



# Planning, Design and Access Statement

**Erection of 2 no. dwellings to rear of 70 Lower  
Vicarage Road, Ashford, TN24 9AS**



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the erection of 2 no. new dwellings within the rear garden of 70 Lower Vicarage Road, Ashford.
  
- 1.2. The statement addresses the site context, planning history, relevant policies, design principles, residential amenity, highways and access, ecology, and overall planning balance. The detailed planning considerations take into account the planning requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted Ashford Local Plan.

## 2. Site Context

### **Site and Surroundings**

- 2.1. The application site comprises a detached two-bedroom bungalow located on the northern side of Lower Vicarage Road, within the settlement of Kennington.
- 2.2. The site extends to approximately 0.1 hectares and includes a spacious rear garden that rises gently to the north, towards Broadhurst Drive.
- 2.3. The existing dwelling fronts Lower Vicarage Road with a driveway along its western boundary. A former rear garage has been demolished. The frontage is enclosed by a low brick wall and pedestrian gate.
- 2.4. The surrounding area is residential, featuring a mix of property types and ages. To the west (Nos. 72–74) are semi-detached bungalows, whilst to the east (No. 68) are two detached two-storey dwellings dating from the 1980s. Infill development is evident along the road.



Image 1: The Application Site



Image 2: The rear of the Application Site and view north towards Broadhurst Drive



### Relevant Planning History

- 2.5. **03/01184/AS** – Proposed bungalow to the rear. Refused and dismissed on appeal (2003).
  
- 2.6. **PA/2022/2784** – Demolition of bungalow and erection of 3 dwellings. Refused December 2023 on grounds of overdevelopment, design, residential amenity, and highways concerns.
  
- 2.7. This revised proposal has been carefully designed to overcome the issues identified in both the 2003 appeal and the 2022 refusal.

# 3. Planning Considerations

## **Principle of Development**

- 3.1. The site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Ashford, where new residential development is supported in principle (Local Plan Policy SP1).
  
- 3.2. Policy HOU3a also confirms that residential development of a scale that can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlement will be acceptable within the built-up confines of Ashford.

## **Character and Appearance**

- 3.3. Policy HOU3a, which relates to windfall development within settlements states that residential development may be acceptable within the built-up confines of Ashford, provided the proposals follow the following principles:
  - Appropriate layout, design and appearance, respecting character and density of the surrounding area.
  
  - Protection of land contributing to local character (including private gardens), avoiding loss or harm.
  
  - No significant harm to landscape, heritage assets, or biodiversity interests.

- 3.4. Policy HOU10 addresses the redevelopment of residential gardens. It permits the complete or partial redevelopment of garden land where proposals comply with the Council's external space standards (Policy HOU15) and the Windfall Housing Policy (HOU3a). The policy further requires that proposals:
- Do not result in significant harm to the character of the area, including the surrounding settlement grain, built pattern, prevailing building density, building line, frontage width, distance from the road, plot sizes, and the visual separation between dwellings; and
  - Do not cause significant harm to wildlife corridors or biodiversity habitats.
- 3.5. Policy HOU15, which considers external space standards, states for houses, the private garden area should, as a starting point, be calculated by multiplying the width of the dwelling (in metres) by 10 metres.
- 3.6. The proposed residential scheme has been designed to respond to these policy requirements, namely:
- **Scale and Massing:** The proposed dwellings would both be single storey and would sit comfortably behind the existing bungalow.
  - **Siting:** The proposed dwelling would be located to the rear of the existing bungalow, within its large garden.
  - **Pattern of Development:** Given that the existing dwelling and neighbouring dwellings to the west are bungalows, these proposed bungalows would sit comfortably in this context.

The surrounding area is characterised by bungalows sporadically set amongst 2-storey dwellings.

The neighbouring plots have extensive outbuildings within a comparable location within their gardens and comparable scale to that proposed.

There are several examples in the immediate locality of dwellings set behind the main building line and accessed via a long drive [See Plan no 09]. Backland residential examples in the immediate include:

- 52 and 52a Lower Vicarage Road
  - 59, 63 and 63a Lower Vicarage Road
  - 69 and 71 Lower Vicarage Road
  - 98, 100 and 102 Lower Vicarage Road
  - Stable House, Upper Vicarage Road
  - 10a, Upper Vicarage Road
  - 189 and 198a Faversham Road
  - 199a Faversham Road
- **Density:** The proposed development would amount to a density of 17 dwelling per hectare, which is appropriate for a suburban setting.
  - **Plot Sizes:** The plot for Unit 1 would amount to 410 sqm, with a built coverage of 23%; The plot for Unit 2 would amount to 335sqm, with a built coverage of 28%. This shows that these dwellings would be set within a spacious setting.
  - **Separation Between Dwellings:** The dwellings would be detached with

an approximate 3.8m separation between. They would also be 19m from the dwelling to the south at its closest point; with a separation of 5.2m from the dwelling to the east and 17.4m from the dwelling to the west. The dwelling to the north would be 16.9m away at the closest point.

Given the proposed dwellings are single storey, and the angles involved, these distances are acceptable and demonstrate that the proposal can sit comfortably in this setting.

- **Appearance:** Both dwellings would be narrow fronted single storey dwellings, with hipped roofs to the front and rear. This detail gives a subtle vertical appearance, whilst also ensuring that the bulk and mass of the buildings are kept to a minimum.
- **Materials:** Both buildings would incorporate red buff brick frontages, clay tiles, with contemporary window and door detailing.
- **Internal Spaces Standards:** Unit 1 would be a 2-bed unit with an internal floor area 81 sqm; Unit 2 would be a 2-bed unit with an internal floor area 81 sqm. These exceed the NDSS space standards of 70 sqm for 2-bed bungalow dwellings.
- **External Space Standards:** Unit 1 has a garden area of 175 sqm; Unit 2 has a garden area of 155 sqm. These exceed the minimum garden space standards of approximately 75 sqm.
- **Landscape:** The site is not subject to any landscape restrictions.
- **Heritage:** The site is not subject to any heritage restrictions.
- **Ecology:** See detailed discussion in the following paragraphs.

- 3.7. It is noted that a 2003 planning appeal for a single bungalow was dismissed, however the national and local planning policy position is significantly different from that period. Furthermore, The present scheme differs significantly:
- Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site and local planning authorities should refuse applications which fail to make efficient use of land.
  - The existing garden is very large comparatively with the surrounding gardens and is particularly large for the size of the existing bungalow that it serves.
  - It proposes **two modest bungalows** within generous plots, not an isolated single dwelling.
  - It is **landscape-led**, retaining mature planting and introducing new planting to soften the built form.
  - The **scale and siting** of the dwellings ensure that they read as part of the mixed built form rather than as intrusive features.
- 3.8. Since that decision, the character of Lower Vicarage Road and the wider Kennington has evolved through incremental infill and backland development. Examples of dwellings sited behind the frontage line, served by private drives, now exist and form part of the varied character of the area.
- 3.9. The proposed development would be in keeping with and would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

## Residential Amenity

3.10. NPPF Paragraph 130(f) requires for development to achieve a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Policy HOU3a(b) of the local plan states that development should not create a significant adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents.

- **Overshadowing** - The buildings have been orientated to avoid any overshadowing.
- **Daylight and Sunlight** - Each unit is dual aspect.
- **Privacy** - The orientation of the dwellings ensures that there is no risk of overlooking of any habitable windows.

The driveway follows the existing side route serving No. 70, minimising intrusion into garden spaces. Vehicle movements associated with two dwellings are limited and not of a scale to cause significant noise or disturbance.

Boundary treatments and landscaping will mitigate any minor impacts and protect privacy.

## Highways and Access

3.11. Policy TRA3a requires two-bedroom dwellings to provide two parking spaces per unit. 37. This has been achieved on-site. An additional visitor parking space has also been accommodated.

3.12. NPPF Paragraph 111 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Policy TRA7 relates

to 'The Road Network and Development' states that new accesses and intensified use of existing accesses onto the road network will not be permitted if a clear risk of road traffic accidents or significant traffic delays would be likely to result.

- 3.13. An existing access to the land to the rear of the site would be utilised by both of the proposed dwellings. If arrangement would not affect the existing dwellings existing parking spaces.
- 3.14. As demonstrated on plan no 03, the site benefits a suitable and safe access with appropriate visibility splays. The present proposal demonstrates that visibility splays can be achieved entirely within land under the applicant's control. The driveway is of sufficient width, with on-site turning provision to allow vehicles to exit in forward gear.
- 3.15. Details of cycle storage and EV charging points could be secured by way of a planning condition.

### **Sustainability**

- 3.16. Kennington is a district of Ashford considered to be in a sustainable location for new development with good accessibility to local transport links and other facilities.
- 3.17. The proposed residential development will incorporate the requirements of Ashford Borough Council's Climate Change Guidance for Development Management, where feasible. The scheme will include provision for solar photovoltaic technology, electric vehicle charging points, and rainwater harvesting systems including water butts connected to downpipes. The technical details could be confirmed via a planning condition.

## **Stodmarsh**

- 3.18. The site falls within the Stour catchment area and it is proposed to connect to the mains sewer drainage network, which discharges the foul water into Ashford Bybrook Wastewater Treatment Works. The applicant has submitted a Nutrient Assessment and associated nutrient load calculations.

## **Ecology**

- 3.19. The application is supported by an ecological survey that demonstrate the development's compatibility with biodiversity objectives.
- 3.20. The site at 70 Lower Vicarage Road comprises a bungalow, associated hardstanding, gardens, and a disused rear area supporting modified grassland, bramble scrub and rubble. The habitats present are of low to moderate ecological value, with no veteran trees, watercourses, or statutory designations identified.
- 3.21. The following mitigation measures are recommended:
- Sensitive clearance of vegetation and rubble to avoid harm to hedgehogs and reptiles.
  - Avoid vegetation clearance during the bird breeding season (March–August inclusive), or conduct a pre-clearance nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist.
  - As no evidence of roosting bats or aquatic habitats was identified, no further survey work is required for bats, amphibians, or aquatic mammals.

- Provide hedgehog permeability measures, such as small access gaps (13cm x 13cm) at the base of fences or walls.
- Any future lighting scheme should follow Bat Conservation Trust (BCT, 2018) guidance to minimise light spill.

3.22. The proposed mitigation is proportionate to the site's ecological baseline and consistent with the mitigation hierarchy.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

3.23. The on-site baseline biodiversity is calculated at 0.27 habitat units. The habitats largely consist of modified grassland. The proposed plans will result in 0.31 habitat units or a net gain of 13.72%.

## 4. Planning Balance

4.1. The proposed development represents a carefully considered response to the site context and planning history. It makes efficient use of underutilised garden land within a sustainable settlement boundary. Key benefits include:

- Provision of 2 no. new homes to help meet housing need.
- Low-rise design that integrates with the mixed character of Lower Vicarage Road.
- Safeguarded residential amenity for neighbours and future occupants.
- Safe and suitable highway access.

4.2. Therefore, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.