

PLANNING, DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Site: 2 Church Cottages, Wrotham Road, Meopham, DA13 0AB

Client: Mr A. Smith

Prepared by: DHA Planning Ltd

Date: November 2024

1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This statement is prepared on behalf of Mr A. Smith in respect of a householder planning application for a replacement garage (including agricultural store) and reconfiguration of the property access at 2 Church Cottages, Wrotham Road, Meopham.
- 1.1.2 On 20 December 2021, the Council approved planning for reconfiguration of vehicle access for the property and replacement and resiting of a single storey garage under planning reference 20210899. Unfortunately, owing to ongoing construction and remodelling of the property, a result of significant delays due to substantial damage following a scaffold collapse during Storm Eunice, it has not been possible to make a material start (at the time of writing) and so this application seeks to re-secure consent for a garage for a further three years.
- 1.1.3 The reconfigured access is entirely as previously agreed without any change. The proposed garage is of a slightly altered roof design so as to be more cohesive with the host property but is largely of a comparable scale to that previously approved.
- 1.1.4 In designing the latest proposals, regard has been had to the building's historic significance. Ultimately, it is still considered that the removal of the existing modern double garage, and re-siting it further away from the listed building, would have a neutral impact with no harm caused to the significance of the heritage asset. The further removal of the existing hard standing and return to lawn and planting, opens up the greenbelt and along with the removal of the modern brick structures and introduction of the proposed barn style agricultural building enhances the visual environment.
- 1.1.5 It should further be noted that the current location has significant privacy and security issues with the double garages and their associated accesses being in direct view from the public realm, resulting in a number of burglaries and members of the 'public' just trespassing onto the property. This has resulted in police attendance and insurance claims for theft.
- 1.1.6 As part of this development there is also an intent to introduce some sustainability by the property owner to utilise stored natural rainwater by introducing a 7500ltr Rainwater Harvesting System which collect water from both the proposed barn roof as well as the existing dwelling, to provide toilet flushing, washing machine supply and garden irrigation.

1.2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 1.2.1 The site is located on Wrotham Road (A227), situated between the settlements of Hook Green and Meopham. It is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt, The Street Meopham Conservation Area and the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area.
- 1.2.2 The site consists of 2 Church Cottages, an established semi-detached dwelling, and a small amount of the paddock east of the property.
- 1.2.3 The property is Grade II Listed (Listing Number: 1054716) and was first designated in July 1983. Historic England lists the house as:

"C17 timber-framed. Ground floor brick faced. First floor rendered. Tiled roof with rear pentice, but recently raised to 2 storeys with flat roof at north end. Original window openings at south end with wood first floor and cast-iron ground floor casements. Modern casements to north end."



Church Cottages (Not to scale)

- 1.2.4 Originally the property was a smaller oak framed building associated with St John the Baptist Church, which is located on the opposite side of Wrotham Road. The house has been altered since 1948 with a modern front porch addition and a first-floor rear extension and original windows replaced to their current form.
- 1.2.5 Vehicular access is currently gained from the northeast of the site via the main road. This driveway provides access to a double garage in the northwest of the site. An agricultural access lies to north of the residential curtilage and serves a field within the applicant's ownership.
- 1.2.6 The surrounding area is semi-rural in nature, characterised by small clusters and pockets of development. The site bound by residential development to the south (1 Church Cottages) and Saint John the Baptist Church is located on the opposite

side of the road. A small row of detached dwellings is sited behind the church accessed via a private loop road along with a modern brick-built church hall.

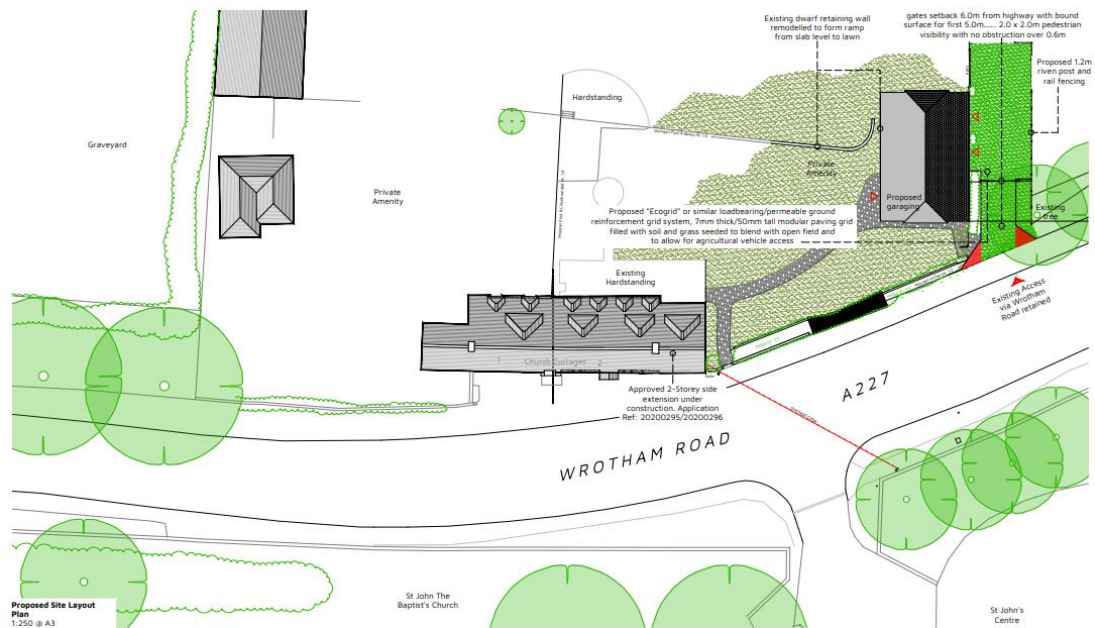
- 1.2.7 Hook Green and Meopham are easily accessible from the site and provide a range services and amenities, including but not limited to; food stores, pubs/ restaurants and schools. Both settlements also offer a range of leisure opportunities and community uses.
- 1.2.8 The nearest bus stop is within 180m of the site (The George) and offers approximately 4 services an hour during the day. These provide regular services (bus no. 416, 308, 1, VIGO1, 305, 308, 416, 695 and 306) into Meopham, Vigo, Sevenoaks, Borough Green and Istead Rise.

1.3 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 1.3.1 According to the online records held by Gravesham Borough Council, 2 Church Cottages has been subject to a small number of planning applications. These include the front porch addition, the remodelled rear extension and works associated with the detached garage.
- 1.3.2 On 10 June 2020 the Council approved planning and listed building consent for a further amended scheme for the extension and alteration to the property under planning reference 20200295 and 20200296 respectively.
- 1.3.3 On 20 December 2021, the Council approved planning for reconfiguration of vehicle access for the property and replacement and resiting of a single storey garage under planning reference 20210899.
- 1.3.4 On 13 July 2023, the Council approved planning and listed building consent to replace structurally unsound construction with green oak frame and reconstruct gable end and shared front chimneys as a result of scaffold collapse under planning permission reference no. 20230441 and 20230533 respectively.
- 1.3.5 It should also be noted that a certificate of lawfulness was issued at appeal APP/K2230/X/19/3233340 that certified that an enlarged area of surrounding land is lawful as garden.

1.4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.4.1 A householder planning application is sought for a replacement double garage (including agricultural store) and reconfiguration of the property access.



Proposed Site Plan (not to scale)

1.4.2 As stated above, an application was previously approved under planning application no. 20210899 for reconfiguration of vehicle access for the property and replacement and resiting of a single storey garage. This application is submitted as a refresh to accommodate minor amendments to the scheme. The revised scheme will see a change in the roof from a hipped roof to a pitched gable roof.

1.4.3 The primary drivers for the proposed development remain:-

- to remedy the dangerous vehicular access arrangements for the site. - In this regard, the proposal seeks to close the unsafe access that suffers from compromised visibility and to provide new access via the adjacent established agricultural access that lies adjacent to the eastern site boundary. As a result of the above, the proposal seeks a minor change of use of the neighbouring land in order to facilitate the new driveway.
- To resolve the current locations significant privacy and security issues with the double garages and their associated accesses being in direct view from the public realm, resulting in a number of burglaries and members of the 'public' just trespassing onto the property. This has resulted in police attendance and insurance claims. - In This regard the new garages would be screened from the road by the existing Laurel Hedge to the side and new Yew hedge to the front and the vehicles parked in the garages due to the space for the agricultural equipment being made available by the new agricultural store.
- The introduction of some sustainability to utilise stored natural rainwater by introducing a 7500ltr Rainwater Harvesting System which collect water from both the proposed barn roof as well as the existing dwelling, to provide toilet flushing, washing machine supply and garden irrigation.

1.4.4 In remedying the access arrangement, it is necessary to secure replacement garage facilities for the storage of the applicant's vehicles.

- 1.4.5 An enlarged building is requested for dual purposes. Indeed, the applicant owns the adjacent field and requires both storage for domestic vehicles as well as farm machinery essential for the maintenance of the adjacent agricultural land. Including a ride on mower.
- 1.4.6 As a consequence of the above, two-thirds of the garage represent a straight replacement domestic building. The residual third is sought based upon the need of the applicant and the long-term maintenance of the land.

1.5 THE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.5.2 For the purpose of this planning application the development plan includes the Gravesham Core Strategy (2014) and the saved policies of the Local Plan First Review (1994).
- 1.5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023 must also be considered as a material consideration when determining planning applications.
- 1.5.4 This section of the statement therefore highlights the aspects of the development plan and NPPF that are relevant.

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 1.5.5 The NPPF is built on the premise that 'sustainable development' should go ahead without delay. In this respect, paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform several roles:
- a) an economic objective – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
 - b) a social objective – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
 - c) an environmental objective – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

Achieving sustainable development (Section 2)

- 1.5.6 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF goes on to state that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be at the heart of both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision-taking this means;
- a) approving development proposals that accord with the up-to-date development plan without delay; and

- b) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important are out of date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Decision taking (section 4)

- 1.5.7 Paragraph 38 outlines that LPAs should approach decision taking in a positive and creative way to and should seek to approve the delivery of sustainable development and goes on to state that LPAs should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

Achieving well-designed and beautiful places (section 12)

- 1.5.8 Paragraph 128 states that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Protecting Green Belt land (section 13)

- 1.5.9 Section 13 of the NPPF has regard to the protection of Green Belts. Paragraph 152 confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition harmful, to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. However, paragraph 154 states that there are several exceptions to this, including the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- 1.5.10 Taking the above into consideration, the proposal represents an 'appropriate' form of development in the Green Belt.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (section 16)

- 1.5.11 Paragraph 200 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 1.5.12 In determining planning applications, paragraph 203 outlines local planning authorities should take account of:
 - a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality.
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 1.5.13 When considering the impacts of a proposed development, paragraph 205 notes that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation irrespective of the degree of potential harm to the asset.
- 1.5.14 Paragraph 208 sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Furthermore, paragraph 209 states that in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or local and the significance of the heritage asset.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- 1.5.15 The existing C13 policy is concerned with extensions to dwellings in the countryside. It states that extensions to dwellings will be considered on their merits but the Borough Council will expect the following criteria to be satisfied: -
 - i. The existing dwelling must be an "original dwelling" in permanent use as a dwelling.
 - ii. There will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.
 - iii. Those extensions which provide essential basic amenities such as a bathroom, toilet or kitchen, which are currently not available or are clearly inadequate, will normally be permitted.
 - iv. The extension shall not be in a form which would facilitate the future formation of a separate residential curtilage.
 - v. the dwelling to be enlarged must have sufficient curtilage to accommodate the extension without undue visual intrusion into the open countryside.
 - vi. The appearance, massing, scale, form and materials of any extension shall be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.
 - vii. Proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.
- 1.5.16 Policy C13 does not refer specifically to extensions in the Green Belt and the policies relating to Green Belt development in the Local Plan first review are now out of date.

- 1.5.17 The Councils draft Development Management Policies Plan (Regulation 18) provides clearer guidance on what would be classed as a proportionate and appropriate addition to a building in the Green Belt (policy DM6), although cannot be attributed full weight at this stage.
- 1.5.18 Policy TC2 outlines the Councils approach to applications affecting listed buildings:
- 1.5.19 The Borough Council will adopt the following approach to applications affecting listed buildings: -
- i. Proposals which involve the demolition of listed buildings will not be granted consent unless the applicant is able to demonstrate substantial and overriding reasons why such consent should be forthcoming. In those few cases where the Borough Council is satisfied that there is no alternative but to grant consent for such demolition, all available means will be used to secure early and appropriate redevelopment.
 - ii. In the case of applications for development involving alterations or extensions to listed buildings or affecting the setting of listed buildings, the primary consideration of the Borough Council will be the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals will also need to be sympathetic to the listed building in terms of massing, scale, appearance and materials.
 - iii. Applications for the change of use of listed buildings will be considered on their merits, in relation to the land use policies set out in this Written Statement. A major consideration will be whether the character or appearance of the listed buildings will suffer as a result.
- 1.5.20 Policy TC3 sets out the Councils approach to applications for development within or affecting conservation areas:
- 1.5.21 The Borough Council will adopt the following approach to applications for development within or affecting conservation areas: -
- i. Where development is acceptable in relation to other policies in this Plan, it will be carefully judged for its impact and will be expected to make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The Borough Council will expect applications to contain sufficient details to enable the impact of the proposal upon the conservation area to be assessed.
 - ii. The demolition of unlisted buildings will be resisted unless the Borough Council is satisfied that the existing building is harmful to the conservation area and that the proposals for redevelopment or other use of the site will be beneficial. To this end, the Borough Council may, in suitable cases, require an agreement for the replacement of the building or other suitable treatment of the site, prior to the granting of conservation area consent for demolition.

1.6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Gravesham Development Management policies document (regulation 18 draft)

- 1.6.1 The Council previously consulted on a Development Management Policies Document, which sets out detailed draft policies which could be used to consider planning applications. When adopted these policies would replace the saved policies from the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994).
- 1.6.2 The Development Management Policies Document is at regulation 18 stage and, therefore, should only be given limited weight. However, notwithstanding the councils published position on what constitutes an 'appropriate' and 'proportionate' extension in the Green Belt, the draft policies are considered material in assessing compliance with the NPPF.
- 1.6.3 Policy DM6 (extensions, replacement buildings and ancillary development in the green belt) states that proposal for Proposals for the extension of an original building in the Green Belt will only be allowed where the extension will not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building unless justified by very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm. The following will be taken into account in determining whether the proposal is proportionate:
- a) its footprint, floorspace ii and volume compared to the original building; and
 - b) whether its scale, mass and height is subservient to the original building;
- 1.6.4 An 'original building' is as it existed on 01 July 1948 or, if built after 01 July, as it was first built prior to any subsequent extensions.
- 1.6.5 The pre-ambble to the main policy text states that in considering whether a proposed extension is proportionate, as a general rule the council considers extensions that exceed the overall volume of an original building by 33% or more will be disproportionate.
- 1.6.6 Policies DM43 (listed buildings) and DM44 (conservation areas) are also relevant as they set out the Councils draft position regarding development involving listed building and that affect Conservation areas.

1.7 DESIGN AND ACCESS

- 1.7.1 In June 2013 changes were introduced under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013, which altered requirements relating to Design & Access Statements. In April 2015 the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2015 was introduced, however, the alterations to requirements relating to Design & Access Statements remain the same.
- 1.7.2 As a result of this change such statements are only required for major development proposals, Listed Building applications and applications within a

Conservation Areas where the application relates to the provision of one or more dwelling houses, or the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space created by the development is 100 square metres or more.

1.7.3 Design and access statements are required to:

- a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
- b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
- c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;
- d) state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and
- e) explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

1.7.4 As the proposal is for works within the curtilage of a listed building, a Design and Access Statement is required for this application. The following section therefore addresses the legal requirement for such information.

1.7.5 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) Will function and add to the overall quality of an area;
- b) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting;
- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place;
- e) Optimise the potential of sites to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development; and
- f) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.

1.7.6 As discussed within the earlier section of the planning statement, 2 Church Cottages is a grade II listed dwelling located within The Street Meopham Conservation Area. It is also judged to affect the setting of the grade I listed Church of St John the Baptist, located on the opposite side of Wrotham Road. Accordingly, the design approach has paid full regard to the significance of these designated heritage assets to ensure national heritage policy is met. The property is also located in the Metropolitan Green Belt and therefore to be an 'appropriate' form of development it must be proportionate to the original dwelling.

- 1.7.7 Having regard to the above, the design ethos has been to deliver replacement access and parking provision in a manner befitting the heritage asset. In this regard, the proposal seeks to remove urban influences in the form of a vehicle access, hardstanding, and domestic garage and re-site them further away from the listed building, thus reducing the influence on the setting.
- 1.7.8 The amount has been dictated based upon the size of the existing building to be replaced and the agricultural need for the upkeep of the plot and surroundings and is wholly consistent with the previous approval.
- 1.7.9 The design of the proposed alterations have focussed on a functional building of traditional Kentish design. The dual use of the building results in building of quality, but not in a manner that seeks to compete with the heritage asset.
- 1.7.10 A vehicle access exists from Wrotham Road leading onto an area of hardstanding to the north of the dwelling. This will be closed, the entry replanted and the hardstanding removed. The existing agricultural access will become the access to the property.
- 1.7.11 The proposal does not seek any changes to the parking levels.
- 1.7.12 The proposal includes the planting of a Yew Hedge along the eastern boundary of the site to close the gap left by the existing access.

1.8 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The principle of development

- 1.8.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.8.2 In terms of local policy, the adopted Development Plan for Gravesham Borough consists of the Core Strategy (2014) and the Local Plan First Review (1994).
- 1.8.3 The most relevant policy in the determination the proportionality of an extension is Policy C13 of the Local Plan First Review, which states:

'Proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot'.
- 1.8.4 Having regard to these requirements, there is little doubt that by moving the building away from the listed cottage, it will be discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot. Furthermore, it is important to stress that unlike policies for physical extensions, the policy does introduce a size threshold.
- 1.8.5 The development plan is silent in respect of detailed requirements for agricultural buildings.

- 1.8.6 In respect of material consideration, section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 is concerned with protecting Green Belt land. It emphasises that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 1.8.7 Paragraph 152 states that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. However, paragraph 154 goes on to state that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate for:
- buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- 1.8.8 The above in mind, national policy provides further support for the scheme.
- 1.8.9 In the absence of development plan conflict, the proposal is acceptable.

Heritage considerations

- 1.8.10 As part of previous proposals for the property, heritage assessments have been carried out by Heritage Collective. In summary, Heritage Collective have identified that the two dwellings of Church Cottages (nos.1 and 2) are likely to have originally started out life as a single unit which was later, likely pre 19th century, converted into two separate units. The list description describes the building as 17th century and no evidence has been sourced that dispute or verifies its age.
- 1.8.11 There is some speculation that the cottages may have originally been in use as a Church House, the (typically medieval) equivalent of a church hall for parishioners' usage. There is little evidence for this bar the close proximity of the church to the cottages. Common place features often found on Church Houses, including first floor entrances and external stairs, are not present at the cottages.
- 1.8.12 The building is typical of the local period vernacular displaying traditional construction, plan form and detailing. Its frame and infill are not unusual or pioneering but follow the established regional patterns for timber framed structures.
- 1.8.13 Both units have undergone alteration and extension that have brought about site specific variation. With regards to no.2, a number of these alterations have had a significant detrimental effect on the significance of the building. Primarily this relates to the large mid-20th century two storey rear extension which has resulted in the loss of the catslide rear roof and the obstruction of the original (internalised) rear elevation. As part of the current approved Planning Application and Listed Building Consent Mr A.Smith has tried to remedy the previous harm done in part by demolishing the unsympathetic extensions and reinstating the original rear catslide roof.
- 1.8.14 The two cottages are of illustrative historic interest derived from their character and form and as an example of a regional period building type. The buildings also hold a degree of associative historic interest related to the village of Meopham within which the dwellings form an important part of the historic streetscape

illustrating domestic arrangements of the 17th century onwards. Further historic interest could be derived from the former use of the building as a Church House should evidence be discovered which confirms this.

- 1.8.15 As a multiphase building containing standing material and internal features from a variety of periods, Church Cottages possesses a degree of archaeological potential to yield further evidence about the past and the creators of this place which may not be reflected in other documentary sources.
- 1.8.16 Church of St John the Baptist (grade I) is situated opposite the site. The grade I listed building is of high significance as demonstrated by its high grade of listing. The church is a high status medieval ecclesiastical structure. The building's architectural interest is primarily due to its external form and appearance which is in the Perpendicular style and features flint paired alongside rubblestone dressings with small areas of red brickwork.
- 1.8.17 The church dates originally from the early 14th century (thought to have been completed by 1327) and was a complete rebuild of an earlier church on the site. However, the church has been altered several times since its original construction, most notably in the 19th century. In 1858 the entire church was re-roofed and in 1874 more fundamental changes were made with the top stage of the tower being added to replace a former spire. The extended tower is a dominant and impressive aspect of the building which features in a number of both long and close range views. At this time the chancel was also refurbished, and the west door and a number of windows are also 19th century replacements.
- 1.8.18 The Street, Meopham was first designated as a conservation area in January 1970 and subsequently extended in 1999. The conservation area is a centred on the historic streets of Wrotham Road, Shipley Hills Road and The Street which form the original settlement of Meopham.
- 1.8.19 In formulating the proposal full regard has been had to these assets and their importance. However, on the basis that it seeks to remove modern urban influences with low key alternative, all assets will be adequately preserved. As such, the proposed development would be in accordance with the requirements of Section 16 of the NPPF and relevant local planning policy. There would also be preservation for the purposes of the decision maker's duty under Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Impact on residential amenity

- 1.8.20 Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy states that new development will be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land.
- 1.8.21 The proposal includes the erection of a replacement garage and closure of a private access. As such, it is considered that there are no aspects of the proposal that have the potential to affect residential amenity.

Flood risk

- 1.8.22 Paragraph 173 of the NPPF states when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere, and only

consider development appropriate in areas at risk of flooding when informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment.

- 1.8.23 Having regard to the Environment Agency Flood Risk Map for planning the site falls within Flood Zone 1 which has the lowest risk of flooding. Accordingly, a Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment is not required to support this application.

1.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 1.9.1 This statement is prepared on behalf of Mr A. Smith in respect of a full planning application for a replacement garage (including agricultural store) and reconfiguration of the property access at 2 Church Cottages, Wrotham Road, Meopham.
- 1.9.2 On 20 December 2021, the Council approved planning for reconfiguration of vehicle access for the property and replacement and resiting of a single storey garage under planning reference 20210899. Unfortunately, owing to ongoing construction and remodelling of the property, it has not been possible to make a material start (at the time of writing) and so this application seeks to re-secure consent for a garage for a further three years.
- 1.9.3 The reconfigured access is entirely as previously agreed without any change. The proposed garage is of a slightly altered roof design so as to be more cohesive with the host property but is largely of a comparable scale to that previously approved.
- 1.9.4 In designing the building due regard has been had to the buildings historic significance in line with national policy. It is considered that the removal of the existing modern garage, and re-siting it further away from the listed building, would have a neutral impact with no harm caused to the significance of the heritage asset. The design will enable the further removal of the existing large hard standing with a return to lawn and planting, and along with the removal of the modern brick structures, enhances the conservation area and opening up of the green belt.
- 1.9.5 In designing the scheme, the building will include the introduction of a significant 7500 ltr Rainwater Harvesting System incorporating the surface water from the main dwelling and a utility water supply for both domestic utility use to the main dwelling as well as the provision of garden irrigation.
- 1.9.6 The principle of development has already been established via the previous approval of planning permission for reconfiguration of vehicle access for the property and replacement and resiting of a single storey garage under planning application no. 20210899. This application is submitted as a resubmission of this application to accommodate minor amendments to the scheme.
- 1.9.7 In terms of principle of development, policy CP13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) states that 'Proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot'.
- 1.9.8 Having regard to these requirements, there is little doubt that by moving the building away from the listed cottage, it will be discreetly sited and subservient to

the scale of the main dwelling on the plot. Furthermore, it is important to stress that, unlike policies for physical extensions, the policy does introduce a size threshold.

- 1.9.9 The development plan is silent in respect of detailed requirements for agricultural buildings.
- 1.9.10 In respect of material consideration, section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 is concerned with protecting Green Belt land. It emphasises that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 1.9.11 Paragraph 152 states that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. However, paragraph 154 goes on to state that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate for:
- buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- 1.9.12 The above in mind, national policy provides further support for the scheme.
- 1.9.13 Taking all the above into account, the proposal accords with the relevant policies contained within the development plan and so we respectfully request that planning permission be granted.