



Delegated Report

Prior Approval Application

Planning Application No: 20250817

Location: Shoulder Of Mutton Shaw Warren Road Cobham Kent

Description: Application to determine if prior approval is required for the proposed erection of a forestry building for timber handling/cutting with store and toilets for forestry use under Class E, Schedule 2, Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Applicant: Mr Graham Pidduck

Site Visit Date: Desktop assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Location Plan
Drawing no. 0001 (Location Plan)
Drawing no. 0002 (Site Plan)
Drawing no. 0100 (Plans)

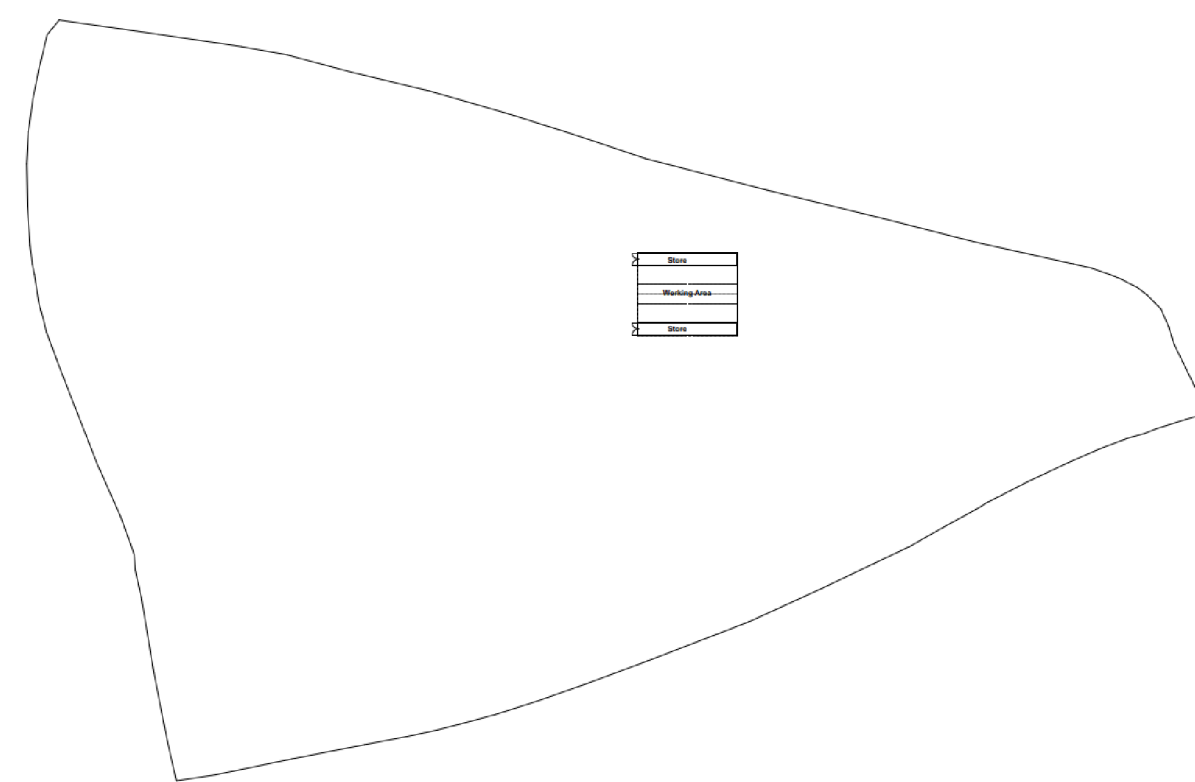
Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20110366	Application for approval of condition 4 attached to planning permission reference number 20090698 relating to the materials and colour of the container.	Approval of details	15.07.2011
20090698	Siting of a second storage container in connection with the maintenance of the woodland and formation of a hardstanding.	Permitted	02.03.2010
20041077	Application for renewal of temporary planning permission for the continued siting of a single replacement steel storage container in connection with the maintenance of the woodland, on a permanent basis.	Permitted	18.02.2005
20010577	Retention of the steel storage container in connection with the maintenance of the woodland.	Refused	01.10.2001
20010860	Retention of the steel storage container in connection with the maintenance of the woodland.	Permitted	27.12.2001

Officer's Analysis

This application seeks determination pursuant to Article 3, Schedule 2, Part 6, Class E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO) in respect of the proposed erection of a forestry building for timber handling/cutting with welfare facilities (toilet, washroom etc.) and secure dry store of large equipment.

Proposed Site Plan:

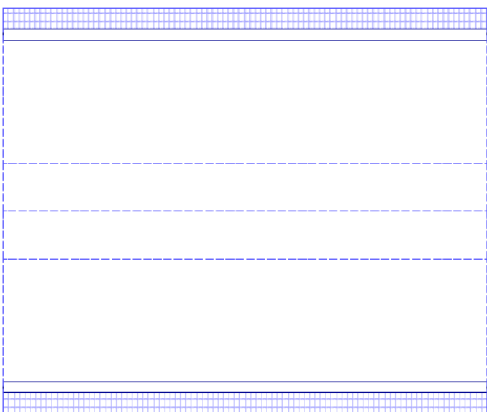


Proposed Site Plan

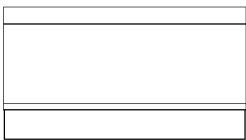
Proposed Plans:



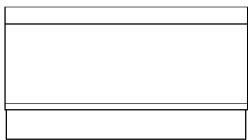
Ground Floor
1:100



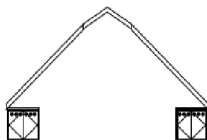
Proposed Roof
1:100



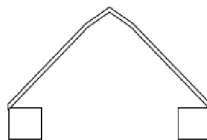
Proposed North Elevation



Proposed South Elevation



Proposed West Elevation



Proposed East Elevation



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This document and its contents shall be used in accordance with the project specifications, technical documents, and drawings. It is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of the author.

The dimensions of the proposed building are 18.5m long, 2.6m to eaves, 15.3m wide and 10m to ridge. The structure would consist of a steel frame, clad in fire resistant sheeting. The structure would be green in colour with a living plant scheme.

It is required as a dry, secure area is needed for large timber harvesting and cutting (without weather protection timber rapidly deteriorates). It will also provide security for large equipment, and weather and fire protection and welfare facilities are needed to maintain health and safety when working on site. The two existing containers on the site will be repositioned and incorporated into the proposed building.

Permitted Development

Class E of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO) relates to forestry developments, and specifically:

E. The carrying out on land used for the purposes of forestry, including afforestation, of development reasonably necessary for those purposes consisting of—

- (a) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building;***
- (b) the formation, alteration or maintenance of private ways;***
- (c) operations on that land, or on land held or occupied with that land, to obtain the materials required for the formation, alteration or maintenance of such ways;***
- (d) other operations (not including engineering or mining operations)***

In this case, the development would fall to be considered under (a). In the first instance, however, in order to comply with the above, the development would have to be carried out on land used for the purposes of forestry and would have to be reasonably necessary for those purposes. There is no supporting evidence put forward with the application to demonstrate that this site is used for the purposes of forestry, either currently or in the future, nor that the building is reasonably necessary for those purposes.

In an appeal relating to land at The Coombes, Coombes Lane, Barkham against an enforcement notice for a building on a tract of woodland known as Coombes Wood (attached at Appendix 1), the Inspector considered the issue of forestry, and how this is construed in the GPDO, to determine whether the development was development permitted by Class E. The same approach is useful to follow here.

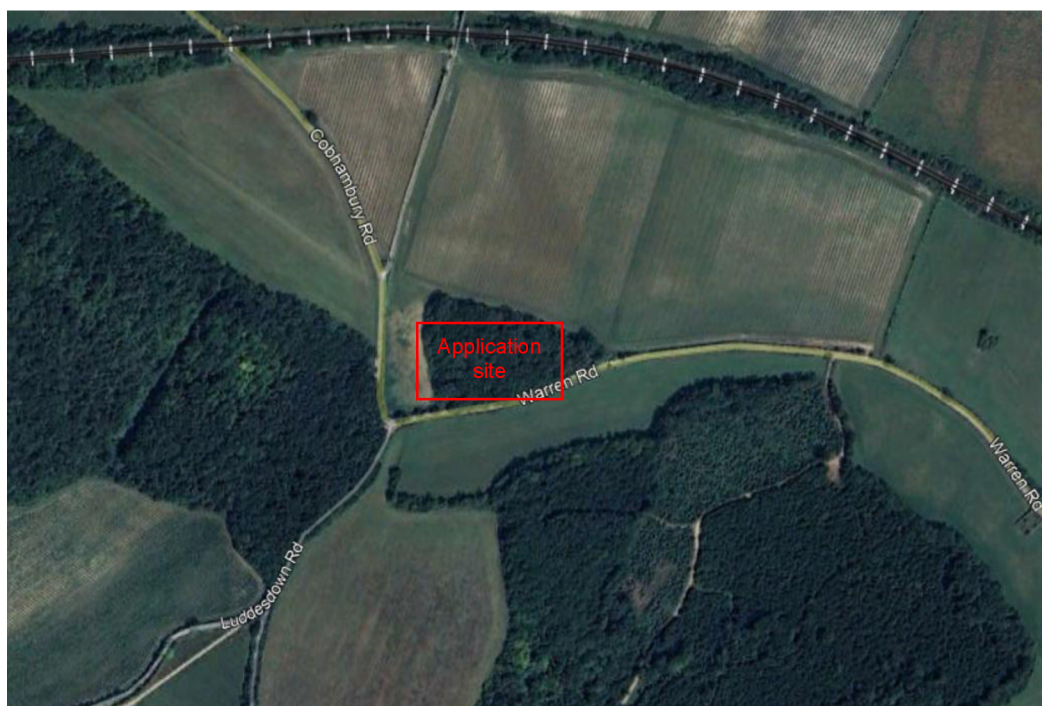
The Inspector first considered the definition of a forest, which the Cambridge Dictionary currently defines as: *a large area of land covered with trees and plants, usually larger than a wood...* and defines forestry as: *the science of planting and taking care of large areas of trees.*

Collins Dictionary also currently describes a forest as: *a large area where trees grow close together*, and describes forestry as: *the science or skill of growing and taking care of trees in forests, especially in order to obtain wood.*

In the Barkham appeal, the Inspector considered similar definitions and concluded that the area of land under management is a central consideration to the use of land for forestry purposes, and determined that as the GPDO does not specify a minimum area of land to which Class E applies in relation to the permitted development rights for forestry, it equates that this is unnecessary on the basis that land used for the purposes of forestry would be extensive in area.

In this case, the application site is approximately 1.76 hectares.

Current Google Earth Image:



This is not a large enough site to be used for the purposes of forestry, and therefore, as in the Barkham appeal, it is difficult to see how a permanent building of the considerable size proposed could be regarded as reasonably necessary for such purposes.

The essential equipment for forestry is generally portable and would usually be brought on site when works are actually being carried out. There does not appear to be a need to store tools on this site; it is accessible by road and therefore tools could be brought to the site as and when they are needed. There also does not appear to be any large scale works forestry works being carried out on the plot, and any large-scale works on such a small scale site would soon result in the loss of this woodland, particularly when there is no evidence of any forestry management being undertaken at the site.

The building would provide weather protection, but because of the small size of the site and its accessibility by road, there would not be a pressing need for the building for this purpose. Secure and dry storage for large timber harvesting and cutting is also set out as a requirement for the site but given that there is Ancient Woodland surrounding this site, it does not seem possible that large timber harvesting and cutting would be carried out.

On the basis that the land is not being used for the purposes of forestry, together with the small size of the application site, the proposed building is not considered reasonably necessary for the purposes of forestry, and therefore the proposed erection of a building is not permitted by Class E of Part 6 of Schedule 2 to the GPDO. Furthermore, the condition set out in Class E in E.2(1)(a) relating to the determination as to whether prior approval will be required is not necessary to be considered.

Recommendation

Refuse.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	

Dated:	20th August 2025	Dated:	20th August 2025
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