



Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240831

Location: Manor Hotel Hever Court Road Gravesend Kent

Description: Alterations to the existing hotel to create a business hub (office use) providing offices for rent, and the development of the existing overspill car parking area situated to the east of the existing hotel to provide a B8 storage facility.

Applicant: Mr M Rossi

Site Visit Date: Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Planning Application Form;
Design and Access Statement;
Transport Statement;
Drawing No. D-01 Rev A – Site Location Plan & Block Plan As Existing;
Drawing No. D-02 Rev A – Parking As Existing;
Drawing No. D-04 Rev E – Parking & Self Storage As Proposed;
Drawing No. D-05 – Parking & Self Storage Street Elevation As Existing;
Drawing No. D-06 – Parking & Self Storage Street Elevation As Proposed;
Drawing No. D-07 – East Elevation As Existing / As Proposed;
Drawing No. D-08 – Parking & Self Storage Site Section (East) As Existing / Proposed;
Drawing No. D-09 – Parking & Self Storage Street Elevation South Elevation As Existing;
Drawing No. D-10 – Parking & Self Storage South Elevation As Proposed;
Drawing No. D-11 – Parking & Self Storage Site Section As Proposed;
Drawing No. D-12 – Parking & Self Storage Containers Plans & Elevations;
Drawing No. D-22 Rev D – Hotel Ground Floor Plan As Existing;
Drawing No. D-23 Rev A – Hotel First Floor Plan As Existing / Proposed;
Drawing No. D-24 Rev D – Hotel Ground Floor Proposed;
Drawing No. D-25 Rev C – Hotel Ground Floor Plan As Proposed;
Drawing No. D-26 Rev A – Hotel South Elevation Existing & Proposed;
Drawing No. D-27 – Hotel East Elevation Existing & Proposed;
Drawing No. D-28 – Self Storage Area Layout, Plans and Elevations;
Drawing No. 410.066123.00001-TR100 – Swept Path Analysis – Refuse Vehicle; and
Drawing No. 410.066123.00001-TR101 – Swept Path Analysis – Box Van.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230757	Redevelopment of the site for a residential development comprising 12 new houses with associated access, private amenity space, vehicle parking provision, refuse and cycle storage	Refused and dismissed at appeal.	19.12.2023

20230756	External alterations and reduction in car parking from 100 spaces to 20 spaces.	Withdrawn	11.03.2024
20200105	Redevelopment of existing overspill car parking area situated to the east of existing hotel to provide a B8 storage facility	Permission	12.06.2020
20200104	Minor external alterations to existing hotel including reduction in car parking area.	Permission	12.06.2020
19880793	**AMENDED APPLICATION/REVISED DESCRIPTION** Erect. of part 2 & part 3 storey building to provide 47 no guest rooms, 9no 1-bed apartments, 4no 2-bed apartments with anc. facilities; layout of assoc. car parking incorp. erection of s/s shelter; formation of vehicular access onto Hever Court Road.	Permission	08.05.1989
19870991	Details of the erection of a part single storey and part two storey hotel building to provide 28 no bedrooms staff accommodation conference rooms restaurant and ancillary facilities laying out of 2 no coach parking spaces and 77 no car parking spaces	Approval of Details	08.07.1988
19861029	Details of part single and part two storey hotel building to provide 28 no bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms staff accommodation functions room restaurant and ancillary facilities laying out of 2 coach parking spaces and 77 car parking spaces pursuant to co	Approval of Details	06.04.1987
19860158	Outline application for the erection of part single and part two storey hotel building to provide 28 bedrooms with ensuite bathroom staff accommodation functions room restaurant and ancillary facilities laying out of 2 coach parking spaces and 70 car parking spaces and formation of a vehicular access onto Hever Court Road.	Permission	08.09.1986

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS07 – Economy, Employment and Skills
- CS09 – Culture and Tourism
- CS10 – Physical and Social Infrastructure
- CS11 – Transport CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-designed Places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Kent Design Guide (SPG 5 published December 2005, adopted July 2006)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

External

KCC Biodiversity

No ecological information has been submitted with this application. As a result of reviewing the data we have available to us, and the information submitted with the planning application, we advise that the proposed development has limited potential to result in significant ecological impacts. We have taken this view due to the application is for an area with hardstanding. As such, we are satisfied that there is no requirement for an ecological survey to be carried out at this time¹.

This application has not provided biodiversity net gain (BNG) information and from the information provided this application appears to impact less than 25m², and if the LPA are satisfied this is correct, this application is exempt from BNG.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Under the Environment Act 2021 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), all planning applications received in England (with a few exemptions) must deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) from the 12th February 2024 and all minor applications from the 2nd April 2024.

The design and access statement has stated that part of the proposal is to redevelop the overspill car park to provide an area with containers. We have reviewed the information, and this area is stated as hardstanding and existing trees and scrub will be used for screening, and as such we anticipate there is no vegetated habitat loss to occur. The BNG de minimis exemption applies when habitats less than 25m² are impacted. If this assumption is incorrect, regarding the impacts to the area proposed for the containers, and vegetation removal works affecting habitats are required for this application, then a BNG metric and baseline habitat information will be required.

Enhancements

Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and paragraphs 180 and 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced through the planning system.

Enhancement refers to providing net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation and compensation. As such, we advise that an enhancement plan is provided that includes the

ownership and responsibilities for future management of the enhanced areas, and a condition wording is suggested below.

Within three months of works commencing, an enhancement plan showing how the development will enhance biodiversity, will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include wildlife features, such as durable bird boxes, of woodstone or similar material, aimed at species of conservation concern. The approved measures will be implemented and retained thereafter.

Appendix 1 provides some generic (non-exhaustive) information regarding the most common enhancements we see proposed. To provide a view regarding the potential ecological benefits of any project, in line with relevant legislation and planning policy, we require sufficient detail to be submitted. Without sufficient detail we are unable to provide an opinion regarding the suitability of any proposed measures. Suitable detail may include the provision of information such as:

- The proposed target species;
- Make and model of any boxes;
- Location information such as height, aspect, surrounding habitat;
- Detailed planting schedules; and
- Relevant management necessary to ensure the habitat is suitable for the target species.

KCC Heritage

The site of the proposed development lies in an area of multi-period archaeological potential adjacent to the projected line of Roman Watling Street. The proposed development includes the siting of containers and it is understood that these would not need significant foundations. If that is the case then I consider it unlikely that the proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and would not recommend the need for any archaeological mitigation in this case.

KCC Highways and Transportation

The development proposals consist of the conversion of the existing hotel function room and kitchen to a business hub consisting of 12x B1 office units (319sqm) and the development of a 58x B8 self-storage units (812sqm).

The existing access is proposed to be reconfigured to reduce it from 15m wide to 10m wide. The entrance gates appear to be set back more than 5.5m from the highway and this is acceptable. Paragraphs 4.32 and 4.34 of the Transport Statement refer to swept paths plans 410.066123.00001-TR100 Rev A and 410.066123.00001-TR101 Rev A, for a refuse vehicle and 8m box van accessing the site respectively, but these have not been appended to the document and are required, in order to demonstrate that these vehicles can access and egress the site in a forward gear.

The dimensions of the car park are not clear. Please provide a scaled plan showing the dimensions of the parking bays, motorcycle bays and aisle widths, to confirm they meet the preferred sizes set out in SPG4 (5m x 2.5m for cars, 2.5m x 1.5m for motorbikes, aisle width of 6m). 2.4m x 43m visibility splays (or where this is not possible, splays meeting or exceeding the existing splays), should also be shown for the access so they can be conditioned to any permission granted.

The proposed parking provision of 45 car parking spaces (including one disabled bay and two oversized bays) and three motorbike spaces for the hotel and office, with additional unmarked spaces for the self-storage units, is considered to be acceptable.

Drivers wishing to access the motorcycle bays are required to cross the footway, which will create a conflict with pedestrians. The bays should be relocated.

12 cycle parking spaces are to be provided, which exceeds the standard and is welcome. The spaces must be covered.

The proposals include one active electric vehicle charging space, with passive provision for a further 10

spaces. This is acceptable.

The trip rates and anticipated trip generation are acceptable and the net impact on the highway network is not considered to be severe.

Whilst not required by planning, it is requested that Travel Information Packs are supplied to people renting the office space, informing them of the sustainable travel options to/from the site.

Conclusion

Whilst the principal of the development is acceptable, I would like to place a holding objection on the application until the above additional information has been provided and accepted.

Should the LPA be minded to grant planning permission prior to this being accepted by KCC, I request the following conditions are secured:

Conditions

Revised access arrangements, parking provision and general layout to be provided in line with drawing D-04 Rev E, prior to first occupation and permanently maintained. Parking provision to include 44 standard parking bays, one disabled bay, two oversized bays and three motorbike bays, with additional unmarked spaces for the self-storage units.

- A minimum of one active electric charging bay and 10 passive charging bays to be provide prior to occupation and permanently maintained. Active chargers must be provided to Mode 3 standard (providing up to 7kw) and SMART (enabling Wifi connection). Passive provision must include ducting and cabling.
- A minimum of 12 covered cycle spaces to be provided prior to occupation and permanently maintained.
- 2.4m x 43m visibility splays (or where this is not possible, splays that meet or exceed the existing visibility) at the site access, to be provided prior to occupation and permanently maintained, with no obstruction over 0.6m within the splays.
- Submission of a Construction Management Plan prior to commencement, to include the following:
 - (a) Routing of construction and delivery vehicles to / from site.
 - (b) Parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and site personnel, which may require supporting vehicle tracking/swept paths.
 - (c) Timing of deliveries, avoiding network and school peaks where possible.
 - (d) Provision of wheel washing facilities.
 - (e) Measures to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the highway.
 - (f) Temporary traffic management / signage.

It is important to note that Local Planning Authority (LPA) permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Following the above comments, additional plans showing swept paths for refuse vehicles and box vans was submitted and the following comments were received:

13.11.24

The drawings submitted showing the tracked movements are acceptable. If a Condition could be applied to any consent granted requiring parking bay sizes to be a minimum of 5.0m x 2.5m and aisle widths to be a minimum of 6.0m that would be good and I do not think another Consultation request would be necessary.

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 request a condition for this site to follow SBD guidance 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.

1. 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 a 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 units, 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 stairs, emergency access doors, 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. All external doorsets (a doorset is the door, fabrication, hinges, frame, installation, and locks) including folding or sliding 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. Windows on the ground floor 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. 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
11. 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.
12. If any buildings are to have 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.
13. 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.

14. The Access Control, Doorsets and Windows should also meet SBD Commercial 2015 advised standards. Any public access to commercial units should be restricted to one main public/visitor entrance into the building. Reception, Audio/Visual systems linking to the reception or personnel managing access control is essential for businesses that could attract crime risk (we can advise). For doorsets, we recommend minimum standards of PAS 24:2022, LPS 1175: Issue 7, SR2, STS 201 or STS 202: Issue 3, BR2. Units may require additional strengthening for some uses.

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

GBC – Leisure

I am writing to confirm that I have no comments to make on the above application from a Leisure Services perspective.

GBC – Environmental Protection Team

There is no objection to this application. This is a better use of the site than the previous application for residential use. The following comments are made:

From the application form, it looks like 24-hour use is proposed. This would not be acceptable nearing in mind the proximity of nearby residential properties. Noise from the self-storage part of the proposal, such as vehicle movements, loading/unloading etc could be a concern if hours are not reasonable. Providing that the hours of use (for the self-storage units in particular) are not excessive, noise should not be a concern. The applicant should be asked to clarify the proposed hours of use for the self-storage area.

Noise from any plant and equipment associated with the development must be suitably controlled.

Any external lighting or illuminated advertisement lighting must be compliant with the appropriate guidance to ensure that there is no adverse impact on neighbouring premises. The lighting should not illuminate anything other than the ground within the curtilage of the new development in order to ensure that the lighting does not cause a nuisance to neighbouring properties.

The Transport Statement has been reviewed. Trip generation and AADT is not forecast to be excessive. As a result, there is unlikely to be any impact on the nearby AQMA as a result of the development.

To address the above, the following conditions are recommended. In addition, once hours of use have been agreed, it is recommended that these are controlled by condition.

Noise Control

The rating noise from fixed building services/mechanical plant/equipment associated with the development shall be at least 10dB below the existing LA90 background level at the nearest noise sensitive receptors (i.e. dwellings) when measured and assessed in accordance with BS4142:2014

Watching Brief

The applicant shall undertake a watching brief during construction in case any contamination issue is

encountered. If during development any contamination is found, the local planning authority should be informed as soon as practical, and the work shall not continue until written agreement is provided by the LPA as to the appropriate measures to be taken to resolve the matter and they are satisfied that those measures have been carried out.

Lighting

Prior to the first use/occupation of the development hereby approved, details of all external illumination [and floodlighting] of the site including the luminance and spread of light and the design and specification of the light fittings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All illumination shall be designed in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals "Guidance Note 01/21: Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light" and "PLG05 The brightness of illuminated advertisements".

Neighbouring properties

Consultation was by way of the displaying of a site notice and individual letters sent to 18 surrounding properties with an overall expiry date of 22nd October 2024. No comments have been made.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application is for the Alterations to the existing hotel to create a business hub (office use) providing offices for rent, and the development of the existing overspill car parking area situated to the east of the existing hotel to provide a B8 storage facility.

The application site forms part of the existing ground floor conference room, bar and kitchen within the hotel and the overspill car park located to the east of the hotel.

Existing Block Plan



Proposed Block Plan



Site History and Context

The site (0.10 hectare in area) consists of a large section of the hotel car park with access from Hever Court Road. The far eastern corner of the site is landscaped.

The site is located within the urban area of Gravesend with the A2 running parallel to the south of the site. With a wide frontage facing onto a large straight stretch of Hever Court Road, the site is highly visible from the surrounding area. Mature and substantial landscaping screens the residential development to the north from view.

View of Site Looking East



View of Site Looking West



The area is predominantly residential in character, with Best Western Manor Hotel, Premier Inn and The George Public House, a Grade II Listed Building located to the west.

Application Site



In terms of site history, this is quite extensive, however with the majority of proposals from 1986 onwards relate to the running and improvements of and to the hotel which was given permission in September 1986. Prior to this permission, 3no. applications for single residential properties (App. Refs. 2024019800316 and 19760713) were refused, with one being dismissed on appeal.

The most recent being 20230757 was for the redevelopment of the site for a residential development comprising 12 new houses with associated access, private amenity space, vehicle parking provision, refuse and cycle storage, and was refused for the following reasons:

1. By virtue of the application site being bounded by the A2 trunk road to the south and the main Hever Court Road to the north, it is considered that the site is unsuitable for residential development due to the impact on the living conditions of future occupants being severely compromised by noise from the adjacent roads when using their private amenity space and the inability to open windows without noise and pollution having a detrimental impact. As such the principle of residential development on this site would be contrary to Policy CS19 (LPCS) and paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2023).
2. The design of the proposed properties have not taken features from the surrounding residential dwellings, or the adjacent hotels and are of a more contemporary design that would be at odds with the streetscene and the character of the area as a whole. In addition, the properties do not benefit from private parking or amenity spaces which is out of character with the existing built form considering the existing pattern of development and the character of the predominantly residential area. It is therefore harmful to the character and appearance of the site and the wider locality and would contravene Policies CS14, CS15 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 which ensure new development will integrate well with the surrounding local area. At a national level the proposed development would also contravene paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) which states 'developments will add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture; and are sympathetic to the local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)'.

3. The proposed properties fail to offer sufficient private amenity space to the detriment of future occupants and the enjoyment of these dwellings contrary to Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130f of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
4. By virtue of the sites location in close proximity to the A2 trunk road and the main Hever Court Road, the living conditions of future occupants would be severely compromised by noise from the adjacent roads when using their private amenity space and the inability to open windows without noise having a detrimental impact. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130f of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
5. The proposal fails to secure a contribution towards strategic mitigation measures within Special Protection Areas, and in the absence of this contribution or adequate information to inform an Appropriate Assessment, the development fails to comply with the requirements of the Habitat Regulations and Section 14 (specifically paragraphs 181 and 182) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 and Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

The application was also dismissed at appeal with the Inspector stating:

29. The proposal would not create acceptable living conditions including in relation to noise and therefore would not be located, designed, and constructed to safeguard the amenity of its occupants. There is conflict with policies in the development plan that flows from this harm that, in light of the severity, I regard as conflict with the development plan taken as a whole.

Previously application 19800316 was for the erection of six detached bungalows with garages, and was refused for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would constitute an undesirable extension of the existing development and would be detrimental to rural amenity in an area which is outside any area allocated for development on the North West Kent Town Map.
2. The site by virtue of its location, restricted depth and road frontages on 2 sides is unsuitable for residential development particularly having regard to its proximity to the heavily trafficked trunk road, where noise and disturbance would be caused to the residents of the dwellings by sustained traffic noise, fumes and dust.
3. The proposal, if permitted, would be likely to generate additional traffic onto Hever Court Road to the detriment of road safety.
4. The development would result in the loss of an open area of ground which acts as a transitional zone between existing and residential development and open countryside to the south of the A2, to the detriment of the character of the surrounding area.

The application was also dismissed at appeal with the Inspector stating:

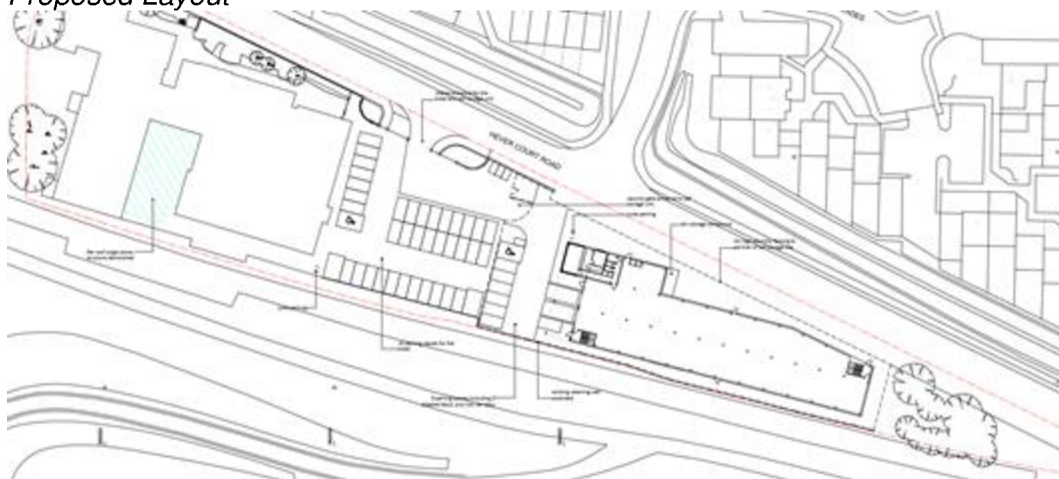
5. In my view the size and location of the appeal site make it inherently unsuitable for residential development. On side of it adjoins a very busy trunk road, with recorded flow of 58,000 vehicles in a 16 hour period, and the other long frontage adjoins Hever Court Road which links substantial part of the built-up area of Gravesend with the trunk road, and also serves a number of housing developments in the vicinity. This is also therefore a busy road, and flows of 2,568 vehicles in a 16 hour period were recorded in 1976. In addition to these 2 sources of noise and disturbance the third side of the site adjoins a large car park serving The George public house. I note that an application to develop a similar site to the west of The George was dismissed on appeal in 1971, the Inspector concluding that "because of its location, restricted depth and the road frontages of 2 sides, the site is unsuitable for residential development, particularly having regard to its proximity to the heavily trafficked trunk road, where nuisance and disturbance would be caused to the residents of the dwellings by sustained traffic noise, fumes and dust." I accept that in this case measures would be taken to reduce levels of noise within the site and within the dwellings themselves, but I consider that the noise levels within the site would still be unacceptably high. Having regard to the

views express in Circular 10.73, I consider that there must be a presumption against residential development on the site.

The arrangement of the site, together with its surroundings such as the A2 immediately to the south and the busy Hever Court Road to the north, remain the same and therefore still relevant in this case.

It is acknowledged that planning permission was granted in 2020 for a similar proposal under planning reference 20200105, for the redevelopment of existing overspill car parking area situated to the east of existing hotel to provide a B8 storage facility. The main differences between this application and the current application is that the previously approved scheme was building with internal storage and not the use of surface freight containers as is currently proposed as can be seen within the following images:

Proposed Layout



Proposed Elevations



The schemes therefore differ considerably. It is also important to note that since planning permission was granted in 2020, the National Planning Policy Framework has been gone through a number of amendments/revisions and the new Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024) has been introduced. The current proposal will therefore be assessed against current policy and guidance.

The key issues to be considered are as follows:

- Design, Character and appearance
- Neighbour Amenity
- Highways
- Contaminated Land
- Archaeology
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Heritage

Design, Character and Appearance

When considering the design of this proposal, it needs to be considered against the relevant local and national planning policy.

Policy CS19 (LPCS) states that the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. The NPPF (2023) sets out that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

At a national level, the NPPF (2023) Section 12 states development should create high quality buildings and places which will function well and add to the overall quality of the area for the lifetime of the development.

Business Hub

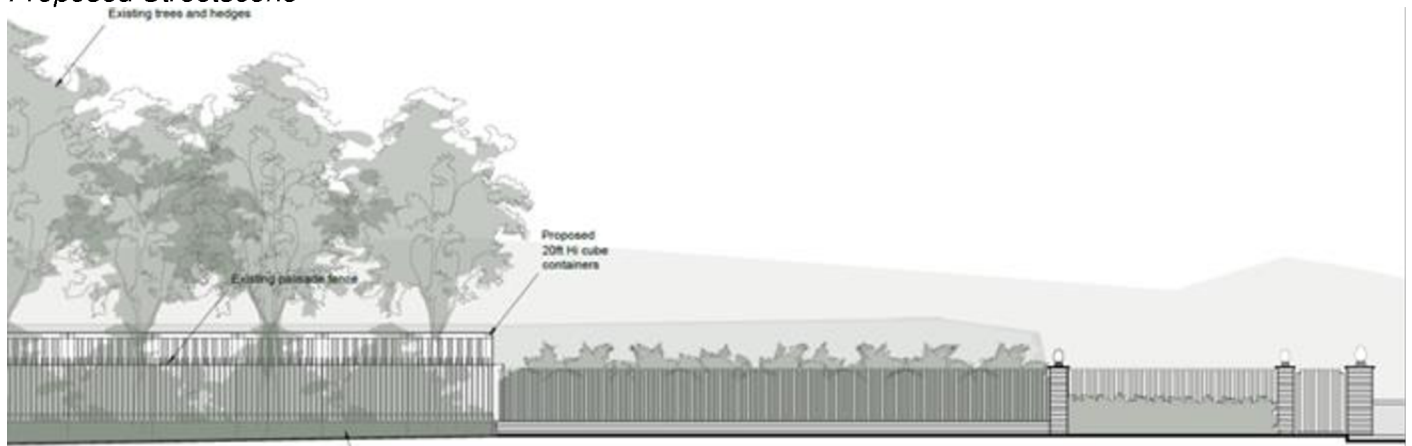
The proposed business hub would be located within the existing hotel. It would utilise the existing ground floor conference room, bar and kitchen areas. Externally, only minor changes are proposed to the south elevation, with two sets of patio-doors serving the existing conference room being replaced with six windows which will serve the new offices (no.1-5 and 11). On the east elevation there would be two additional windows to serve the new offices (no.6 and no.7).

The proposed windows are of a size and design that reflect the existing and as such in design terms, the proposed business hub would be acceptable.

B8 Storage Use

The proposed storage containers would be located within the existing overspill car park serving the hotel. This has a boundary with Hever Court Road and although there is existing soft landscaping along the northern boundary of the site, due to the location and height of the containers, they would be highly visible from the highway.

Proposed Streetscene



The area is predominantly residential in nature, with the addition of the hotel and public house to the west. The proposed commercial use would be highly inconsistent with the character and nature of the surrounding area. The introduction of large freight containers and storage facility would not lend itself to the area and would neither enhance or improve, but would instead create an industrial feel and nature.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would be out of character with the surrounding development in terms of type, design and layout. The introduction of an industrial business use would be wholly unacceptable and operating on a 24-hour service would be inconsistent with the character and nature of the surrounding area.

The development would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).

Amenity (Neighbours)

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires new development to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land and paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2023) requires development to have a high standard of amenity for existing users (in this case surrounding properties).

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature.

Business Hub

The proposed business hub would operate out of the existing hotel and would use the existing parking facilities. It is therefore considered that whilst the intensity of use maybe increased, this would largely be during office hours and would not result in a detrimental impact above what is currently experienced from the hotel and conference use.

B8 Storage Use

With regard to the proposed redevelopment of the overspill car park to provide a B8 storage facility, this use would be a commercial use in an area that is predominantly residential. The supporting information states that it would be 24-hour use which would entail vehicle and other movements and access to the containers potentially being antisocial and create a disturbance. It is also likely that some of the vehicles would be large vans and lorries and not limited to domestic vehicles. Taking into consideration the residential properties located directly to the north which are only separated by Hever Court Road and a small section of amenity land, the proposal is likely to result in noise and disturbance from the commercial 24-hour activity which would be harmful to the residential amenity both when in their properties and private gardens.

To the west of the site is the Manor Hotel which would be separated by the retained car park. Again, the noise and activity from a 24-hour commercial use, is likely to disturb customers of the hotel which entail is likely to have a detrimental impact on the future of the hotel itself, with customers choosing not to return if disturbed during their stay.

Therefore, whilst it is considered that the proposed business hub would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity, the proposed B8 storage facility, being in close proximity to surrounding residential properties would have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity that would be unacceptable. As such, the proposed B8 storage facility would be contrary to Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).

Highways

The proposed development needs to be considered against Policy CS11 (LPCS) which states that new development should mitigate their impact on the public highway and that transport assessments should be provided and implemented to ensure delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunities for travel. Furthermore, it states that sufficient car parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with adopted standards which will reflect the availability of alternative means of transport accessibility to services and facilities. This is also reflected by Saved Policy T1 (LPFR) which requires proposed development to be adequately served by the highway network and Saved Policy P3 (LPFR) which sets out highways parking standards for development.

At a national level the NPPF (2023) states at paragraph 105, significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. The NPPF (2023) goes on to state development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the cumulative impact of development is severe.

The existing access is proposed to be reconfigured to reduce it from 15m wide to 10m wide. The entrance gates appear to be set back more than 5.5m from the highway and this is acceptable.

The proposed parking provision of 45 car parking spaces (including one disabled bay and two oversized bays) and three motorbike spaces for the hotel and office, with additional unmarked spaces for the self-storage units, is considered to be acceptable.

The proposed swept paths for the refuse and box van vehicles are considered acceptable.

Overall it is considered that the proposed parking layout for the both aspects of the proposed development and retained parking for the hotel are inadequate and would be in accordance with Policies CS07 and CS11 (LPCS).

Contaminated Land

Policy CS19 (LPCS) indicates that new development will be located, designed and constructed to avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air, odour and light pollution, and land contamination.

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF (2023) indicates that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things:

- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Due to the current use of the land as a car park (fuel/oil leakages/spillages and also polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) associated with tarmac), a contaminated land watching brief condition is recommended, should the development be supported.

Subject to a watching brief condition being imposed, no objection to the proposal subject to the above suggested condition and the proposal complies with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Paragraph 174 of the NPPF (2023).

Archaeology

Policy CS20 (LPCS) gives a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place. Particular attention in this regard will be focused on those heritage assets most at risk. When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset's conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset. For non-designated assets, decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Saved Policy TC7 (LPFR) 1994 indicates that planning permission may be refused without adequate assessment of the archaeological implications in areas of archaeological potential.

At a national level paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2023) advises that where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest (evidence of past human activity), local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

The site lies adjacent to the line of the Roman Watling Street with the potential for below ground archaeological remains associated with the road and adjacent activity of Romano-British and subsequent date.

Considering the proposed development which includes the siting of containers and it is understood that these would not need significant foundations. If it is unlikely that the proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and would not recommend the need for any archaeological mitigation in this case.

The proposal therefore complies with Policy CS20 (LPCS), Saved Policy TC7 (LPFR) and Paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2023).

Ecology and Biodiversity

Paragraph 179 and 182 of the NPPF (2023) requires planning decisions to ensure that the natural and local environment is enhanced by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity and this is reflected in Section 40 of the Natural England Commission Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) and the Environmental Act (2021).

Policy CS12 (LPCS) indicates that sites designated for their biodiversity value will be protected, with the highest level of protection given to internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites, and that there will be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough.

The KCC Biodiversity Officer was satisfied that sufficient information has been provided suggested conditions should the proposals be supported to ensure that biodiversity is maintained and enhanced.

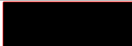
Conclusion and Recommendation

Whilst it is considered that the proposed business hub would be acceptable and would not have a detrimental impact on the design and amenity, the proposed B8 storage would introduce an industrial type development to a predominantly residential area that would be highly visible from the streetscene and due to the 24-hour use, is likely to result in a harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

In this case the balance is tilted towards refusal for the following reasons:

1. By virtue of the proposed commercial use, with large freight storage containers in an area that is predominantly residential, it would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies CS19 and Sections 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
2. The proposed use of the site is considered to be harmful to local amenity through unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance (From both the use and vehicles entering or leaving the site), and light pollution. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

(For detailed reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Amanda Cue	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	15th November 2024	Dated:	15th November 2024