

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 23/02026/FULL			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Proposed car parking space			
ADDRESS 1 Littleworth Cottages, Etherington Hill, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 0TP.			
RECOMMENDATION GRANT (please refer to Section 11.0 of this report for full recommendation)			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/REASONS FOR REFUSAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development would not be significantly harmful to the residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings; • The development would preserve the openness of the Green Belt; • The development would preserve the character of the AONB; • The development would comply with adopted Local Plan policy relating to highway safety; • Other issues have been assessed and there are not any which would warrant refusal of the application, or which cannot be satisfactorily addressed by condition. 			
INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF PROPOSAL The following are considered to be material to the application: Contributions (to be secured through Section 106 legal agreement/unilateral undertaking): N/A Net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A Estimated average annual workplace salary spend in Borough through net increase in numbers of jobs: N/A The following are not considered to be material to the application: Estimated annual council tax benefit for Borough: N/A Estimated annual council tax benefit total: N/A Annual New Homes Bonus: N/A Estimated annual business rates benefits for Borough: N/A			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE The applicant is an Elected Member of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.			
WARD Speldhurst & Bidborough	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Speldhurst Parish Council	APPLICANT Mr M Sankey AGENT Mr Alan Madgwick	
DECISION DUE DATE 22/09/23	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 25/08/23	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE 04/08/23	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):			
81/01119/CPD	Section 53 Determination - Single-storey rear extension	Planning Permission Not Required	21/12/81
13/01159/HOUSE	Single storey side extension with accommodation in extended roof	Granted	28/06/13

	above.		
22/03350/FULL	Demolition of single storey rear extension, erection of replacement single storey rear extension and entrance porch	Granted	09/02/23
23/02027/FULL	First floor extension over existing garage and utility room	Decision Pending	N/A

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

1.01 1 Littleworth Cottages is a two-storey, semi-detached dwellinghouse situated within a row of cottages along a designated rural lane outside of any established settlement. The dwelling benefits from existing off-street parking and is elevated slightly above the public highway behind soft landscaping, with one adjoining neighbour at number 2 Littleworth Cottages to the southern side, and The Old Cottage around 7.5 metres away to the northern side.

1.02 The property sits immediately adjacent to the junction of Etherington Hill and Stockland Green Road.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.01 This application seeks planning permission for the creation of an additional parking space on the existing front lawn, along with the associated landscaping.

3.0 SUMMARY INFORMATION

	Existing	Proposed	Change (+/-)
Car parking spaces	1	2	+1

4.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (Statutory protection in order to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of their landscapes - National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 & Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000);
- Metropolitan Green Belt;
- Outside the Limits to Built Development.

5.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2006

Policy LBD1: Development Outside the Limits to Built Development

Policy MGB1: Metropolitan Green Belt

Policy EN1: Development Control Criteria;

Policy EN25: Development Control Criteria for all Development Proposals Affecting the Rural Landscape;

Policy H11: Extensions to Dwellings Outside the Limits to Built Development

Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Development Strategy 2010

Core Policy 2: Green Belt

Core Policy 4: Environment

Core Policy 5: Sustainable Design and Construction
Core Policy 14: Development in the Villages and Rural Areas

Supplementary Planning Documents

Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2006

Tunbridge Wells Borough Submission Local Plan 2021

Policy STR8: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, Built, and Historic Environment

Policy STR9: Green Belt

Policy EN1: Sustainable Design

Policy EN18: Rural Landscape

Policy EN19: The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Policy H11: Residential Extensions, Alterations, Outbuildings, and Annexes

6.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

6.01 Site notices were displayed on the 4th of August to expire on the 25th of August.

6.02 No representations were received.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

Speldhurst Parish Council (15/08/23):

7.01 Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer

KCC Highways (16/08/23):

7.02 Referring to the above description, it would appear that this development proposal does not meet the criteria to warrant involvement from the Highway Authority in accordance with the current consultation protocol arrangements. If there are any material highway safety concerns that you consider should be brought to the attention of the HA, then please contact us again with your specific concerns for our consideration.

Informative: It is important to note that planning permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

8.0 APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING COMMENTS

8.01 N/A

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

9.01 Application Form;
Proposed Plan, Section, Elevation and Block Plan (3350/06);
Existing Plan, Elevation and Location Plan (3350/07).

10.0 APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

10.01 The subject property is located Outside of the Limits to Built Development, within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Metropolitan Green Belt. In such areas, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to restrict development which could be considered harmful to the area.

Visual Impact

10.02 Policy EN1 requires the design of the proposal, encompassing layout and orientation, external appearance, and landscaping, to respect the context of the site.

- 10.03 Policy LBD1 states that proposals will be permitted if they comply with all relevant policies in the Local Plan. Policy EN25 would be most relevant for development such as that proposed in this application, which aims to limit the impact of any proposed development on the character and setting on areas outside the Limits to Built Development and within the AONB. Works will be permitted providing the works would not detract from the character or setting of the area.
- 10.04 The addition of a dropped kerb and the associated landscaping are relatively minor alterations and would not appear out of character within the residential character and context of the site, especially as there is an existing driveway immediately adjacent to that being proposed.
- 10.05 Whilst the loss of the hedge to the front boundary of the property's curtilage is not ideal, it would be partially retained alongside the existing tree. As such, the removal of a portion of the hedge is unlikely to cause any significant degree of harm, either by its impact upon the street scene or the rural lane.

Impact on the AONB

- 10.06 As shown in the above assessment, Policy EN25 requires development outside the LBD and within the AONB to respect local building styles and material use, and have no adverse impact on the form, appearance or setting of the host building.
- 10.07 In addition, Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by preserving protected landscapes and Paragraph 176 explains how 'great weight' should be given to conserving the scenic beauty of AONBs.
- 10.08 Core Policy 4(1) encapsulates the LPA's statutory duty to protect the AONB by stating 'the Borough's urban and rural landscapes, including the designated High Weald AONB, will be conserved and enhanced'. Assessing the impact on the natural landscape through the context of this application, the proposed development would be secluded and contained within a defined residential context and would not negatively affect the character of the host building or its wider curtilage.
- 10.09 There would therefore be little to no impact on the AONB and the development in question is not deemed to be 'inappropriate development' within the rural landscape, in compliance with Policy EN25 and the NPPF.

Impact on the Metropolitan Green Belt

- 10.10 Policy MGB1 of the TWBC Local Plan requires, for instances where an engineering operation would occur, that the works maintain the openness of the Green Belt, and do not conflict with its purposes.
- 10.11 Again, the proposed development would be situated entirely at ground level and would not introduce any significant built form as to reduce the openness of the Green Belt, or otherwise be at odds with the purpose of the Green Belt.

Residential Amenity

- 10.12 The proposed works are situated entirely at ground level. The installation of a dropped kerb and the associated landscaping would not give rise to any significant harm to residential amenity with regard to overlooking, overshadowing, or overbearing.

Highways

10.13 The dwelling of 1 Littleworth Cottages benefits from an existing driveway. It is unlikely that the proposed addition would have any greater impact on highway safety.

10.14 KCC Highways have not raised any objections in relation to the proposal.

Conclusion

10.15 As a result of the above assessment, no significant harm to either residential or visual amenity has been identified. The proposed works are also not considered to cause harm to the AONB, the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt, nor otherwise be of detriment to highway safety. The application is therefore considered to comply with the relevant local and national policies.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT, subject to the following conditions:

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 hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Proposed Plan, Section, Elevation and Block Plan (3350/06).

Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved.

3. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the details of external materials specified in the application which shall not be varied unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

INFORMATIVES

1. It is important to note that planning permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Case Officer: James Taylor

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.
The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.