
SUMMARY REPORT

Application Ref:	20250749
Site Address:	Carl Ekman House, Tooley Street, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 9PN
Application Description:	Conversion of existing store and vacant area into office space. Conversion of separate store into pram and cycle storage spaces with enhancements to the communal area with installation of secure door between entrance lobby and corridor. The front entrance landscape will be updated from grass to a resin surface with two types, and wooden planters installed.
Applicant:	Gravesend Borough Council
Agent:	Mrs Awa Sarr, Potter Raper
Ward:	Northfleet And Springhead
Parish:	Non-Parish Area
Decision due date:	21 January 2026
Publicity expiry date:	05 September 2025
Decision Level:	Planning Committee Decision
Reason for referral:	Council Application
Recommendation:	PERMISSION – subject to conditions

Summary of Reasons for Recommendations

The proposed front infill extension and canopy to Carl Ekman House will provide a sheltered entrance and much improved visual appearance to the building. The extension and canopy will frame the main entrance to the front of the building, which along with other external improvements to frontage will significantly enhance the character of the street scene and the amenity of future occupiers of the block.

Furthermore, the conversion of existing stores into a purpose-built office space and pram / bicycle stores will provide a better use of spaces within the building, to the benefit of future occupiers.

The development is in accordance with the Development Plan and national planning policy, and therefore, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

MAIN REPORT

1. Site Description and Surroundings

- 1.1. Carl Ekman House is a large block of flats constructed in the late 1960s, located within the urban area of Northfleet. The block is a H shape unit consisting of 14 storeys and 52 flats.



- 1.2. There have been some external improvement works undertaken to the building in recent years, with the panelling updated and painted.

2. Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20221062	Construction of front lobby area with canopy and new communal front entrance doors to include the redecoration of railings.	PERMITTED	06.12.2022
19650026	Erection of a fourteen-storey block of fifty-two flats and the construction of an underground car park for twenty-eight cars and twenty-eight car parking spaces	PERMITTED	06.07.1965

3. Proposal

- 3.1. This application seeks planning permission for the change of use to convert a store and vacant area (B8 class) into an office space area (E class) and another store into a separate pram & cycle storage spaces.
- 3.2. The proposal also contains improvements to the communal area, adding a secure new door between the entrance lobby and corridor to provide additional protected lobby area. There are also changes proposed to the front entrance landscape to a resin surface and wooden planters.

4. Planning Policy, Development Plan and other Material Considerations

4.1. Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 - Sustainable Development
- CS18 - Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles

4.2. Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

4.3. National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places

5. Consultations and Publicity Responses

External Consultations

5.1. HSE Fire –

- *Scope of consultation* - The above consultation relates to “Carl Ekman House”, an existing 14 storey (41.6m) building. The building contains residential flats on floors 1 – 14 with the ground floor containing a vacant space currently being used for storage and refuse.

The proposal seeks the change of use of the ground floor from class B8 to class E, to change the vacant space to office space, a separate pram (x18) and cycle store (x15). Changes also include improvements to the communal area, adding a new door to provide additional protected lobby and changes to the landscape.

The building is served by a single protected stair with dry rising fire main, and does not contain a firefighting shaft or firefighting lift (the fire statement states that the lift is a “firemans” lift).

Section 6 of the fire statement confirms that the development has been designed using Approved Document B Volume 1 (‘ADBv1’). HSE has assessed the application on that basis.

- *Consultation* - Following a review of the information provided in the planning application, HSE is content with the fire safety design as set out in the project description, to the extent it affects land use planning considerations.

- *Supplementary information* - The following information does not contribute to HSE's substantive response and should not be used for the purposes of decision making by the local planning authority.
- *External wall* - It is noted the above application includes the installation and replacement of windows and doors. Whilst window/door frames and glass are exempt from the regulations regarding fire performance classifications of relevant building external walls, it is advised that there is a potential risk that any replacement work could affect the integrity of fire safety precautions such as fire resisting cavity barriers around openings in external walls. The applicant is advised that persons with competence in fire safety should undertake the proposed works.

It is also noted that section 6 of the fire statement confirms that the external wall system achieves the European Classification of A2-s1,d0 or better. It will be for the applicant to demonstrate compliance at later regulatory stages.

- *Building Safety Regulator* - For information, HSE advises that all higher risk buildings are now required to be registered with the Building Safety Regulator ('BSR'). Once the building has been registered, the BSR will invite accountable persons to submit a safety case for their buildings. Applying to register a high-rise residential building - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

It will be for the accountable person to submit a safety case to demonstrate how the building's safety risks are managed. This would include the risks to the safety of people in or about a building arising from the spread of fire, including the spread of fire over external walls.

5.2. Kent Police Designing Out Crime – We have reviewed this application in regard to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Applicants/agents should consult us as Designing out Crime Officers (DOCO's) to address CPTED and incorporate Secured By Design (SBD) as appropriate. We use details of the site, relevant crime levels/type and intelligence information to help design out the opportunity for Crime, Fear of Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Nuisance and Conflict.

There is a carbon cost for crime and new developments give an opportunity to address it. Using CPTED along with attaining an SBD award using SBD guidance, policies and academic research would be evidence of the applicants' efforts to design out the opportunity for crime.

We recommend SBD guidance is utilised to address designing out crime to show a clear audit trail for Designing Out Crime, Crime Prevention and Community Safety and to meet our Local Authority statutory duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The points below identify my recommendations for the layout and design of this scheme.

1. We recommend the applicant review current site security and boundary treatments. We recommend boundary treatments be a minimum of 2m and the installation of lockable gates to the sides of the unit to provide controlled access to the rear. These gates must be flush to the building line to optimize surveillance.
2. We recommend natural surveillance for parking areas. As a secondary layer of security, we would also recommend CCTV be installed to further monitor use. We

also strongly recommend gating access roads/ parking areas to prevent nuisance parking and misuse out of hours.

3. Defined pedestrian routes to/ from the building are recommended to improve safety and avoid pedestrian and vehicle conflict.
4. Cycle storage must be well lit and with natural surveillance. We recommend the sold secure or SBD recommended products for additional security.
5. Lighting - Please note, whilst we are not qualified lighting engineers, any lighting plan should be approved by a professional lighting engineer (e.g., a Member of the ILP), particularly where lighting condition is imposed, to help avoid conflict and light pollution. we recommend that a suitable lighting policy is installed to ensure that the units and staff have safe access to and from the units and to help deflect criminality. External lighting to conform to min standard of BS5489-1:2020.
6. CCTV to be installed, especially in areas with limited natural surveillance such as rear of the building, utility areas/ bin stores and on the access/ exit road. We also recommend cameras in the following areas to keep users safe and monitor their movements; any access points including emergency exits, any stairs, lifts, loading/ unloading areas, car park and reception, main office/ safe. The CCTV must not infringe any lighting plan.
7. We strongly recommend alarms, with an auto-dial function, be installed on all external doors, including emergency exits.
8. If new external doorsets are proposed (a doorset is the door, fabrication, hinges, frame, installation, and locks) including folding or sliding, we recommend these to meet PAS 24: 2022 UKAS certified standard, STS 201 or LPS 2081 Security Rating B+. Please Note, PAS 24:2012 tested for ADQ (Building Regs) has been superseded and is not suitable for this development.
9. If new windows are proposed on the ground floor, we recommend these to meet PAS 24:2022 UKAS certified standard, STS 204 Issue 6:2016, LPS 1175 Issue 8:2018 Security Rating 1/A1, STS 202 Issue 7:2016 Burglary Rating 1 or LPS 2081 Issue 1.1:2016 Security Rating A. Glazing to be laminated. Toughened glass alone is not suitable for security purposes. Any curtain walling and fixings should be tested and meet BS EN 1627:2011 and/or be certified to LPS 1175: Issue 7, SR1 or STS 202: Issue 3, BR1.
10. Access control. Adequate access control is required for the main entrance point of the building as well as any other access points located to the side or rear. In addition to this, access control is recommended for areas used by staff only such as office space, storage rooms and other restricted areas. If new internal doorsets are proposed for storage areas, these should be certified and comply with PAS 24:2022 as a minimum-security standard.
11. Any Shutters should be as close to the building line as possible and must avoid the creation of a recess. Shutters must be certificated to LPS 1175: Issue 7, SR2; STS 202: Issue 3, BR2; Sold Secure Gold or PAS 68:2013
12. Bin Stores must be secure, lit and, if in an area with limited natural surveillance we recommend CCTV cameras be installed. We also strongly advise against placing this store close enough to the building that it can be used as a climbing aid into the building when closed. Please note where there is a mixed-use building, residential and commercial bins must be segregated.
13. If the building has roof access for maintenance of solar panels and lift shafts etc., we recommend that ladders/ access doors to these areas are securely locked so that members of the public are unable to access this area. We also require CCTV to cover this area in order to monitor unauthorized access.
14. Any pre-existing or new trees should help protect and enhance security without reducing the opportunity for surveillance or the effectiveness of lighting. Tall slender trees with a crown of above 2m rather than low crowned species are more suitable than "round shaped" trees with a low crown. New trees should not be planted within

parking areas or too close to street lighting. Any hedges should be no higher than 1m, so that they do not obscure vulnerable areas.

If approved, site security is required for the construction phase. There is a duty for the principle contractor “to take reasonable steps to prevent access by unauthorised persons to the construction site” under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007. The site security should incorporate plant, machinery, supplies, tools and other vehicles and be site specific to geography and site requirements.

We welcome a discussion with the applicant/agent about site specific designing out crime. If the points above are not addressed, they can affect the development and local policing.

This information is provided by Kent Police DOCO's and refers to situational crime prevention. This advice focuses on CPTED and Community Safety with regard to this specific planning application.

Internal Consultations

- 5.3. No comment received.

Publicity

- 5.4. Publication and Neighbour Consultation

A notice was displayed on site 15 August 2025, and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 05 September 2025.

6. Preliminary Matters

- 6.1. This application follows an approval for the “construction of front lobby area with canopy and new communal front entrance doors to include the redecoration of railings” (ref. 20221062), which Members approved at planning committee (23 November 2022) with 5 conditions.
- 6.2. The approval has not yet been implemented and due to the 3 year time limit enforced by Condition 1, the planning permission will expire 06 December 2025.
- 6.3. As such, this application proposes the same external alterations to the property, with some changes to enable the provision of a new office space, and dedicated pram / bicycle stores.

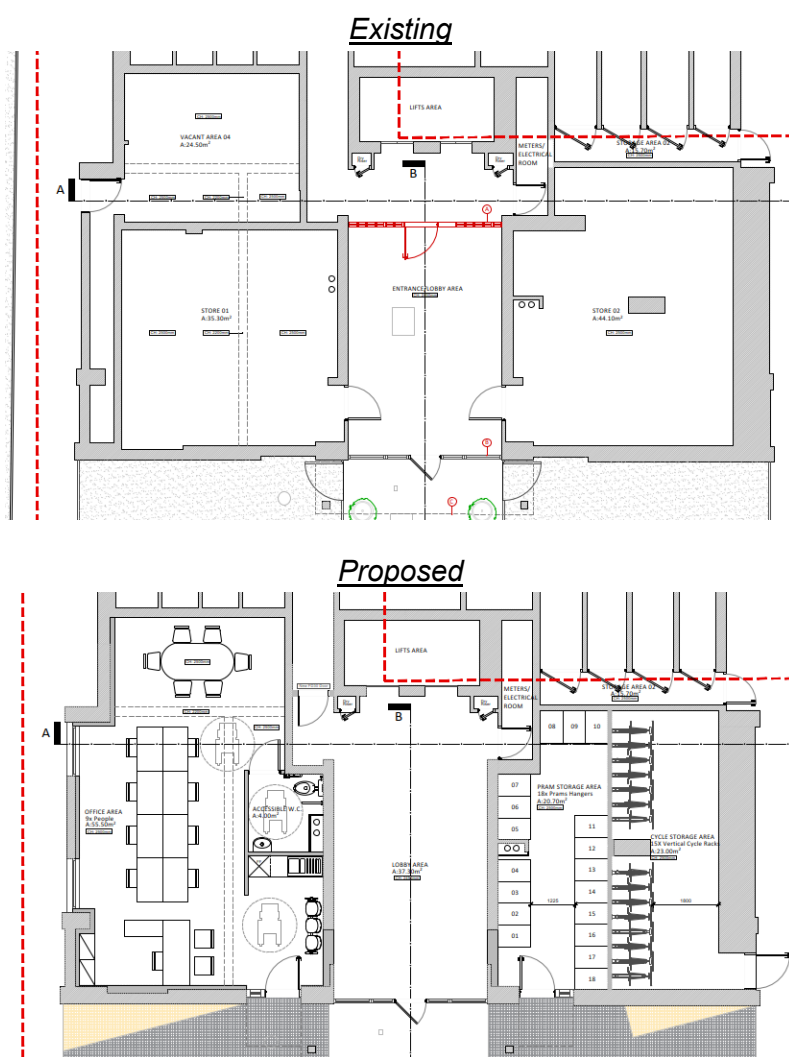
7. Planning Analysis and Head of Planning Comments

Principle of Development

- 7.1. The principle considerations of this application are:
- Change of Use
 - Design, Character and Appearance
 - Amenity
 - Parking and Highways
 - Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Change of Use

- 7.2. As referenced above, this application seeks to convert two existing stores. Store 01 is a store and vacant area (B8 use) and would be changed into a Class E office space. Store 02 would be converted into separate pram and bicycle stores.
- 7.3. The change of use of Store 01 from storage (B8) to an office use (Class E) requires planning permission, but the conversion of Store 02 into a pram/bicycle store does not require consent.
- 7.4. The proposed pram / bicycle stores are to be externally accessed, with two new doors inserted into the front and side elevations. There will be provision for the storage of 18 prams and 15 bicycles. This change will be a more efficient use of the store, to the benefit of residents and is supported by the Local Planning Authority.
- 7.5. The current B8 store (01) is described in the supporting plans as a vacant space, and therefore the conversion to an office space (Class E) would be a more efficient use of the area.



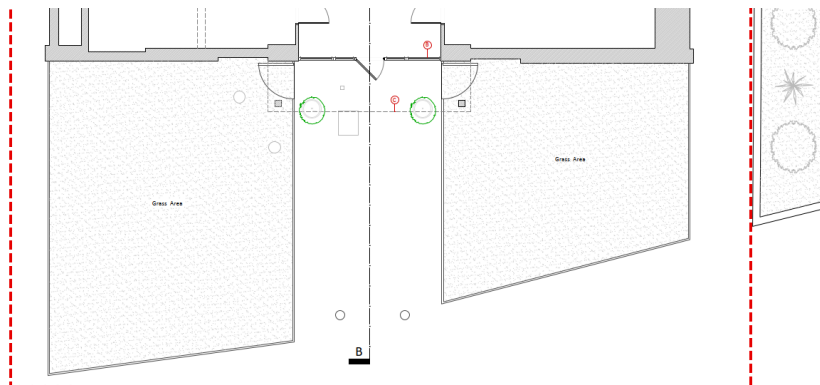
- 7.6. The plans above demonstrate that the office would have 8 desks, a meeting room, accessible w.c., kitchenette, reception desk and waiting area. It would be accessed externally through a new doorway opened on the front elevation of the building.

- 7.7. The proposed office space will only be used for temporary periods in emergency situations by the Council and for resident meetings, which will be secured by condition. However, the change of use will bring a vacant storage area into use and is considered to be acceptable. The building retains sufficient storage areas on the ground floor and as such the proposal will not compromise the operation of the building and the change can be supported.

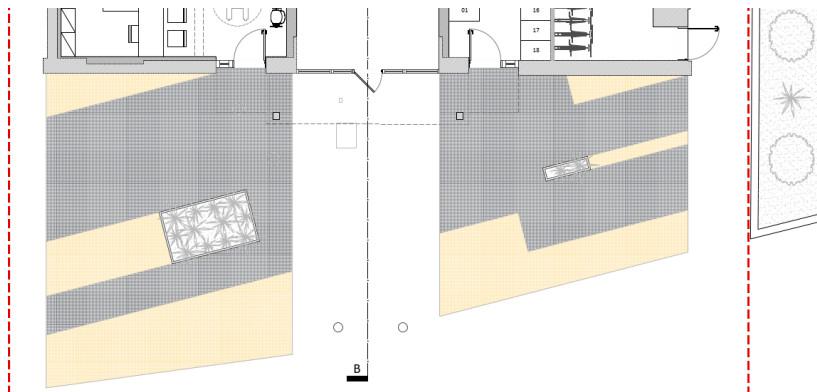
Design, Character and Appearance

- 7.8. Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) states that new development will be visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area. Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.
- 7.9. The external changes to the building are as approved in the 2022 application (ref. 20221062), with the proposed canopy and secure entrance lobby. These are considered to improve the visual appearance of the block, creating an attractive and welcoming entrance. The black metal materials are a modern material palette but are not considered to have any adverse impact on the appearance of the building or character of the street scene.
- 7.10. As part of this proposal, the existing grass areas will be replaced by resin bound surface and the metal railing removed to create an open frontage. There are two planters proposed which will soften the appearance and provide landscaping.

Existing Landscaping



Proposed Landscaping



- 7.11. The new office space and pram/bicycle store would have external doors and clad canopies to match the main lobby. The new flank windows on the office side, are not excessive in size and will be finished in white uPVC to match the fenestration on the building.
- 7.12. Overall, the proposed development will improve the external appearance of the block and create an attractive, modern entrance which benefits the street scene. The painting of the fencing and re-tarmacking of the path will similarly improve the street scene and tie in with the black metal canopy. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Amenity

- 7.13. Policy CS19 (LPCS) seeks to protect amenity and ensure acceptable future living conditions. The NPPF (2024) also assists and seeks to ensure developments will function well, do not undermine quality of life and create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit and seeks to secure high-quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 7.14. The new canopy will provide a covered entrance to the flat block, providing residents and visitors with additional protection from poor weather, whilst improving the overall appearance of the building and area. The new stores will also provide dedicated spaces for storage of prams and bicycles to the benefit of amenity. Therefore, the development is considered to improve the amenity of current and future occupiers of the building.
- 7.15. The development will have no impact on the amenity of surrounding residents. The closest neighbouring property is approx. 24m from the proposed canopy, and there will be no impact in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy, sense of enclosure or loss of outlook.
- 7.16. Overall, the proposed development will safeguard the amenity of future occupiers and surrounding residents in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Parking and Highways

- 7.17. The proposed development will have no impact on the existing parking provision of the residents of Carl Ekman House and will have no impact on the on-street parking available on Tooley Street. As such, the proposal is acceptable in highway terms.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Fire Safety

- 7.18. The proposed canopy extension will be approved separately by Building Control in terms of regulations around means of escape and fire spread. However, the application has been reviewed by HSE Fire, due to the building meeting the 'high risk building' threshold. HSE Fire have raised no objection at this stage, however, confirmed that their comment is not a substantive response, and the applicant would need to comply with later regulatory stages.

Equalities Considerations

- 7.19. The application has been considered in accordance with the Council's Equality Policy, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people in a diverse community. In this case the proposed

development is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

Human Rights Implications

- 7.20. The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the Convention of the same Act which sets out his/her rights in respect for private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposed development would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles in respect of the human rights of surrounding residents/occupiers.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act provides that planning decisions should be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2. The proposal is considered to accord with the Development Plan when read as a whole, whilst taking into account material considerations, in this instance the NPPF Dec. 2024, and it is recommended that the proposed development is GRANTED planning permission.
- 8.3. The canopy and other external works around the building will significantly improve the appearance of the building and the character of the street scene. The internal alterations will improve the functionality of the building to the benefit of future occupier amenity. There will be no impact on the amenity of future occupiers and surrounding residents, nor the parking provision or highway network.

Recommendation

PERMISSION subject to conditions as follows:

1. The development hereby approved shall be begun not later than 3 years following the date of this decision.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following schedule of approved plans:

Application Form – dated 17 July 2025;
Planning, Design and Access Statement by Potter Raper – dated 19 May 2025;
Supplementary Information – Office Use Confirmation from Applicant – dated 03 November 2025;
Supplementary Information – Fire Statement Form – dated 14 May 2025;
Supplementary Information – Satellite Site Image;
Supplementary Information – Fire Statement Details;
Un-numbered Location Plan – Site Location Plan (scale – 1:1250);
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL001 – Rev. P1 – Proposed Site Plan;
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL101 – Rev. P1 – Existing & Proposed Ground Floor Plans;

Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL102 – Rev. P1 – Existing & Proposed Roof Plans;
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL103 – Rev. P1 – Proposed Ground Floor Fire Strategy Plan;
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL201 – Rev. P1 – Existing & Proposed North Elevations;
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL202 – Rev. P1 – Existing & Proposed West Elevations;
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL203 – Rev. P1 – Existing & Proposed East Elevations;
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL204 – Rev. P1 – Existing & Proposed Elevations;
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL301 – Rev. P1 – Existing & Proposed Section A-A;
Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL401 – Rev. P1 – Proposed Window & Door Schedules.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The materials used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be in accordance with the details shown on Application Form and Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL101 – Rev. P1.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual relationship between the existing and the new development in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

4. Prior to above ground works commencing, details of all external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visually attractive development which safeguards amenity of, and to create a safe environment for future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

5. Prior to first use of the development hereby approved, details of the external seating and benches shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development thereafter shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is accessible and provides good quality amenity for all users in accordance with Policy CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

6. Prior to the first use of the 'Office Area' as shown on 'Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL101 – Rev. P1' a comprehensive management plan for the use shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the management plan should demonstrate the hours of operation, maximum number of staff, types of meetings and parking plans for staff. The operation of the Office Area shall be carried out in accordance with these approved details.

Reason: To protect residential amenities of occupiers of properties in the building in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

7. The use of the Office space for emergency situations shall only be utilised for a temporary period of no longer than 3 months, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenities of occupiers of properties in the building in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

8. Any resident meetings taking place within the 'Office Area' as shown on 'Drawing no. 11700-PR-ZZ-CH-DR-A-PL101 – Rev. P1', shall not take place beyond 9pm.

Reason: To protect residential amenities of occupiers of properties in the building in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).