



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No:	20230393
Location:	Boughurst Farm, Leywood Road, Meopham, Gravesend
Description:	Demolition of existing workshop and storage building and construction of a new car port, workshop and storage building with associated landscaping, turning and visitor parking areas.
Applicant:	Mr Ohslon & Till
Site Visit Date:	3 May 2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Design and Access Statement including Heritage and Planning Statements
Drawing no. SP_01 (Location Plan)
Drawing no. SP_02 (Block Plan Existing)
Drawing no. SP_03 (Block Plan Proposed)
Drawing no. EX_01 (Existing Workshop and Store Building)
Drawing no. EX_05 (Existing South Facing Site Context Elevation)
Drawing no. E_11 (Proposed Ground Floor Plan, South and East Elevations)
Drawing no. E_12 (Proposed Roof Plan, North and West Elevations)
Drawing no. E_15 (Proposed South Facing Site Context Elevation)
Drawing no. P_01 (Illustrative Partial Site Plan)
Drawing no. S_01 (Illustrative Site Section)

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20210920	Application for Listed Building Consent for conversion of existing outbuilding to two bedroom all year round holiday let.	Withdrawn	22.02.2022
20210919	Conversion existing outbuilding to two bedroom all year round holiday let.	Withdrawn	22.02.2022
20171004	Application for the approval of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference no. 20170711 relating to details of the extractor fan.	Approval	18.01.2018
20170711	Application for Listed Building Consent for the retention of the en-suite shower room and cupboard in the fourth bedroom at first floor level.	Permission	24.08.2017
20120667	Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of secondary glazing to all windows at first and second floor levels.	Permission	19.09.2012
19980461	The installation of a Yorkstar 24 oil fired condensing boiler in lobby leading to ground floor toilet, with a rear	Permission	25.09.1998

	exit external flue.		
19860199	Use of land as residential garden and erection of 2.75 metre high perimeter fence to tennis court	Permission	27.06.1986

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

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

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

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

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

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- SPD – Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (October 2021)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2026
- Landscape Character Assessment Update 2020
- The Setting of Heritage Assets by Historic England (2017)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Luddesdown Parish Council and the Kent Downs AONB Management Unit were consulted but have not responded.

KCC Biodiversity

The replacement of a building and green space will almost certainly require an ecological survey to demonstrate that protected species (primarily bats for the building) and biodiversity loss has been considered and addressed. I advise that this is carried out and submitted prior to determination of the application.

Internal Consultees

GBC Conservation

Having reviewed the proposed replacement building, the existing modern structure having no historic significance, it appears to be sympathetic to its context and the adjacent heritage assets. It is however larger in footprint and would therefore cause harm to the setting of those adjacent heritage assets. On balance, the proposals are contrary to local and national policy and cannot be supported.

GBC Environmental Protection

No objection. Code of practice on construction, lighting and asbestos informatives are recommended.

GBC Highways

I have no highway objections to the proposal, the pea shingle used for the driveway turning area is remote from the highway and the car port conforms to current design guidance.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 3 properties, on site and in the press. The overall consultation period expired on 26 May 2023.

No letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties.

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

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing workshop and storage building and the construction of a new car port, workshop and storage building with associated landscaping, turning and visitor parking areas.

The proposed building will be located in the north-eastern corner of the site, in place of an existing building used as a workshop/garden machinery store.

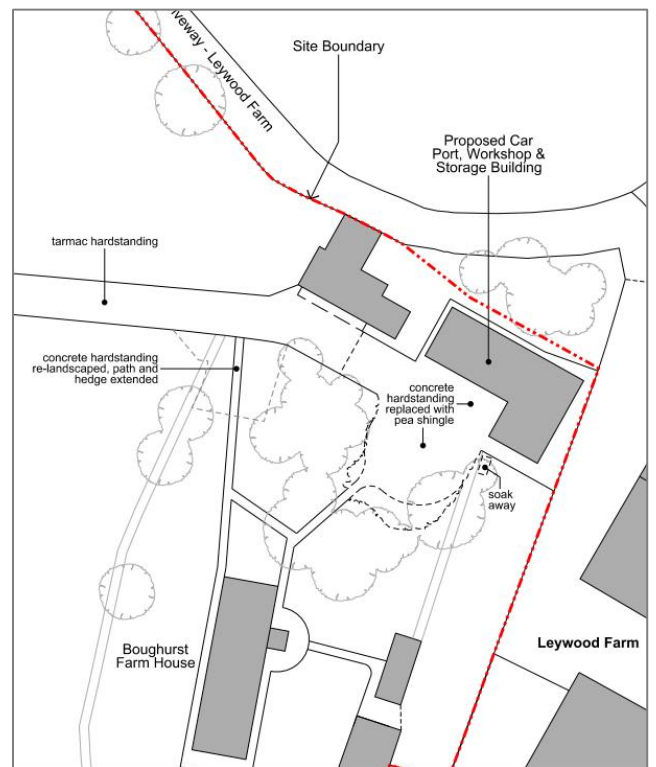
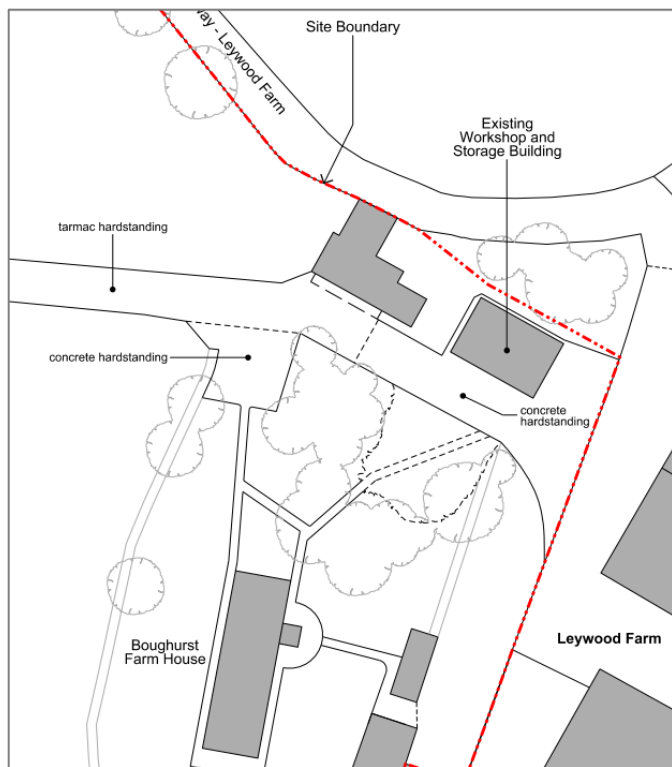
Submitted photos of existing building to be demolished



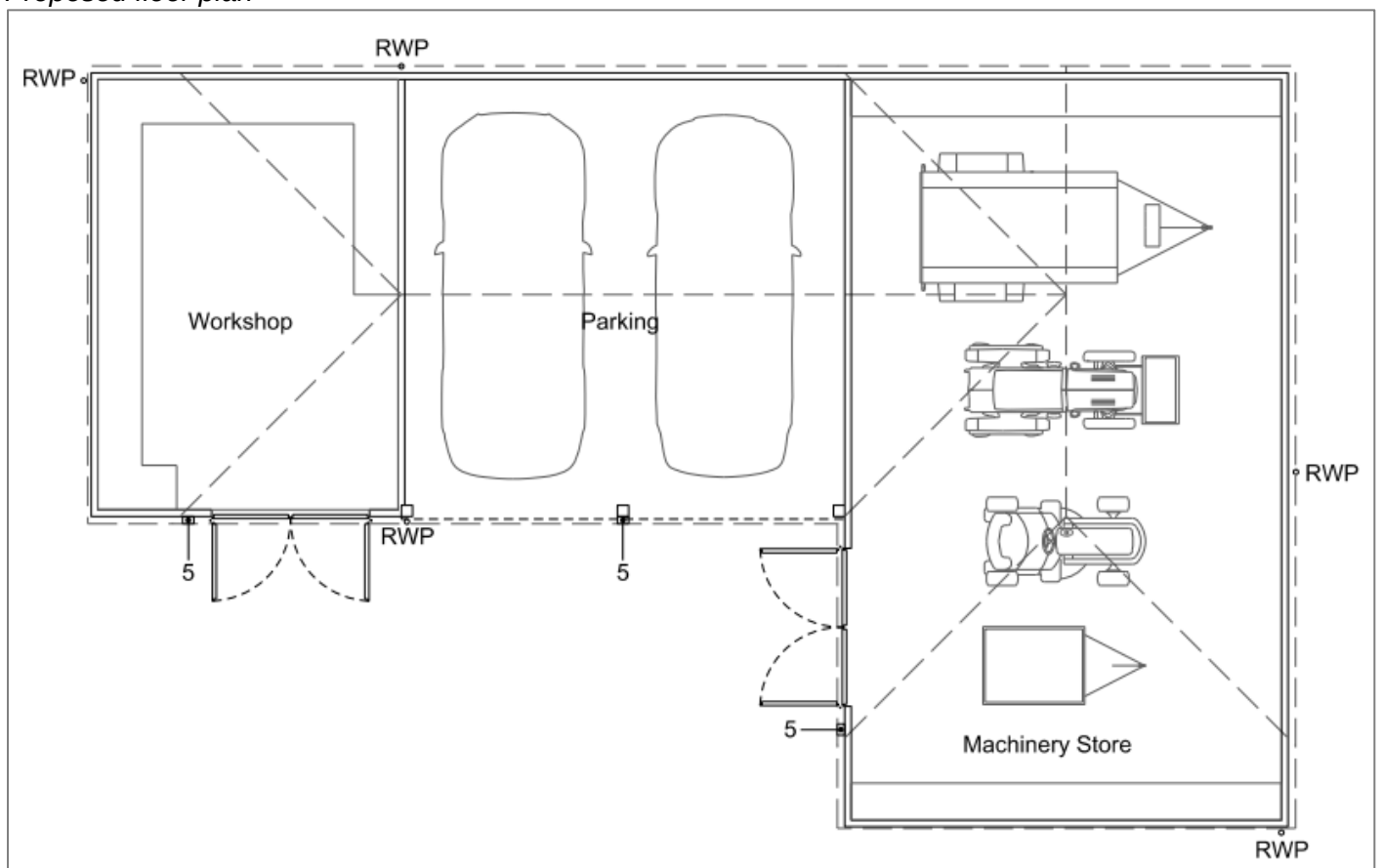
The proposed building will be 'L' shaped and single storey with a pitched roof. It will have an oak frame, with a brick plinth, black feather-edged horizontal weatherboarding, clay roof tiles and an external downlight on a PIR sensor. The building will be approximately 16m wide, between 6m and 10m deep, and 4.7m high to the top of the pitched roof.

Extract from existing block plan:

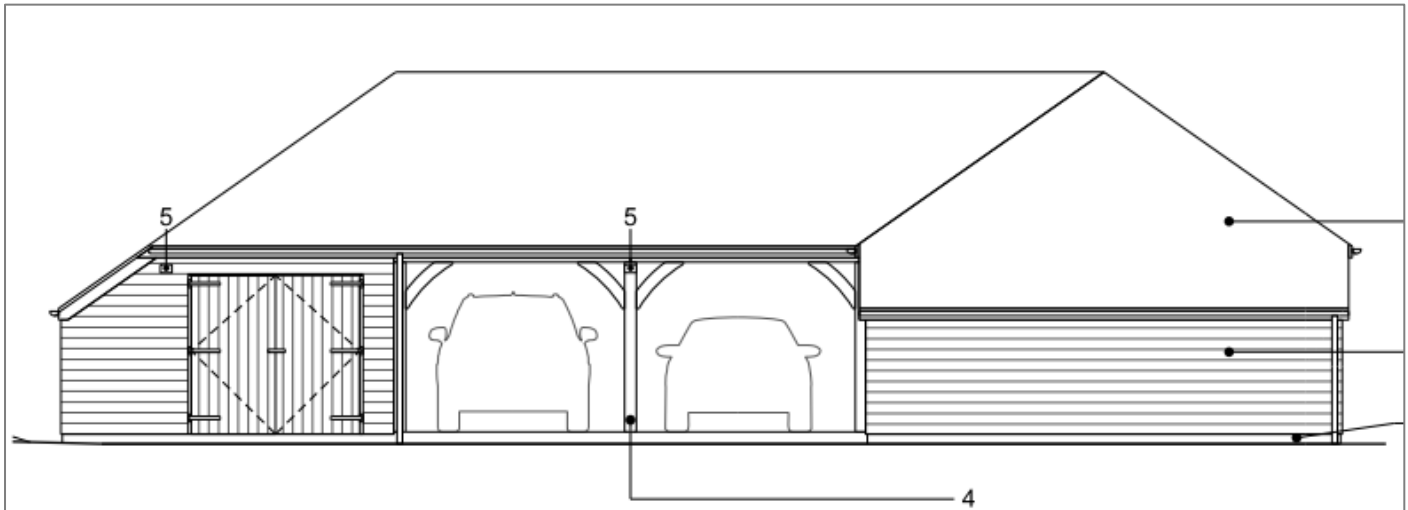
Extract from proposed block plan:



Proposed floor plan



Proposed front (south) elevation



The proposal also involves forming a new turning area with space for visitor parking in front of the proposed new building, which will be shingled. The existing concrete hardstanding to the north of the house will be returned to grass.

Main Issues

The application site is located in the countryside in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and in the Green Belt. It is also located in the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area. The main dwelling, Boughurst Farm, is Grade II listed.

The main issues for consideration with this proposal are as follows:

- Principle of development in the Green Belt
- Impact on openness and the landscape character of the surrounding area
- Impact on the main listed building and curtilage listed building on the site.

There are no design, residential amenity or highways concerns.

Principle of development in the Green Belt

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

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

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

Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements

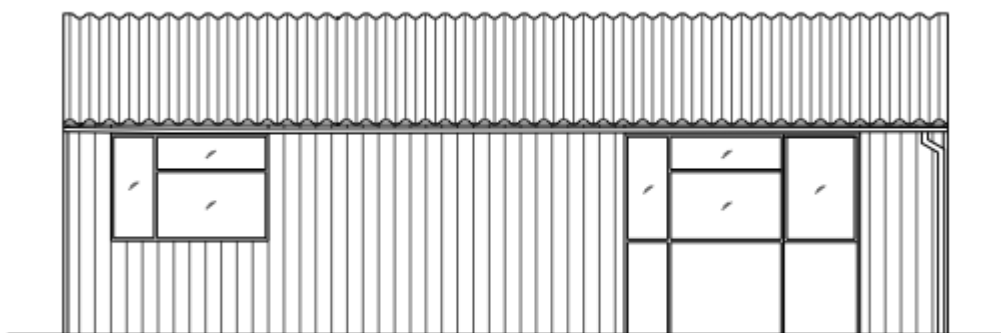
(which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the Core Strategy 2014.

Saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994 relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, and generally seeks to maintain the open character of the Green Belt and retain a stock of rural dwellings of modest size. In relation to this proposal, criteria (vii) is relevant, which states that proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.

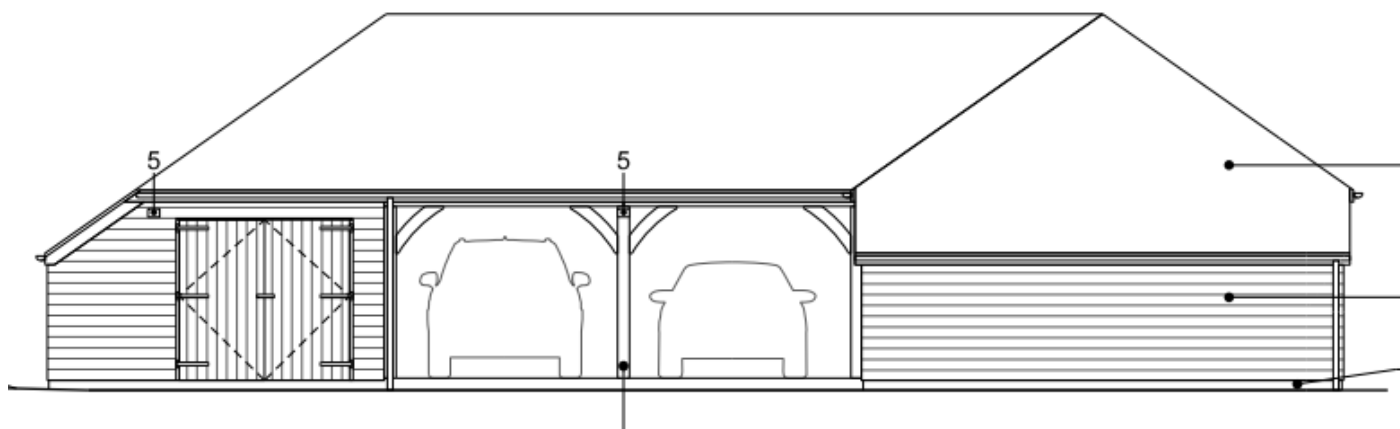
Turning to the matter of the impact of the replacement domestic and ancillary outbuilding in this location in the Green Belt, the proposed replacement outbuilding is increased in size and height compared to the existing outbuilding and is therefore materially larger than the existing outbuilding:

	Existing outbuilding	Proposed outbuilding	Increase over existing (%)
Gross external floor area (m²)	65 m ²	127 (>62) m ²	49 %
Ridge / eaves height (m)	3.6 / 2.3 m	4.7 / Between 1.6-2.5 m	23 % (ridge)

Existing outbuilding (south elevation):



Current proposed outbuilding:



As the proposed outbuilding would be significantly larger than the existing outbuilding, the proposal would not comply with the requirements of the NPPF, as at 49% larger than the existing outbuilding, it is considered to be materially larger and this would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

As part of the assessment of this proposal, the impact of such an inappropriate development on the openness of the Green Belt must also be considered.

Impact on Openness and Character and Appearance of Surrounding Area

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

As established above, the application proposal, by virtue of its size, would involve an inappropriate form of development at the application site that would be harmful to the Green Belt.

The application site can be described as previously developed land as it is part of an existing residential site. As the proposed development would not provide affordable housing, the proposal can also be judged against the first part of paragraph 147(g) of the NPPF 2021, which seeks to prevent a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development on a site. In this case, the proposal is considered as inappropriate development but its impact on the openness of the Green Belt must be also assessed, and in turn the impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The existing outbuilding is a fairly modestly sized, subservient, domestic storage building within the curtilage of a large, detached dwelling on a very generous plot. The proposed replacement outbuilding will introduce a much larger, permanent structure than what is existing. Indeed, the footprint of the proposed outbuilding would be larger than that of the main dwelling on the site (which is approximately 115m²) and the Gatehouse adjacent to it (70m²). This will clearly reduce and cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt in this location.

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

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF 2021 aims for development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The site lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Reflective of paragraph 176 of the NPPF 2021, Policy SD2 of the Management Plan 2021-2026 recognises the need to conserve and enhance the local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the AONB. Principle SD8 seeks to ensure that proposals do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the AONB.

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

In relation to the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area, the LCA states the area is defined by undulating topography with arable farmland and pasture, irregular field patterns, fields divided by native hedgerows and areas of native woodland that all contribute to the rural character of the area. The condition of the landscape is generally good, its sensitivity high. The guidelines for the area focus on maintaining the character of sparse and distinctive built development and conserve small-scale farmsteads.

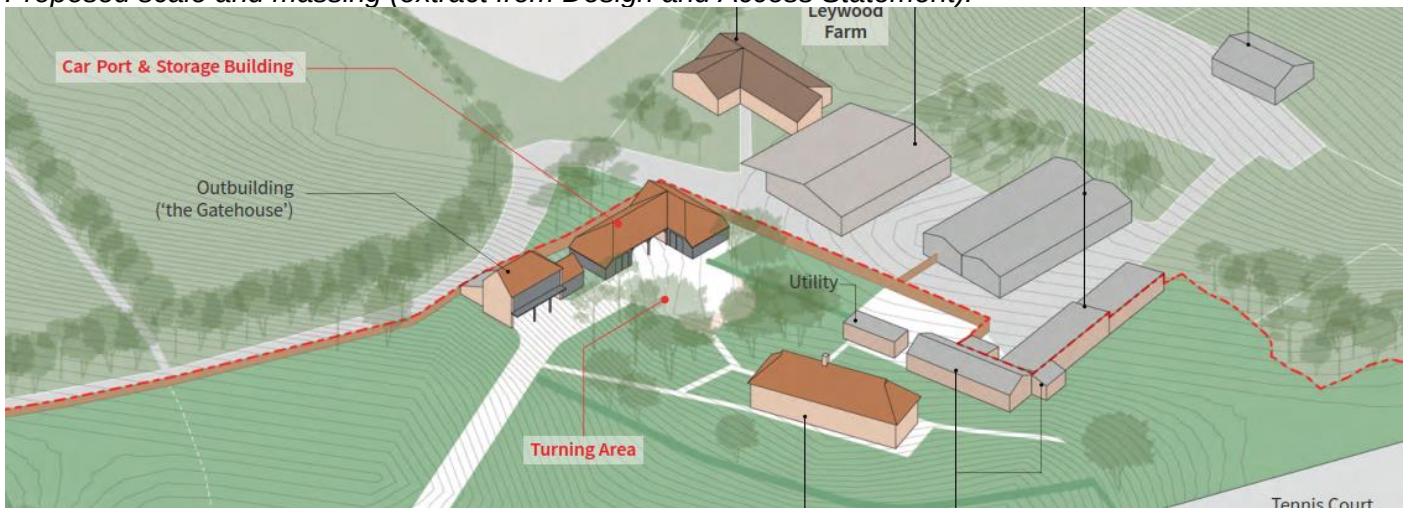
The site is fairly open at the front with post and rail fencing and open gates, though Boughhurst Farm and

the existing outbuilding are set well back from the road. However, the larger scale of the proposed outbuilding would be visible from the front of the site and would further enclose the corner of the site and the views through to the rear.

Photo of Site Frontage:



Proposed scale and massing (extract from Design and Access Statement):



The proposed replacement outbuilding is well designed with the use of high-quality materials. It is traditional

and in keeping with the character and appearance of domestic storage/garaging in the rural area. The layout is not unacceptable, and access would be appropriate. The proposed re-landscaping of an existing hardstanding area and re-organisation/shingling of an existing hardstanding for parking/turning is acceptable, and landscaping/planting details for this area could be conditioned to ensure their quality.

However, the fact that the proposed outbuilding would be significantly larger than the existing outbuilding and will add to the amount of built development on the site, and this is considered to have a harmful impact on the openness of the site and an adverse erosive impact on the surrounding Landscape Character Area, which is contrary to the recommendations in the Landscape Character Assessment. In a similar vein, the proposed outbuilding would be more intrusive within its AONB setting.

Referring to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF 2021, inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. As the proposal involves a car port/workshop/store for a private dwelling, there are no special circumstances that would outweigh the harm brought about by this inappropriate development.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposed outbuilding would detract from the openness of the Green Belt and would fail to conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the AONB and Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area. As such, the proposal would not comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 130, 137, 174 and 176 of the NPPF 2021.

Design and Impact on Listed Building(s)

The NPPF 2021 also places great significance on the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets, and on new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 197). This is echoed in Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that the significance of the Borough's heritage assets and their setting should always be preserved or enhanced. Saved Policy TC2 of the Local Plan 1994 sets out that for development involving affecting the setting of listed buildings, the primary consideration is the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals must be sympathetic in terms of their massing, scale, appearance and materials.

The main house, 'Boughurst Farm' is a Grade II Listed Building. The Gatehouse building immediately adjacent to the existing outbuilding to be replaced is a curtilage listed building. The current outbuilding is clearly subservient in scale, massing and appearance to both the adjacent Gatehouse and main dwelling, but the existing modern structure has no historic significance.

It is appreciated that the appearance of the existing outbuilding is utilitarian and nondescript, and that it would be worthy of replacement. However, despite the design of the replacement outbuilding being sympathetic to its context and the adjacent heritage assets, the increase in the size of the building, and particularly its increased footprint, is considered to be excessive and harmful to the setting of the listed Gatehouse and Boughurst Farm buildings.

The dominance of the proposed replacement building therefore fails to comply with the relevant conservation requirements of Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, Saved Policy TC2 of the Local Plan 1994 and section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Biodiversity

Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect sites designated for their biodiversity value based on their level of importance and enhance, restore, recreate and maintain habitats particularly within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, which is a designation of this site. The development is located within the curtilage of a residential property and on the site of an existing outbuilding.

The replacement of a building and green space would require an ecological survey to demonstrate that protected species (primarily bats for the building) and biodiversity loss has been considered and addressed. This has not been considered and therefore should be conditioned to prior to commencement further to any forthcoming planning permission.

Conclusion and Recommendation

1. The proposed replacement outbuilding, by virtue of its excessive size, is an inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt that would be contrary to the requirements of Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 147, 148, 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
2. The proposed replacement outbuilding, by virtue of its excessive size, would fail to conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area. As such, the proposal would fail to comply with the requirements of Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, and paragraphs 130, 174 and 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.
3. The proposed outbuilding, by virtue of its excessive size, would adversely affect the setting of the original Grade II Listed Gatehouse and Farmhouse buildings on the site. As such, the proposal would fail to comply with the requirements of Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 190 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

The application is accordingly recommended for refusal.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	12 June 2023	Dated:	13th June 2023