

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20241037

Location: Former Coal Yard, Meopham Railway Station, Station Approach,
Meopham, Gravesend DA13 0LU

Description: Application for the variation of conditions 1 and 3 and removal of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference number 20201253 application for change of use of the building and land to self-storage (Use Class B8) and the siting of storage containers with associated parking; to allow the sitting of 3 additional containers.

Applicant: Mr M Banks

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Planning Statement
Drawing no. 4260 01 (proposed block plan)

Relevant Planning History

20201253	Application for change of use of the building and land to self-storage (Use Class B8) and the siting of storage containers with associated parking.	Permitted	18.02.2021
20190977	Application for approval of condition 3 & 4 attached to planning permission reference number 20170662 relating to details on how the southern boundary will be treated as to prevent the headlights of vehicles from shining into the residential gardens and properties along Edvia Road and details of the 2m high security gate and fence.	Details approved	30.09.2019
20190603	Application for the approval of condition 9 attached to planning permission reference number 20170662 relating details of a lighting scheme and report.	Details approved	18.09.2019

20180572	Application for approval of condition 3, 4 and 9 attached to planning permission reference number 20170662 relating to details on how the southern boundary will be treated as to prevent the headlights of vehicles from shining into the residential gardens and properties along Ediva Road, details of the 2m high security gate and fence and a lighting scheme and report demonstrating the proposed lighting.	Details refused	26.11.2018
20170662	**AMENDED APPLICATION** Change of use of the building and land to self-storage (B8) and the siting of storage containers with associated parking for a temporary period of three years.	Temporary consent	31.01.2018
20140583	Outline application for the erection of 8 affordable dwellings with vehicular access from Ediva Road.	Refused	16.06.2015
20120565	Outline application for 16 residential flats with provision of car parking and associated landscaping.	Refused	27.12.2012
20060394	Continued use of yard for the storage and sale of vehicles.	Permitted	05.09.2006
19850821	Retention of a portakabin for use as an office	Permitted	18.12.1985
19820542	Construction of extension at 1st floor level to form offices and toilets on the north and east elevation and erection of detached single storey building to form workshop	Permitted	29.09.1982
19490178	Use of coal bins for garage accommodation for vehicles in connection with coal business.	Permitted	02.09.1949
19480099	Use of land for erection of coal office - land at Station Approach	Permitted	05.11.1948

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development

- CS07 – Employment, Economy and Skills
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Design & Development Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network

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.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design for Gravesham: Design Code (2024);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Meopham Parish Council

Following discussion by our Planning Applications Working Group; the Council wishes to provide the following response:

The parish council did not believe the evidence provided gave sufficient information to make a judgement. It was unclear if this was a new or retrospective application in relation to the additional containers. The Council would suggest a GBC site visit is necessary to assess the impact on neighbours and whether the site owners are responsible for mitigating action, particularly fencing and lighting.

Due to the nature and content of the proposed change and the comments above Meopham Parish Council defers its position at this time.

GBC Environmental Protection

There is no objection to this application. It's noted that there is no proposed additional external lighting associated with the variation application. It is recommended that a condition is placed on any permission requiring that if there is to be any alteration to or additional lighting that a scheme must be submitted for

approval. This is to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the nearby houses.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by site notice and individual letters to 38 neighbouring properties.

- Vans have damaged a fence and it was not replaced like for like (this is a civil issue between the parties and not a material planning consideration)
- Flood lights come on all night
- Double height fences need replacing
- Open man hole cover is dangerous
- If there are to be double height containers then a double height fence is required to screen them
- The site is used all times of the night which is disrupting sleep

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the variation of conditions 1 and 3 and removal of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference number 20201253 application for change of use of the building and land to self-storage (Use Class B8) and the siting of storage containers with associated parking; to allow the siting of 3 additional containers.

Issues relating to the principle of development and use have all been considered previously and therefore only issues relating to the changes to the approved application are being considered.

Condition 1 of 20201253 states:

The development hereby permitted shall be retained only in precise accordance with the following schedule of approved plans and details, unless alternative details are approved pursuant to the conditions imposed on this decision notice:

Design & Access Statement;

Lighting Product Information;

Drawing No.01 Rev B - Site Location Plan;

Drawing No.03 Rev H - Proposed Block Plan;

Drawing No.04 Rev B - Existing and Proposed garage: Elevations and Plans;

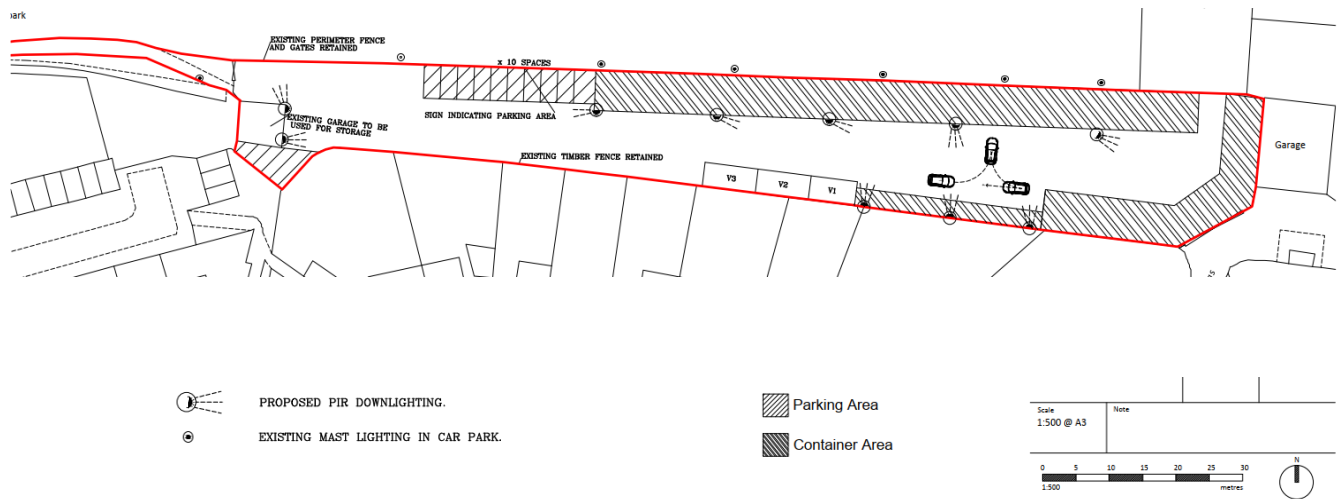
Reason: *For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning*

Condition 3 of 20201253 states:

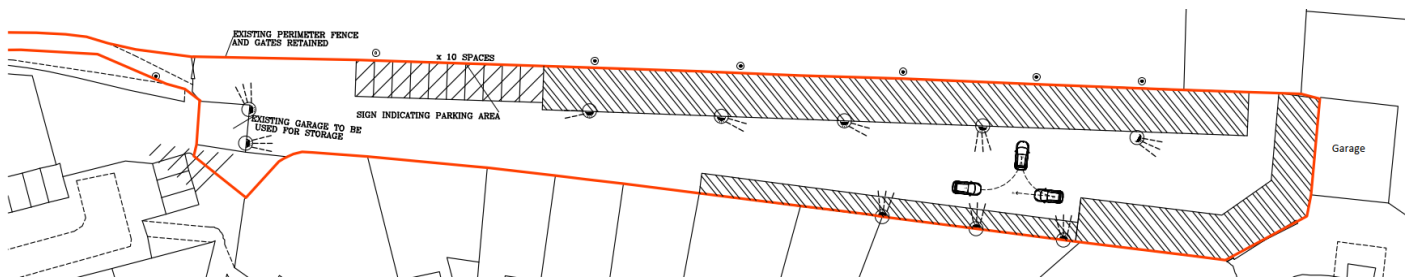
The self-storage containers shall only be located on the area marked container area on Drawing No.03 Rev H and at no time shall containers be stacked upon each other.

Reason: *Because a greater number of self-storage units, in the absence of further operational details, would be harmful to residents amenities, public and highways safety and the environment, contrary to Policy CS11 and CS19 of Gravesham Core Strategy (2014).*

Plan 03 rev H is shown below:



The application seeks the following:



Storage containers are now being shown along the southern boundary in place of the visitor parking bays. The submitted Planning Statement is clear that three additional containers are proposed and there is no mention that these are double stacked.

Condition 2 of 20201253 states:

The existing boundary treatment and security gates approved by 20190977 shall be maintained at all times.

Reason: *In order to protect the amenity of the residents of adjacent properties in accordance with Policy CS19 of Gravesham Core Strategy (2014).*

The reason for the proposed removal of condition 2 is that the applicant has never had control over the fence and therefore it is considered to be unreasonable for the applicant to be expected to maintain it.

Design, Landscape Character and Appearance

In terms of design the storage containers are utilitarian in nature and are in keeping with the existing site which already contains a number of containers. The site is enclosed and not readily visible save for from neighbouring rear gardens. The addition of three containers to the site will not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.

The site is located within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. As the site is already used for storing containers and is enclosed it does not impact on the wider landscape character. The addition of three containers likewise will have no detrimental impact on the wider landscape.

The proposed three containers therefore comply with the objectives of policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and

no objection is raised to the variation of conditions 1 and 3.

Amenity

Noise

The level of noise is controlled by condition 6 of the original consent and therefore this condition shall be reimposed.

Lighting

Concerns have been raised with regards to lighting. Condition 7 of the original consent allows for lighting to operate between 0700 and 2200 Monday-Saturday and between 0900-1700 on Sundays and bank holidays. This condition would be imposed on any forthcoming permission. If it is found at a later date that lighting is being utilised outside of these hours then enforcement action could be taken.

Screening

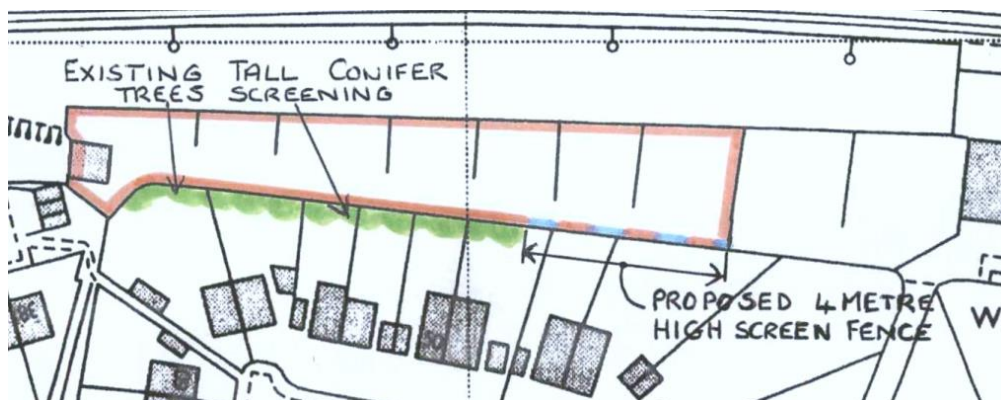
The screening of the site from neighbouring properties has been an important consideration throughout all the planning history on the site. In 2006 the following condition was imposed on an application (20060394) for the use of the yard for storage and the sale of vehicles:

Condition 2

Details of a scheme of suitable screening for the rear of properties at 44-50 Ediva Road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the District Planning Authority within a month of the date of this permission and such boundary treatment as is so approved shall be erected, constructed or implemented within three months of that approval, and maintained whilst the use hereby permitted continues.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenity of the surrounding area.

This was an enforcement generated case and the condition was discharged by letter on 10 January 2007. The approved plan is that shown below:



Letters on the file state that leylandii trees were proposed to those properties with no screening at the time, a 20m long 2m high close boarded fence along the boundary of no. 44 Ediva Road and a 4m high Yorkshire boarding fence 10m long up to the point where there are no conifers.

Application reference 20170662 sought the change of use of the building and land to self-storage (B8) and the siting of storage containers with associated parking for a temporary period of three years and the following conditions were imposed:

Condition 3

Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted and notwithstanding the information on the approved plans and application form details on how the southern boundary will be treated as to prevent the

headlights of vehicles from shining into the residential gardens and properties along Edvia Road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall then be built in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.

Reason: No details have been provided at this stage and in order to protect the amenity of the residents of adjacent properties in accordance with Policy CS19 of Gravesham Core Strategy (2014).

Condition 4

Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted and notwithstanding the information on the approved plans and application form elevational details of the 2m high security gate and fence shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The gates and fence shall then be built in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter.

Reason: No details have been provided at this stage and in accordance with Policy CS19 of Gravesham Core Strategy (2014).

Application 20170977 sought to discharge conditions 3 and 4 of 20170662. The details submitted showed the existing boundary fence to remain which would ensure the privacy and amenity of adjacent properties is protected. This was accepted as the permission was temporary and no complaints had been received. It was also stated that condition 4 lacked specific application such that it would be difficult to enforce non-compliance. The report goes on to say:

'If a permanent permission was to granted then in the long term it may be appropriate to consider improvements to the boundary treatment.'

Therefore, whilst it was accepted that the existing boundary treatment was sufficient for the temporary consent, it was also accepted that some screening is necessary for the duration of any permanent development in order to protect the amenities of the neighbouring properties. In addition to this, complaints have now been received from the neighbouring properties relating to the upkeep of their fences which are outside of the applicant's ownership.

Whilst it is accepted that the applicant does not have control over the neighbours' fences, the fact remains that the storage containers need to be screened in visual terms, for security reasons and to stop the potential of headlights shining into the rear windows of neighbouring properties. Therefore, this condition can be removed but it must be replaced in order to ensure neighbours' amenities are protected. The replacement condition shall state:

Within three months of the date of this decision, and notwithstanding the information on the approved plans and application form, details of a 2m high boundary treatment to be erected along the southern boundary to protect the amenities of nos. 44-50 Edvia Road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved boundary treatment shall be built in accordance with the approved details within three months of that decision and maintained thereafter.

Reason: No details have been provided at this stage and in order to protect the amenity of the residents of adjacent properties in accordance with Policy CS19 of Gravesham Core Strategy (2014).

Subject to the above conditions relating to noise, lighting and screening the proposed development accords with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135f of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Ecology and Biodiversity

The site has no ecological value and therefore the positioning of three additional containers will have no impact on biodiversity. No concerns are therefore raised in terms of policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014.

Parking and Highways

Condition 9 of 20201253 stated that the vehicle parking spaces shown on the approved plan should be retained and not used for any other purpose other than the related use approved. There is no differentiation made between the parking spaces and visitor spaces and the planning report refers to the protection of 13 parking spaces which would include the visitor spaces. This report also mentions that it is expected that there will be no more than 10 visits to the site a day and therefore 10 parking spaces would appear to be sufficient. On balance it is not considered that the loss of these three visitor spaces would have a detrimental impact on the functioning of the site and therefore no objection is raised.

Conclusion

The addition of three storage containers to the site, subject to appropriate conditions to protect amenity, accords with the above mentioned policies and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation:

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	8 January 2025	Dated:	22nd January 2024