

The Lion, Luddesdown - Proposed Garden Extension and Other Works

Planning, Design and Access Statement

ST/TS/35855

May 2026



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

- 1.1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application submitted on behalf of Vineyard Farms Ltd to Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) for the:

"Proposed extension to The Lion public house garden and associated alterations to access arrangements to the adjacent winery and associated works."

- 1.1.2 This statement provides an overview of the site, the proposed development and the relevant planning history, and a review of all applicable development plan policies as well as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other relevant guidance.

1.2 APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

- 1.2.1 This Statement summarises and appraises the proposed development in the context of the relevant planning policy requirements. It should be read together with the following reports and plans:

DOCUMENT/PLANS	AUTHOR
Application Form and Certificates	DHA
Noise Assessment	Lustre Consulting
Landscape and Visual Appraisal	Briarwood
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	JW Biodiversity
Biodiversity Net Gain Metric	Greenspace Ecological Solutions
Biodiversity Net Gain Report	Greenspace Ecological Solutions
Ground contamination	Lustre Consulting

TABLE 1.1: SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS

DRAWING NAME	DRAWING NO.	AUTHOR
Site Location Plan	DHA/35449/01	DHA
Existing Site Layout Plan	DHA/35449/02	DHA
Proposed Site Layout Plan	DHA/35449/03	DHA

Pub Garden Proposed Stair Detail	DHA/35449/04	DHA
Pub Garden Propose Site Section	DHA/35449/05	DHA
Farmyard HGV access- vehicle tracking	DHA/35862-T-01	DHA Transport

TABLE 1.2: SUBMITTED DRAWINGS

2 APPLICATION SITE

2.1 THE SITE

- 2.1.1 The site is situated in the hamlet of Luddesdown in between Cuxton, Meopham and Cobham.

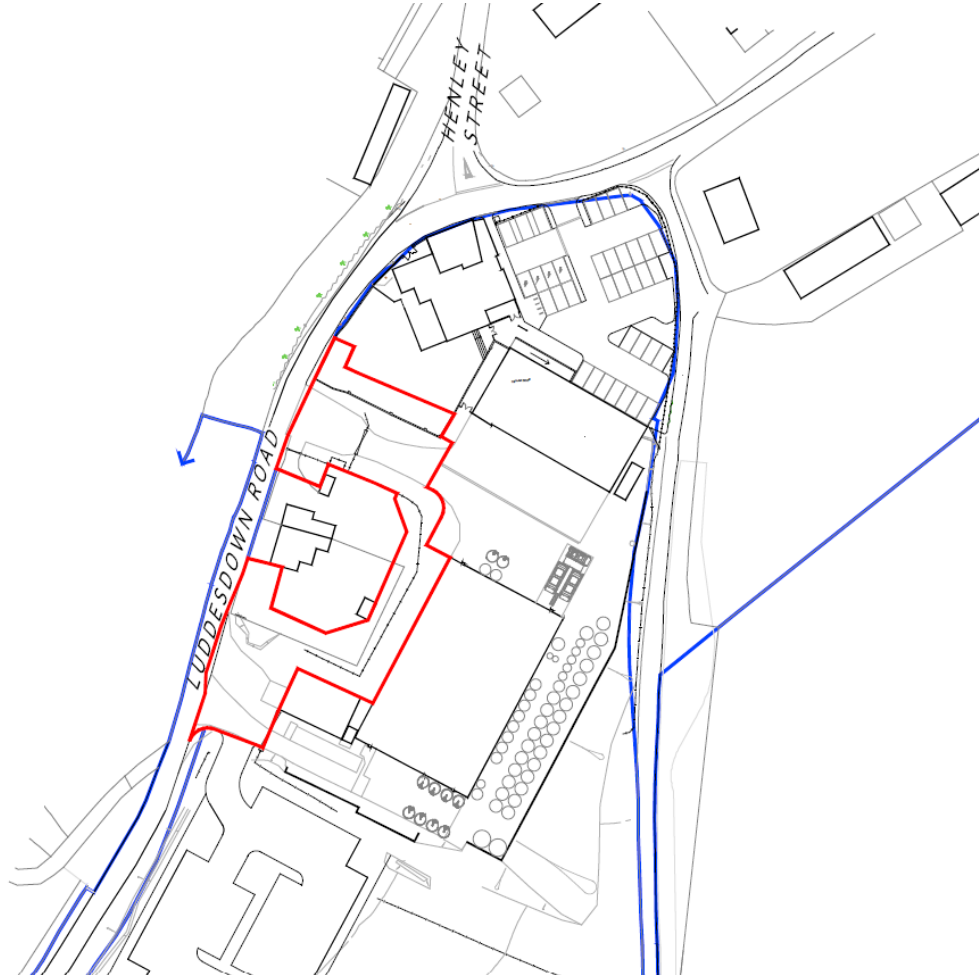


FIGURE 2.1: SITE LOCATION PLAN

- 2.1.2 The site of the proposed development includes:

- An area of concrete hardstanding situated immediately south of the existing garden of The Lion public house and forming the existing access to the Brookers Farm farmyard.
- An area of land comprising part of the rear gardens of a pair of existing cottages (88 and 89 Brookers Cottages owned by the Applicant) and a

vacant area of land adjacent to the western elevation of the existing winery building.

- Part of the southern garden of one of the cottages (No. 88) and an area of vacant land in front of an existing agricultural building and adjoining Luddesdown Road.



FIGURE 2.2: VIEW OF THE EXISTING FARMYARD ACCESS FROM LUDDESDOWN ROAD LOOKING TOWARDS THE PUB GARDEN AND PUB BEYOND



FIGURE 2.3: VIEW FROM WITHIN THE FARMYARD LOOKING BACK THROUGH THE EXISTING ACCESS TO LUDDESDOWN ROAD WITH THE EXISTING PUB GARDEN ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE



FIGURE 2.4: VIEW OF THE EXISTING PUB GARDEN FROM WITHIN THE FARMYARD



FIGURE 2.5: VIEW FROM THE FARMYARD LOOKING SOUTH SHOWING THE AREA OF VACANT LAND ADJACENT TO THE WINERY BUILDING WITH THE REAR GARDENS OF 88 AND 89 BROOKERS COTTAGES ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE



FIGURE 2.6: VIEW FROM LUDESDOWN ROAD LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS 88 BROOKERS COTTAGE AND SHOWING THE AREA OF VACANT LAND IN FROM OF THE ADJOINING AGRICULTURAL BUILDING

Planning Constraints

- 2.1.3 The site is located in the countryside, the Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB), and the Green Belt.
- 2.1.4 At the local level, GBC's Luddesdown Landscape Character Assessment shows that the site is within the Luddesdown Downs character area. GBC identify that the main characteristics of the built form in the Luddesdown Downs Character Area is the clustering of buildings around lane junctions, farmstead development, timber framed buildings and the use of Kent Peg roof tiles.
- 2.1.5 The site is located in Flood Zone 1.

2.2 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.2.1 GBC's online planning register records the following recent/relevant planning history for the Lion Pub and Brookers Farm. A summary of the sites' relevant planning history can be found in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below.

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
20250053	Erection of a rear and side extension and refurbishment of the Golden Lion pub including landscaping, parking and associated works.	Approved (31.03.2025)
20250920	Application for a non-material amendment to planning permission reference number 20250053 to allow minor changes to the internal arrangement of the car park to the pub to that approved, including the loss of two car parking spaces introduce a repurposed red phone box for use as a 'community library' and add the 'Proposed Parking Layout Plan' Ref: DHA/35449/11 to the list of approved plans listed in Condition 2 of the planning permission.	Approved (08.10.2025)
20251301	Application for a non-material amendment to planning permission reference number 20250053 to allow addition of an oak framed entrance porch; amendments to window and door openings; modification to the dimensions of the western toilet block extension; removal of existing external cupboard; minor roof alterations, including changing the restaurant roof to a symmetrical pitch and removal, of roof lights; relocation of the outdoor stairs; and change of materials.	Approved (22.01.2026)
20260267	Application for a non-material amendment to planning permission reference number 20250053 to allow re-designed/reconfigured concrete ramped access to the Cellar Door Shop and realignment of the existing gabion wall, installation of a new brick / flint wall to meet the realigned gabion wall and the installation of oak arched access gate to the pub garden from the car park;	Approved.

installation of a secondary low level picket style gate and fence to the pub garden; installation of new planter next to new main access gates; installation of new planter adjacent to stepped access to the pub garden; and installation of a set of semi-circle up to the Cellar Door Shop.

TABLE 2.1: PLANNING HISTORY FOR THE LION PUB

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
20210607	Retrospective application for erection of two storage/fermentation tanks.	Granted Temporary Permission (23.07.2021)
20230454	Application for retrospective temporary consent for the erection of 41 wine fermentation and storage tanks	Granted Temporary Permission (22.06.2023)
20240021	Prior notification under Class B of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the addition of 9 additional fermentation tanks to existing 41 already in place.	Prior Approval Not Required (09.02.2024)
20240091	Engineering works to construct a formal car parking area for Vineyard Farms Ltd office, winery and vineyard workers, and other users of Brookers Farm.	Approved (05.04.2025)
20250839	Application for an Existing Lawful Development Certificate for the continued use of part of the agricultural building as a small wine shop (Cellar Door) and vineyard/farm Offices in association with the existing agricultural operations.	Certificate Granted (15.10.2025)
20251092	Application for a Proposed Lawful Development Certificate; to create additional ground floor space within existing building for new storage area for wine shop; conversion of existing staff room into storage/wine tasting room; creating internal doorways connecting the wine shop with the adjacent tasting rooms; reconfiguring and replacing ground floor toilets with installation of new external windows on side elevation. Creation of first floor mezzanine floor space for new wine tasting room.	Certificate Granted (09/12/2025)
20250840	Retention/installation of 59 wine tanks and grape presses.	Approved (06.02.2026)

TABLE 2.2: PLANNING HISTORY FOR BROOKERS FARM

- 2.2.2 The planning permission most relevant to this proposal is application ref. 20250053 for the erection of a rear and side extension and refurbishment of The Lion pub, which was granted consent in 2025.

3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 CONTEXT TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1.1 Planning permission (20250053) was granted in 2025 for the refurbishment and extension of The Lion public house.
- 3.1.2 The pub as existing is sub-optimal in terms of layout. The existing car park is poorly defined and provides an unattractive sense of arrival to the pub. The kitchen is also too small, and the general layout of the pub has suffered by successive additions to the property over time rather than a cohesive rationalisation. The overall appearance of the property is beginning to look tired, and the overall aesthetic appearance of the property is deteriorating.
- 3.1.3 The planning permission granted seeks to refurbish and extend the pub to rationalise the internal layout and external spaces. This includes its garden and car park, the enhancement and extension of the dining area, and improvement to the overall aesthetic of the property and its contribution to the street scene of Luddesdown Road.
- 3.1.4 The works to the pub are currently underway and are due to complete in September 2026.

3.2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.2.1 Since permission was granted to extend and refurbish the pub, plans for the Brookers Farm site have continued to evolve, alongside the vision for the pub through consultation with specialists brought on board to deliver and run the pub.
- 3.2.2 Through this process it has been identified that it would be advantageous to extend the pub garden to provide a larger and enhanced outside space for the pub, allowing the pub to serve more meals during busy summer periods and host garden events. In doing so, this will allow the pub to maximise summer revenue and staff employment and help subsidise the quieter autumn/winter months.
- 3.2.3 During busy periods at weekends during the summer months, parking at the pub sometimes becomes an issue and so it is proposed to connect the pub, via a new 1.8m wide pedestrian walkway, to the existing staff car park to provide overflow parking at busy weekend periods. This will ensure that visitors and customers do not park or walk along the road.
- 3.2.4 An overview of the key elements of the proposed development is provided below and shown spatially on Figure 3.1:
- Create a 331m² extension to the pub garden;

- Reconfigure the driveway access from Luddesdown Road for 89 Brookers Cottage;
- Create a new landscape buffer between the southern boundary of the extended pub garden and 89 Brookers Cottage;
- Create a new alternative 4m wide vehicle access to Brookers Farm farmyard south of and behind the gardens of 88 and 89 Brookers Cottages;
- Create a new 1.8m wide pathway running behind 88 and 89 Brookers Cottages providing safe pedestrian access between the pub garden and the existing staff car park located south of and adjacent to Brookers Farm (Planning Ref. 20240091).

3.2.5 The above works will reduce the gardens associated with 88 and 89 Brookers Cottages, however, suitable outside amenity space and functional gardens will remain for the properties. The properties are owned by the applicant and used/occupied by staff members.



FIGURE 3.1: PLAN SHOWING PROPOSED PUB GARDEN EXTENSION AND OTHER SITE ALTERATIONS

Design and appearance

New pub garden

- 3.2.6 The existing concrete hardstanding forming part of the access to the farmyard/winery will be removed and a flint wall extended along the boundary of the extended garden matching that approved as part of the pub refurbishment permission. The garden would then be landscaped.
- 3.2.7 The garden extension area sits approximately 1.2m higher than the existing pub garden, and so a tiered structure would be introduced via a retaining wall and steps, giving an elevated view over the garden.
- 3.2.8 The proposed flint wall will create an enclosed space and a flint wall boundary feature that is in keeping with the character of the area.

New vehicle and pedestrian access

- 3.2.9 The new 4m wide vehicle access route to the winery and farmyard will be constructed in concrete with the area adjacent to Luddesdown Road finished in tarmac.
- 3.2.10 The 1.8m wide pedestrian walkway connecting the extended pub garden to the existing staff car park will be surfaced in a resin bound gravel with iron gates placed at each end to ensure security. The walkway will be set within new landscape planting.

Landscaping

- 3.2.11 A newly proposed landscape buffer between the pub garden and the residential curtilage of 89 Brookers Cottage is proposed to propose a visual screening to the neighbouring residential dwellings.
- 3.2.12 Landscape enhancements are proposed to the rear boundaries of 88 and 89 Brookers Cottages to maintain privacy and provide visual screening.
- 3.2.13 An additional landscape buffer is proposed between the 1.8m wide pedestrian walkway, and the 4m wide winery access, clearly distinguishing the two routes.

Access and parking

- 3.2.14 The new 4m vehicle access to be located south of 88 Brookers Cottage is to provide access to HGVs (up to 12m rigid body lorries) which require infrequent access to the farmyard and the winery.

- 3.2.15 The existing farmyard provides sufficient space for vehicles to turn and then leave via the new access in forward gear.
- 3.2.16 The proposed works will not alter the type or frequency of vehicles accessing the farmyard and will simply provide an alternative access to the farmyard. Loading/unloading activities associated with the winery happen only during weekday working hours.
- 3.2.17 The existing Brookers Farm staff car park (Planning Ref. 20240091) is infrequently used by a very limited number of cars during the weekend period. As such there is significant parking capacity during this period.
- 3.2.18 During busy weekend periods and on sunny days, the existing pub car park can become full and some visitors attempt to park on the adjoining roads and walk to the pub. To prevent this and to offset any impact from increasing the size of and seating opportunities within the pub garden, it is proposed to allow pub customers to use the staff car park during weekend periods only. This will prevent vehicles from being parked on surrounding roads and visitors walking along the highway to access the pub. The new proposed pedestrian walkway will facilitate this arrangement.

4 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.1.2 For the purpose of this planning application the relevant development plan documents comprise the following:
- (1) Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)
 - (2) Gravesham Local Plan First Review Saved Policies (1994)
- 4.1.3 The following Local and National Planning Policies are considered most relevant to the proposal:

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- Policy CS01 Sustainable Development;
- Policy CS02 Scale and Distribution of Development;
- Policy CS07 Economy, Employment and Skills;
- Policy CS09 Culture and Tourism;
- Policy CS11 Transport;
- Policy CS12 Green Infrastructure;
- Policy CS18: Climate Change; and
- Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles.

Gravesham local plan first review (1994) – saved policies

- Policy T1 Impact of Development on Highway Network;
- Policy T4 Impact of Development on Highway Network.

4.2 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework

Decision Making

- 4.2.1 Paragraph 39 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Building a strong, competitive economy

- 4.2.2 Paragraph 88 states that planning policies and decisions should enable:
- (a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;
 - (b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
 - (c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
 - (d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

- 4.2.3 Paragraph 89 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist."

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 4.2.4 Paragraph 98(d) seeks to ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community.

Promoting sustainable transport

- 4.2.5 Paragraph 116 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

Making effective use of land

- 4.2.6 Paragraphs 129 (d) and (e) state that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting or of promoting regeneration and change and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

- 4.2.7 Paragraph 131 states that creating high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
- 4.2.8 Paragraph 135 states that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - (c) are sympathetic to 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).

Protecting Green Belt land

- 4.2.9 Paragraph 143 sets out the five purposes of Green Belt. These are:
- (a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - (b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - (c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - (d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

- (e) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.2.10 Paragraph 153 states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 4.2.11 Paragraph 154 lists exceptions to development in the Green Belt. These include:
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
 - (h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:
 - (ii) engineering operations.
 - (v) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds).

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 4.2.12 Paragraph 189 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape.
- 4.2.13 With respect to habitats and biodiversity, paragraph 193 says that when determining applications, local planning authorities should apply the principles that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 4.2.14 Equally, proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity to seeking net gains should be supported and encouraged.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 4.2.15 Paragraph 215 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

- 4.2.16 Paragraph 216 deals with applications affecting non designated heritage assets and that the impact needs to be weighed in the planning judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

5 PLANNING APPRAISAL

5.1 OVERVIEW

- 5.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.1.2 In determining whether the proposal accords with the development plan, the following issues are considered:
- Principle of the proposed development
 - Green Belt
 - The Kent Downs National Landscape
 - Other Matters
 - Ecology
 - Residential Amenity
 - Contamination
 - Access and Highways
 - Flood Risk and Drainage

5.2 PRINCIPLE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.2.1 The proposed development will extend the garden of The Lion public house further enhancing the pub beyond the improvements secured as part of permission 20250053.
- 5.2.2 The larger garden will facilitate more outdoor seating for the pub and provide an outdoor space for summer activities (BBQ's, spit roasts, beer festivals etc) which will enhance revenue potential for the pub during the warmer summer months. Within the hospitality sector, and in particular with pubs, the busy summer months help subsidise the quieter winter months.
- 5.2.3 Policy CS07 Economy, Employment and Skills of the Local Plan states that:
- 'The Council will support proposals that promote the appropriate expansion and diversification of the rural area economy'.

- 5.2.4 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF 'supporting a prosperous rural economy' states that planning policies and decisions should enable:
- the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;
 - the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
 - sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside;
 - the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- 5.2.5 Paragraph 98(d) of the NPPF seeks to ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community.
- 5.2.6 The primary function of the proposed development is to provide a vibrant prosperous rural pub.
- 5.2.7 We, therefore, believe that the principle of the proposed development is supported by the adopted development plan and the NPPF subject to consideration of the impact on the Kent Downs National Landscape and the Green Belt amongst other material considerations.

5.3 GREEN BELT

- 5.3.1 Policy CS02 of the core strategy (2014) states that the Council will apply national Green Belt policy when determining development within the Green Belt outside of any defined settlement confines.
- 5.3.2 The site lies within the Green Belt, where paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. A limited number of exceptions of development that is not considered 'inappropriate' are provided. Those of relevance to the proposed development are as follows:
- h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:
 - (i) engineering operations.

- (ii) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds).

- 5.3.3 The proposed development both constitutes an engineering operation, and a material change of use in the land from agricultural hardstanding providing vehicular access to pub garden, and from residential garden to agricultural hardstanding for access.
- 5.3.4 The creation of the new access is considered to constitute an engineering operation for agriculture and is not therefore considered inappropriate development in accordance with paragraph 154 of the NPPF.
- 5.3.5 The extension of the pub garden into and over the existing agricultural hardstanding represents a material change of use in the land. Paragraph 154 (h)(II) states that 'material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds)' is not inappropriate development. Whilst the proposed use is not listed, the list provided is not exclusive ("such as") and the change of use proposed is not considered incongruous with the uses listed. The pub garden extension would form an area of greenspace contained by a boundary wall and used by members of the public.
- 5.3.6 The pub garden extension is not therefore considered a material change of use of land that is inappropriate in the Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances

- 5.3.7 In the event that the Council should consider that the proposed development still does not meet the requirements of paragraphs 154, rendering the proposal 'inappropriate development' we do not believe that the proposed development would contravene or undermine any of the key purposes of the Green Belt as defined by the NPPF.
- 5.3.8 As defined in Paragraph 143 of the NPPF, the Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*

The proposed development does represent unrestricted sprawl of a large built up area.
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*

The proposed development would have no impact in this regard.
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*

The proposed development relates to an existing established rural pub and the proposed pub garden extension would cover an area of existing concrete hardstanding that would be removed.

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

The site is not located within or near to a historic town.

e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

The pub is an existing rural pub and not located in an urban area where urban regeneration is relevant or feasible.

5.3.9 Due to scale, location and nature of the proposed development the impact on the Green Belt would be very limited in scale and degree.

5.3.10 It should be noted that 'Very Special Circumstances', as case law has established, need only be sufficient to outweigh the degree of harm caused by a proposal.

5.3.11 We have set out Very Special Circumstances that we believe would outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt.

5.3.12 The Very Special Circumstances in respect of this proposal are considered to be as follows:

- Helping to secure the long-term viability and prosperity of an existing rural pub and its value as a community asset through enhancing summer revenue;
- Helping to secure long-term jobs in the rural economy;
- Long term aesthetic improvement to the character of the local area and street scene from Luddesdown Road.

Landscape Impact and The Kent Downs National Landscape

5.3.13 Policy SD2 of the Kent Downs Management Plan seeks to ensure that the scale and siting of new development are appropriately designed to reflect the setting of the Kent Downs. Policy SD8 states that proposals should not negatively impact the landscape and spatial characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs.

5.3.14 The proposed development is located within the National Landscape in a location characterised by existing built form including The Lion pub to which the proposed development primary relates, farm buildings, wine tanks, a pair of farm worker cottages and a farm workers staff car park. The main vegetation on site is associated with the rear gardens of the two residential properties fronting

Luddesdown Road. The garden vegetation is predominantly non-native species, such as evergreen conifers.

- 5.3.15 The proposed pub garden extension would extend into a nucleate area of built development contextualised by the pub itself, farm buildings and farm worker cottages. The proposed garden extension would remain within this nucleated environment and would not extend development into areas not previously characterised by development. The introduction of a flint boundary wall will represent an aesthetic enhancement to the area and is inkeeping with the traditional character of the area and will not be perceived as incongruous with its farmyard setting.
- 5.3.16 The relocated farmyard access will be discretely located between the rear residential gardens of 88 and 89 Brookers Cottages and the existing winery building.
- 5.3.17 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken by Briarwood Landscape Architecture Limited.
- 5.3.18 The LVA concludes that the proposed development has a well-contained zone of visual influence and as a result, potential visual receptors are limited, and the proposed development is considered to have a beneficial effect on the general visual amenity of the local area.
- 5.3.19 The magnitude of change on the character of the site is assessed as high, whereas the magnitude of change on the character of the local landscape is considered to be low with any experiential or perceptual effect on the local character of the National Landscape confined to a comparatively narrow margin of land around the site.
- 5.3.20 With specific reference to the Kent Downs Management Plan, section 11 states:
- "The secondary purposes of the AONB designation are to take account of the needs of land based and rural industries and the economic and social needs of local communities".*
- 5.3.21 In recognition of the importance of vibrant communities in supporting the purposes of the National Landscape, the Government's Landscape Review 2019 seeks to ensure that National Landscapes:
- 'Foster the economic and community vitality of their area in support of the first two purposes (safeguarding and enhancing the special character of the national landscape)'.*
- 5.3.22 One of the main issues affecting 'vibrant communities' within the National Landscape is stated to be the loss of local services. The Management Plan expressly seeks to retain and improve access to local services and facilities including pubs.

- 5.3.23 We, therefore, consider that despite the proposed change in use of land to accommodate an extended pub garden and the introduction of a flint boundary wall, the proposal represents an opportunity to improve and enhance the visual and aesthetic contribution of the property to the National Landscape (the primary purpose of the National Landscape) whilst also supporting and safeguarding a local community asset (the second and third purposes of the National Landscape).
- 5.3.24 We do not consider that the development proposals are of sufficient scale to constitute major development in a National Landscape that requires wholly exceptional circumstances to justify them.
- 5.3.25 Overall, it is considered that the proposal has been designed to accord with the characteristics of the site's setting and the principles set out in GBC's Landscape Character Assessment, the Kent Downs Management Plan, local policy CS12 and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

5.4 OTHER MATTERS

Ecology

- 5.4.1 An ecological appraisal of the site has been undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist and the corresponding Preliminary Ecological Appraisal submitted in support of the application. The site has negligible/low potential to support protected species and no further protected species have been identified as being necessary.
- 5.4.2 The proposed development will deliver BNG on 'offsite land' 100m north of the site and is calculated as follows:
- Area habitats BNG 33%
 - Hedgerow BNG 319%
- 5.4.3 There is no ecological reasons why planning consent for the development should be withheld.

Residential Amenity

- 5.4.4 A noise assessment has been completed by Lustre Consulting and submitted in support of the application.
- 5.4.5 The assessment identifies that a slight increase in patron noise due to the pub garden extension can be expected with a noise level of 53 dB(A) at the southern pub garden boundary. 'Existing' patron noise contribution in the rear garden of 88 Luddesdown Road is in the region of 38 dB(A). Based on the proposed extension of the pub garden, patron noise levels in the rear garden of 88 Luddesdown Road

are expected to increase to approximately 43 dB(A). This increase can be classified as 'minor' in the short term and 'negligible' in the long term. The extended pub garden would only be used during licensed pub hours and therefore any noise would not extend into the night time.

- 5.4.6 Noise associated with the relocated access could exceed the prevailing background sound conditions for 88 and 89 Brookers Cottages. However, as the exceedance is objectively low and would normally only occur sporadically (approximately two HGVs per day, except during harvest season which increases to four per day), and during daytime hours only, the projected noise increase is not considered significant.
- 5.4.7 Noise impact on all other noise sensitive receptors is considered negligible.

Contamination

- 5.4.8 A phase 1 desk study has been submitted in support of the application. The report identifies that it is unlikely that significant contamination is present on site that could result in adverse impacts to the identified receptors.
- 5.4.9 Based on the findings of the assessment, no further investigation works, or specific mitigation measures are required to ensure the proposed development is suitable for use from a land quality perspective. The assessment recommends that a Non-Specialist Watching Brief is maintained during the groundworks and construction phase to monitor for any visual or olfactory evidence of contamination.

Access and highways

- 5.4.10 The new 4m vehicle access to be located south of 88 Brookers Cottage is to provide access to HGVs (up to 12m rigid body lorries) which require infrequent access to the farmyard and the winery.
- 5.4.11 The existing farmyard provides sufficient space for vehicles to turn and then leave via the new access in forward gear.
- 5.4.12 The proposed works will not alter the type or frequency of vehicles accessing the farmyard and simply provide an alternative access to the farmyard. Loading/unloading activities associated with the winery happen only during weekday working hours.
- 5.4.13 The existing Brookers Farm staff car park (Planning Ref. 20240091) is infrequently used during the weekend period. As such there is significant parking capacity during this period.
- 5.4.14 During busy weekend periods and on sunny days, the existing pub car park can become full and some visitors attempt to park on the adjoining roads and walk to the pub. To prevent this and to offset any impact from increasing the size of and

seating opportunities within the pub garden it is proposed to allow pub customers to use the staff car park during weekend periods only. This will prevent vehicles from being park on surrounding roads and visitors walking along the highway to access the pub. The new proposed pedestrian walkway will facilitate this arrangement.

- 5.4.15 No highways safety or highways capacity issues are envisaged to result from the proposed development.

Flood risk and drainage

- 5.4.16 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of fluvial flooding. As the site is less than 1ha and in Flood Zone 1 no flood risk assessment is required to support the planning application.
- 5.4.17 The proposed development will both remove and create impermeable hardstanding but there is not considered to be a net material change from the existing baseline in that regard. Material impacts of surface water flooding and drainage are therefore unlikely to occur.

6 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications for planning permission are required to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan in force unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.2 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is supported in principle by both local and national planning policies, that it does not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, that it will not harm the special character of the Kent Downs National Landscape and that there are no other material considerations that indicate that planning consent should be withheld.
- 6.1.3 Should the Council consider the development to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt then we have set out that Very Special Circumstances exist to outweigh the very minimal harm to the Green Belt that would result from proposals in any event.
- 6.1.4 In accordance with the NPPF Local Planning Authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.1.5 For the reasons given above, we respectfully request that the Council give this planning application favourable consideration and grant planning permission for the proposed development, subject to appropriate conditions.