

**Proposed Detached Dwelling and Demolition of Garage Extension
St Paul's Vicarage, 130 Boxley Road, Maidstone ME14 2AH
Planning Design and Access Statement
12 October 2022**



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Introduction

1. This statement supersedes the September and 10 October 2022 versions and sets out the thinking behind the proposal to construct an additional dwelling within the curtilage of 130 Boxley Road Maidstone. Formerly used as a parsonage, the house is now leased to Maidstone Borough Council and used to accommodate refugees, for the time being.
2. The garden, which extends to one third of an acre, is unmanageably large by today's requirements. So, the underused space within the urban area is a highly appropriate location for an additional dwelling, with excellent access to a wide range of community facilities and services. This is also a highly accessible location with convenient public transport links to the town and beyond.
3. A great deal of care has gone into designing a scheme that complements the character and appearance of this part of Maidstone in terms of both building design and effect on the street scene. Care has also been taken to respect the setting of the protected Giant Redwood at the bottom of the garden close to the eastern boundary.
4. The effect of the new dwelling on the quality of life for existing neighbours has been carefully considered and planned for by ensuring that there would be no loss of privacy by way of overlooking of windows.
5. This statement is set out in the following order:
 - Site and surroundings.
 - Proposed development.
 - Principle of development and relevant policies.
 - Sustainability credentials of location and proposed development.
 - Design and access.
 - Trees.
 - Conclusions.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

6. Although still known as "St Paul's Vicarage," the house ceased to be a parsonage some time ago and is now simply a dwellinghouse with tenants. The full curtilage extends to 0.13 hectares (0.33 acres). The application site lies within the urban area of Maidstone and is surrounded by residential development.

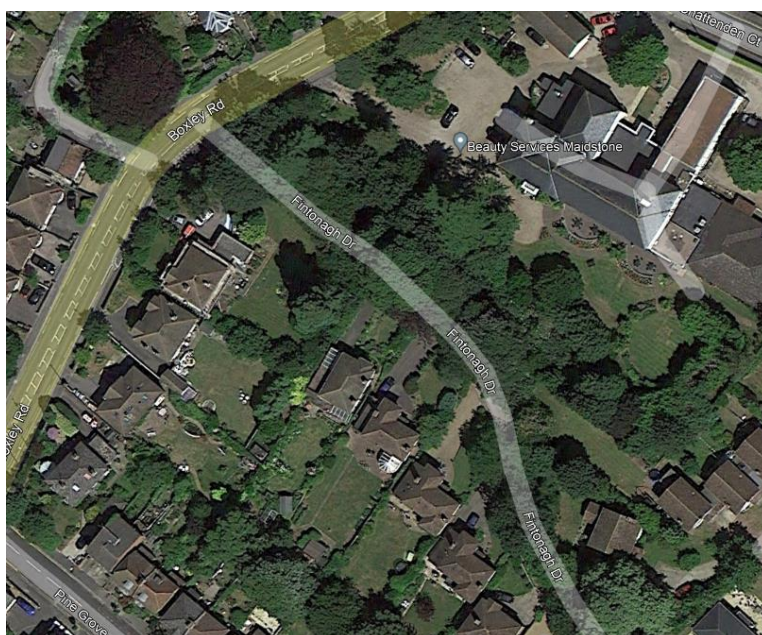


Approximate footprint of retained dwelling following removal of single storey garage extension.

7. The three aerial photographs below show the intensification of development that has steadily taken place in the vicinity of the application site since the 1930s. The first, was taken in 1940 not long after construction of the Vicarage. The second, taken in 2013, shows the former Russell Hotel to the north of the application site. The third, from 2020, shows the recently constructed Milton Grove development of fourteen houses on the site of the former hotel.



1940 Aerial Photograph of Locality



2013 Aerial Photograph



2020 Aerial Photograph

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

8. The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the single storey garage extension and the erection of a new detached dwelling on the northern half of the site. The two existing vehicular access points would be retained, and six car spaces would be provided. The protected Giant Redwood would be retained, and a comprehensive landscaping scheme implemented to reinforce existing boundary treatment. The supporting submissions comprise the following drawings and documents:

- A1581-01 Revision P2 - Red Line Site Location Plan.
- A1581-02 Revision P2 - Existing Block Plan/Site Survey.
- A1581-05 revision P1 – Existing Vicarage Plans and Elevations.
- A1581-06 revision P1 – Existing Vicarage Proposed Plans and Elevations.
- A1581-10 Revision P6 - Proposed Site Plan.
- A1581-11 Revision P2 - Proposed Floor Plans.
- A1581-20 Revision P4 - Proposed Northwest Elevation.
- A1581-21 Revision P5 - Proposed Northeast Elevation.
- A1581-22 Revision P5 - Proposed Southeast Elevation.
- A1581-23 Revision P3 - Proposed Southwest Elevation.
- A1581-24 Revision P5 – Existing and Proposed Street Scenes.
- A1583-200 Revision P4 - Garden Shed/Cycle Store Layout.
- Tree Report.
- Planning Design & Access Statement 12.10.22.
- CIL Form 1.
- CIL Form 2.

9. The proposed layout below shows the existing dwelling remaining, albeit with the single storey garage extension removed, within an independent curtilage. The existing and proposed dwellings would share the two access points onto Boxley Road.



Proposed Site Layout

10. The mature landscaping surrounding the site would remain intact and be reinforced with additional planting along the new boundaries.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT AND RELEVANT POLICIES.

THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

11. The NPPF, updated in July 2021, is predicated on a presumption¹ in favour of sustainable development which is defined² in terms of three objectives.

Firstly, economic – the construction work would provide a modest, temporary boost to the local economy. The new dwelling would bring a new family household income to the locality.

Secondly, social – the occupiers of the new family home would become part of the local community and help to sustain community services and facilities.

Thirdly, environmental – the site is already residential land within a settlement with good sustainability credentials. A range of community services and facilities are within convenient reach. The site is well served by bus and rail connections, as well as having excellent access to the primary highway network. The site is within walking distance of Maidstone town centre with its services, amenities, and public transport links.

12. So, the proposed development enjoys a presumption in favour of sustainable development under the terms of the NPPF.

13.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2017

Spatial Strategy

14. The Maidstone Local Plan was adopted in October 2017. The proposals comply with the spatial strategy set out in the Spatial Vision (page 8), the spatial objectives (page 9), and the settlement hierarchy (page 17), as follows:

Maidstone county town

4.22 As the largest and most sustainable location for development, Maidstone town is the focus for a significant proportion of new housing, employment and retail development in the borough. Cultural and tourism facilities are an important

15. Key Policy SS1 seeks to focus new development at accessible and sustainable locations, primarily within the urban area. The latter policy states: -

¹ NPPF July 2021 page 6, para 11.

² Ditto page 5, para 8.

3. An expanded Maidstone urban area will be the principal focus for development in the borough. Best use will be made of available sites within the urban area. Regeneration is prioritised within the town centre, which will continue to be the primary retail and office location in the

MAIDSTONE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW REGULATION 19 SUBMISSION

16. Published for consultation on 29th October 2021, and the subject of a recent public examination, the emerging Local Plan continues to recognise the importance of Maidstone urban area as the focus for new development:

Maidstone County Town

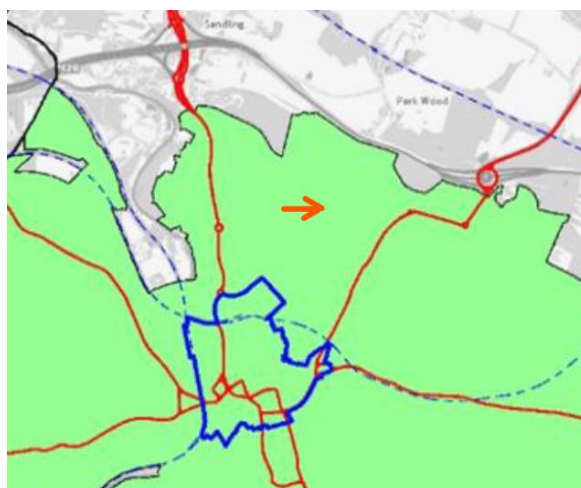
- 5.22 As the largest and most sustainable location for development, Maidstone town is the focus for a significant proportion of new housing, employment and retail development in the borough. Cultural

17. Draft Policy LPRSS1 states:

Maidstone Urban Area

5. Maidstone urban area will continue to be a focus for development in the borough. Best use will be made of available sites within the urban area. Renewal is prioritised within the town centre,

18. The approximate location of the site is shown with an arrow on the following map, just seven hundred metres, or less than ten minutes' walk, from the town centre, which is edged in blue. The urban area is coloured green.



19. Policy LPRSP2 gives explicit support to the development of appropriate infill sites within the defined urban area, as follows:

POLICY LPRSP2 – MAIDSTONE URBAN AREA

- 1) As a sustainable location, Maidstone urban area, as defined on the policies map, will be a key focus for new development.
- 2) Within the urban area and outside of the town centre boundary identified in policy SP4, Maidstone will continue to be a good place to live and work. This will be achieved by:
 - a) Allocating sites at the edge of the town for housing and business development;
 - b) The development and redevelopment or infilling of appropriate urban sites in a way that contributes positively to the locality's distinctive character;

20. The emerging plan makes sets specific requirements for the development of residential garden land as follows:

Policy LPRHou 4: Residential garden land

Within the defined boundaries of the urban area, rural service centres and larger villages development of domestic garden land to create new buildings which meet the following criteria will be permitted provided:

1. The higher density resulting from the development would not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area;
2. There would be no significant loss of privacy, light or outlook for adjoining properties and/or their curtilages;
3. Access of an appropriate standard can be provided to a suitable highway;
4. There would be no significant increase in unacceptable impact on amenity by noise or disturbance from traffic gaining access to the development.
5. The scale, height, form, appearance and siting of the proposal would fit unobtrusively with the existing building where retained and the character of the street scene;
6. Any loss of biodiversity is to be offset elsewhere in line with Policy LPRSP14(a)

21. Not only would the proposed development be compliant it would also make a very positive contribution to the locality in design and land use terms.

22. Regarding density, Policy LPRHou5, set out below, echoes NPPF paragraph 125, and in the interests of efficient use of land, sets minimum density requirements.

Policy LPRHou 5: Density of residential development

All new housing will be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated. Development proposals that fail to make efficient use of land for housing, having regard to the character and location of the area, will be refused permission. Subject to these overriding considerations the following minimum densities are expected in the following locations:

1. At sites within the town centre new residential development will be expected to achieve a net density of 150 dwelling per hectare.
2. Sites within inner urban area (800 metres from the town centre) a net density of 75 dwellings per hectare
3. Sites within outer urban area (within the urban boundary of Maidstone, but not within the inner urban area) a net density of 35 dwellings per hectare
4. Sites within identified Garden Communities will be expected to achieve a net density of 40 dwellings per hectare
5. At sites within or adjacent to the rural service centres, larger and smaller villages as defined under policies LPRSP1-8 new residential development will be expected to achieve a net density of 30 dwellings per hectare where that is compatible with the individual settings of those sites.

23. The proposed additional dwelling would take the density from the existing 7.7 dwellings per hectare to 15.4 dwellings per hectare which is closer to the recently permitted Milton Grove development constructed at 17 dwellings per hectare. The site characteristics and setting demand a balance between more efficient land use on the one hand and design/tree protection requirements on the other. A higher density of development than that proposed would be inappropriate in planning terms as it would compromise the protected Giant Redwood and a range of development management requirements.

Design Policy

24. The meticulous design approach complies with Local Plan Policy DM1 which requires high quality design which demonstrates a positive response to a range of specified criteria, of which the following are relevant:

- Character, distinctiveness, and sense of place – the proposed layout and architectural form/materials demonstrate a great deal of sensitivity to the character and appearance of this mature part of urban Maidstone. The scheme demonstrates that an additional dwelling would retain generous garden space for both the existing and proposed dwellings. The resulting density would still be lower than that of the surrounding development.
- Respect for the amenities of existing residents and provision of adequate amenities for the new occupiers – the proposed scheme goes well beyond the minimum requirements in this regard. The separation distances from existing properties and well-established screening would ensure there would be no compromise to the privacy and amenity of the existing, surrounding

houses. Within the site the retained house and the new dwelling would enjoy very high levels of privacy and amenity afforded by the sensitively designed, low-density development.

- Respect for topography and natural features – the scheme would blend in very naturally and there would be no significant tree loss.
- Safe access and ease of movement – good level access would be provided throughout the ground floor accommodation and private amenity spaces. There would be good level access to the community services and facilities nearby. The existing access points on the Boxley Road frontage are well capable of providing safe access to the existing and proposed dwellings.
- Design approach – the proposed house takes its design cues from the existing dwelling on the plot and the street scene drawing illustrates just how successful this would be in blending in. At the same time, the new house would be built to contemporary sustainable construction standards.
- Public safety and crime – the scheme would create a very secure and safe-feeling environment.
- Flexibility and liveability – the new dwelling would be as liveable and flexible as any comparable dwelling in the locality, with generous spaces inside and out.
- Efficient use of natural resources – for the reasons set out elsewhere within this document, this is a highly efficient proposal which would use existing garden land in a highly sustainable location for new development.

Parking

25. Six parking spaces would be provided i.e., above the requirements of Policy DM3 to retain flexibility as to the possible future re-use of the existing house as a parsonage.

Density

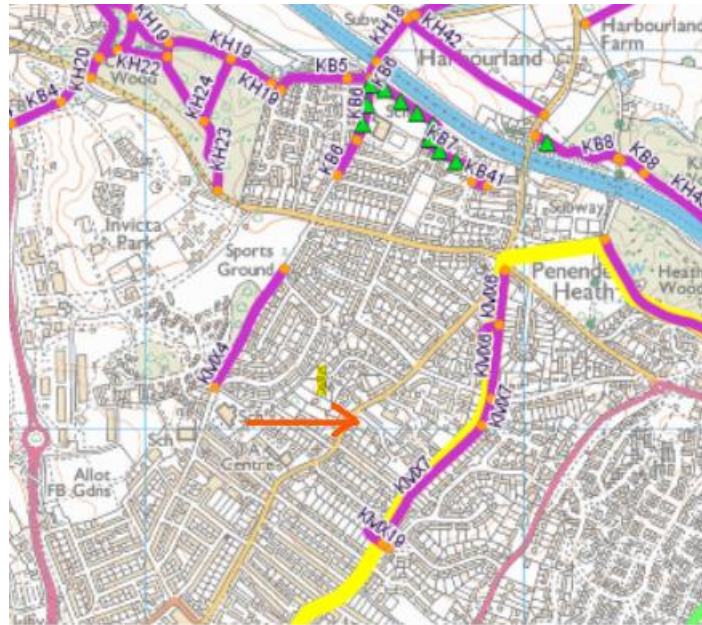
26. This issue is addressed above. In design terms, Policy DM12 acknowledges that a balance needs to be struck to avoid creating high densities that detract from the character of an area or low density that is inefficient in land use terms. The submitted scheme strikes the right balance.

SUSTAINABILITY CREDENTIALS OF LOCATION AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT (REASON 3).

Sustainability - The Location

27. The application site is a highly sustainable location for additional development as it is already in use as residential curtilage and with excellent, convenient access to a wide range of community services and amenities within walking distance. In the same way, there is excellent access to the primary highway network.

28. In terms of public transport, Maidstone East Station, just 1km from the site, is less than a 12-minute walk. There are five bus stops within 350 metres; each within a few minutes' walk of the application site. There are three primary/junior schools within 750 metres (St Paul's, North Borough and Sandling).
29. There is excellent access to public open spaces and to the open countryside via Public Rights of Way (see below).



Application site indicated with arrow, in relation to public rights of way.

Sustainability - The Proposed Development

30. The proposed site already comprises residential curtilage. The proposed layout drawing demonstrates that the erection of a fully separate, independent family dwelling would make efficient use of the planning unit without any loss of greenfield land or any encroachment into open countryside. So, there would be no question of sacrificing greenfield land for development.
31. The new floorspace would be constructed to contemporary sustainable, energy efficient, construction standards.

DESIGN AND ACCESS

32. The architect has designed the proposed scheme to a high standard so that the new house would make a positive contribution to the mixed character and appearance of the built-up context. The elevational treatment is very much in keeping with the former Vicarage.
33. The layout has been designed to optimise the use of the site without compromising the character and appearance of the locality, including the existing dwelling.
34. The new dwelling would safeguard the setting and amenities of the neighbouring dwellings including The Vicarage.

35. The site benefits from two existing access points, both which would be retained for use by the existing and proposed dwellings. Thereby, providing safe and convenient access.
36. The proposed dwelling would be accessible for disabled people and fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

TREES

37. A comprehensive Tree Survey and Tree Report is submitted. The latter includes an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. All the best trees would be retained, including the protected Giant Redwood. The existing landscaping would be reinforced with additional planting.
38. Appropriate measures are recommended for protection of the trees during construction.

CONCLUSIONS

39. The evidence set out in this Statement, together with the suite of drawings and the Tree Report, demonstrate that the proposed development would be fully compliant with all the relevant planning requirements. It would make more efficient use of land already forming part of a residential curtilage. Safe and convenient access would be provided. The development would integrate with and be complementary to this part of the Maidstone urban area.
40. The proposals would be fully compliant with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the appropriate policies of the adopted Local Plan and those of the emerging Local Plan.
41. This is a sustainable location for a new home, and occupiers would have convenient access to a wide range of community services and facilities.
42. The Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to conclude that the applicants have taken a sensitive and meticulous approach to the planning of this proposed development, which would make a positive contribution to this part of urban Maidstone. The proposed development would constitute sustainable development and the Council is respectfully requested to grant full planning permission, subject to appropriate conditions.

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