



## **Squires Cottages Olantigh Road, Wye**

**Proposed change of use from student accommodation back to four cottages and minor elevation changes**

### **Planning Statement**

**HPPC Ref: 30831**

**Date: June 2016**



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# 1 Introduction and context

1.1 Squires Cottages lie on the western side of Olantigh Road within the built up area.



Image 1 aerial view

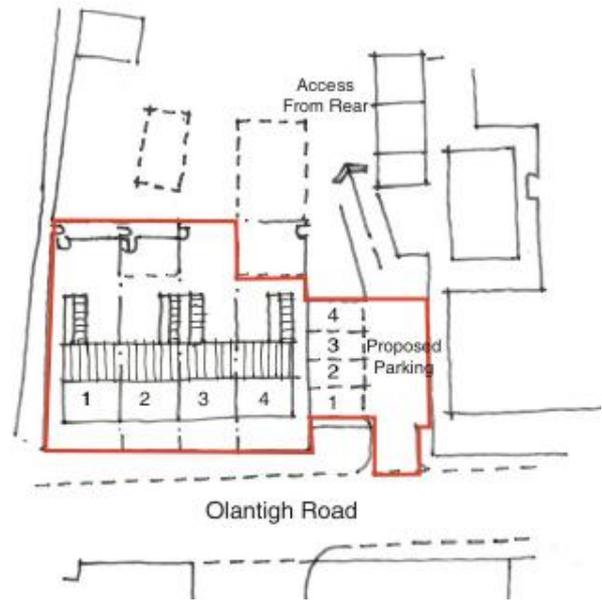


Image 2 site plan

- 1.2 The Design, Access and Heritage Statement provides a detailed description of the site, context and the proposals. This statement will focus on planning policy and issues.
- 1.3 The cottages were built as four residential properties and later adapted to provide student accommodation when owned by Imperial College. The buildings have stood empty for several years and the new owners are keen to return them to the original residential use.
- 1.4 Although the nature of the use has always been residential, planning permission is required for change of use from class C 2 residential institutions to C3 residential.

## 2 Proposals

2.1 Apart from the change of use class. planning permission is required for the external alteration to reinstate a front door on the front elevation:.



Image 3 existing street elevation



Image 4 proposed street elevation

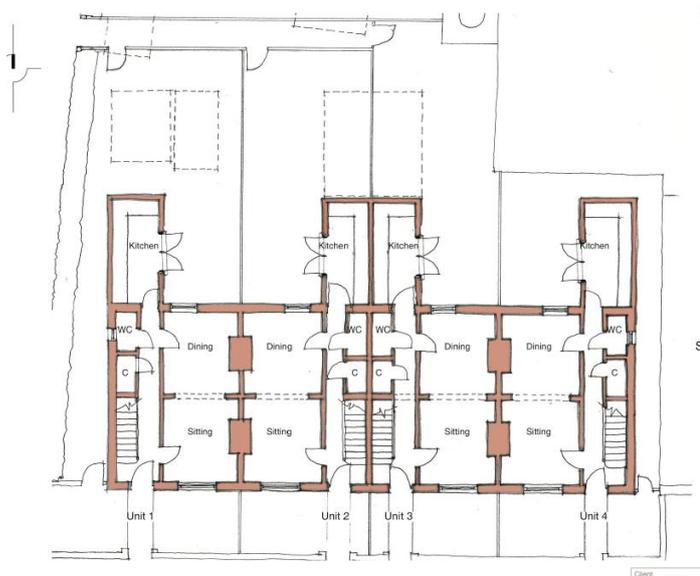
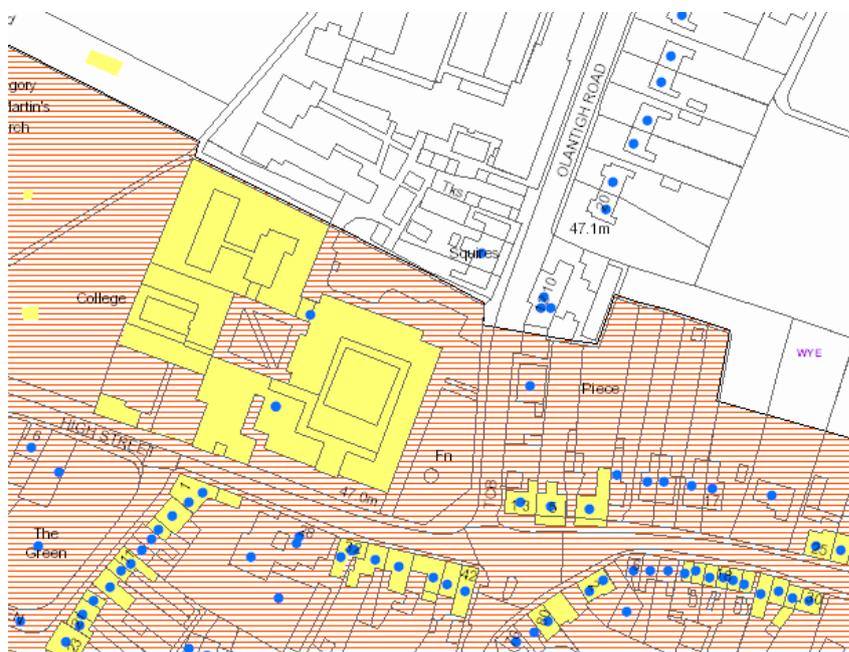


Image 5 Ground floor plan

2.2 The Design, Access and Heritage Statement provides details of the layout and design.

### 3 Planning Policy

- 3.1 This site lies within the built up area of Wye, the wider area is covered by the AONB designation (which washes over the whole settlement), and much of the locality is identified as an Area of Archaeological Potential. The cottages are outside the conservation area but adjoin its northern boundary (the conservation area is shown hatched brown on the plan below, listed buildings are coloured yellow).



The development plan comprises the Ashford Core Strategy, the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD, the saved policies of the Ashford Local Plan 2000.

- 3.2 The Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD dates from 2010 when the future of the Imperial College was uncertain, consequently a “precautionary approach” was adopted, it was intended that the position be re assessed in the first review of the Core Strategy in 2014. Circumstances have changed significantly in that the College has been sold, the Core Strategy review did not take place in 2014, national planning policy has changed.
- 3.3 The Ashford Local Plan to 2030 publication draft was considered by cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> June. The emerging policies are yet to be subjected to public consultation and detailed examination and are therefore not reviewed here.
- 3.4 Supplementary guidance is provided in the Wye Village Design Statement.
- 3.5 The Wye Neighbourhood Plan does not form part of the development plan but has been through public consultation and examination and is to be subject to a referendum in the autumn of 2016.

- 3.6 Squires Cottages lie within the area identified as WYE3, however as re-use of 4 former cottages it is not considered that this planning application should await the outcome of the future preparation of a masterplan, within the context of the Emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

### **National policy NPPF and NPPG**

- 3.7 National policy guidance is provided in the NPPF and the national space standards.
- 3.8 Key planning issues are considered on a topic base below.

### **Principle of residential use – sustainable development**

- 3.9 The NPPF emphasises the importance of sustainable development, this proposal will deliver homes, through re use an existing building in one of the larger rural settlements – residential use is supported in principle by NPPF policy.
- 3.10 Core Strategy CS1 Guiding Principles highlights at criterion F the key planning objective of making the best use of previously developed land and buildings.
- 3.11 Policy TRS13 - Conversions of rural buildings to general residential use states:  
*“Proposals to convert rural buildings to general residential use will not be permitted unless the building lies within the built-up confines of Tenterden or a village listed in policy TRS1 of this DPD and satisfies the criteria in policy TRS11...”*
- 3.12 The NPPF and Core Strategy support is echoed in the Neighbourhood Plan, policy WNP11 part e) which seeks to:  
*“Achieve the “positive re- use” of grade 1 and 2 listed, and other unused Edwardian buildings of the former Wye College by a mix of community, residential and business uses”*  
Squires Cottages are unused Edwardian cottages – the re use is supported by WNP11.

### **Timing**

- 3.13 The Wye Neighbourhood Plan policy for the WYE3 area is examined at 6.4 and in policy WNP11. A masterplan for the WYE3 area is in preparation in consultation with the Parish Council. The Neighbourhood Plan is clear that piecemeal proposals that would prejudice an integrated solution should not come forward in advance of the masterplan. Residential re use of these existing cottages will not prejudice the masterplan and there is no objection to bringing this proposal forward in advance of the masterplan.

### **Design and impact on the character and appearance of the street scene and conservation area**

- 3.14 The location adjacent to the conservation area (a heritage asset) presents the potential for impact on

its setting. The NPPF requirement to identify, describe and assess the affected heritage asset is met in the Design, Access and Heritage Statement.

3.15 The external changes to the main building are minimal and will have no significant impact on the street scene or character and appearance of the conservation area. The removal of the numerous outbuildings in the rear gardens will enhance the setting of the Conservation area. All the criteria of policy TRS11 are met:

a) the building does not require any reconstruction; b) it is of permanent and substantial construction; c) the conversion will preserve integrity and character; d) the traffic generated is appropriate to the road network that serves it; and, e) the scale and nature of the proposed use will have no adverse impacts on the character of Wye, the street scene or the amenities of local residents.

#### **Parking and access**

3.16 The Neighbourhood Plan emphasises notes the parking challenges in the older parts of the village. The KCC vehicle parking standards require 2 parking spaces per dwelling. At present the vehicular access to the side is gated and no parking is provided for Squires Cottages, as proposed 8 parking spaces will be provided.

#### **Residential amenity**

3.17 The national residential space standards for internal space and the locally adopted garden space standards are considered in detail in the Design and Access Statement.

#### **Ecology**

3.18 A bat survey was undertaken on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016; this noted that no bats were seen emerging from the building, and as the proposals involved limited demolition (a single storey building to the rear) and no works to the roof or hanging tiles no further surveys or mitigation are recommended with regard to bats (KB Ecology note, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016).

## **4 Key Issues and Conclusions**

#### **Principle and timing**

4.1 Planning policy strongly support the efficient use of existing buildings in sustainable locations. These cottages close to the heart of the village were designed for residential use but have stood empty for many years. It is desirable in economic and social terms to put the buildings back into use and provide much needed housing as soon as possible.

#### **Details of conversion and layout – residential amenity**

4.2 The internal layout of the cottages is to be adapted to ensure that the new national space standards can be met.

- 4.3 Externally the existing garden areas of units 1 – 3 will be made more useable by the removal of the sheds and outbuildings. However the garden of unit 4 is limited in size by the large outbuilding to the rear (outside the application site) which houses the heating plant for the former college and continues to serve the buildings to the south. Preliminary work is underway to secure refurbishment and reuse of the listed buildings and the proposals will incorporate new on site services. Once the detailed design is approved for the conversion of the listed buildings and alternative heating arrangements secured the existing plant can be removed and the garden of No 4 extended to match the depth of the gardens of units 1 – 3. Whilst the garden size and the relationship between the end cottage and the college heating plant is not ideal, this situation has persisted for many years. On balance it is considered preferable to accept this for a temporary period, secure reuse of the building now and improve the garden space once the plant can be replaced.

### **Ecology**

- 4.4 The Cottages have been empty for some time, it is recognised that there is some potential for roosting bats under the roof and hanging tiles. A night time emergence survey has been undertaken to check for bats using the building and passing across the site. Although common pipistrelle bats were seen and heard commuting and foraging in the area, no bats were recorded emerging from the building itself. The report notes that the limited demolition proposed relates only to single storey buildings at the rear and not the areas of tile hanging, and no further survey work or mitigation is required.

### **Conclusion**

- 4.5 The return of Squires Cottages to the former residential use is desirable in economic, social and environmental terms and the principle is supported by national and local planning policy.
- 4.6 On matters of detail the external changes to the street elevation are minor and sympathetic, to the rear, the removal of the outbuildings will provide more useable garden areas and improve the setting of the cottages.
- 4.7 The limited garden space for unit 4 is an existing situation which is considered acceptable given the need to retain heating for the listed buildings until refurbishment and reuse is finalised. As the sites are in the same ownership the applicants have the ability to address this situation in the future improve the layout .
- 4.8 The provision of off street parking to KCC standards is to be welcomed.