Provision and Highway Safety

26. Policy TRA3a of the Local Plan requires one off-street car space to be provided for 1 bedroom dwellings.
27. In this instance, the existing dwelling currently has no off street parking and none would be provided. However, there are no parking restrictions in the surrounding streets and there is on-street parking available immediately outside the house, which is accessed via an existing footpath.

28. In this case, it is important to realise that off-street parking is not considered a necessity for the proposed flats which are intended to cater for former rough sleepers who have very few possessions and are highly unlikely to have a car.
29. The existing 4 bedroom family home would have already been operating without dedicated parking and it is more likely that this would have resulted in a requirement for parking provision. As such, it is considered the current proposal may improve the local situation by removing the requirement for a family car to park on the adjacent roads.

Other Matters

30. The site is located within the Stour catchment. The Council received advice from Natural England (NE) in respect of the nationally and internationally designated protected sites at Stodmarsh lakes, east of Canterbury. This relates to an increased level of nitrates and phosphates within the protected sites which is adversely affecting the integrity of the habitat of the lakes.
31. The development proposes to convert the existing dwelling into new accommodation. The existing dwelling is a 3 bedroom house, which in accordance with the Natural England methodology, is assumed to have an existing occupancy of 2.4 persons.
32. The proposed development would result in the creation of two single occupancy flats. Given that the proposed flats are intended for single occupancy, it is considered that the standard occupancy value of 2.4 persons per dwelling is not appropriate for the type of accommodation proposed and that assuming an occupancy value of 1 person per flat would be more appropriate. Again, this is the approach taken with the similar application at 240 Beaver Road (22/00569/AS) and 15 Warwick Road (PA/2023/0218).
33. The proposed development would convert an existing dwelling into 2 self-contained flats for single occupancy. Subject to the imposition of a condition restricting the occupancy of the units to one person per flat, the scheme does not result in any increase in net population within the Stour catchment. Consequently, there would be no net increase in nutrients generated from the proposed use. Additionally, there is no land use change associated with this application, given that the site is an existing residential site. Consequently, there would be no net nutrients generated from the surface water/land use change.
34. The Assistant Director of Planning & Development, in his capacity as Competent Authority, has considered the Natural England consultation comments and has signed off the Appropriate Assessment. Therefore subject to the inclusion of the single occupancy condition, the development proposal achieves nutrient neutrality and it is concluded that the development would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of the Stodmarsh Lakes.

Human Rights Issues

35. 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).

Conclusion

36. There is no policy objection to the conversion of larger dwellings into smaller units in the adopted Local Plan. Neither are there compelling housing needs that support the retention of larger homes in this part of the Borough. Nonetheless, the proposal generally complies with the aims and objectives of relevant Local Plan policies in relation to design, residential standards, parking / highway safety and amenity impact. For the reasons set out above, the proposed development is satisfactory and therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation

Permit

- A With delegated authority to the Planning Applications and Building Control Manager or the Strategic Development and Delivery Manager to add, amend or remove planning obligations and/or planning conditions as they see fit to secure the required mitigation and any associated issues relating thereto; and,**
- B Subject to planning conditions and notes, including those dealing with the subject matters identified below, (but not limited to that list) and those necessary to take forward stakeholder representations, with wordings and triggers revised as appropriate and with any ‘pre-commencement’ based planning conditions to have been the subject of the agreement process provisions effective 01/10/2018.**
1. 3-year standard condition
 2. Approved Plans
 3. Single person occupancy condition
 4. Materials in accordance with the submitted details

5. Landscaping and boundary treatment (to include details for rear amenity space and access gate)

Notes to Applicant

- Working with the Applicant
- List of plans/documents approved
- Construction practices (including hours of construction, avoiding burning of controlled waste, and minimising dust emissions)

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/2023/0225)

Contact Officer: Georgina Galley
Email: georgina.galley@ashford.gov.uk
Telephone: (01233) 330724