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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 February 2026

by **J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc MCIH MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th February 2026

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**Appeal Ref: APP/E2205/W/25/3375345**

**Little Etchden, Etchden Chase, Etchden Road, Bethersden, Kent TN26 3DS**

- 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 Mrs A Saunders against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
  - The application Ref is PA/2025/1205.
  - The development proposed is for the conversion of an annex to a dwelling.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of an annex to a dwelling at Little Etchden, Etchden Chase, Etchden Road, Bethersden, Kent TN26 3DS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PA/2025/1205, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

### Preliminary Matters

2. It is noted that a draft Ashford Local Plan 2042 has been subject to a regulation 18 consultation. However, as this Plan is yet to be adopted, the Council have relied upon Policies contained within the extant Ashford Local Plan (2019) (ALP) on its decision notice. I have proceeded accordingly.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is whether the proposed development would be in a suitable location.

### Reasons

4. The appeal building faces onto Etchden Road and is located outside a settlement boundary approximately 1km from the village of Bethersden. The village includes a post office/village shop, a butchers, a hairdressers, a village hall, a public house, a bus service to the towns of Ashford and Tenterden, a play park and a primary school.
5. The site is linked to Bethersden by Fridd Lane and Old Surrenden Manor Road/Pluckley Road both of which are unlit with grass verges. Made footways for pedestrians walking along the highway from the appeal site commence adjacent to the built form along Mill Road as it runs towards the centre of Bethersden.

6. The appellant has brought to my attention a number of schemes in support of her case<sup>1</sup>. However, I have limited detail of those schemes before me, some of which are in a different location altogether. Moreover, I concur with the Council that every application should be considered on its own planning merits.
7. As such, I note that the appellant regularly makes her way to the village by foot. However, as the occupation of the proposed dwelling is likely to change over time, the partially lit national speed limit and mostly grass-verged route that leads from Little Etchden to Bethersden village is likely to be unattractive to some pedestrians and cyclists, particularly at certain times of the day and during the colder months of the year.
8. Moreover, given the relatively limited choice of shops in Bethersden, the wide range of facilities, services and the rail links for wider travel which can be found further afield in Ashford and Tenterden would be very desirable to occupiers of the new dwelling.
9. Consequently, both the shops of Bethersden and the comprehensive day to day services found in Ashford and Tenterden are likely to be accessed by the future occupiers of the new dwelling by using a motor vehicle rather than by foot/cycle or the relatively limited bus service.
10. Nonetheless, the use of a motor vehicle to access those services would be similar to the occupiers of recent developments nearby<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, as set out in the appellant's submitted transport note, the total number of journeys generated by one new dwelling, even when combined with the vehicle movements associated with the host dwelling and the other residential properties along this section of Etchden Road, would be very modest.
11. Overall, and in the planning judgement, I conclude that the proposal would meet the aims of Policies SP1 and HOU5 of the ALP which say, amongst other things, that development should provide a mix of housing types and sizes to meet the changing needs of the Borough's population, as supported by Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which says housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

## Conditions

12. I have considered Paragraph 56 of the Framework, and the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and imposed the following conditions:
13. For certainty a standard time limit condition, and for the avoidance of doubt, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
14. In the interests of amenity and wildlife there are conditions related to landscaping, lighting and boundary treatments. To encourage sustainable travel there are conditions for cycle storage and electric vehicle charging. To manage the risk of flood on the site, a drainage condition is necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> PA/2024/0975, PA/2023/2108, PA/2025/0486, PA/2024/0820 and APP/E2205/W/24/3342137

<sup>2</sup> 22/00875/AS, 12/01230/AS and 16/01271/AS

15. As the self-build scheme is exempted from the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), an ecological enhancement condition would not be reasonable for a scheme of this size.
16. In addition, the Framework states that planning conditions should not be used to restrict national permitted development rights unless there is clear justification to do so. As any future development would be subject to a separate application to the Council, and as there is no substantiated justification before me, this condition is not imposed.

### **Conclusions**

17. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted, subject to the conditions set out in Schedule A.

*J E Jolly*

INSPECTOR

## **Schedule A – Conditions**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
  
- 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans:
  - Site Location - 01 Rev 00,
  - Proposed Plans - 05 Rev 00,
  - Proposed Elevations - 06 Rev 00; and,
  - Proposed Site Layout Plan 07.
  
- 3) Prior to first occupation of the dwelling details of both hard and soft landscape works must have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include a statement setting out the design objectives for lighting and floodlighting, boundary treatments, fencing and soft landscaping, including their positions, height, design and materials.
  
- 4) The approved soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out fully within 12 months of the completion of the development. Any trees or other plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species.
  
- 5) Prior to the first occupation of the development, bicycle storage shall be provided in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and thereafter shall be retained solely for that purpose.
  
- 6) Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling, at least one all electric vehicle charger point shall be provided to a specification agreed in writing by the local planning authority and be retained in working order thereafter.
  
- 7) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the sustainable drainage system for the site has been agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

\*\*\*\*\*End of Conditions\*\*\*\*\*