

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 18th June 2026

PART 2

Report of the Head of Planning

PART 2

Applications for which **PERMISSION** is recommended**2.1 REFERENCE NO 26/501729/FULL****PROPOSAL** Partial conversion of existing garage to form habitable room with side facing window.**SITE LOCATION** 61 Galena Close Sittingbourne Kent ME10 5LB**RECOMMENDATION** Delegate to the Head of Planning to grant planning permission subject to appropriate safeguarding conditions as set out in the report, with further delegation to the Head of Planning to negotiate the precise wording of conditions, including adding or amending such conditions.**APPLICATION TYPE** Householder**REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**

The applicant's spouse and co-owner of the property is an employee of a shared service which includes Swale Borough Council.

Case Officer Mandi Pilcher**WARD** Bobbing**PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL**
The Meads**APPLICANT** Mr P May
AGENT Mr R Trute**DATE REGISTERED**

07.05.2026

TARGET DATE

02.07.2026

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND INFORMATION:**Documents referenced in report are as follows: -**

All drawings submitted.

The full suite of documents submitted and representations received pursuant to the above application are available via the link below: -

<https://pa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=TEM3Y8TYM2X00>

1. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 1.1. The application site consists of a detached two storey dwelling with an integral garage, located within the built up area boundary of Sittingbourne. The frontage of the site is comprised of hardstanding with private amenity space to the rear. The surrounding streetscene is characterized by residential dwellings of a similar scale and design.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1. SW/96/0717 – Outline application for mixed use development including residential, office and commercial uses, shopping and community facilities, school, community woodland, associated infrastructure and services – Granted 20.01.1998.

Condition 28 of the above referenced application is relevant to this application and is worded as follows:

The details submitted pursuant to condition (i) above, in respect of the residential development aspect of the development shall show adequate land to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority, reserved for the parking or garaging of cars (in accordance with the currently adopted Kent County Council Vehicle Parking Standards) which land shall be kept available for this purpose at all times and no permanent development, whether permitted by the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 or not shall be carried out on such land or in a position as to preclude vehicular access thereto; such land and access thereto shall be provided to the occupation of the dwelling to which it relates [sic].

Grounds: Development without adequate provision for the parking or garaging of cars is likely to lead to car parking inconvenient to other road users and detrimental to amenity.

- 2.2 (Adjacent site – 62 Galena Close) 23/502300/FULL – Garage conversion into a habitable space – Granted 11.07.2023

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. Planning permission is sought for the partial conversion of the existing attached garage to a study. The proposed works would relate to approximately one third of the garage. The scheme also includes the insertion of a ground floor side window.
- 3.2. The conversion of the garage would normally constitute works not requiring planning permission. However, in this instance, there is a planning condition (condition 28 of SW/96/0717 as set out above) that restricts the garage to vehicle parking only, hence this planning application has been submitted.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

4.1. One round of consultation has been undertaken, during which letters were sent to neighbouring occupiers. No letters of representation were received.

4.2. **Bobbing Parish Council** - no comments received.

4.3. **Ward Councillors** - no comments received.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1. None required.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

6.1 **Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Council Local Plan 2017 (the Local Plan)**

ST3 The Swale settlement strategy

CP4 Requiring good design

DM7 Vehicle parking

DM14 General development criteria

DM16 Alterations and extensions

DM28 Biodiversity and geological conservation

6.2 **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents -**

Designing an Extension – A Guide for Householders

Swale Parking Standards

7. ASSESSMENT

7.1 This application is reported to the Planning Committee as the applicant's spouse and co-owner of the property is employed by a shared service which includes Swale Borough Council. Considering the scheme that has been submitted, the Committee is recommended to consider the following points:

- Principle
- Character and appearance
- Transport and highways
- Living Conditions
- Ecology

7.2. Principle

- 7.2.1. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that the starting point for decision making is the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.2.2. The NPPF provides the national policy context for the proposed development and is a material consideration of considerable weight in the determination of the application. The NPPF states that any proposed development that accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved without delay. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for decision-taking this means approving development that accords with the development plan.
- 7.2.3. The site is located in the built up area boundary of Sittingbourne where policy ST3 of the Local Plan supports development in principle.
- 7.2.4. The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable subject to certain criteria being met. These matters and other relevant planning considerations are discussed below.

7.3. Character and appearance

- 7.3.1. Local Plan Policies CP4 and DM14 and the NPPF attach great importance to the design of the built environment and set out that design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Policy DM16 of the Local Plan supports alterations to existing dwellings providing, amongst other relevant criteria, they are of an appropriate design and maintain or enhance the character of the street scene.
- 7.3.2. The proposed alterations to the dwelling itself comprise small scale changes that would involve converting part of the garage to a habitable room and the insertion of a ground floor window in the side elevation. The only alteration that would be externally visible would be the insertion of the window, which in any case would be permitted development. The frontage of the dwelling would remain unchanged and as a result the proposal would maintain the character of the streetscene.
- 7.3.3. Taking the above into account the proposal is of an appropriate scale and design, complying with policies CP4, DM14 and DM16 of the Local Plan.

7.4. Transport and Highways

- 7.4.1. Local Plan policy DM7 requires development to be in accordance with the Council's Parking SPD.
- 7.4.2. As the proposal includes the partial loss of the garage the assessment turns on the impact that this would have on the parking available to serve the property.

- 7.4.3. The Council's Parking SPD includes minimum size requirements for garages, which, in the case of a single garage is 3.6m x 7m. The existing garage measures 2.3m in width (at its narrowest point) x 5.1m in length. It is comfortably undersized when compared to the SPD and therefore it is not considered that a vehicle would be able to be parked within it. As such, the loss of part of the garage has no impact upon the available parking at the property.
- 7.4.4. Notwithstanding the above, the property also has space for vehicles to park to the front of the site. Having measured the drawings, the site has enough parking space to comply with the dimensions set out in the Council's Parking SPD for two vehicles. Further to this, although part of the area of hardstanding falls marginally below the length required for a third parking space when assessed against the SPD, a site visit and images available shows a vehicle parked comfortably in this space. As a result, in reality, there is space to park three vehicles to the front of the property, which complies with the SPD.
- 7.4.5. Overall, the scheme would have a neutral impact upon the available parking provision at the property and in any case has an acceptable number of parking spaces. Therefore, the proposal would not give rise to any adverse impact on highway safety or convenience. As such the scheme complies with policy DM7 of the Local Plan.

7.5. Living Conditions

- 7.5.1. Policy DM14 of the Local Plan and the NPPF requires that new development has sufficient regard for the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.5.2. The only external change proposed is a ground floor side window that faces no.60 Galena Close. The proposed window will face the side elevation of no.60 where there are no existing ground floor windows. As a result, there would be no opportunities for harmful levels of overlooking. In any case, the window could be inserted without the need for planning permission under permitted development rights.
- 7.5.3. Given the nature and scale of the proposal it would not give rise to any unacceptable impact on the living conditions of any neighbours and as a result complies with policy DM14 of the Local Plan.

7.6. Ecology

- 7.6.1. In terms of the Local Plan, Policy DM28 sets out that development proposals will conserve, enhance, and extend biodiversity, provide for net gains where possible, minimise any adverse impacts and compensate where impacts cannot be mitigated.
- 7.6.2. From April 2024, minor developments are required to provide at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). There are exemptions to this, including applications made by householders as defined within article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. This application

amounts to householder development and as such is exempt from the need to provide BNG.

- 7.6.3. Due to the nature of the proposal there would be no adverse impacts upon biodiversity on site.

7.7. Conclusion

- 7.7.1. On the basis of the above, the scheme is considered to be in compliance with policies ST3, CP4, DM7, DM14, DM16 and DM28 of the Local Plan. It is recommended that planning permission is granted.

7.8. Recommendation

- 7.8.1. Grant planning permission subject to the conditions below:

(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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawing:

- PL01 – Existing & Proposed site, floor plans & elevations.

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

(3) The frames of the ground floor window hereby approved shall match the frames of the windows on the existing building in terms of type, colour and texture.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

The Council's approach to the application

In accordance with paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024 the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service, where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome and 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.

