

MC/24/1334

Date Received: 28 June 2024

Location: 69 - 71 High Street, Rochester, Medway ME1 1LX

Proposal: Listed Building application for the conversion of the first and second floors to residential use, forming the addition of 4 residential flats change of use of the ground floor to dental surgery, demolition of part of the single storey rear extension and construction of a two-storey rear extension to provide dental surgeries with two flats on the first floor, provision of cycle and bin storage and associated works. Felling of a Lime tree located in the rear garden which is subject to a TPO.

Applicant Dr M Singh Mathura

Agent Synergy Planning & Property Consultants Ltd
Mr Jonathan Bolton Synergy
The Office
The Larches
Higham
Rochester
ME3 7NQ

Ward: Rochester West & Borstal

Case Officer: Sam Pilbeam

Contact Number: 01634 331700

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 4 June 2025.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development and works to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Received 28 June 2024:

22/367/11 - Proposed Sections
22/367/12 - Proposed Sections

22/367/13 - Proposed Elevations
22/367/14 - Proposed Sections
22/367/16 - Proposed Drainage Plans
22/367/17 - Proposed Main Dwelling Elevations
Sheet 01 - Proposed S185 Diversion

Received 23 September 2024:

22/367/06 REV C - Proposed First Floor 1 of 2
22/367/07 REV A - Proposed First Floor 2 of 2
22/367/08 REV C - Proposed Second Floor 1 of 2
22/367/09 REV A - Proposed Second Floor 2 of 2

Received 14 March 2025:

22/367/04 REV B - Proposed Ground Floor Plan 1 of 2
22/367/05 REV B - Proposed Ground Floor Plan 2 of 2
22/367/15 REV B - Proposed Site Plan

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

- 3 No development above slab level shall take place until details of all external materials to be used in the works shall be submitted in writing to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include (but are not limited to) tiles, ridges, cladding, paving stones and insulation. The development shall therein be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 4 Prior to any internal works to the first floor or above, full details including a measured and photographic survey of the existing historical panelling room located within the rear northeast room on the first-floor in situ; methodology and method statement for the removal, repair, temporary storage and installation of the panels into their new location within the proposed rear extension as shown on drawing number 22/367/05 REV B - Proposed Ground Floor Plan 2 of 2 (received 14 March 2025) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details for the installation of the panels into their new location shall include a detailed assessment of the room's humidity, heating, lighting and how these will be controlled and maintained appropriately thereafter. All works shall therein be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To address the sense of importance of the historic panelling in conjunction with its historical significance in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 5 Prior to installation, details between the interface of the proposed rear extension and existing outrigger, including full size sections and fixing details,

shall be submitted in writing and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall therein be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 6 Prior to installation, details of full-size sections through all new or replacement joinery including (but not limited to) doors, windows (and adaptations to existing windows), architraves, pictural rails, linings, and skirtings shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall therein be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 7 Prior to installation, details including full size sections of all internal partition walls and how they interface with the historic fabric shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall therein be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 8 Prior to installation, details through all proposed mechanical extracts, vents and flues shall be submitted in writing and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall therein be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 9 Prior to installation, details including full sections of external windows and doors, and the making good of external masonry shall be submitted in writing and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall therein be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 10 Prior to installation, full sections demonstrating details including newels, handrails and spindles through the proposed stairs within the first floor of the existing property shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall therein be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 11 Prior to the first occupation of any part of development hereby approved details of a heritage interpretation, to commemorate the historic panelling and their historical significance, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The agreed memorial shall be installed within 2 months of the first use of the development and maintained thereafter.

Reason: To address the sense of importance of the historic panelling in conjunction with its historical significance in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 12 All new rainwater goods installed on both the existing property and proposed extension shall be cast iron.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 13 All existing historic features shall be retained in situ, except where indicated otherwise on the approved drawings, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To preserve the historic character of the building, in accordance with Policy BNE17 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

This application seeks Listed Building consent for the demolition of the existing late 20th Century outrigger building located to the rear, southwest, of the curtilage and construct a two storey 'L'-shaped extension in its place: running along the southern boundary treatment and rear eastern wall.

The proposed extension would comprise of two clearly demarcated blocks connected via a discrete glazed link.

The first would project across the footprint of the demolished outrigger, finished in a barn style black painted weather boarding with four dormers integrated into the eaves, measuring approx. 20m in length and 7m in width, supporting an up-and-over roof with a gable ended design fronting to eastern flank and jerkinhead to the west, measuring approx. 5m to the eaves and 8.2m to the ridge.

The second block would project across the rear of the existing hard standing area, measuring approx. 11.2m in length and 7m in width, featuring a contemporary minimalist design and gable ended roof running north to south standing at approx. 5m in height at the eaves and 7.6m at the ridge.

The linking structure would measure approx. 0.9m in depth and 5.5m in height.

The proposal also consists of numerous internal alterations to facilitate the conversion of the property to accommodate the proposed dental practice and upper floor units, alongside the relocation of historical panelling.

Further emphasis on the proposed change of use, removal of a Lime Tree subject to Tree Preservation Order and wider planning considerations have been assessed within the Full Application running in tandem with the pursuant case, under reference number MC/24/1333.

Relevant Planning History

CAN/23/1263	T1 - Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> - fell to ground level and treat stump with herbicide plugs to prevent regrowth. T2 - Goat Willow <i>Salix caprea</i> - fell to ground level and grind stump. Decision: Raise no objections Decided: 3 July 2023
CAN/24/1285	T4 -Sycamore - fell to 1m above ground level, removal of stump and roots using mechanical extraction. Decision: Raise no objections Decided: 7 August 2024

Representations

The application has been advertised on site, in the press and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

No letters of consultation have been received.

Historic England comment stating they are supportive of the proposed rear extension and change of use of the property. Likewise going into to confirm that they support the critical off-site conservation required to save the historical panelling from further deterioration. Historic England identifies a level of harm with regard to the panel's relocation within the proposed rear extension, nevertheless, acknowledge in this instance it is a vital step to safeguard against their future and allow for public viewing.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) and are generally considered to conform. Where non-conformity exists, this is addressed in the Planning Appraisal section below.

Planning Appraisal

Impact upon Heritage Asset

Both the NPPF and Local Plan stress and emphasis of good design and achieving high quality buildings. Policy BNE1 of the Local Plan states that the design of development should be appropriate in relation to the character, appearance and functioning of the built and natural environment by amongst other matters being satisfactory in terms of scale, mass, proportion, details, and materials. Moreover, paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that developments should contribute to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, supported by paragraph 131 which adds that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Furthermore, due to the site's siting within the Historic Rochester Conservation Area (CA) Policies BNE12 and BNE14 of the Local Plan are of significance; with the former stating that special attention will be paid to the preservation and enhancement of the CA and latter seeking to ensure that development within a Conservation Area, or affecting its setting, should achieve a high-quality design which will preserve or enhance its historic or architectural character and appearance.

The property itself is Grade II Listed, therefore is subject to Policy BNE17 of the Local Plan: outlining that development would not be permitted if any alterations to a Listed Building would be detrimental or unsympathetic to its design, architectural or historical significance and its materials.

Due to the site's historical setting, there are numerous Listed Buildings located in close proximity to the proposed extension works. Including both adjacent properties and The Meeting House located approx. 20m to the northeast.

Therewith, Policy BNE18 is of relevance, outlining that should proposals adversely impact this setting, they will not be permitted. The preamble expands upon this by emphasising the importance of a Listed Buildings surroundings, as much of their character can be owed to the harmony produced by grouping and the quality of the spaces around them.

At a national level, the above is supported by Section 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) which sets out the obligation on the LPA to pay special regard to safeguarding the special interest of Listed Buildings, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Furthermore, Section 16 of the NPPF also sets out how the historic environment should be conserved and enhanced. With paragraph 208 stating that local authorities, when considering proposals that affect a heritage asset, should seek to avoid or minimise any conflict between the conservation of the heritage asset and any aspect of the proposal; paragraph 212 confirming that when considering the impact of a proposed development on a heritage asset, local planning authorities should give 'great weight' to preserving the asset's significance; paragraph 213 requiring that any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification; and paragraph 215 expanding upon this by confirming that where harm is caused to a

heritage asset, and this is deemed to be less than substantial, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.

Notwithstanding, the proposal seeks to demolish the late 20th Century outrigger building located to the rear, southwest, of the curtilage and construct a two storey 'L'-shaped extension in its place: running along the southern boundary treatment and rear eastern wall.

Subdividing the consideration of the impact of design into two elements, firstly the demolition of the existing structure and secondly the impact of the newly proposed rear/side extensions.

Addressing the former, the applicant has produced a detailed Heritage Statement (produced by Fuller Long), clearly outlining the property's historical development including the production of a plan illustrating and dating a timeframe of the additions to the existing building; utilised array of historical mapping techniques, reviewing archive data and photographs to gather such evidence accordingly.

Subdividing the property into four historical periods: dating the principal elevation to circa 16th/17th Century; rear elevation of the principal unit to 18th Century; rear return extension adjoining the principal rear elevation to the 19th Century; and outrigger building to late 20th Century.

Effectively demonstrating that over time, the property has been subject to numerous ad-hoc alterations to the rear.

The findings of this exercise are generally accepted, with clear material differences between the additions demarcating the alternating construction periods.

Against this backdrop, it is not considered that the demolition of the later 20th Century outrigger would result in significant harm to the existing building or its setting. Given its age, poorer quality of materials and design which currently appears to juxtapose both the character and setting of the building. Furthermore, the fabric itself is not of significant historical significance.

Addressing the later, the proposed side/rear extension would comprise of two clearly demarcated elements: the first projecting across the footprint of the demolished outrigger, finished in a barn style black painted weather boarding with four dormers integrated into the eaves, and a part gabled end roof and part jerkinhead to the west where the extension abuts the existing property; and second projecting across the existing rear wall featuring a more contemporary design finished in brick, supporting a gable ended roof design.

The two elements would be connected via a discrete glazed linking structure.

As a broad overview, the historical significance of the rear of the property and front in this case vary significantly. With the principal elevation fronting onto and forming part of Rochester High Street and the CA, wherein the well-preserved historical buildings and their architectural features compound not only at immediate scale of their

adjacent properties and neighbours but also forming an essential part of the historical value of the High Street as a whole.

To the rear, the historical setting has been substantially altered throughout the 20th Century. Formerly the properties would have supported extensive rear gardens backing into the city wall and marshes, which has now been developed for a range of commercial purposes; supporting parking infrastructure for the High Street; and Rochester Train Station alongside its associated railway structures.

Furthermore, over time it is evident the back land plots of the adjacent properties have been subject to numerous ad-hoc extensions, for the purposes of providing supporting floorspace for changing business needs and operations, or more generally representing a wider historical change in use of the High Street from the former merchant houses.

In other words, the setting to the front of the property and rear vary significantly in their architectural value and contrition the historical setting of both the listed building and wider CA. With the rear, due to the changes in land use over time resulting in less sympathetic extensions that are of lower importance to the character of the locality.

Nonetheless, while of lower significance, it is still recognised that in-of-itself the structures to the rear of the buildings fronting onto the High Street form part of the overall character of the area.

The proposed extensions have been carefully designed to fit the plotting and character of the locality. This has been achieved via the splitting of the two buildings into separate elements, insofar as externally the extension would appear as two distinct units. Subsequently echoing the ad-hoc sprawl of extensions spanning the rear curtilages of the existing buildings, giving the impression of a sensitive modern interpretation of the localities characteristics without appearing as a pastiche.

Equally, the composition and profile of the buildings takes into account the setting and massing of the existing property. At the point where the existing and new intersect the jerkinhead roof assists to smooth bridge the transition between the eaves and ridge heights of the buildings, mitigating against any juxtaposition between the roofscapes of the two buildings.

Moreover, the contrasting orientation and heights of the two roofs establishes visual interest and characteristics that are reflective of the eclectic nature of traditional vernacular buildings that have grown organically over the centuries to the rear of the High Street.

The two roof orientations break-up the overall massing and scale of the proposed extension as a whole. In particular with emphasis on the negative space around the glazed link, clearly separating the two blocks and their respective roofscapes whilst also simultaneously affording limited views of the existing buildings rear elevation.

Deriving a subservient and sympathetic approach that would appear commensurate with the listed building and wider CA.

The proposed extensions would be of limited visibility within the wider CA or relative to that of views from within the curtilage of adjacent listed buildings, predominantly afforded short distance views from the car park to the east and some glimpses when traversing west along Northgate or significantly obscured medium distance views when traversing along Corporation Street. Moreover, for the reasons set-out above its addition would not result in significant harm to the Listed Building itself; the contemporary approach to the buildings detailing and glazed linking structure alongside the anticipated external finishing would not appear as a caricature of the existing encompassing architecture, rather, would be clearly demarcated as a modern addition to the building with subtle references to the special historical character, therewith treading a fine balance between tying the two buildings together with a clear sympathetic design while not appearing pastiche.

Overall, given the limited significance and of the proposed outrigger building, no objections are raised to its removal. Likewise, it is not considered the proposed new linking structure or rear extensions would result in significant intervention or detract from the historic fabric of the property nor diminish from the interpretation of the Listed Building or those in its immediate context. Moreover, by virtue of the limited short to medium range vistas of the extension and its carefully designed composition and profile, in conjunction with the existing ad-hoc style of sprawl characteristic of the rear elevation of the buildings fronting onto the High Street, the proposal would conform with and blend into the character of the wider Conservation Area and street scene.

In addition to the demolition of the existing late 20th Century rear extension and construction of a 'L'-shaped rear extension, the application also takes on numerous additional smaller scale detailed works in order to bring the building up to standard for modern day use and to provide a sufficient level of general functionality for both the proposed dentistry and residential flats.

Reviewing these works from the ground floor upwards, as there are no proposed alterations to the basement.

Of vital importance as a starting point it should first be understood that the property has seen significant reorganisation over the years, most notably during circa 1950s when the premises was occupied by the Lloyds Bank; effectively undertaking an entire refurbishment of the building. Unfortunately resulting in the loss of the majority of the original plan form and much of the historical internal features.

Surviving features of note include the 1730 staircase; areas of remaining 18th Century panelling; stained glass windows; and original external casement windows. All of which are proposed to remain in situ as part of the context of this application.

Instead, the proposal seeks to strip away the 20th Century fitting, suspended ceilings and floor coverings, in order to derive a layout that would serve the needs and requirements of the dental practice and secure a separate secure access into the residential flats at first floor. This does not consist of the removal of any historic wall or fabric. However, will include the introduction of a doorway formerly blocked up circa 1950 to the side southern elevation to provide access to the flats, alongside the

removal of existing stud-wall partitions and installations of additional stud walls to define the internal layout.

To the rear of the ground-floor, the replica panelling and joinery will be removed where appropriate with original features retained, likewise additional stud-wall partitions will be inserted and with the existing removed.

Moving to the first floor, again the existing layout has been adapted over time and altering in accordance with the needs of occupants.

The works to this level will subdivide the existing floor plan into two separate units, including similar works for the installation of partition walls, blocking up and existing apertures alongside the installation of additional flues and vents.

At this level the proposal would also consist of a range of enhancements to the building, including the removal of the inappropriate air conditioning units, window vents, communal WCs and other modern interventions such as the metal barrier in the rear kitchen and fire door paraphernalia. Likewise, the fire rear metal fire escape will be removed along with the fire door, making good of the existing brickwork and installation sash window.

At second-floor level, again, as with the latter two floor there have been substantial alterations across the years, evidenced via the insertions of panelling that has been cut-to-size in order to fit new rooms and apertures.

This floor will be subdivided into two residential flats, accessed via the existing staircase which is to remain unaltered. Including the installation of partition walls, blocking up and existing apertures alongside the installation of additional flues and vents. the reorganisation of the floor will also result in the loss of some existing walls that are present within the 1950s plan of the building.

Overall, there would be a level of harm associated with the numerous modern interventions, removal of the existing fabric and installation of internal partitions, blocking-up of doors and insertion of flues and vents. Nonetheless, when viewed by-and-large, the proposal would constitute a low level of harm to the overall significance of the reading and interpretation of the historical and architectural significance of the Grade II Listed Building.

Consequently, when assessing the harm against the directives of the aforementioned Policy context, the applicants accompanying Design and Access Statement and Statement of Heritage Significance are of vital importance; specifically, as they explain both the building's significance and that the likely impact of the proposal has been robustly accounted for.

Once-more, the applicant's Statement of Heritage Significance set out for each of the proposed alterations an outline of the significance, general impacts against the character of the Listed Building and scope of which mitigation measures have been undertaken. Such detailing, alongside the continued liaising outside of the scope of this application has clearly demonstrated the applicant's continued efforts of

minimising harm as far as practicably possible whilst simultaneously being vigilant of the proposals need to secure an effective space for end point users.

It is understood that interface with the historical fabric will be kept to a minimal extent as possible, works have been carefully considered and respect the historical significance of the building and its character. Subsequently, the proposal would not contrast with the Grade II Listed Building, alternatively, by virtue of its careful design the alterations would likely be incorporated into the building's interpretation.

Consequently, no objections are raised in terms of Policies BNE1, BNE12, BN14, BNE17 and BNE18 of the Local Plan or paragraphs 208, 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

Historical Panelling

It is vital that special attention is subject to the historical panelling contained within the rear northeast room on the first floor. The panelling itself is comprised of Scots Pine and Oak, featuring flat, rectangular panels that have been set into the surrounding rails and stiles. Much of the woodwork dates back to the 17th Century with some element of later periods.

The panelling is of significant value twofold: firstly, owing to its remarkable survival and condition; and secondly as it pre-dates King James II's visit to the property ahead of his stopping before he fled to France in 1668 having abdicated his crown.

The proposal seeks the careful removal, restoration and then relocation of the panels into a controlled environment within the proposed rear extension. Whereby, access to the general public will be granted.

An independent review of the panelling has been produced by Vicent Reed under the applications instruction detailing the panelling's movement throughout the building, general condition and scope for removal.

The findings of which confirm that the panelling is not currently in situ and appears to have been relocated circa early mid-20th Century; suggested due to evidence of the panels covering of 19th Century cornicing and the type of plywood used within the east elevation.

In this view, given the panelling is not specifically contextual to the current room within which it is located; the proposed use of this room for residential purposes that could lead to unfavourable treatment and preservation; and proposed preservation of the panels in a controlled environment supported by heritage interpretation and public viewing it is considered that the less than substantial harm via their relocation would be outweighed by the requisite public benefits.

Conditions securing the panels, removal, restoration and relocation alongside preservation are essential in ensuring the conservation of the exceptionally important heritage assets.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

In summary, all interference with the historical fabric will be kept to as minimal extent as possible, works have been carefully considered and respect the historical significance of the building and its character. Subsequently, the proposal would not contrast with the Grade II Listed Building, the adjacent Listed Buildings or the wider Conservation Area, instead by virtue of its careful design the alterations would be well incorporated and received within the interpretation of the heritage asset. As such, the proposal is in accordance with Policies BNE12, BNE14, BNE17 and BNE18 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 208, 212, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

The application would typically be determined under delegated powers but is being referred to Committee for decision due to Councillor interest and its inextricably interlinked relationship with the full application against the pursuant site under case reference number MC/24/1333.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection on Medway Council's Website <https://publicaccess1.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>