



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No:	20221182
Location:	Woodhill House, Woodhill, Meopham, Gravesend
Description:	Demolition of the existing storage building and the construction of a new garage/car port ancillary to the main residence.
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs L Tomlinson
Site Visit Date:	Desktop assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Design and Access Statement
Drawing no. 209PD-01 (Existing floor plan, Elevations, Site Plan)
Drawing no. 209PD-02 Rev. A (Proposed Elevations, Floor Plan)
Drawing no. 109PD-03 Rev. A (Proposed Site Plan, Location Plan)

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20220514	Demolition of the existing storage building and the construction of a new garage/car port ancillary to the main residence.	Refused	08.07.2022
20171147	Erection of a timber frame outbuilding for the storing of equipment to support the equestrian use.	Refused	13.04.2018
20120276	Erection of stable block comprising five stables and a tack room and construction of a ménage.	Permitted	18.09.2012
20050656	Erection of a detached stable block and hay store.	Permitted	10.11.2005
20020379	Erection of single storey extension on south-west elevation to form orangery & indoor swimming pool enclosure, plant room and changing room/shower room/w.c.	Permitted	27.09.2002
19990493	Erection of a two storey rear extension to form enlarged living room and enlarged kitchen with two bedrooms and ensuite bathroom over.	Permitted	30.11.1999
19990494	Details of conversion of stable building into a dwelling pursuant to conditions 2 and 4 of planning permission granted under reference GR/98/378 including provision of integral garage, alterations to all elevations and	Permitted	30.11.1999

	construction of new slate roof; formation of residential curtilage.		
19970878	Application for Lawful Development Certificate in respect of use of dwelling for unrestricted residential occupation.	Granted	31.03.1998
19910749	Removal of agricultural condition attached to planning permission ref. no. GR/75/375.	Refused	27.02.1992
19900262	Erection of two storey side extension to form enlarged kitchen and dining room with two bed-rooms, ensuite bathroom and ensuite shower room over and erection of a first floor over the existing detached storage/games room at the side to form attic/store.	Refused Appeal dismissed	21.08.1990 12.04.1991
19840113	Change of use of land from agriculture to the keeping of horses continued use of former agricultural building for the stabling of horses and erection of a dutch barn	Permitted	25.07.1984
19750375	Erection of a two storey replacement farmhouse and double garage	Permitted	19.08.1975

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development and Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- SPD – Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (October 2021)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2026

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultee Responses

Meopham Parish Council

Meopham Parish Council raises no objection providing it meets the requirements of GBC's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide.

Kent Downs AONB

No response.

KCC PROW

Upon looking at the plans I do not believe that the application will materially affect the Right of Way.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letter to 1 property, on site and in the press. The consultation periods expired on 28 November and 9 December 2022 respectively.

No letters of representation have been received.

Local Ward Councillors were also consulted, and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing storage building and the construction of a new garage/car port ancillary to the main residence.

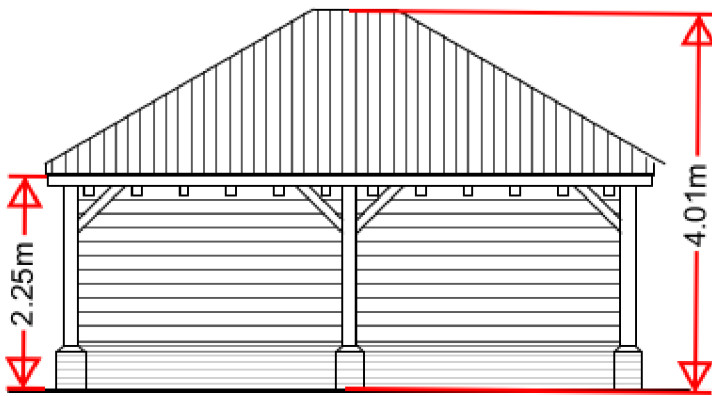
The existing wooden storage building (shed) is quite dilapidated. It has a pitched roof up to 2.6m high to the ridge and 1.9m to eaves. It is 3.02m deep and 6.126m wide.

The proposed building will be located on the site of the existing shed. It will have a pitched and hipped roof up to 4.37m in height to the ridge, and 2.26m to eaves. The footprint will be 6.189m deep and 6.189m wide. The structure will be oak framed with Cedar wood cladding under a plain red tiled roof.

The building will comprise a car port for two cars. The building will be open to the front.

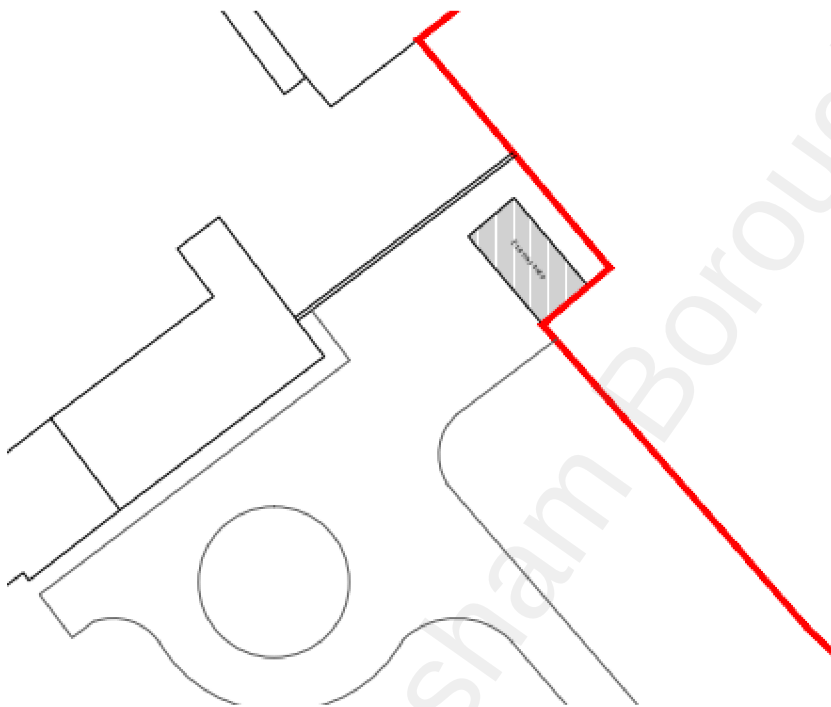
There are currently no facilities on the site for covered parking.

Proposed front elevation:

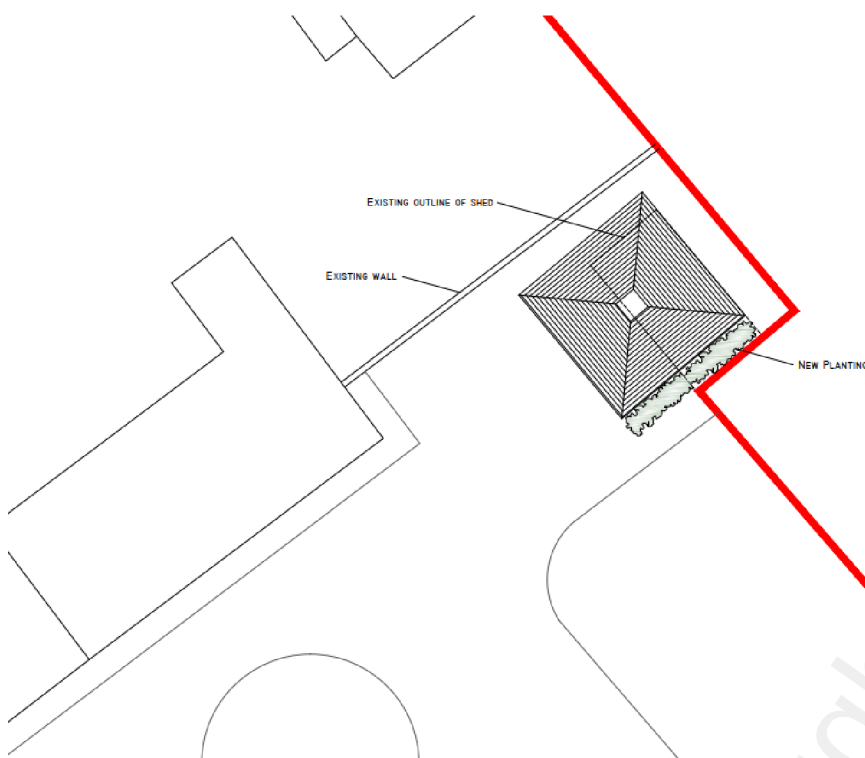


The proposed outbuilding will be accessed from the existing driveway for the house:

Existing site plan:



Proposed site plan:



Background and Main Issues

The application site is located in the countryside in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and in the Green Belt. It is also located in the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

Similar proposals have been submitted twice before. The first was submitted in 2017 (see Planning History above). The main reason for this previously refused application 20171147 for a timber frame storage building for the equestrian use at the site in the same location as that proposed under the current application, centred around the excessive scale, mass and height of the building and the resultant impact on the Green Belt.

A subsequent revised application (20220514) for an ancillary garage/car port was refused on the following grounds:

The excessive size of the proposed outbuilding would detract from the openness of the Green Belt, encroach into the countryside, and fail to conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. As such, the proposal would fail to comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 130, 137, 147, 148, 149, 174 and 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Likewise, the main issues for consideration with this proposal are as follows:

- Principle of development in the Green Belt
- Impact on openness and the character and appearance of the surrounding area

As with the previous proposal, there are no design, residential amenity or highways concerns.

The previous refusal ground of application 20220514 will be borne in mind in terms of assessing the revised proposal, in order to determine whether this ground has been adequately addressed and therefore overcome.

Principle of development in the Green Belt

Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (paragraph 137 of the NPPF 2021). Paragraph 147 of the NPPF 2021 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt (paragraph 149 of the NPPF 2021). However, there are exceptions to this which, as in the case of this proposal, include:

- (c) 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;
- (d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- (g) the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development or would not cause substantial harm to openness and would contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need.

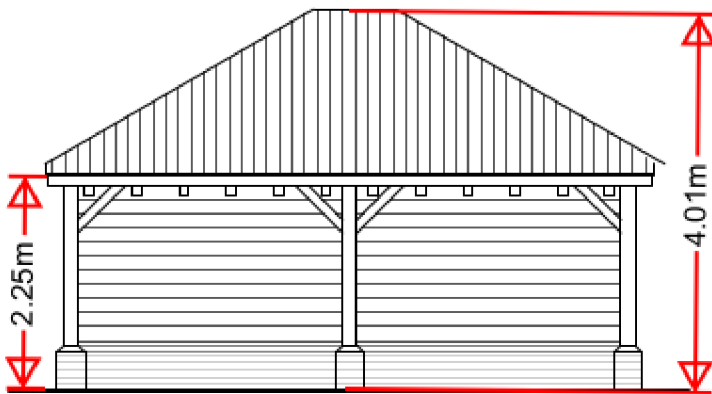
Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the Core Strategy 2014.

Saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994 relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, and generally seeks to maintain the open character of the Green Belt and retain a stock of rural dwellings of modest size. In relation to this proposal, criteria ii) states there will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling. Criteria (vii) is also relevant, which 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.

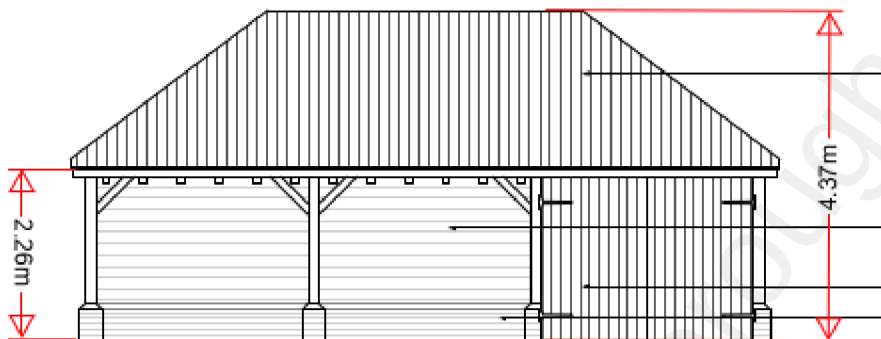
The proposed outbuilding would be incidental to the main dwelling, as it lies within its clearly defined curtilage and would have a close visual relationship with it. The proposal could therefore be treated either as an extension to the dwelling or as a replacement building; both of which essentially consider the size of the resultant building when assessing the impact on the Green Belt.

Turning to this matter, the proposed outbuilding has been reduced in size and height compared to the previously proposed outbuilding and would be domestic and ancillary to the main house, Woodhill House, for a car port. The domestic storage element of the proposal has been removed.

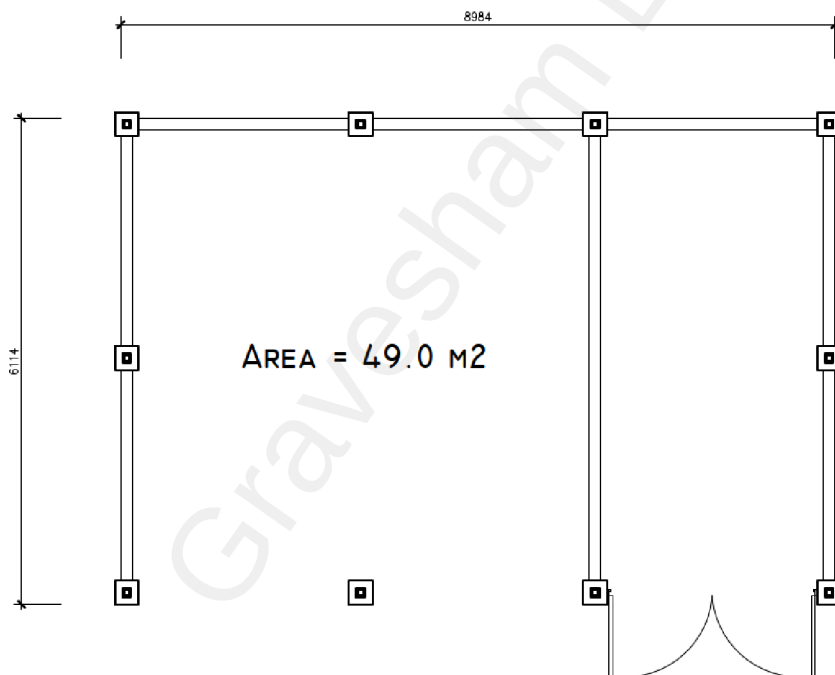
Proposed front elevation:



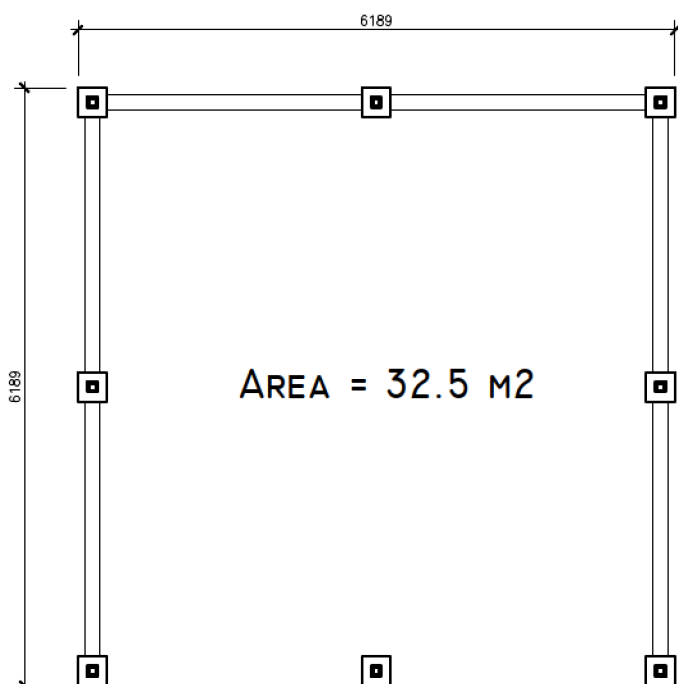
Previous front elevation (20220514)



Previous ground floor plan (20220514)



Proposed ground floor plan:



However, it would be larger than the existing outbuilding:

	Existing outbuilding	Previous (20220514)	Proposed outbuilding	Increase over existing (%)
Gross external floor area (m²)	18.5 m ²	54.9 (>36.4) m ²	32.5 (>14)	43 %
Ridge / eaves height (m)	2.6 / 1.9 m	4.37 / 2.25 m	4.37 / 2.25 m	40 / 16 %

Whilst the height and width of the proposed outbuilding have been reduced from the previously refused proposal, it would remain larger than the existing outbuilding. The existing house has been extended previously (application 20020379 appears to have been the only implemented permission and added just under one third to the size of the dwelling (from 316m² to 411m²)). In terms of floorspace, the addition of the proposed outbuilding would exceed the overall one third extension allowance set out in Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994, but only by a further 5%.

Whilst the proposed garage/carport would be larger than the existing outbuilding, within the context of the main dwelling and considering its domestic use, the garage would not be a disproportionate addition to the property. Furthermore, as the garage would be located on the site of an existing building, this would restrict the spread of development on the site. The proposal would therefore be an appropriate development in the Green Belt.

However, as part of the assessment of this proposal, the impact of such a development on the openness of the Green Belt must also be considered.

Impact on Openness and Character and Appearance of Surrounding Area

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF 2021 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Paragraph 001 of the Planning Practice Guidance 2019 on Green Belts looks to assess the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt by taking into account the spatial and visual aspects of a development, its duration and remediability, and the activity levels

generated.

As established above, the application proposal would involve an appropriate form of development at the application site.

The application site can be described as previously developed land as it is part of an existing residential site. As the proposed development would not provide affordable housing, the proposal can also be judged against the first part of paragraph 149(g) of the NPPF 2021, which seeks to prevent a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development on a site. In this case, the proposal is considered as appropriate development but its impact on the openness of the Green Belt must be also assessed, and in turn the impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The existing outbuilding is a modestly sized domestic storage building within the curtilage of a large, detached dwelling on a very generous plot. The proposed replacement outbuilding will introduce a larger structure than what is existing, and this will reduce the openness of the Green Belt in this specific location.

However, overall, the proposed outbuilding would be in the same location as an existing domestic structure within the curtilage of a residential dwelling, which is set well back and screened from the road, would be subservient to the main dwelling in terms of its dimensions and scale, and is clearly designed to be a subservient structure. The proposed outbuilding would not alter the bulk or appearance of the main dwelling and has been reduced in size to the extent that whilst it may be larger than the existing building, it would not be considered to adversely impact the openness of the Green Belt.





Paragraph 130 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy reflects these aims and requires that new development is well-designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The site lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Reflective of paragraph 176 of the NPPF 2021, Policy SD1 of the Management Plan 2021-2026 recognises the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB as the primary purpose of the designation, and this is given the highest level of protection. Policy SD8 states that proposals which negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the AONB will be opposed unless they can be satisfactorily mitigated.

The application site is also located in the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area and as such, Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2014 is also relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) will be taken into account in determining applications.

In relation to the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area, the LCA states that the overall condition of the landscape is moderate and that it has moderate sensitivity. It recommends that the strong landscape elements of the area should be conserved, whilst design standards should be defined to halt the erosion of the area with inappropriate development.

Woodhill House and the existing outbuilding are set back from the road and there are trees/shrubs to the front of the property which help screen the property from public view. The larger scale of the proposed outbuilding, which would be set forward and to the side of the main dwelling would be partially visible from the front of the site.

The proposed replacement outbuilding is well designed with the use of high-quality materials. It is traditional and in keeping with the character and appearance of domestic storage/garaging in the rural area. The layout is acceptable, and access would be appropriate. Overall, the impact from a public vantage point would be limited and very localised. Whilst the proposal would result in additional built development on the site, the garage/carport would be subservient in relation to the main dwelling and would not represent a significant change in the overall character and appearance of the site. It would not therefore result in any significant adverse visual impact on landscape character. These factors together would limit the impact on the landscape and on openness. In a similar vein, the proposed outbuilding would not be considered to be intrusive within its AONB setting.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed outbuilding would not detract from the openness of the Green Belt and would conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the AONB and Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. As such, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 130, 149, 174 and 176 of the NPPF 2021.

A condition should be attached ensuring that the garage is not used for any other purpose other than a garage to ensure its use remains incidental.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Under this revised proposal, the reduced size of the proposed garage/carport would not harm the openness of the Green Belt and would conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. As such, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 130, 149, 174 and 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Approve with conditions.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	20 December 2022	Dated:	20 December 2022