

Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————

Clerk & Responsible Officer
Shorne Village Hall
The Street
Shorne
Nr Gravesend
Kent DA12 3EA

E-mail: clerk@shorneparishcouncil.org



4th October 2023

Application ref 20230942

Starwood Pear Tree Lane Shorne Gravesend Kent DA12 3JU

Demolition of existing stables and removal of containers and hardsurfacing and conversion of existing concrete framed structure to form detached bungalow with three bedrooms plus single storey rear extension, front porch and use of existing access.

This is a reapplication of refused Applications Ref 20220531 and 20221342 with minor alterations, so effectively almost the same. Hence the reasons for refusal will also be the same.

The Parish Council again has to **OBJECT STRONGLY** to this application for the following reasons and comments:

1) **Plots of land, land ownership, access:**

The land area shown is composed of parts of two parcels of land however the ownership remains confused:

- the rear land of Starwood K424735, stated previously and presently as being in the ownership of the applicant
- the narrow access track on the west side that is part of K654169, this was established previously to be in the ownership of the applicant's children but is again now stated to be in the ownership of the applicant.

The actual situation requires verification.

The manner in which proper and permanent access is to be maintained to the rest of K654169 needs to be clarified as no proper route of access is shown. It is not appropriate for access to be via a residential garden, or a route that might come to be in different ownership. As the existing

accumulated structures, including the barn structure, are said to be redundant and are to be removed, we suggest that the original track on K654169 should be reinstated.

2) Green Belt Location; Landscape character

The proposed property is located in the Green Belt where a new dwelling would not normally be permitted due to detrimental impact on openness. It remains the case that no valid “very special circumstances” have been cited that might override this restriction.

The proposed location would also cause harm to local Landscape Character.

3) Backland development and precedents

The proposal would be a backland development which is by definition undesirable. Contrary to the applicant’s statement that (“There are many examples of long access roads providing access to backland dwellings along this stretch of Pear Tree Lane”, see applicant’s point 6.19), there are in fact no backland residential buildings on the entire north side of Pear Tree Lane. On the south side there are only two: one purpose-built residential property, “Furze Bank” which was permitted in the 1950’s, and “Sunridge” which is a mixed-use building, previously related to the historic Bushylees Farmhouse and which was converted from genuine stable use.

Permission of this proposal would create a precedent in the area, particularly as Starwood is already set well back on its plot, which could lead to other backland proposals being impossible to resist.

4) Out of character with the area; Amenity of neighbouring dwellings

The area is characterised by single detached houses built on large plots, this proposal would be out of character with the area.

The proposal will be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings, especially “Colesmead” to the east.

5) Proof of redundancy of existing buildings

It is claimed that the hay barn and various stable and storage structures are all redundant however further information is required proving this in case removals and any conversion might lead to pressure for more barn and stable structures to be built elsewhere on the properties owned by the applicant and his children, so leading to further erosion of openness of Green Belt land.

However, if they are all truly redundant then there is no valid reason why they should not anyway all be removed.

6) Suitability of structure for conversion

The barn structure was built on (at the time) non-residential land that was previously orchards. It appears to be merely a concrete frame with some timber posts. There does not appear to presently be a floor or any existing services. We question whether the existing structure can be regarded as a building suitable for conversion and whether conversion to a residence can be achieved without considerable engineering works.

7) Other points about plans, layout and design/changes since the previous applications:

- A double gate is still shown in the northern boundary fence, clarification is required over the need for and proposed use of this non-residential feature (see Point 1 above).
- The layout remains the “wrong way round” on the site, with the “front door” at the rear so not relating to the roadway but rather to the open countryside. In our opinion the layout should be turned round by 180 degrees.
- The previously proposed two car garage at the back of the site has been replaced by three open air parking spaces further south, towards the roadway.
- The plans do not indicate how surface drainage and sewerage needs will be met.
- The Applicant references other planning decisions however these relate to very different locations and circumstances.
- The Applicant considers that their proposal can be regarded as “infilling” however the site is outside the village/settlement envelope and there is no other property at the rear of the Starwood curtilage. There is also local precedent against their view as, at the land adjacent to The See Ho, Appeals were dismissed on two occasions, see the latest under ref APP/K2230/W/20/3258951.

The Parish Council **OBJECTS STRONGLY** to this application. **We request that the application should be refused**, and that enforcement action should be taken concerning the various buildings and structures that have been erected without planning permission, including the menage constructed in Starmore Wood, as discussed in a previous decision notice.

In view of the extent of built form proposed on the site, we also request that, should Officers be minded to permit the application, then Conditions should be attached withdrawing permitted development rights for the entirety of both the quoted Land Registry titles, to prevent further encroachment onto the Green Belt, open agricultural land and woodland.

However, should officers be minded to permit this application we would also request that the application should be called in to the Planning Committee to enable wider discussion and informed participation in any decision.