

**PLANNING COMMITTEE – 20 JULY 2017**

**PART 2**

Report of the Head of Planning

**PART 2**

Applications for which **PERMISSION** is recommended

<b>2.1 REFERENCE NO - 17/501750/FULL</b>			
<b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL</b> Erection of a two storey side and rear extension, including new front and rear porches and two bay windows to front elevation, erection of a quad garage with access point through existing garage, and the filling in of sunken front garden area, as confirmed by email dated 30 June 2017.			
<b>ADDRESS</b> Bramble House Highsted Valley Rodmersham ME9 0AB			
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b> – Approve			
<b>SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION</b> The proposal would not cause any unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area or to the neighbouring amenities and would comply with the policies of the Local Plan and guidance of the SPG for householders.			
<b>REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE</b> Parish Council Objection			
<b>WARD</b> West Downs	<b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> Rodmersham	<b>APPLICANT</b> Mr Dan Finch	
<b>DECISION DUE DATE</b> 31/07/17	<b>PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE</b> 26/05/17		
<b>RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):</b>			
<b>App No</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Date</b>
SW/81/315	Two storey extension	Approved	1981
SW/81/271	Rebuilding of garage store and loft space Decision appealed This building has since been converted to a separate dwelling and does not form part of the current application site.	Refused Allowed	1981 1981
SW/80/871	Extension	Approved	1980
SW/80/681	Extension to dwelling and rebuilding of garage at rear	Refused	1980

## **1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

- 1.01 Bramble House is a large detached residential property located on Highsted Valley within the built up area boundary of Rodmersham, as defined by the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan 2008. Previously, Bramble House was known as 'Foxlands' and looking at the history of the local area, it appears the change of name was done post 2012.
- 1.02 The property is set with a large garden area which extends southwards to the rear of the property known as "Cherry Trees", and northwards to the rear of the properties known as "Conway" and "Freshfields". The frontage of the property is characterised by a substantial hedge with a gravelled driveway which arcs around a sunken lawn within the site, with an access to the highway at either end of the site frontage.
- 1.03 The surrounding area may be described as semi-rural, despite being classified as being within the built up area boundary of Rodmersham which runs in a north/south alignment, approximately 1.9 miles from Sittingbourne. The dwellings along this stretch of Highsted Valley are predominantly detached – being of varying sizes and designs – individual in character and mainly found on the eastern side of the road. To the immediate west of the application site is a large orchard and land that is in active agricultural use.
- 1.04 The property itself has previously been extended both to the rear and to the south (right hand side) at two storeys and currently features polystyrene mock-tudor beams on the first floor elevations with brick below.

## **2.0 PROPOSAL**

- 2.01 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a two storey side and rear extension to the north and west elevations (left side) and will involve the erection of front and rear porches and the addition of two bay windows to the front (west facing) elevation. The extension will feature a third front dormer window to match two that currently exist, along with another front rooflight to match an existing one. Mock-tudor timber framing would be replaced by red concrete tile hanging.
- 2.02 The proposals also involve the erection of a flat roofed quad garage (14m x 9m by 3.5m tall) set well behind the house, with access to be through the existing garage on the southern end of the house. This also involves the addition of a blocked paved drive that will extend from the rear of the existing garage to the proposed detached quad garage.
- 2.03 The application also proposes the filling-in and resurfacing of the sunken lawn within the driveway. It is proposed to finish the driveway with gravel, whilst maintaining the existing slight slope that runs from the main dwelling to the road.
- 2.04 The application originally included the erection of new 1.8m high boundary walls from the house's facade to the highway on the western, northern and southern boundaries of the site incorporating tall solid gates at each end of the frontage, whilst retaining the existing high hedgerow that runs along the front boundary of the site. However, the applicant has since withdrawn the wall and gates from the application at my request.

### 3.0 SUMMARY INFORMATION

	Existing	Proposed	Change (+/-)
Approximate Ridge Height (m)	6.6m	6.6m	+0
Approximate Eaves Height (m)	4.7m	4.7m	+0
Approximate Depth (m)	9.4m	10.4m	+1.0m
Approximate Width (m)	21.0m	24.4m	+3.4m
No. of Storeys	2	2	+0

### 4.0 PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

Environment Agency Flood Zone 3 133440

### 5.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

#### 5.01 National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

The following policies and paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are considered to be the most relevant:

**Paragraphs 7 and 8** set out that there are three mutually dependent facets to sustainable development

**Paragraph 14** explains the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development

**Paragraphs 56 and 58** outlines the importance and principles of good design in new development.

**Paragraph 187** states that LPAs should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. LPAs should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

#### 5.02 The Development Plan for Swale comprises the saved policies of the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan 2008. The emerging Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031 Main Modifications, June 2016), has been subjected to Examination by an Independent Planning Inspector, has been found to be sound, and now carries significant weight.

#### 5.03 Swale Borough Local Plan (SBLP) (2008)

The following policies of the adopted SBLP (2008) have been 'saved' and are considered to be relevant here:

- SP1 – Sustainable Development
- E1 – General Development Criteria
- E19 – Achieving High Quality Design and Distinctiveness
- E24 - Alterations and Extensions
- T3 – Vehicle Parking for New Development.

5.04 Emerging Local Plan Proposed Main Modifications June 2016

The following policies are considered to be relevant here:

- ST1 – Delivering sustainable development in Swale
- CP4 – Requiring Good Design
- DM7 – Vehicle Parking
- DM14 – General development criteria
- DM16 - Alterations and extensions

5.05 Supplementary Planning Documents – Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): ‘*Designing an Extension – A Guide for Householders*’. This provides guidance on design, scale and design of extensions to dwellings, whilst protecting the visual and residential amenities of the local area and residents of neighbouring properties.

6.0 **LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS**

6.01 None received.

7.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

7.01 Rodmersham Parish Council does not object to the rear extensions of the property, but have raised the following objections:

- The front elevation is inappropriate for the house and location; it needs to be re-designed
- We strongly object to losing a substantial part of the front garden to parking - we cannot understand why a domestic dwelling requires 30 parking spaces (see section 8 of the application).
- Changes to the front garden and front elevations impacts on the visual amenity.

7.02 The applicant has responded Rodmersham Parish Council’s objections and has stated the following:

*“I probably did not explain very well in the planning application the purpose of filling in the driveway, it is not to do with storing more cars on the driveway it is actually about creating a safer, more practical environment, mainly for my wife and 4 year old son*

*As you will have seen when you visited last week the existing semi-circular driveway was built many years ago when cars were a lot smaller than today, the result of which it is narrow for a car to pass between the sunken border areas and the small dwarf wall to the front garden*

*We have a very active and curious young son and with a road outside (which people drive way too fast down) with no pavements and tall hedges to the entrance, if he ran out cars would not see him in time and there could be a serious accident (probably fatal), so we like to make sure we park as close to the house as possible to prevent him getting near the road*

*My wife also has to lift our son out of the car and then sometimes lift in heavy shopping which she needs to do with the house door open so we need the car close to the house to make sure our son does not make a break for the road if he sees*

*something that will interest him (like the tractors in the fields which he loves watching out of the windows)*

*When we do this it leaves only a small 400mm wide place to stand to pick him up out of the rear of the car which is also dangerous as if you topple backwards holding him you are falling about three feet down into the rubble border which at the very least is a trip to hospital*

*The drive is also not symmetrical so reversing in from one side is different to the other side and at night when the drive is not lit you can also reverse off the drive into the sunken area (I did this myself when I first moved in), obviously when you live there you get used to it and can get round the problem, but that is not the case for visitors*

*Another issue with the drive is that the safest way in is to turn into the drive from the right hand entrance as you look at the property and the safest way to exit is on the left hand side (you cannot see through the hedge on the right hand side so you are pulling out blind) so you want to be able to drive round the driveway from one side to the other, if one car is parked on the drive already you cannot do that so you have to move the car in the way, behind the one that just pulled in to exit later so that is also not practical*

*On the subject of the cars being parked on the drive we have three cars at the moment and this will not increase, with the introduction of our garage that will decrease to just one (my wife's car) as the other two will go in the garage, we have no intention of putting any more cars on the driveway as we want it free for access as explained above. I only answered 30 cars on the questionnaire as if you stacked 30 cars bumper to bumper you probably could fit them into the space but in reality any more than one car on the drive and you need to move it to get out of the safest exit. This was poor communication on my part but once the works are completed there will be less cars on view than present not more*

*Also as part of the proposed plans we want to put on the two sets of gates at the roadside and then the toddler is safe and with the drive filled in we have a safe way on loading/unloading cars and shopping etc and can also drive in and out in the safest way*

*Environmentally we love living in the village and do not want to make the property seem any less rural which is why we are keeping the hedge to the front of the property and the removal of the lowered garden is purely for practical and safety purposes. As it stands the view from the road should not be altered as the hedge covers the driveway in any event*

*Hopefully the above explains the thought process behind the filing in of the driveway”.*

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS**

- 8.01 Application papers and drawings, including a brief Design and Access Statement relating to planning reference 17/501750/FULL.

## 9.0 APPRAISAL

### Principle of Development

- 9.01 The site is located within the built confines of Rodmersham where extensions and alterations to dwellings are generally acceptable. This is subject to them being of a high standard of design and sitting comfortably within the street scene and, not giving rise to any serious amenity concerns in accordance with the above policies. In particular, saved policy E1 of the adopted Local Plan 2008 states that development should reflect the positive character and features of the site and locality.
- 9.02 The application property enjoys a significantly sized plot which benefits from being naturally well-screened from the main road by a large hedgerow and from a large/wide garden to the rear. As such, I consider that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable.

### Design and Scale

- 9.03 The proposals involve the construction of a two storey side and rear extension to the north and west elevations. The scale and design of the proposed two storey extension is acceptable and would generally sit comfortably within the context of the existing streetscene and it is sympathetic to the existing fabric of the main dwelling and will not detract from its character.
- 9.04 The two storey element also incorporates the addition of a dormer window and velux window to the front, and the creation of two new side door entrances and a window – to service a proposed utility room at ground floor level. The proposed patio-style sliding door is to serve the proposed kitchen/diner. The proposals also include the erection of new front and rear porch extensions. The front porch will be approximately 2.9m in height, 5m in width and 1m in depth. The proposed rear porch will be approximately, 2.75m in height, 3.3m in width and 1.4m in depth.
- 9.05 The existing mock Tudor façade of the dwelling will be replaced, both on the front and the rear of the dwelling with new tiles. It is acknowledged that Rodmersham Parish Council have objected to the alterations of the front elevations, however, I consider that the overall design and scale of the proposals will not detract from the existing character of the property or have a significantly detrimental impact upon the visual amenities of the local area, as, all of the detached properties in this stretch of Highsted Valley are individual in character and appearance.
- 9.06 The existing brick-built wall that runs from the side gate to the boundary line with the neighbouring property to the north will be re-built to the same height as existing – albeit reduced in width from the original width of 6.5m.
- 9.07 The existing integral garage will remain on the southern elevation of the dwelling, but will act as an access to the proposed detached quad garage towards the rear of the site. Therefore aesthetically, this side of the dwelling will largely remain unchanged. The proposed detached garage will be sited approximately 22m from the rear of the dwelling – on the southern boundary of the site. It will be approximately 14m wide and 9m in depth at a height of 3.5m. It is also proposed to block pave the area in front and surrounding the proposed garage, in addition to a path leading from the rear of the existing integral garage.
- 9.08 The application also involves the in-filling of the sunken front garden and resurfacing of the driveway. The applicant has provided a statement – as provided above, that

explains that this is done more for safety and practical reasons, rather than to allow the parking of more vehicles. I consider that this is acceptable and will cause no significant detrimental impact upon the amenities of the local area.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 9.09 The application site has the fortunate situation of being both set back from the main road and a good distance from its neighbours. Bramble House is naturally well-screened by a high hedgerow at the front and many trees towards the rear and along the north and south boundaries of the dwelling. The proposed two storey extension to the north, which incorporates a ground floor window and two doors – one of which is a patio-style entrance – is set approximately 2.9m from the boundary with the neighbouring property known as ‘Conway’. These doors and windows are to serve the proposed utility room and kitchen area and are not habitable rooms. I consider that, given the distances between the proposed works and the boundary with this neighbour, there will be no significant overshadowing, loss of outlook, loss of privacy or overlooking issues in relation to the neighbouring property. Therefore, the proposed development will have no significant detrimental impact upon the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.

### **Parking**

- 9.11 It is acknowledged that Rodmersham Parish Council raised an objection to the alterations of the front drive. Their concern was made in the light of the applicant’s declaration within his application form stating that, potentially he could fit up to 30 vehicles on site. However, the applicant has since made a written statement assuring the Parish Council that this is not the intention of altering the front driveway.
- 9.12 During my site visit, it was evident that access onto the site is currently ‘awkward’. As one drives onto the site the drive is narrow and restricted by the current sunken aspect of the drive, which is steep and hazardous. I consider that this part of the application is justifiable and reasonable.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

- 10.0 Having considered the overall harm of the proposed development upon the visual and residential amenities of the locality and the neighbouring occupiers of the residential properties, I consider that the proposed development will have no significant detrimental impact. Overall, the proposals comply with the relevant policies within the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008, emerging Local Plan Bearing Fruits 2031 and the guidance provided in the Supplementary Planning Guidance for extensions and therefore, approval is recommended.

- 11.0 **RECOMMENDATION** – GRANT Subject to the following conditions:

### **CONDITIONS**

- (1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) The bricks and roofing tiles to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those on the existing building in terms of type, colour and texture.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

- (3) The garage hereby permitted shall be used only for the parking of a private motor car or cars or for uses ordinarily incidental to the enjoyment of the occupiers of the dwelling house.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity

**The Council's approach to this application:**

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

Offering pre-application advice.

Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome.

As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance the application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.