

Application Number	18/00846/AS
Location	24, 30, 38, 40, 42, 48, 50, 54 & 69 Downs Way, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0LF
Grid Reference	95390/49752
Parish Council	Charing
Ward	Charing
Application Description	Recladding of concrete panels that provide the existing external finish with a reinforced insulated render system.
Applicant	Ashford Borough Council Community & Housing Department
Agent	N/A
Site Area	0.44

(a) 40/- (b) S (c)

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 9 two storey semi-detached post WW2 Airey style properties within the village of Charing which falls within the Charing Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA).
3. These properties form part of a development of a linear form of uniform semi-detached dwellings externally finished in a mix of either precast slatted panels with an exposed aggregate finish or brick. The dwellings subject of the application exhibit the slatted panels.
4. A site location plan is attached as an annexe to the report.

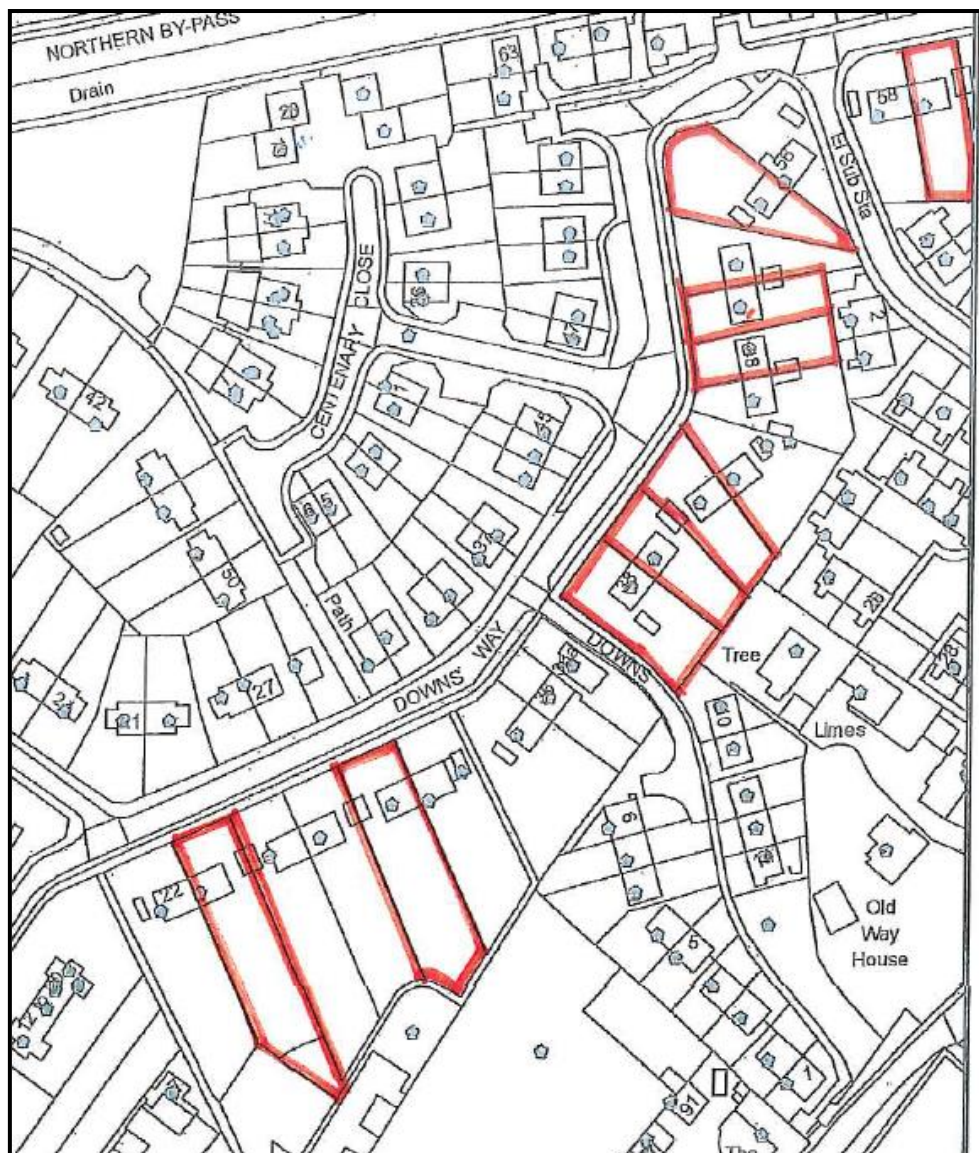


Figure 1 - Site location plan

Proposal

5. 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 in line with previous identical schemes.
6. The intention of the proposed development is to:
 - Improve the thermal efficiency of the structure. This will realise associated benefits to 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.
7. 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.
8. Of note is previous applications granted approval in Chester Avenue, Bethersden (22 properties) and Green Lane, Smarden (8 properties). It is also of note that two other applications are seeking approval at this committee for two other sites in Charing for the same development.

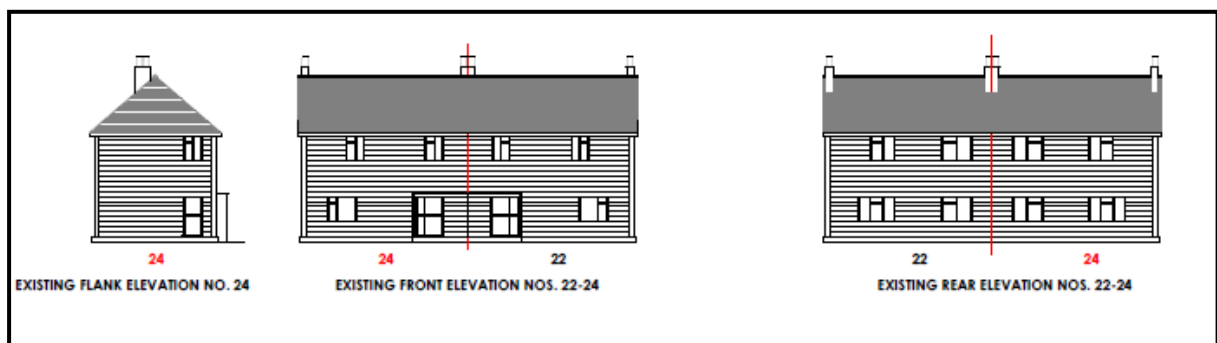


Figure 2 - existing elevations

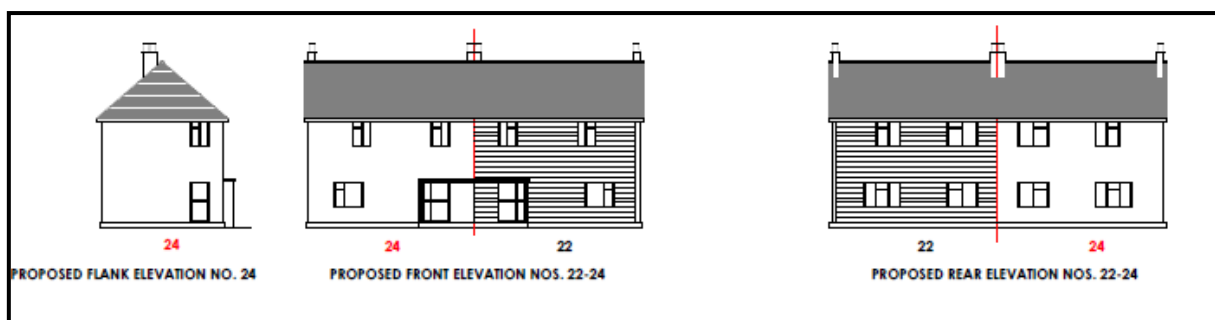


Figure 3 - proposed elevations



Figure 4 example from previously approved scheme for comparison



Figure 5 existing elevational treatment

Planning History

9. There is no relevant planning history.

Consultations

Ward Member: No representation received at time of writing this report

Parish Council: Support and make the following comment *“to make the external finish match with adjacent properties which are of brick nature could the colour match”*

(HDM & SS comment: the cream/off-white colour is consistent with the other approved developments across the borough and is not considered to present a jarring contrast).

Neighbours: 40 neighbours consulted; no representations received at the time of writing

Planning Policy

10. 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.
11. The new Ashford Local Plan to 2030 has now been submitted for examination. Following this, the Local Plan Inspectors issued a post-hearings advice note on 29th June 2018 which sets out the elements of the Submission Local Plan that they consider require amendment in order to be found sound. In the context of paragraph 48 of the NPPF, this note provides a material step towards the adoption of the Plan and the weight that should be applied to its policies in decision-making. Where the Inspectors have not indicated a need for amendment to policies in the Plan, it is reasonable to assume that these policies are, in principle, sound and should therefore be given significant weight. Where policies need to be amended as a consequence of the Inspectors' advice, significant weight should be attached to the Inspectors' advice in the application of those policies.
12. The relevant policies from the Development Plan relating to this application are as follows:-

Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008

CS1 Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development and High Quality Design

CS9 Design Quality

Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document 2010

TRS17 Landscape Character and Design

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

Ashford Local Plan to 2030 (Submission Version December 2017)

SP1 Strategic Objectives

SP6 Promoting High Quality Design

ENV3a Landscape Character & Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Landscape Character Assessment SPD

Village Design Statements

Charing Village Design Statement 2002

Government Advice

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

14. 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:-
15. Paragraph 11 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.

16. Paragraph 8 makes reference to a core underpinning principle of sustainable development from a social objective to be the fostering of a well-designed and safe built environment.
17. Paragraph 48 states in relation to the stages of preparing a Local Plan that:

“From the day of publication, decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

 - the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
 - the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
 - the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).”

Assessment

18. The main issues for consideration are:
 - Visual Amenity
 - Residential Amenity

Visual Amenity

19. As stated above Members approved very similar schemes in 2017 for near identical properties in Bethersden and Smarden (within the Conservation Area). 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 line of properties, would not represent an incongruous contrast and thus be out of character with the context of the site.
20. 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 thus the visual amenity of the locality.

Residential Amenity

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

Human Rights Issues

22. 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

23. In accordance with paragraph 38 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

24. 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.
25. 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

Subject to the following Conditions and Notes:

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 38 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). Those papers relating specifically to this application may be found on the [View applications on line](#) pages under planning application reference 18/00846/AS.

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