

4.2 - 24/01558/HOUSE

Revised expiry date 9 September 2024

Proposal: Demolition of existing shed and erection of a double storey side extension with Juliet Balcony. Removal of two chimneys. New portico porch. Alterations to fenestration, Internal alterations and alterations to roof.

Location: The Mount, Main Road, Knockholt Kent TN14 7NU

Ward(s): Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount

Item for decision

This application has been called to Development Management Committee by Councillor Grint on the grounds of the potential impacts of the proposal on the Green Belt, National Landscape and neighbouring amenity.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

In pursuance of section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2023-069 101; 2023-069 106 F; 2023 104 E; 2023-069 103 D; application forms.

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3) Prior to any development above the damp proof course, details and samples of the external materials to be used for the development, including the arrangement of materials across the existing and proposed elevations, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The samples shall include a full sample panel of the flint finish which can be viewed on site, to allow comparison with the existing materials. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure that the appearance of the development is in harmony with the existing character of the area as supported by Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

4) Prior to works commencing, a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include details of i. how the development will protect the Ancient Woodland of Knockholt Wood during the demolition of the outbuilding and construction of the extension through the reduction of dust and light pollution; and ii. the precautionary methods for the protection of bats during construction, as set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment section 5.6.2 (Aval, June 2024).

To ensure the protection of species in accordance with Policy SP11 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.

5) No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include the materials to be used for the hard landscaping along with full details of the proposed soft landscaping, which shall include native species tree and hedgerow planting and shall be in accordance with the recommendations within Section 4 of the Landscape, Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (Aval Consulting Group, October 2023). It shall also provide details of the proposed boundary treatments, which shall incorporate native species hedgerow planting. The approved hard landscape scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved and thereafter retained. The approved soft landscape scheme shall be implemented in the first planting season following occupation of the development and retained thereafter.

Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or diseased in the opinion of the local planning authority, shall be replaced in the next available planting season with others of similar size, species and number, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

To preserve the character of the area in accordance with policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

6) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved the recommendations within the Arboricultural Report provided by SouthOaks Arboricultural Consultancy dated 12th June 2024 shall be implemented and provided in full on site and shall remain in place for the duration of the construction process.

To ensure the protection and retention of the protected tree in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks ADMP.

7) Prior to the commencement of development above damp-proof course, details of the balustrade screen to the Juliet balcony hereby approved, which shall be obscure glazed and enclose the access from the balcony, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved screen shall be implemented prior to first occupation of the extension and retained as such thereafter. The proposed area of flat roof adjoining the Juliet balcony shall not be used as amenity space for the dwelling.

To safeguard the privacy of surrounding neighbours in accordance with Policy EN2 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP).

8) Prior to commencement of works above damp-proof course, detailed plans showing how the development will maintain and enhance biodiversity, plus an establishment and management plan for native planting, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This shall include details of native and wildlife-friendly planting, integrated bat and bird bricks and/or durable boxes, log piles, hibernacula, and hedgehog homes and holes in close board fencing. The approved measures will be implemented and retained thereafter.

To ensure the protection and enhancement of species in accordance with SP11 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

9) Prior to occupation, a lighting plan which has been designed to minimise impacts on biodiversity and landscape character shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall show how and where external lighting will be installed, including details of lighting position, design, intensity and light spill, and provide commentary regarding how the Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Professional's 'Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' has been considered in the lighting design. It will

be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not adversely impact protected species. All external lighting shall be installed only in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the plan and be maintained thereafter.

To ensure the protection and enhancement of species in accordance with SP11 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and to preserve the character of the landscape in accordance with Policy EN5 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

10) The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the driveway, access and parking has been fully implemented in accordance with the details approved under planning permission 24/00013/HOUSE. The driveway, access and parking shall be retained as approved thereafter.

To ensure that the development does not prejudice highway safety or cause inconvenience to other highway users in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

11) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting or amending those Orders with or without modification), planning permission shall be required in respect of development falling within Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A and E of that Order.

To ensure that development within the permitted Classes in question is not carried out in such a way as to lead to harm to the Green Belt, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1) The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this Act.

Habitats are present on and around the site that provide opportunities for breeding birds. Any work to vegetation/structures that may provide suitable nesting habitats should be carried out outside of the bird breeding season (1st March to 31st August inclusive) to avoid destroying or damaging bird nests in use or being built. If vegetation/structures need to be removed during the breeding season, mitigation measures need to be implemented.

This includes examination by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist immediately prior to starting work. If any nesting birds are found, works must cease until after the birds have finished nesting.

2) It is important to note that Local Planning Authority (LPA) permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Any changes to or affecting the public highway in Kent require the formal agreement of the Highway Authority, Kent County Council (KCC), and it should not be assumed that this will be a given because LPA planning permission has been granted.

For this reason, anyone considering works which may affect the public highway, including any highway-owned street furniture or landscape assets such as grass, shrubs and trees, is

advised to engage with KCC Highways and Transportation at an early stage in the design process.

Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens and near the highway that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the public highway.

Some of this highway land is owned by Kent County Council whilst some is owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have 'highway rights' over the topsoil.

Works on private land may also affect the public highway. These include works to cellars, to retaining walls which support the highway or land above the highway, and to balconies, signs or other structures which project over the highway. Such works also require the approval of the Highway Authority.

Kent County Council has now introduced a pre-application advice service in addition to a full formal technical approval process for new or altered highway assets, with the aim of improving future maintainability. Further details are available on our website below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>.

This process applies to all development works affecting the public highway other than applications for vehicle crossings, which are covered by a separate approval process. Further details on this are available on our website below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/apply-for-a-dropped-kerb/dropped-kerb-contractor-information>

Once planning approval for any development has been granted by the LPA, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that before development commences, all necessary highway approvals and consents have been obtained, and that the limits of the highway boundary have been clearly established, since failure to do so may result in enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority.

The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under the relevant legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Further guidance for applicants, including information about how to clarify the highway boundary and links to application forms for vehicular crossings and other highway matters, may be found on Kent County Council's website: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>. Alternatively, KCC Highways and Transportation may be contacted by telephone: 03000 418181.

National Planning Policy Framework

In dealing with this application, we have implemented the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant/agent in a positive, proactive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service; as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible and if applicable suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome. We

have considered the application in light of our statutory policies in our development plan as set out in the officer's report.

Description of site

- 1 The application property is a semi-detached house, attached to the Pheasants on its southwestern side, located on the southeast side of Main Road in the parish of Knockholt. The property is set back from the road behind a mature conifer tree. It has an existing single-storey brick outbuilding to the northeast.
- 2 Dwellings in the vicinity are varied in design and style but characterised by relatively substantial houses set within generous plots, well-spaced out and interspersed by open fields.

Description of proposal

- 3 The application proposes the demolition of an existing shed and erection of a double storey side extension with Juliet Balcony; this extension extends to a single storey to the rear, projecting back from the rear elevation. It would also involve the removal of two chimneys, the construction of a new portico porch, alterations to fenestration, internal alterations and alterations to the roof.
- 4 The development would lead to the creation of an additional bedroom, creating a 4-bedroom property, and more generous living and ancillary space.
- 5 A new access is being created from Main Road, consistent with that approved under a separate planning permission earlier in 2024.

Relevant planning history

- 6 89/00958/HIST Proposed new detached house on the site of existing semi-detached house. As amended by letter and drawings received 01/08/89. GRANT 10/10/1989
- 7 90/01759/HIST Construction of 6 x 3-bedroom terrace cottages with car parking and new road access (OUTLINE) REFUSE 04/12/1990
- 8 06/00680/FUL Detached house to replace existing semi-detached house. REFUSE 17/05/2006
- 9 06/01934/FUL Detached house to replace existing semi-detached house. WDN 17/10/2006
- 10 07/00870/FUL Detached house to replace existing semi-detached house. GRANT 05/06/2007
- 11 23/01258/HOUSE Demolition of existing shed and erection of a double storey side extension with Juliet Balcony. New access and hard standing. Removal of chimney. Alterations to fenestration, Internal alterations and alterations to roof. WDN 07/11/2023
- 12 23/02198/LDCPR Single storey rear extension with parapet wall and roof light. WDN 02/10/2023
- 13 23/02889/LDCPR Single storey rear extension. GRANT 27/11/2023

- 14 24/00013/HOUSE Creation of new vehicular access and hard standing GRANT
13/03/2024

Policies

- 15 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Para 11 of the NPPF confirms that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.

This paragraph also states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:

- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed⁷; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Footnote 7 (see reference above) relates to policies including SSSIs, Green Belt, AONBs, designated heritage assets and locations at risk of flooding.

- 16 Core Strategy (CS)

- LO1 Distribution of Development
- LO8 The Countryside and the Rural Economy
- SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation
- SP11 Biodiversity

- 17 Allocations and Development Management (ADMP)

- SP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- GB1 Extensions in the Green Belt
- EN1 Design Principles
- EN2 Amenity Protection
- EN5 Landscape
- T2 Vehicle Parking

- 18 Other

- Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Sevenoaks Residential Extensions SPD
- The Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment 2017
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2021-2026

Constraints

- 19 The following constraints apply:

- National Landscape
- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Tree Preservation Order

Consultations

20 Knockholt Parish Council

We object to this application for the reasons listed below:

- We wish to seek clarification as to which of the previous applications this refers to, and if this application now means that the previous applications are no longer valid?
- We still have concerns regarding bulk, scale and form in the Green Belt and AONB due to the prominent nature of the site.
- We feel the design is not in keeping and would have preferred to have seen a design that mirrors the Pheasants particularly the fenestration.
- As per our comments to the previous application, we note from the drawings that it would appear that the brick outbuilding is more than 5 metres from the main dwelling and therefore cannot be included within the footprint calculations and hence the 50% rule should be strictly enforced.
- Furthermore, we remain disappointed that no submission of a structural survey has been carried out on this dilapidated property which is circa 100 years old.
- We refer to previous application for a new dwelling on this site.
- We have read and fully support the points raised in the neighbours well-structured report and we share reservations regarding the impact on the neighbouring property.
- If Sevenoaks are minded to grant this application we would request that all Permitted Development rights be removed for the entire site

21 KCC Ecology

22 We have reviewed the information submitted by the applicant and advise that sufficient ecological information has been provided.

23 We have taken this view due to a lack of suitable features for most protected species, and for those potentially on site, appropriate precautionary approaches have been proposed.

24 Aerial photography shows that the land was cleared between the arboricultural survey in July 2023 and May 2024. Prior to the removal of the vegetation, the site was covered in self-seeded willow saplings, which could have been suitable habitats for bats and breeding birds. Whilst we are satisfied that the willow trees and ground vegetation cleared were outside of the root protection zones of the other mature tree species that are being retained, including the two trees with TPOs, we advise that the works should not have taken place in advance of any planning application and highlight that the clearance of the vegetation may have resulted in a breach of legislation. We highlight that the applicant will need to continue management within the development footprint as it is currently to discourage protected species from beginning to use the site.

25 Bats

26 Gaps in the soffits and cracks in the doors/windows were identified during the Phase 1 habitat survey that could be used by roosting bats. Two emergence surveys were undertaken, and no bats were observed emerging or re-entering either the building or outbuilding. We are satisfied that the buildings are likely to not be used by bats and no further bat surveys are required. We advise that the precautionary methods suggested in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) section 5.6.2 are followed and

incorporated into the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). See below for CEMP condition suggested wording.

27 The Preliminary Roost Assessment deemed that only one of the willow trees to be removed had the potential to conceal roosting features due to dense ivy growth covering the tree. A survey on this tree was not completed as the willow trees and vegetation to the northwest of the site had already been cleared. We advise that the works should not have taken place in advance of the surveys being completed and highlight that the clearance of the trees and vegetation may have resulted in a breach of legislation.

28 Lighting

29 Common Pipistrelles (peak count 186) were detected foraging and commuting on site. Lighting can negatively impact nocturnal species like bats, which are roosting on site and foraging and commuting through the site. Currently there is no lighting plan or information submitted with the application. Therefore, there is a risk that any lighting may have a negative impact on bats foraging/commuting within the site.

30 To mitigate against potential adverse effects on bats, and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, we suggest that the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night', is consulted in the lighting design of the development. We advise that the incorporation of sensitive lighting design for bats is submitted to the local planning authority and secured via an attached condition with any planning permission.

31 Suggested condition wording:

Prior to occupation, a lighting plan which has been designed to minimise impacts on biodiversity shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan will show how and where external lighting will be installed and provide commentary regarding how the Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Professional's 'Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' has been considered in the lighting design. It will be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not impact protected species. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the plan and be maintained thereafter.

32 Breeding birds

33 A bird's nest was found in the outbuilding to be demolished. It is also possible that breeding birds may be using the building and vegetation on site. We advise that an informative is included on how works are to be carried out with respect to breeding birds should planning permission be granted.

34 Breeding bird informative – suggested wording:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this Act.

Habitats are present on and around the site that provide opportunities for breeding birds. Any work to vegetation/structures that may provide suitable nesting habitats should be carried out outside of the bird breeding season (1st March to 31st August inclusive) to avoid destroying or damaging bird nests in use or being built. If

vegetation/structures need to be removed during the breeding season, mitigation measures need to be implemented.

- 35 This includes examination by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist immediately prior to starting work. If any nesting birds are found, works must cease until after the birds have finished nesting.
- 36 Ancient Woodland
- 37 The site is 160m from the ancient woodland of Knockholt Wood. As there are very few physical barriers between the site and the woodland, we highlight that the proposed development entails some potential adverse impacts on the woodlands, namely from light pollution and potentially dust pollution from the demolition and construction on site.
- 38 A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) can be secured by a condition if planning permission is granted and must detail how to reduce dust and light pollution during and after construction so as not to impact the ancient woodland and any species living there.
- 39 Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) – suggested wording:
- Prior to works commencing, a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include:
- how the development will protect the Ancient Woodland of Knockholt Wood during the demolition of the outbuilding and construction of the extension, as well as during the operational phase, through the reduction of dust and light pollution.
 - the precautionary methods for bats as set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment section 5.6.2 (Aval, June 2024).
- 40 Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Enhancements
- 41 Under section 40 of the NERC Act (2006) and paragraph 180 of the NPPF (2023), biodiversity must be maintained and enhanced through the planning system. Additionally, in alignment with paragraph 186 of the NPPF (2023), the implementation of measurable net gains for biodiversity (integrated as part of design) should be encouraged.
- 42 The Arboricultural report details that most of the willow trees will be removed within the site and aerial photography dated May 2024 shows that the removal of trees and vegetation on site has already begun. The Arboricultural report suggests that removal of the self-seeded willow saplings and small trees will improve the long-term retention of the remaining mature trees. We are satisfied that no trees will be removed within the root protection area of the other mature tree species being retained on site. However, with the large-scale removal of vegetation on site, we highlight that currently the proposal is unlikely to result in a net gain (as per the NPPF) and therefore we recommend that native trees, hedgerows and other native planting are incorporated within the site.
- 43 A Landscape, Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan has been submitted as part of this application, but it only provides recommendations of what measures can be incorporated into the site. To ensure that measurable net gain can be achieved, we

advise that the landscaping plan, plus establishment and management of the proposed planting, is secured with a condition if planning permission is granted.

- 44 Enhancement features are not considered as part of a measurable net gain; however, we expect enhancement features to also be incorporated into an enhancement plan within the red line boundary. These can include integrated bat and bird bricks and/or durable boxes, log piles, hibernacula, and hedgehog homes and holes in close board fencing.

Suggested condition wording:

Within three months of works commencing, detailed plans showing how the development will enhance and maintain biodiversity, plus an establishment and management plan for native planting, will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include details of native and wildlife-friendly planting, integrated bat and bird bricks and/or durable boxes, log piles, hibernacula, and hedgehog homes and holes in close board fencing. The approved measures will be implemented and retained thereafter.

- 45 SDC Tree Officer

- 46 After a desk-top review of this application I can confirm that two trees on site are protected by TPO No 13 of 2007. A comprehensive Arboricultural Method Statement, Impact Assessment & Tree Protection plan have been submitted with the application. In addition to potential small removals (below 75mm diameter), one group of self-seeded trees are proposed for removal to facilitate the development. Works are due to take place within the RPA of T1, the incursion into the RPA is minimal (5.7%) and a method statement outlines working practices which conform to British Standards including site-supervision from an arboricultural consultant. A cellular confinement system is due to be installed in this area before hardstanding is overlaid. Remedial works have been proposed which include crown lifting and deadwood removal, these would be considered good practice. Tree protection measures proposed include tree protection fencing and retained hardstanding as ground protection. I have no objection to the proposal if the details within the submitted Arboricultural documents are followed and tree protection measures are installed as specified prior to works commencing. If permission were to be granted, I would suggest a condition requesting landscaping details which consider the mitigation of any losses throughout the development.

- 47 KCC Highways

- 48 Thank you for your consultation in relation to the above planning application. I note that in highway terms the proposals do not differ materially from the previous applications for this site, were acceptable to us. It is noted that the access and parking provision was approved under application SE/24/00013/HOUSE.

- 49 Consequently, I can confirm that provided the following requirements are secured by condition or planning obligation, then I would raise no objection on behalf of the local highway authority: -

- Provision and maintenance of 43m x 43m x 2.4m visibility splays at the access with no obstructions over 1.05 above carriageway level within the splays, prior to use of the site commencing.
- Gradient of the access to be no steeper than 1 in 10 for the first 1.5 metres from the highway boundary and no steeper than 1 in 8 thereafter.

- Use of a bound surface for the first 5 metres of the access from the edge of the highway.
- Provision of measures to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the highway.
- Provision and permanent retention of the vehicle parking spaces and turning room, shown on the submitted plans prior to the use of the site commencing.

Representations

50 One letter of objection has been received relating to the following issues:

- Impact on the National Landscape
- Impact on the Green Belt
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Impact on privacy and amenity
- Impact on design and the street scene
- The applicant should not be allowed to build out the approved LDC application and should make a decision over the two.
- The outbuilding is not located within 5m
- The permitted LDC Application should no longer be permitted

Chief Planning Officer's appraisal

51 The main planning considerations are:

- Impact on the Green Belt
- Design and impact on the character of the area
- Impact on the National Landscape
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Other Issues

Main planning consideration

52 Impact on the Green Belt

53 As set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF, new buildings in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. There are some exceptions to this identified in this paragraph, such as "c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building."

54 Paragraph 152 states that where a proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

55 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF advises we should give substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

56 Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and is not simply a consideration of visual impact. Openness is about freedom from built form, although it can have a visual element. Even if there is absence of harm to openness, there can be harm in principle to the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

57 Policy GB1 of the ADMP provides the local development plan policy on extensions in the Green Belt. It requires a consideration of factors including design and impact on openness - I refer to this further below in reference to the NPPF criteria.

58 In response to Policy GB1 (parts (a) and (b)), I can confirm that the existing dwelling is lawful and permanent in nature. With regards to openness, the proposal comprises a two-storey side extension with small single storey rear element. The extension would be positioned on the existing built form of the house, representing a limited expansion of an existing building that forms part of an established spread of dwellings along Main Road. As such, I consider that it would not materially impede the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed design of the extension would respond to the design of the existing house and be sympathetic with those in the surrounding area.

59 Notwithstanding the above, impact on openness is not a consideration under the exception set out at NPPF para 149(c), which is the more up to date policy. This simply requires that extensions would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In this regard, Part (c) of ADMP Policy GB1 gives allowance for an increase of up to 50% above the floorspace of the original dwelling, including any outbuildings within 5 metres.

60 The dwelling was in situ before 1948, and the building has not been extended. This information has been gathered by researching the site through planning history and OS & Plotting Maps. The original floor space as such is calculated as per below in the table. The floor space of the house is 103m².

61 The dwelling has an outbuilding that is located within 5m (4.96m) of the house; historic mapping shows that the outbuilding was in situ before 1948 as well. The previous planning applications also confirm that the outbuilding is within 5m of the original dwelling. The outbuilding has a floor space of 8.5m². The proposal would see the removal of this outbuilding.

62 Greenbelt Calculations

	m ²	% increase
Original dwelling & Outbuilding	111.5	
Proposed extension	57.20	
Total increase	160.20 (-8.5 Outbuilding)	43.68

63 As the table demonstrates, the proposal would comply with Part (c) of GB1, as the total increase of the development would not take it over the 50%.

64 As such the proposal for the extension would be appropriate development in the Green Belt failing to comply with Policy GB1 of the ADMP and the NPPF.

65 It is noted that a lawful development certificate was issued on 27 November 2023 confirming the lawfulness of a rear extension under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) on that date.

This certificate pre-dated this current application. As this extension has not been implemented, it cannot form part of the consideration of the current application.

- 66 It is requested in comments that the permitted development rights should be removed for the dwelling due to further impact on the Green Belt. The dwelling is located within a National Landscape and as such there would be restrictions on the scope of permitted development rights that the dwelling would benefit from, e.g. in relation to work that could be undertaken to the roof, and the nature of possible extensions and any outbuildings. I note that the proposed extension would fall below the 50% threshold taking into account the removal of the outbuilding and is therefore policy compliant. Nonetheless, were additional extensions brought forward, it is likely that these would exceed the 50% threshold, thus bringing development into conflict with local and national policy. To prevent future harm to the Green Belt from disproportionate extensions over and above that currently proposed, it is proposed to remove permitted development rights by condition such that any proposals can be assessed against planning policies.
- 67 Design and impact on the character of the area
- 68 The relevant policies relating to design and the character of the area are SP1 of the Core Strategy and EN1 of the ADMP. The Residential Extensions SPD is also applicable. The NPPF emphasises the importance of good design.
- 69 The host dwelling is a two-storey semi-detached property, with the immediate area comprising of detached and semi-detached dwellings (many of which are sizeable properties) located within generous plots with substantial spacing between them.
- 70 The position of the two-storey extension and other works means that the development would have an impact on the street scene. The extension would, however, be contained upon the dwelling and would be built flush with the existing house, creating an integrated façade and roof form. Taken in this context, the development would be in keeping with the wider built form of The Mount and Pheasants. Further, being extended on its north-east end closest to the property's boundary with open fields, the extension would not erode gaps between properties.
- 71 The extension would be a proportionate addition to the dwelling in the context of the existing house and attached neighbour. It would not be an overbearing addition, creating a dwelling that is well balanced with the neighbouring property, which has also been subject to a two-storey side extension. The single storey element to the rear would be modest and discrete, noting also that the neighbour has a single storey extension to the rear.
- 72 In terms of design features, the doors and windows and their arrangement on the house would respond to the existing dwelling and those of the neighbouring house, particularly on the principal frontage. Although there would be more variation to windows to the rear, this is considered acceptable in the rear elevation, where views would be more limited and there is already some variety in design features across the wider rear elevation. I note also that the site is also screened to the rear by landscaping.
- 73 The erection of a porch would also be seen in connection with the neighbour, mirroring the scale and form of the porch erected on the front of the Pheasants, and creating a degree of balance and symmetry.

- 74 The proposed material finish, which is shown to be of brickwork and flint, would match that seen on the rear of the existing dwelling. The flint finish is a high-quality feature on the building and its use around the entire building is supported, reflecting the material vernacular of other buildings in the vicinity. While it would distinguish the building from Pheasants, it would complement the painted finish seen on the neighbour. A condition can be secured to seek further details of the arrangement of brick and flint, including samples, to ensure these are of appropriate quality. Similarly, materials finishes for all windows and doors can be secured by condition.
- 75 Overall, the extension would sit comfortably on the site and would retain the character of the site, with a semi-detached dwelling sitting within wider landscaped grounds. It would not harm the integrity of the design of the existing dwelling and its attached neighbour and would in fact increase the design quality through the introduction of a more attractive, quality material finishes reflective of the local area.
- 76 The proposal would be acceptable in terms of design, form and scale. It meets the requirements of the NPPF and the relevant policies relating to design and the character of the area are SP1 of the Core Strategy and EN1 of the ADMP.
- 77 Further detail of landscaping, which will support the design quality achieved, are provided below.

National Landscape

- 78 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires that a local planning authority, when performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Landscape (formerly AONB), must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. Designating an area of National Landscape protects its distinctive character and natural beauty and can include human settlement and development. Consideration must be given to both whether the development conserves and enhances.
- 79 ADMP Policy EN5 requires that the National Landscapes within the District and their settings be given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Proposals within National Landscapes will be permitted where the form, scale, materials and design will conserve and enhance the character of the landscape and have regard to the relevant Management Plan and associated guidance
- 80 As noted above, the proposal would deliver a proportionate extension to the existing building, retaining the character of the property as a semi-detached dwelling set within landscaped grounds. It would not encroach on the countryside beyond the site boundaries, so would remain as a dwelling set within an open landscape. The materials and features would respond well to the site and as noted, a brick and flint finish would be extended around the building, in keeping with the existing building and other buildings in the vicinity. The Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment 2017 recognises the presence of brick and flint in the Knockholt and Halstead Wooded Downs Character Area, within which the site lies. The wider use of this material around the property is considered an enhancement over the existing finish.
- 81 The impact of any additional external lighting on the rural landscape and on dark skies can be minimised through a sensitive lighting scheme, required by condition.
- 82 As such, the design of the proposals would be in keeping with the character of the area and would be acceptable in this part of the National Landscape. As a result, it is considered that the proposals would conserve and enhance the National Landscape.

Impact to neighbouring amenity

- 83 Policy EN2 of the ADMP and our Residential Extensions SPD are relevant in the consideration of this application. Policy EN2 requires proposals to provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development and to safeguard the amenity of adjoining residents.
- 84 Having conducted the loss of light test as per the SPD, the proposal would pass the relevant tests in relation to the impact on the neighbouring dwellings.
- 85 The proposal would include new windows in the front elevation of the extension and the replacement of existing windows; however, these would be located a sufficient distance from the neighbouring dwellings.
- 86 The windows located on the ground floor of the extension would be offset by the boundary treatment, which is to be conditioned, and would have limited views into the neighbouring amenity.
- 87 The proposal also includes a Juliet balcony and large window at first floor level in the southeast elevation. The window would gain no materially greater views into the neighbours' amenity space than currently available from the other windows on the first floor; such oblique views are in any event generally considered acceptable in terms of inter-visibility between adjoining properties.
- 88 The Juliet balcony may create the additional perception of overlooking although it is noted that the window this serves is some distance from the Pheasants and would again create an oblique view towards its neighbour. To minimise any potential impact to the neighbour, however, the balustrade screen can be conditioned to ensure it is obscure glazed, so restricting 'full height' views. It is also considered reasonable to restrict, by way of condition, the use of the flat roof as amenity space. Overall, given the position of the Juliet balcony window in relation to the neighbours, and subject to the proposed condition, it is deemed to be acceptable in terms of amenity impacts.
- 89 I am satisfied that the proposed relationship to neighbouring properties means that the outlook from these properties would not be unduly impacted upon.
- 90 In terms of the existing property, the residents would benefit from improved living space and would achieve good quality amenity.
- 91 Therefore, the proposal would meet the requirements of the NPPF and policy EN2 of the ADMP.

Other issues

- 92 Ecology
- 93 The NPPF states amongst other matters that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.
- 94 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF 2021 states in part:
"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts),

adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.”

- 95 Policy SP11 of the Core Strategy states that the biodiversity of the district will be conserved and opportunities sought for enhancements to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. The wider landscape is rural and verdant in character and therefore both the site and the surrounding area have the potential to provide a habitat for wildlife.
- 96 As set out in the response of KCC Ecology, Government Policy states “it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.”
- 97 The application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment, which KCC Ecology has reviewed. They consider the Preliminary Ecological Assessment to be sufficient for the determination of the application and raise no objection to the proposals, subject to various conditions and informative as per the comments received. These would provide further protections to habitats and biodiversity during the course of construction and operation of development (e.g. through a Construction Environmental Management Plan and sensitive lighting) and secure enhancement to habitats through appropriate landscaping and the integration of habitat features.
- 98 The conditions can be included upon any grant of planning permission to ensure that the development does not cause harm to protected species and can provide benefits to biodiversity. The proposal would therefore comply with policy SP11 of the Core Strategy, subject to conditions.
- 99 Trees & Landscaping
- 100 Policy EN1 states that the layout of proposed development would respect the topography and character of the site and the surrounding area and sensitively incorporate natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site.
- 101 There is a conifer tree to the front of the dwelling and an oak tree to the rear which are covered by a Tree Protection Order. The Tree Officer has no objections to the scheme and its impact on the protected trees, subject to protective measures being put in place during construction. The submitted arboricultural report details the tree protection measures that would be secured to ensure these trees are retained and protected. The Tree Officer is satisfied that these are appropriate and has requested that the methods detailed in the report be adhered to; a condition can be secured for this.
- 102 It is also noted that, in addition to potential removals of small trees (below 75mm diameter), one group of self-seeded trees is proposed for removal to facilitate the development. These are considered to be trees of low quality. In this regard, replacement planting is proposed in order to mitigate for the loss of trees, which can again be secured by a soft landscaping condition.
- 103 Subject to condition, it is considered the development would appropriately protect existing valued trees and enhance the contribution of trees to the appearance of the site and wider landscape, in line with Policy EN1.

104 Access and Parking

105 The KCC Highways Officer has no objection to the application, subject to the conditions stated in their comments. It should be noted that planning permission was granted under 24/00013/HOUSE for a new driveway, access and parking area, which is currently under construction. The current application submission refers to the "driveway, access and parking already approved" under this permission. Rather than repeat the conditions of this previous implemented permission, it is proposed to condition the current planning permission such that the development shall not be occupied until the driveway, access and parking approved under the previous planning permission has been implemented in full and shall be retained as such thereafter.

106 The proposal would provide sufficient parking to meet the requirements of Policy T2.

107 Other Comments from Knockholt Parish Council

108 The previous planning permission for a new dwelling on the site has no bearing on the current application as the current proposal seeks to retain the existing house and extend it. The previous planning permission has, in any event, expired and is no longer a material consideration.

109 In regard to structural integrity of the building, this is not a planning concern but would fall within the remit of building control. Furthermore, the issues raised by the neighbouring resident regarding the structural wall would be covered under a Party Wall Agreement and would not be covered under planning policy.

110 have assessed the impact on the neighbouring dwelling and, as above, am satisfied that there would be no unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

111 The proposal is not CIL liable.

Conclusion

112 It is recommended that this application be approved as the development conforms to the relevant planning policies at both national and local level.

Recommendation

113 It is therefore recommended that this application is GRANTED.

Background papers

114 Site and block plan

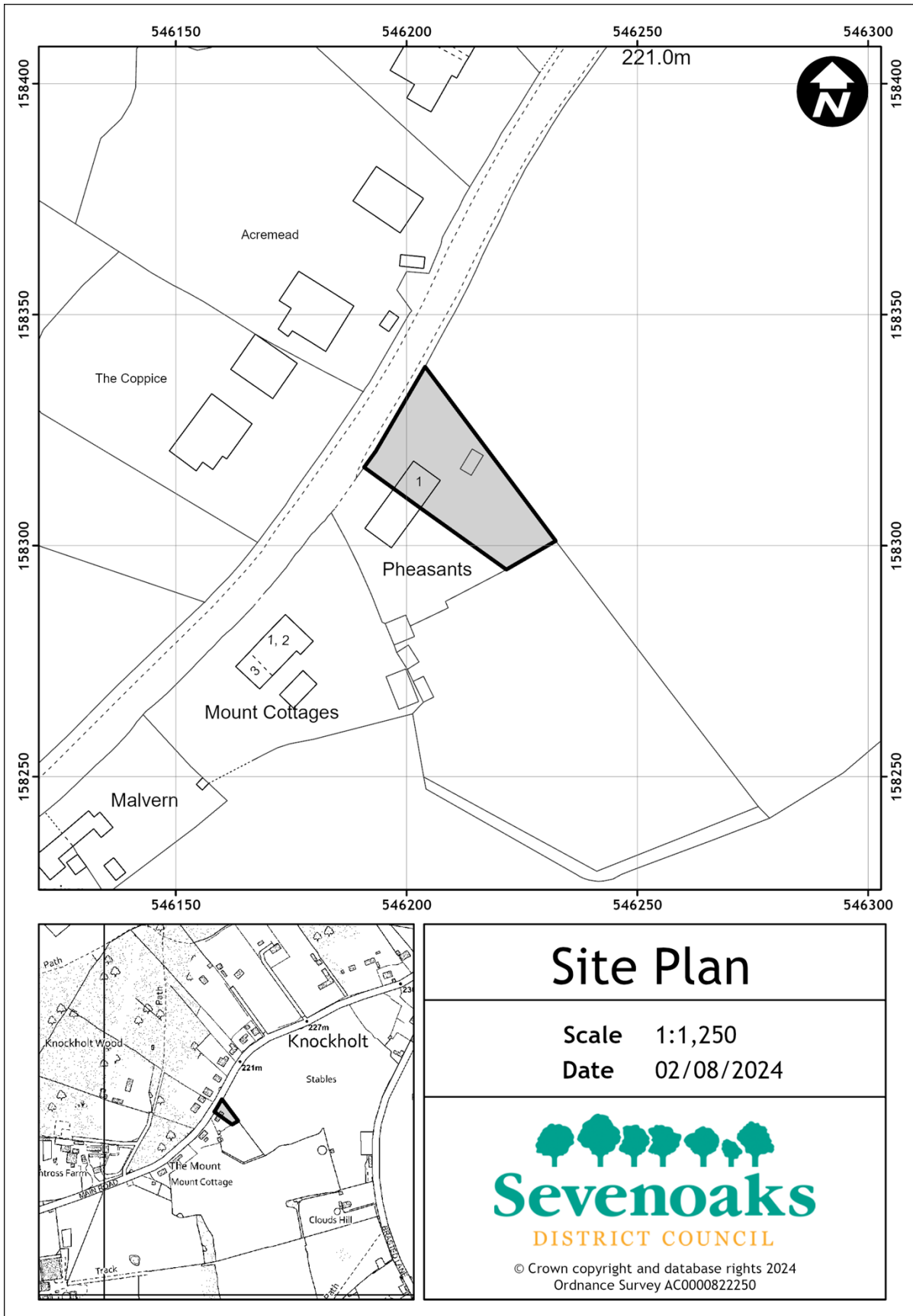
Contact Officer(s):

Scott Fisher 01732 227000

Richard Morris
Chief Planning Officer

[Link to application details:](#)

[Link to associated documents:](#)



Site Plan

Scale 1:1,250
 Date 02/08/2024



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 Ordnance Survey AC0000822250

PROPOSED BLOCK PLAN

