



**Erection of Four Dwellings and Alterations to Existing Dwelling
The Vicarage, Waterloo Road, Cranbrook TN17 3JQ**

**Planning Design and Access Statement
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Introduction

- 1 This document sets out the thinking behind the proposal for the erection of four dwellings within the curtilage of The Vicarage, Waterloo Road, Cranbrook TN17 3JQ. The proposals also include alterations to the existing dwelling which is no longer in use as a parsonage - an alternative has been purchased.
- 2 The acceptability of the principle of retaining the existing dwelling and developing four additional dwellings was firmly established by Appeal Decision APP/M2270/W/20/3271510 dated 23rd June 2021. Paragraph 4 states:

The appeal site is the large and somewhat overgrown side garden of the Vicarage. It lies within the Limits to Build Development (LBD) of Cranbrook. Policy AL/CR 3 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations Local Plan allocates the site for approximately 4 additional dwellings. There is therefore no objection in principle to a residential development on it.

- 3 The Appeal Decision goes on to set out clear guidelines for the acceptable development of the site, which are examined in detail in this and the accompanying documents. The key requirements for any proposed development may be summarised as follows.
 - It must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Cranbrook Conservation Area.
 - It must have special regard to preserving the setting of the Listed Waterloo Terrace.
 - It must retain an appropriate degree of tree screening.
 - It must make effective use of the site having regard to the area's need for smaller homes.
- 4 The Local Planning Authority stated clearly that the latter requirement means that the site must deliver four dwellings in addition to the existing house.
- 5 The former Vicar has retired. A new vicarage has been purchased, subject to contract. The existing dwelling at the application site is now let to a private tenant. In order to accommodate four additional dwellings, it will be necessary to demolish the small, single storey part of the existing house, together with the detached garage. The application documents provide full details of the existing house and the proposed changes to it, as well as the four new dwellings, their access and parking.
- 6 As the principle of development in this sustainable location has already been firmly established there is no need to rehearse the detailed sustainability criteria that have already been met. The format of this statement is as follows:

- Characteristics of site and surroundings.
- The proposed development.
- Sustainability credentials of location.
- Sustainability credentials of proposal.

Policy context.
Design and Access.
Conclusions.

Characteristics of Site and Surroundings

- 7 The historic small town of Cranbrook lies on the main road between Maidstone and Hastings, roughly midway between the two towns. The parish population in 2011 was 6,717 - this includes the small settlements of Sissinghurst, Swattenden, Colliers Green and Hartley. The application site lies at the northeast entrance to village on Waterloo Road which formed part of the original “King’s High Road” around which the settlement developed.
- 8 The application site comprises the 1950’s former vicarage building, a substantial detached family dwelling set within a very large, enclosed garden. It is bounded to the north and east by historic parkland and open countryside. To the south by the Listed Waterloo Terrace and to the west by Waterloo Road with a run of semi-detached houses opposite the Vicarage. The site is in an elevated position and the existing dwelling sits approximately two metres above the road.
- 9 The curtilage of the property extends to 0.35 hectares (0.87 acres). It is roughly square with an average depth of about 60m and an average width about the same. The site tapers a little to the northwest. The boundaries are enclosed with fencing.
- 10 Over half of the site is lawn/modified grassland. There are several mature trees, together with areas of dense scrub along the southern boundary, much of the western edge and part of the eastern edge. There are small pockets of dense scrub towards the southwest corner of the site.
- 11 The built-up parts of the site comprise the existing dwelling, set towards the middle of the northern half of the site, as well as a brick garage and a timber shed, a large hardstanding for cars and a long driveway. There is a substantial patio at the back of the house.



The Proposed Development

12 The proposed development is set out on the following drawings.

Drawing No A1606-01 Rev P1 – Red Line Site Location Plan.
 Drawing No A1606-05 Rev P1 – Existing Site Survey Plan.
 Drawing No A1606-10 Rev P4 – Proposed Site Layout Plan.
 Drawing No A1606-20 Rev P2 – Proposed Ground Floor Plans.
 Drawing No A1606-21 Rev P2 – Proposed First Floor Plans.
 Drawing No A1606-22 Rev P2 – Proposed Second Floor Plans.
 Drawing No A1606-25 Rev P2 – Proposed Roof Plans.
 Drawing No A1606-50 Rev P2 – Site Section AA.
 Drawing No A1606-51 Rev P2 – Site Section BB.
 Drawing No A1606-52 Rev P2 – Site Section CC.
 Drawing No A1606-53 Rev P2 – Site Section DD.
 Drawing No A1606-54 Rev P2 – Site Sections EE & FF.
 Drawing No A1606-55 Rev P2 – Site Sections GG, HH & II.

13 A comprehensive analysis of the material planning considerations and additional details of the proposed development are set out in the following supporting documents:

BS5837 Tree Report/Arboricultural Impact Assessment Ref No L830AIA.
 Tree Survey.
 Tree Constraints Plan.
 Tree Protection Plan.
 Tree Removal Plan.
 Ecological Impact Assessment Ref No 0482_R02_REV B.
 Planning Design and Access Statement Ref 15/02/RS
 Heritage Significance and Impact Assessment Ref 15/02/RS.

14 The submitted documents also include:

CIL Form 1.
 CIL Form 2.
 Natural England DLL Form (Great Crested Newts).

15 Four family dwellings are proposed: Semi-detached units 1 and 2 would have a large kitchen opening into a spacious living room/dining room. Off the entrance hall there would be a ground floor cloakroom and store cupboard. On the first floor there would be three bedrooms and a family bathroom. On the second floor there would be a double bedroom with en suite facilities. The detached Unit 3 has similar accommodation but without an additional store cupboard on the second floor.

16 Detached Unit 4 would have an L shaped plan providing a large kitchen/diner and a large living room, as well as a cloakroom on the ground floor. The first-floor

accommodation would comprise three double bedrooms, on with en-suite facilities, a family bathroom, and a storage cupboard.

17 The proposed accommodation schedule is as follows:

Unit Number			Area (NIA)*		Floors
	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom	sq ft	sq m	
1		1	1,546	143.6	3
2		1	1,546	143.6	3
3		1	1,546	143.6	3
4	1		1,367	127	2
Total 4	1	3	6,004	557.8	
	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom	sq ft	sq m	

18 Each of the new dwellings would be of conventional construction with walls clad in stock bricks to the front and side elevations. The rear elevations would be varied with bricks and tiles for units 1 and 3, plain render and tile for unit 2 and brick with white weatherboarding for unit 4. The pitched roofs of units 1,2 and 3 would be clad in clay tiles to match the existing dwelling. Unit 4 would have a natural slate roof to match Waterloo Terrace. Unit 4 would also have a chimney of similar design to the dwellings in Waterloo Terrace.

19 Each new house would have a generous garden and two parking spaces. An additional visitor space would be provided close to the entrance. The existing house is no longer used as a vicarage so there would be no enhanced parking requirement.

20 The single storey conservatory at the southern end of the existing dwelling would be removed, as would the detached garage. The floorspace reduction would be as follows:

Existing Vicarage retained in proposed scheme		1	1,894	176	2
Existing Vicarage Demolition*		1	2,266	210.5	2
			371	34.5	

* Area of demolition includes 14.7m² of conservatory floor area and 19.8m² of garage floor area serving existing vicarage

Sustainability Credentials of Location and Proposed Development

Sustainability - The Location

- 21 The Council's Core Strategy recognises the impressive range of community facilities and services within Cranbrook:

the town's setting within the AONB. The Core Strategy also seeks to support the role of Cranbrook as a provider of shops and services to the wider rural area and highlights that many smaller independent shops are concentrated in High Street, Stone Street and Carriers Road, in addition to the Co-op Supermarket to the rear of High Street. There are also a number of restaurants, public houses and cafés, which add to the vibrancy of the town. The town of Cranbrook and the nearby Sissinghurst Castle Garden
(extract from Site Allocation Local Plan 2016, p81)

- 22 Cranbrook School is very close by and Cranbrook Church of England Primary School lies within 500 metres. The High Weald Academy is within 1 kilometre.
23 There is excellent access to the primary highway network and there are 2 bus stops within 100m of the site.
24 The application site has excellent access to local and long-distance footpaths and bridleways (see below).



Extract from KCC Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way

- 25 100% of the houses in Waterloo Road can connect to Next Generation Access Broadband and Superfast Broadband, thereby facilitating working from home. Average download speeds are 23.5 Mbps and upload speeds 5.0 Mbps.¹
26 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 which has a negligible risk of inundation.

¹ <https://www.getthedata.com/postcode/TN17-3JQ>

Sustainability - The Proposed Development

- 27 The proposed site is already in use as residential curtilage, so there would be no question of sacrificing greenfield land for development. The scheme for four additional houses has been very skilfully designed to strike the right balance between efficient land-use and the need to respect the particular character of the site and its setting. High priority has also been given to tree retention, assessing and planning for the local ecology and safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity.
- 28 The dwellings would be built to contemporary sustainable construction standards.

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

- 29 The NPPF is predicated on a presumption² in favour of sustainable development which is defined³ in terms of three objectives.

Firstly, economic – the construction of four houses would boost to the local economy in many ways. Temporarily through the construction phase and then in the long-term by bringing four more household incomes to the locality. Broadband speeds are conducive to working from home.

Secondly, social – the four new dwellings would provide high quality family accommodation, adding to the mix of house types available locally.

Thirdly, environmental – the site is existing garden land within a settlement with excellent sustainability credentials. An extensive range of community services and facilities are nearby. The site is extremely well connected to the primary highway network and is well served by bus connections. The local footway network is first class.

- 30 So, given the fact that this is an allocated site, the proposed development enjoys a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development under the terms of the NPPF. This is reinforced by the current inability of the LPA to identify a 5-year housing land supply.
- 31 Section 11 of NPPF emphasises the need make effective use of land. A garden of 0.35 hectares or 0.87 acres would have been appropriate for a Rectory in the 1950's when the Incumbent would probably have been able to employ a gardener. However, the garden is far too large for contemporary life-styles and budgets. Indeed, a new Vicarage has been purchased elsewhere in Cranbrook with a more manageable garden. So, the proposal would be 'garden-creating', as well as making far more effective use of the land without the need to release agricultural land for development. Paragraphs 124 stresses the need to achieve appropriate density of development in the interest of the efficient use of land.

² NPPF February 2019, p6, para 11.

³ Ditto para 5.

- 32 Section 12 of NPPF emphasises the need for well-designed places. As explained elsewhere in this document a great deal of care has been taken in designing a scheme that strikes the right balance among the key requirements of; efficient use of the land, safeguarding trees and preserving/enhancing the Conservation Area and the setting of Waterloo Terrace.
- 33 Compliance with NPPF requirements relating to habitats and biodiversity are dealt with in the separate Environmental Impact Assessment. Conservation and enhancement of the historical environment are dealt with in the separate Heritage Impact Assessment.

Core Strategy (June 2010)

- 34 The Core Strategy, adopted in 2010, sets out the Council's planning requirements to 2026. It envisages the development of some 300 dwellings in Cranbrook, as set out on Core Policy 12:

Core Policy 12

Development in Cranbrook

Development at Cranbrook during the Plan period will support and strengthen its role as a small rural town with its own character. At Cranbrook:

1. All new development will have particular regard to preserving and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area and for the setting of the town within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
2. Approximately 300 net additional dwellings will be delivered on sites to be allocated and released in accordance with Core Policy 1: Delivery of Development
3. Sites capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings will be required to provide affordable housing in accordance with Core Policy 6 (4) and (5)
4. In the order of 1,150sqm (net) additional comparison retail floorspace will be delivered by 2017, unless a different need is identified in a future Retail Study, to increase the vitality and viability of the centre
5. A community facility will be provided and, if necessary, a site will be allocated for this purpose

- 35 The proposed development is clearly consistent with this strategic approach. Moreover, the details of the scheme are fully compliant with the relevant topic policies of the Core Strategy.

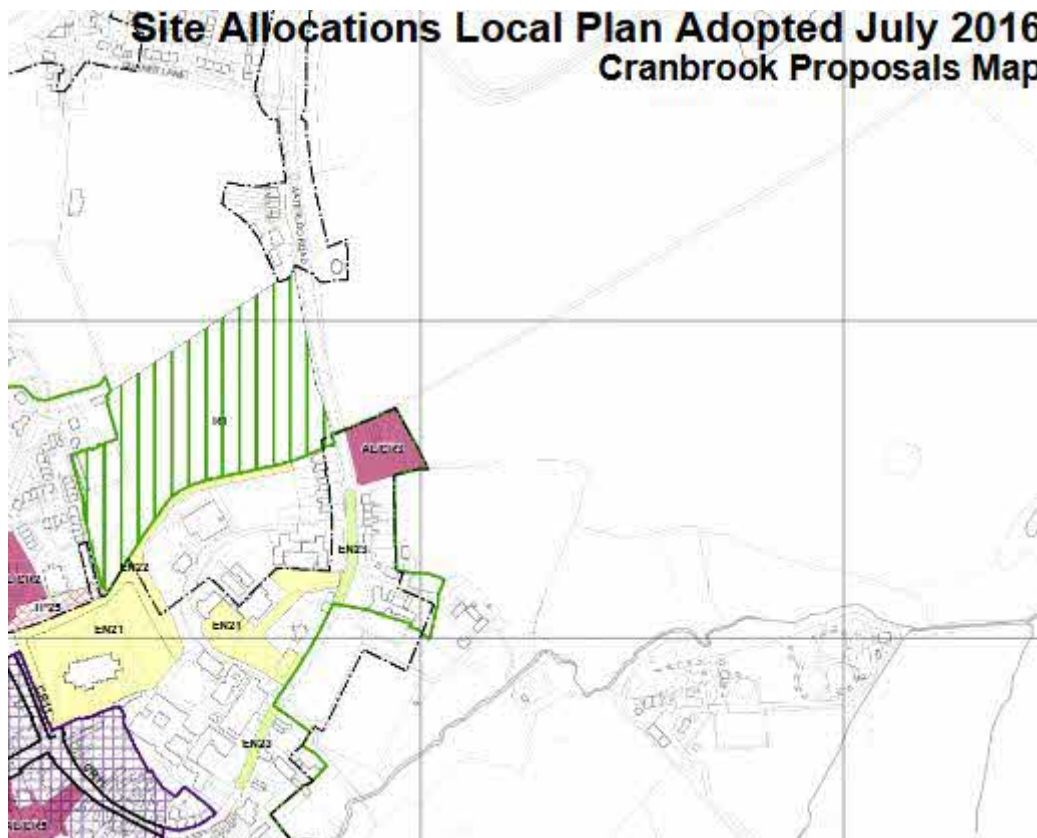
Site Allocations Local Plan (July 2016)

- 36 The Site Allocations Local Plan was adopted in July 2016 and must be afforded a great deal of weight in reaching planning decisions. It's stated purpose⁴ is as follows:

The main purpose of this Site Allocations document is to allocate land for housing, employment, retail and other land uses to meet the identified needs of the communities within Tunbridge Wells borough to 2026 and beyond.

⁴ Site Allocations Local Plan p.2

37 The requirements of the Local Plan are set out graphically on the Cranbrook Proposals Map (extract below) and the application site is shown as housing allocation AL/CR3.



38 The policy itself is very straightforward:

Policy AL/CR 3

The Vicarage, Waterloo Road

This site, as shown on the Cranbrook Proposals Map, is allocated for residential development (C3) providing approximately 4 additional dwellings.

39 The Limits to the Built Development for Cranbrook were redrawn to specifically include The Vicarage and its curtilage.

Local Plan 2006

Policy LBD1

- 40 The saved(extant) policies of the 2006 Local Plan maintain the requirement for development to be focused within the Limits to Built Development under the provisions of Policy LBD1. As stated above, the LBD was specifically redrawn by the Local Planning Authority in order to include the Vicarage.

Policy EN1

- 41 The submitted scheme has followed the requirements of saved policy EN1 which requires new development to satisfy seven criteria as follows.

Compatibility with the amenities and character of the area – this is a high-quality scheme which would make a very positive contribution to the local built environment.

Safeguarding amenity for existing and future residents – the scheme would be entirely complementary to the surrounding development and would create a very high standard of amenity and privacy for future occupiers.

High quality design, respecting the context and using energy efficiently - this is a bespoke scheme, sensitively designed following a full topographical survey, a comprehensive tree survey and a rigorous assessment of the role that the site plays in the local ecology and in terms of biodiversity. It also demonstrates a real awareness of the *genius loci* of the Conservation Area within which it sits and would make a very positive contribution to the built environment of this part of Cranbrook.

Safeguarding significant buildings, related spaces and trees, shrubs or hedges that are important to the character of the area – the whole approach to the design of the scheme has been led by the priorities set out in the Planning Appeal Decision of 2021. So, four extra dwellings would be delivered in such a way as to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings, as well as maintaining the contribution of the trees to the quality of the street scene and the character of the area.

Safeguarding nature conservation – following a Preliminary Ecological Assessment, no fewer than 15 reptile survey points were established within the site and a follow up Ecological Impact Assessment was completed. This includes detailed measures for the enhancement of biodiversity, which can be dealt with by conditions. There is no evidence of newts at the site but a contribution will be made to wider Great Crested Newt conservation through the Natural England DLL scheme.

Security – the design of the layout would create a set of very defensible spaces in terms of maintaining security.

Inclusivity – the scheme would deliver the best possible outcomes in terms of inclusive access, having regard to the site characteristics.

Policy EN5

- 42 The proposals are fully compliant with Policy EN5 which sets out the requirements of the Local Planning Authority for development within Conservation Areas. The requirements are dealt with in detail in the separate Heritage Impact Assessment.

Policy EN11

- 43 The proposals are fully compliant with Policy EN11 which seeks to protect historic parks and gardens. The requirements are dealt with in detail in the separate Heritage Impact Assessment.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Submission Local Plan 2020-2038

- 44 Although not yet formally adopted, much of the new plan is consistent with the established policy framework as far as the application site is concerned. Policy STR/CRS 1 sets the Limits to Built Development as a framework for new development over the plan period. The application site continues to be included within the LBD in the new Local Plan.



Extract from Inset Map 10 with site in yellow(author's highlight).

- 45 The settlement is intended to deliver 415 – 429 new dwellings over the plan through a range of large and small sites. The current proposals are entirely consistent with this policy, as well as policies STR2 Place Shaping and Design and STR6 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural, Built and Historic Environment.
- 46 The proposals fully accord with the Development Management Policies set out in Section 6 of the new Local Plan and in particular Policies EN1, EN4, EN5, EN9, EN12, EN16, EN18, H1, H2, TP3.

Housing Land Supply

- 47 The Borough Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (4.49 years as of April 2022)⁵. In this context NPPF paragraph 11(d) requires that planning permission be granted unless there are clear reasons for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts would outweigh the benefits when

⁵ TWBC Planning Committee Report 12th April 2023, p28.

assessed against the whole NPPF. No such clear reasons or adverse impacts exist so the proposed development should be approved, without delay.

Design and Access

- 50 The scheme has been designed by a talented team of experienced professionals paying meticulous attention to the special character of the site and its surroundings as well as the requirements of the Appeal Inspector and the Local Planning Authority. The proposed houses have been designed to a high standard to ensure they would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Buildings. A comprehensive assessment of the detailed design is set out in the separate Heritage Impact Assessment, which examines the significance of local heritage assets and the effects of the proposed development upon them.
- 51 The design of the layout has been strongly influenced by the need to safeguard trees whilst at the same time respecting the character and appearance of the local built, cultivated, and semi-natural environment. The local pattern of built development is characterised by the building line which runs parallel to Waterloo Road. The proposed scheme respects this. In accordance with the guidance of the Appeal Inspector there is some modest staggering in the building line. Unit 3 is on the same line as the existing house whereas Units 1 and 2 are set back slightly and unit 4 steps forward approximately 5 metres to safeguard trees on the important southern boundary and align more closely with Waterloo Terrace.
- 52 The new homes would be fully compliant with accessibility requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 53 Vehicular and pedestrian access would be from the existing access point on Waterloo Road.
- 54 As stated, the way in which the proposed development has been designed to respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the adjoining Listed Buildings and the adjoining Historic Park and Gardens is addressed in detail in the separate Heritage Impact Assessment.

Conclusions

- 55 Having firmly established the acceptability of the principle of development, the Planning Inspector set out four detailed requirements for a successful scheme. A great deal of care and attention has been given to meeting these requirements, so that the scheme now presented to the Local Planning Authority would achieve the following:

The proposed development would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Cranbrook Conservation Area.

The scheme has demonstrated special regard to preserving and enhancing the setting of the Listed Waterloo Terrace.

The proposed development would achieve maximum tree retention, consistent with the requirement to deliver 4 new homes. It would retain an appropriate degree of tree screening, especially on the southern boundary next to Waterloo Terrace.

The scheme would make effective use of the site having regard to the requirements of NPPF and the Local Planning Authority's requirement for four new dwellings in addition to the existing.

- 56 The Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to conclude that the proposed development would constitute fully compliant, sustainable development in keeping with its surroundings and grant planning permission subject to appropriate conditions. No doubt appropriate weight will be given to the fact that the LPA is currently unable to identify a 5-year housing land supply.

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