
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2026

by **S F Barnes MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/W/25/3372898

Dental Surgery, 225 Faversham Road, Kennington, Kent TN24 9AF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Peter Chopra against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PA/2025/1166.
 - The development proposed is a first floor side extension to be used as surgery and office.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development above is taken from the application form; however it is clear from the existing and proposed elevations that the proposal would comprise a 2-storey extension to the side of the appeal building. In its Officer Report, the Council has assessed the proposal on that basis and so shall I.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the preservation or enhancement of the Kennington Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies at the corner of Faversham Road and Upper Vicarage Road. The site is located within the built confines of Ashford and the 2-storey appeal building contains a dental surgery and other commercial space at ground floor, along with residential uses.
5. The proposal concerns an expansion to the existing dental surgery. The principle of the development would be acceptable subject to site-specific considerations including, as most pertinent to this appeal, its design. Permission has previously been granted for a single storey extension (Application ref PA/2025/0201), which the appellant advises has the same footprint at ground floor as the proposal before me.
6. The appeal building is neither statutorily listed nor a World Heritage Site, and it has not been suggested to have archaeological importance. However, the site is within the Kennington Conservation Area ('the KCA'), which is a designated heritage asset as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). As the proposal is in a conservation area, I have had special regard to section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act').

This requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

7. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, the significance of the KCA is associated with the variety of architectural styles and building materials seen in late 19th and early 20th century buildings on this urban part of Faversham Road. Buildings within this part of the KCA vary in size and can be substantial, but whether as detached buildings or semi-detached pairs they generally retain some distance to their site boundaries, particularly above ground floor level. Roof overhangs to front gable features and detailing around the eaves and first floor level, such as decorative timber features or use of hanging tiles, are notable unifying details at surrounding properties. These distinctive characteristics of layout and detailing are seen at the appeal building, which is a positive contributor to the KCA.
8. The existing single-storey side extension projects out only part of the building's depth and remains subordinate to its overall scale. However, the proposal would project beyond the existing rear wall, add considerable massing to its side and rear, and almost match the ridge height of the building.
9. Despite its use of a pitched roof form, the proposal would amount to a significant increase in the bulk and massing of the building resulting in an obtrusive and over-dominant effect. The addition would erode the existing space between the flank wall and the site boundary at first-floor level, resulting in harm to the appearance of the building and local pattern of siting. The additional massing at first-floor level would distinguish the effects of the scheme before me from those of the single-storey extension at ground floor that has been recently granted permission.
10. The rising topography of Upper Vicarage Road limits the wider views from which it would be seen further away from the site on that road. However, this harm would nonetheless be highly prominent due to its exposed corner location in perspectives along Faversham Road and from the junction with Lower Vicarage Road.
11. Although it would be well set back from the corresponding features on the principal elevation, the absence of traditional detailing applied to the proposal's front elevation at first-floor level and around its eaves would also be apparent in certain perspectives from Faversham Road. Similarly, the featureless flank wall presented at Upper Vicarage Road would be incongruous with the articulation found in the elevations of the existing building and its neighbours addressing this road. In these respects, and irrespective of whether a roof overhang is incorporated and sympathetic materials are specified for the walls and roof, the proposal would fail to respect the existing building's detailed design. However, even with satisfactory detailing, the proposed extension would not overcome the harmful effect of its scale and massing.
12. The appellant has drawn comparison between the proposal and nearby boundary walls, including that of the property on the opposite side of Upper Vicarage Road. However, that wall is much lower than the proposed height of the extension. Moreover, walls comparable in height to this proposal are not significant features of the area. Whilst I did observe a tall hedge at the opposite site, that is a natural feature which is markedly different to a wall, and could also reasonably be expected to change in size over time. These factors would not justify the proposal.
13. Whilst no formal consultation with a conservation team appears to have been carried out, the Council has put forward a reasoned assessment of the impact on

this heritage asset, supported by evidence including the Kennington Conservation Area Assessment. Overall, I find the proposal would detract from the appearance of the building and the contribution it makes to the significance of the KCA.

14. Paragraph 212 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Whilst modest in scale, this proposal would cause less than substantial harm to its significance, to a moderate degree within that spectrum.
15. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires that such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal seeks to increase access to NHS dentistry in the local area, including for children, and this would amount to a public benefit.
16. A letter from the Deputy Director of Primary Care Commissioning at NHS Kent and Medway confirms that additional funding has been secured for the existing practice to provide urgent and non-urgent unscheduled dental care. The appellant has advised that, following the extension, an additional 3,000 to 4,000 NHS patients per year could be treated at the expanded dental practice. This increased capacity is also referred to within the letter of support from a local MP. Although this is a clear social benefit, no substantiated evidence is before me which demonstrates that this, or a similar scale, of benefit could not be delivered through an alternative or less harmful scheme. Accordingly, the weight I can afford to this benefit is tempered to a limited one.
17. Industry-wide sustainability and environmental standards would apply to the operation of the dental surgery, such as those required by the Care Quality Commission. However, as only limited evidence is before me to quantify these environmental benefits, this factor carries limited weight. As efficient insulation and lighting systems are already incorporated into the existing building, allowing this appeal would not secure their associated environmental benefits.
18. The proposal would result in employment, including apprenticeships, both in its construction and for the duration of its use. This would be associated with economic benefits, albeit of a small scale. The continued use of the property would reasonably be associated with reduced threat of neglect or decay, although there is no substantive evidence to indicate that the building would be likely to fall into disrepair or disuse should this appeal fail.
19. Cumulatively, the public benefits of the proposal carry limited weight. This is not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified.
20. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the KCA. This harm carries considerable importance and weight. Consequently, the proposal conflicts with the requirements of section 72(1) of the Act and relevant provisions of Policies SP6 and ENV14 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030 (2019). In summary, those policies seek high quality new development which, through its scale and detailed design, preserves or enhances conservation areas.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole. The material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with that plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S F Barnes

INSPECTOR