

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251049
Site Address:	River Cottage, Church Street, Wargrave, Wokingham, RG10 8EP
Expiry Date:	4 July 2025 (Eot until 12 September 2025)
Site Visit Date:	29 May 2025
Proposal: Householder application for the proposed part single storey, part two storey rear extension followed by external refurbishments, changes to fenestration and internal alterations to a listed building.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Listed Building
Wargrave Conservation Area
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Scale and Location of Development – Modest Development Location – Wargrave
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Wargrave Parish Design Statement

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
243178	Pre-application advice for the proposed erection of a part single part two storey rear extension, plus refurbishment of the listed building including replacement glazing and internal alterations.	Issued 14 th February 2025

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

Highways – No objection.
 Ecology – No objection.
 Built Heritage – No objection subject to conditions.

External N/A

N/A

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	No objections raised.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	1. The proposed 1.53-meter extension on the west side of the property may reduce natural light into the living room at Gaunt House. Also, the submitted digital shadow simulations may not accurately reflect everyday lighting conditions. We have suggested alternative solutions to the architects such as extending the east side or reconfiguring the interior layout. <i>Officer comment: The potential loss of light in relation to neighbour amenity at Gaunt House is assessed in the main body of the report.</i> 2. Security risk, vehicle access, and potential damage to Old Gaunt House whilst the building works are being carried out. In particular, the brick driveway, lime-rendered walls, and conservation glass windows. Clarification on insurance responsibilities is requested for any damage or injury during the works. <i>Officer comment: The Party Wall etc. Act 1996 provides a framework for preventing or resolving disputes in relation to party walls, party structures, boundary walls and excavations near neighbouring buildings. A party wall agreement is a legal arrangement between neighbouring property owners and covers the way the works are to be carried out, in their timing and manner. However, this is a separate process from planning and therefore not a material consideration in determining the application.</i>

APPRAISAL

Site Description: The site is a Grade 2 late C18 two storey detached dwelling with a two-storey rear extension that was added in the late C20. The property faces directly onto Church Street in Wargrave and does not benefit from off street parking. The external facing walls are finished in painted roughcast and the hipped roof is slate. Figure 1 shows the principal elevation comprises bays with sash windows and Venetian style shutters either side of the 6-panelled central entrance door. At the rear (Figure 2) there is a small courtyard garden.



Figure 1 Front elevation of River Cottage



Figure 2 Gaunt House access adjacent to River Cottage



Figure 3 Rear elevation of River Cottage towards Gaunt House

Principle of Development: The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is located within settlement limits and as such the development should be acceptable providing that it complies with the principles stated in the Core Strategy. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area in which it is located and must be of high-quality design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers.

Proposal: The application is for a part single storey, part two storey rear extension followed by external refurbishments, changes to fenestration and internal alterations. Prior to this submission, the owner sought pre-application advice. The Built Heritage Officer was consulted and supported the following parts of the proposal in principle:

- *“The replacement of the existing external cementitious rough-cast render of the property with the proposed lime render is supported.”*
- *“There are no heritage concerns with respect to the proposed alterations to the flat roofed 20th century rear extension to raise the ceiling height at first floor level and create a single bathroom, instead of the present two.”*
- *“The addition to the raised flat roof of the element of a sloping tiled roof is visually more appealing in appearance to the 20th century extension than is presently the case.”*
- *“The proposed glazed build out to the ground floor garden room whilst in principle thought potentially acceptable, it only works based on being able to extend the historic rear range.”*

However, the Heritage Officer was concerned that the extent of the works to erect the two-storey rear extension would *“result in the loss of a substantial of the historic rear range walling, along with the fireplace/chimney breasts. And as such would be seen to result in harm to the historic form and significance of this designated heritage. This is not to say that a smaller opening could prove acceptable where there was a more clearly retained elements of the wall either side of the opening.”*

In line with the Heritage Officers advice, the applicant submitted revised plans which would retain the kitchen chimney breast and part of the original historic rear wall, with a connection to the extension via an opening measuring approximately 2.2m. The Heritage officer has reviewed the revised plans and has raised no objection.

The windows on the front elevation would be refurbished, the faux Venetian style shutters removed, and new insulating lime render would be applied to the external walls. Internal alterations to the ground floor would be the addition of a WC, stairlift, and a new hard floor to the dining/living room.

Roof alterations

Roof repairs to the original ceiling joists and roof timbers, and removal of metal straps.

The existing flat roof in the centre of the property (shown in Figure 4) would be raised to increase the existing headroom of 1.9m to a minimum of 2.3m. 1 no. roof light would also be inserted.

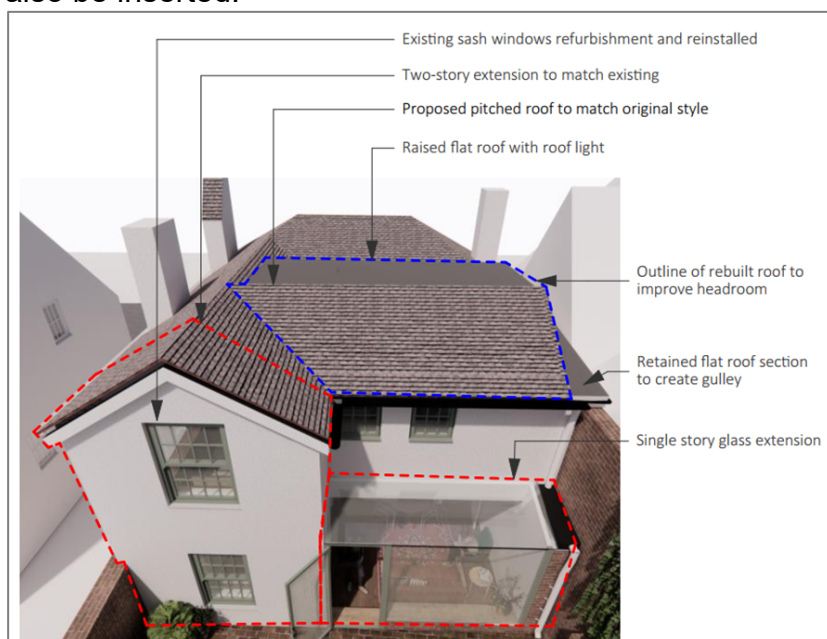


Figure 4 Proposed rear elevation with roof alterations

Alterations to the rear

The two-storey rear extension would have a gable end to match existing. It would measure 1.5m in depth to the rear wall, 1.66m in depth including the rear overhang, and 3.5m in width. The height would be 5.7m to the top of the gable roof and 4.6m to the top of the eaves. The 2-no. existing timber sash windows on the rear elevation would be refurbished and reinstated. There would be no additional windows to the side elevation facing Gault House. On the first floor, the extension would facilitate the enlargement of the rear bedroom, where the original historical rear wall would be retained with a connection to the extension via an opening measuring approximately 2.2m. The rear bedroom chimney breast would be demolished. On the ground floor the extension would enlarge the existing kitchen. The historical rear wall would be retained and connected to extension via an opening 2.3m in width. The existing Aga enclosure with masonry chimney breast above would be retained.

The single storey glazed extension would be in line with the rear wall of the two-storey extension and facilitate a garden room. It would have a shallow roof, a door and a large window. It will measure approximately 2.5m in height, 1.2m in depth and 4m in width. The original internal rear wall would be retained and have an opening into garden room approximately 1.3m in width. The existing brick patio to the rear will also be retained.

On the first floor, the 2 existing bathrooms would be merged to create one bathroom, and the external wall of the bathroom would be rebuilt and 2 no. windows inserted to match the colour palette of the front of the house. The new glazing will feature traditional side-hung windows with glazing bars.

Character of the Area:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that planning permission will be granted for proposals that are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials

and character, together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users, including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires developments to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment.

The application site is located within a Conservation Area off the main High Street in the village of Wargrave. The street scene is a mixture of older properties, several of which are Grade 2 Listed including the immediate neighbour at Old Gaunt House. A row of traditional terraced cottages is located opposite the application site and immediate neighbours are traditional individual detached properties with gable roofs which are a characteristic feature of this historical area. The refurbishment of the front windows, the removal of the faux Venetian style shutters, and the lime render would blend with the historical architecture in the street. The alterations to the roof height at the rear and the rear extensions are commensurate to the size and scale of the host dwelling and would not harm the character of the area. Moreover, they would not be visible from the public realm.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy in respect of the proposals impact on the character of the surrounding area including the Wargrave Conservation Area.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Core Strategy Policy CP3 states that development proposals should not result in a detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. The Wokingham Borough Council Design Guide (BDG) provides some guidance on extensions which relate to protecting residential amenity. It states the following:

- Rear extensions should not project more than 4 meters from the main rear wall where they are close to a boundary.
- The eaves height of single storey extensions should not exceed 3m within 2m of a side boundary.

Overlooking: The side wall of the two-storey rear extension would not have any windows and so there would be no increase in overlooking into neighbour's habitable rooms.

Loss of Light: The test advocated within the British Research Establishment's (BRE) publication *Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice*, has been used to assess impact on daylight and sunlight levels to neighbours potentially impacted upon by adjacent developments. As can be seen in Figure 5 and 6, the 45-degree angle tests are not complied with regards to the side elevation sitting room window at Gaunt House.

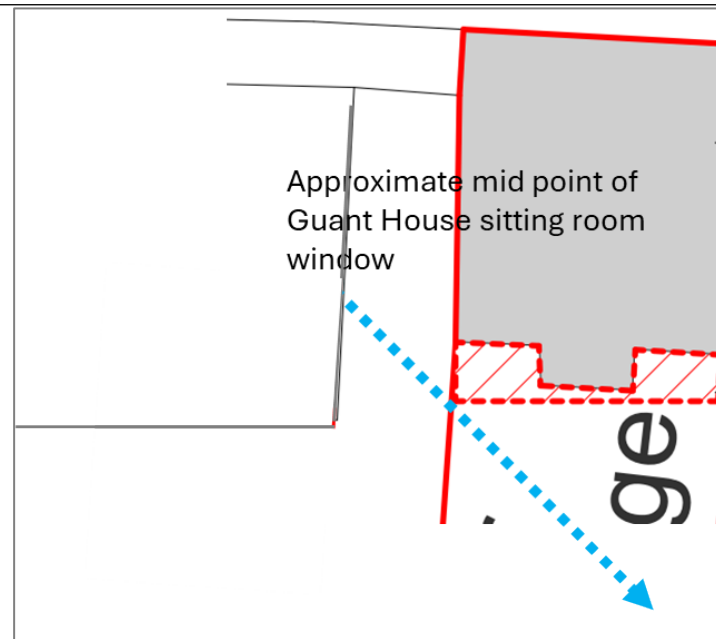


Figure 5 Horizontal test 45 degree from the nearest habitable room window at Gaunt House

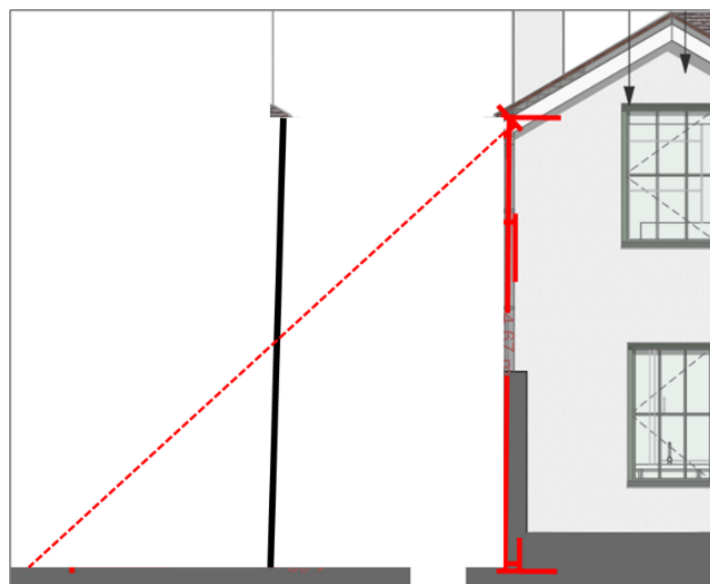
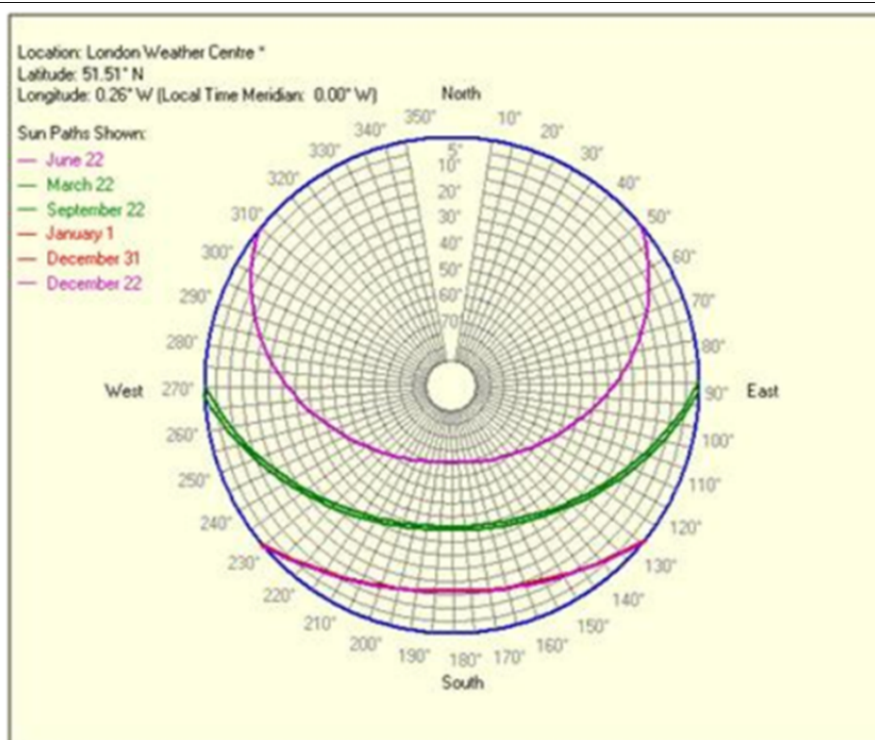


Figure 6 Vertical 45-degree angle test from River Cottage (rear view)

After the consultation period had ended, further scrutiny to the potential loss of sunlight was requested to ensure that the side east-facing window (W1) and front north-facing window (W2) serving a ground floor reception room at Gaunt House would continue to receive sufficient light given the results of the initial 45 test (see above). A Daylight and Sunlight Assessment was commissioned by the applicant which included a Vertical Sky Component (VSC) Test (which makes reference to the Waldram diagram – see Figure 7 below), as advocated within Appendix B of the *BRE Report BR 209 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight, a guide to good practice'* was subsequently carried out.



The BRE guidelines at paragraphs 2.2.6 and 2.2.7 state that:

"Any reduction in the total amount of skylight can be calculated by finding the VSC at the centre of each main window." and *"If the VSC, with the new development in place, is both less than 27% and less than 0.8 times its former value, occupants of the existing building will notice the reduction in the amount of skylight".*

The results of the VSC test conclude that there would be no change to the existing VSC level (38.56%) for W2 and that a 'minor adverse' reduction to W1 would occur reducing its existing VSC level of 8.94 down to 6.90 (refer to Table 3 below).

Daylight assessment (Surrounding buildings)						
Address	Floor	Assessed Window	Existing VSC>27%	Proposed VSC>27%	Ratio	Result
Gaunt House	Ground	W1	8.94	6.90	0.77	Minor adverse
		W2	38.56	38.56	1	Pass

Table 3 Daylight results (VSC)

While W1 already has a deficient VSC level, the harm associated to the further 'minor adverse' reduction resulting from the proposed development.

The submitted Daylight and Sunlight Assessment goes on to verify that the No Sky Line (NSL) Assessment indicates that... *"the internal room associated with the affected window (Room R1, identified as a reception room) maintains the same level of sky visibility pre- and post-development, with a ratio of 1.00 (98.36% in both scenarios). This confirms that, despite a minor reduction in VSC to one window, the overall daylight distribution within the room remains unaffected".*

Finally, the submitted Daylight and Sunlight Assessment has undertaken a Sunlight Assessment and concludes only a minor adverse impact to W1 with assessment of W2 not being applicable given its north facing direction.

Hence, the submitted Daylight and Sunlight Assessment's conclusion that Gaunt House's reception served by W1 and W2 would continue to receive a good level of sunlight is accepted by officers.

Moreover, W1 receives part of its outlook and daylight from across the application site. Whilst this is a historical arrangement, the 'minor adverse' harm identified to Gaunt House in daylight terms would not be so significant as to warrant refusal of this application in this respect.

There would be no loss of light to Sister Cottage because the side wall facing the application site does not have windows and the rear wall extends further back. Therefore, the proposal would not significantly increase overshadowing or any loss of daylight to neighbouring property's habitable rooms.

Overbearing: The proposed two storey rear extension would be located adjacent to the property boundary with Old Gaunt House but located approximately 3m away from the nearest habitable room windows of this neighbouring dwelling. The two-storey rear extension would extend beyond the rear wall of the existing dwelling by approximately 1.5m. The proposed single storey extension would extend beyond the wall of the existing garden room by approximately 1.2m and be adjacent to the shared boundary with Sisters Cottage. It is not considered the proposal would have any negative impact upon the neighbouring properties by way of overbearing impacts given that adequate separation distance from neighbouring habitable room windows would be retained.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Policy CP3 in relation to Neighbour Amenity.

Highway Access and Parking Provision: The Highways Officer has raised no objection and commented: *"No increase in habitable rooms and no impact on parking arrangements."*

Ecology: The Ecology Officer raises no objection and commented:

"I am satisfied that the internal and external inspection methodology and survey effort are adequate for the Ecologist to conclude that the main house has negligible roosting potential. There are no ecological objections to the development as proposed. I suggest informative I17 may be included in the decision notice."

Built Heritage: The Heritage Officer raises no objection to the revised proposal subject to conditions and has commented as follows:

"From a heritage stance with the scheme as proposed, which is considered to have substantially addressed those concerns raised with the design of the pre-application scheme, the significance of River Cottage as designated heritage asset is not harmed. Whilst in terms of the proposal to replace the external render for one appropriate for a traditional building and the removal from the front elevation of the faux Venetian shutters, and metal planters, are beneficial changes to the traditional appearance of River Cottage and in so doing to the character and appearance of the conservation area in which it is situated."

In terms of the submitted details there would appear to be elements requiring further detailing and/or clarification, which whilst ideally should be addressed prior to determination of the applications, however it would be possible to deal with these matters through conditions.

- *Historic fire insurance plaque, noted in the listing description, and depicted on the existing front elevation drawing, is not shown on the proposed drawing. It would be expected that this historic feature be put back once the re-rendering has been done.*
- *Proposed front elevation (drawing PA018 Rev.01) needs clarification with respect to*
 - i) *the rainwater downpipe on the left-hand side, which appears to be in a slightly different position to that shown on the existing. Is it intended to move this?*
 - ii) *The roughcast covered downspout to the left of the front door. Is this to be removed?*
- *The existing elevation drawing includes the terracotta chimney pots however the proposed elevations do not. There is no mention in the works being applied for that there is any intention to remove the existing pots. However, in approved the proposed elevation showing no pots could be misinterpreted.*
- *There are 2no. new windows indicated for the proposed new rear bathroom, for which there are no joinery details.*
- *The brick boundary walling to the western side of River Cottage, which in part runs along the side elevation of the cottage, and which appear to be of a hick width to the rear. The ownership of this boundary wall is not stated and seemingly would belong to Old Gaunt Cottage, itself a listed building. The boundary walling may well hold curtilage listed status to Old Gaunt Cottage. Seemingly the proposed rear new two storey extension, for which there would be an apparent need for foundations, would require part of the boundary wall to be removed/rebuilt to do so. Also, there is the question as to the routing of the rainwater downpipe that appears is intended to pass through the boundary wall. (see attached images below)*

Subject to the above matters being satisfactorily responded to, the Built Heritage Officer otherwise raises no objection to the scheme proposed.”

Officer comment: The agent has confirmed that it is their understanding the rear/side wall adjacent to the driveway of Gaunt House (Figure 6) belongs to River Cottage and the owner does not to extend onto the neighbour's land. The intention is to retain the wall; build over/adjacent to it and keep the new structure including foundations to within River Cottage's boundary.

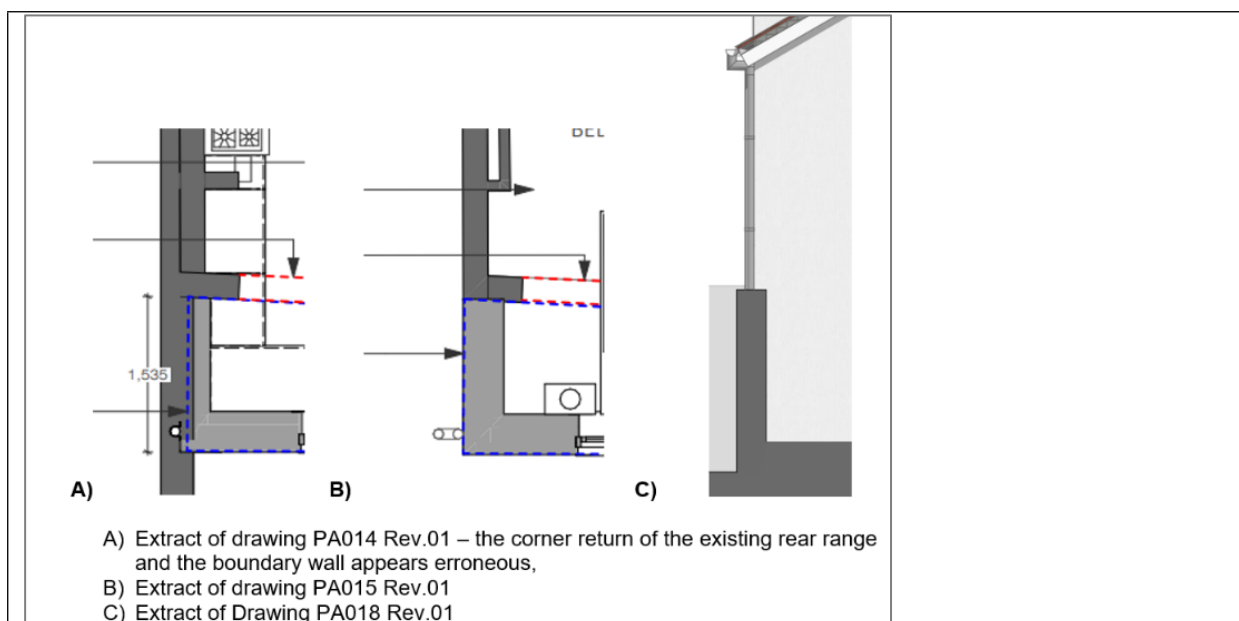


Figure 7 Image from Heritage Officers Report relating to query about ownership of rear boundary wall

The agent has submitted a revised proposed front elevation drawing to show the chimney pots, the 'Fire Insurance Plaque' and the soil pipe.

Requested Conditions

The Council's Heritage Officer has recommended conditions to secure finish or exterior render, schedule or works, matching finishes, slate roof detail, details of secondary glazing, joinery, extraction vents, gas flues, external pipework, and ducting. Also, construction details of the new walling of the rear two-storey extension along the boundary with Old Gaunt House.

Subject to adherence to the above conditions, the proposal accords with National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy TB24 in respect of built heritage requirements.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION	
Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	11 September 2025
Earliest date for decision:	31 May 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	11/09/25