



# Delegated Report

## Planning Application

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| <b>Application No:</b> | 20231008                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Location:</b>       | Swanswood Farm, Harvel Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0UA                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Description:</b>    | Demolition of existing stable block and erection of an oak framed cart shed style building with four stable stalls, welfare facilities with storage areas and rooflights in the roof space above the stables. |
| <b>Applicant:</b>      | Mr Keith Walters                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Site Visit:</b>     | 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2024                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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### Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form – 28 September 2023;
  - Design and Access Statement;
  - Site Location Plan (scale – 1:1250);
  - Drawing no. 14 – Existing Floor Plan – dated 20 September 2024;
  - Drawing no. 15 – Existing Elevations – dated 26 September 2024;
  - Drawing no. 16 – Existing Site Location Plan – dated 26 September 2024;
  - Drawing no. 18 – Existing Block Plan – dated 15 March 2024;
  - Drawing no. 19 – Proposed Block Plan – dated 15 March 2024;
  - Drawing no. 21 – Tree Plan and Additional Access – dated 15 March 2024;
  - Drawing no. 22 – Proposed Floor and Roof Plans – dated 15 March 2024;
  - Drawing no. 23 – Proposed Elevations – dated 15 March 2024.
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- ~~Drawing no. 11 – Proposed Elevations – dated 2 September 2024 – SUPERSEDED;~~
  - ~~Drawing no. 12 – Proposed First Floor Plan – dated 20 September 2024 – SUPERSEDED;~~
  - ~~Drawing no. 13 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan – dated 20 September 2024 – SUPERSEDED;~~
  - ~~Drawing no. 17 – Proposed Site Location Plan – dated 26 September 2024 – SUPERSEDED;~~
  - ~~Drawing no. 18 – Existing Block Plan – dated 26 September 2024 – SUPERSEDED;~~
  - ~~Drawing no. 19 – Proposed Block Plan – dated 26 September 2024 – SUPERSEDED;~~
  - ~~Drawing no. 21 – Tree Plan – dated 26 September 2024 – SUPERSEDED.~~

Plans Note – the design and access statement includes details of the superseded proposal and therefore should be used for information only. An informative will be attached to the decision notice to highlight that this decision has been made on the single storey stable building.

### Relevant Planning History

| Reference | Description                                                                                                                                                                               | Decision            | Decision Date |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| 20210818  | Application for the approval of conditions 3 and 4 attached to listed building consent reference number 20200359 relating to external facing materials and joinery (3) and brickwork (4). | APPROVAL OF DETAILS | 19.07.2021    |

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                     |            |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 20210691 | Application for the approval of conditions 3 and 4 attached to planning permission reference number 20200358 relating to external facing materials and joinery (3) and brickwork (4)                                                                                               | APPROVAL OF DETAILS | 19.07.2021 |
| 20200359 | <u>_REVISED PLANS_</u><br>Application for Listed Building Consent for the demolition of timber and brick outhouse and adjoining wooden shed. Erection of a fully insulated utility room in the same area as the original and addition of a green Oak framed sun room/Conservatory. | PERMITTED           | 13.07.2020 |
| 20200358 | <u>_REVISED PLANS_</u><br>Demolition of timber and brick outhouse and adjoining wooden shed. Erection of a fully insulated utility room in the same area as the original and addition of a green Oak framed sun room/Conservatory.                                                 | PERMITTED           | 13.07.2020 |
| 19960018 | Continued display of sponsors boards on pitch side railings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | REFUSED             | 21.06.1996 |
| 19920738 | Continued display of one free standing club name board.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | CONSENT             | 15.02.1993 |

## **Development Plan**

### **Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):**

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

### **Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)**

- C17 – Horse Riding and Stables
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

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 and beautiful places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Downs National Landscape National Management Plan (2021-2026)

### **Consultations, Publicity and Representations**

#### **External Consultees**

Kent County Council Biodiversity – From the photos in the design and access statement I'm not too concerned about the stables but the submitted information has detailed that there is a rotten beech tree which is proposed to be felled.

This tree may support roosting bats and the removal of the tree might result in the loss of bat roost. If the tree is to be removed, I would recommend a bat mitigation condition to read as follows:

*“Prior to works commencing a bat mitigation strategy for the removal of the tree must be submitted to the LPA for written approval. It must include the following:*

- *Bat assessment of tree*
- *Bat emergence surveys (if needed)*
- *Overview of bat mitigation required.*

*The plan must be implemented as approved.”*

While I think it is unlikely that a bat emergence survey will be needed but I've included it as a just in case.

Luddesdown Parish Council – No comment received.

Dickens Protection Society – The Society would comment that it notes the site is in an area within which Green Belt policies apply. We would suggest that, if consent is granted, conditions are imposed to control any potential residential use.

Kent Downs National Landscape Unit – no comment received.

#### **Internal Consultees**

Local Ward Councillors – No comment received.

GBC Conservation Architect - no comment received.

#### **Neighbouring properties**

An advert was published in the local paper and a notice was displayed on site.

In addition, one surrounding property was consulted and one comment of support was received, highlighting that the development would improve the appearance of the site.

The consultation period expired 17 November 2023.

### **Preliminary Matters**

The proposed stables as originally submitted were too large to be considered a replacement structure and too extensive for a personal use within the Green Belt. As demonstrated in the screenshots below, the proposal was out of scale and the intended personal use could have been achieved through a significantly smaller replacement stable, at single storey level, with a reduced impact on the Green Belt.

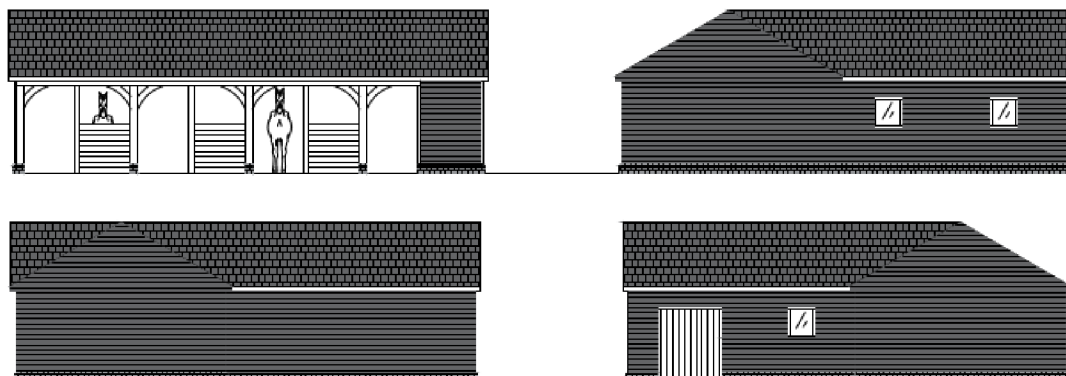


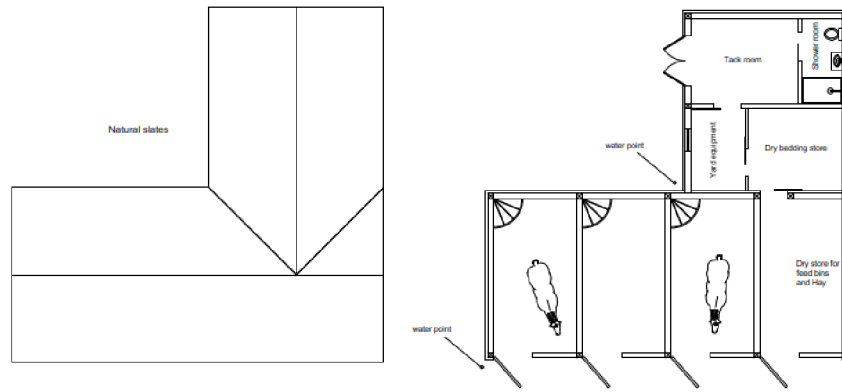
The agent was contacted and requested to consider a single storey stable, with revised drawings submitted and accepted by the Local Planning Authority.

## **Officer's Analysis**

### **Proposed Development**

This application proposes the demolition of existing stable block and erection of an oak framed cart shed style building and rooflights in the roof space. The building would be approx. 12.95m wide, 12.35m deep (maximum) and 4.45m in height. It will be finished in black timber weatherboarding, with heritage clay tiles and timber framed windows and doors. Internally there will be three stable stalls with welfare facilities (wc/shower), a drying area, tack room and storage area.





It will replace a stable block that measures 10m in width, 3.5m in depth and 2.15m to the eaves (2.5m to the pitch).

## Green Belt

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Para. 152 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Para. 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. '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.

Para. 154 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt with the exception of (a) buildings for agriculture and forestry.

Whilst there are horses kept on the land currently, this is for grazing purposes and therefore the land is considered to be in agricultural use. The proposal for a new barn/stable building on the land, in terms of the Green Belt, is acceptable in principle.

## Design, Character and Appearance

The application site is a farm that currently accommodates a number of paddocks for grazing of horses. It extends 2.14ha in area. Although the building will be larger than the existing, it is a type which is commonly seen in rural areas and is not out of scale with other such buildings. The location is to the edge of the site adjacent to boundary with the rugby club and well screened. The increase in size of the building is justified by providing four stables in addition to a welfare and storage area, which would currently be stored elsewhere on site and therefore resulting in an improvement to the appearance of the site. Moreover, the removal of the existing dilapidated and poor-quality stable block, and replacement with this building would improve the appearance.

### Landscape Character

The application site falls within the Kent Downs National Landscape and the Vigo Scryptop Woodlands Landscape Character Area. Paragraph 182 of the NPPF (2023) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the

designated areas.

Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced. The greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting. Proposals will take account of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009). The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan sets out that its aim is to ensure that the natural beauty and special character of the landscape and the vitality of communities are recognised, valued, enhanced and strengthened well into the future.

The proposed barn will replace an existing barn on the edge of the site and therefore will not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the wider landscape and therefore accord with Policy CS12 (LPCS). No comments have been received from Kent Downs National Landscape Unit.

### Horse riding and stables

Policy C17 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) states that proposals for the recreational use of land in the countryside for horse-riding, riding schools and the erection of stables will only be permitted if they are compatible with the agricultural, landscape and transport policies of the plan. Where the proposals are accepted in principle, the Council will expect stables and horse shelters to be properly designed and constructed of sound materials appropriate to the countryside and to be in an acceptable location within the site. The use of the land has already been accepted as grazing land and therefore agricultural. The proposed barn/stables will be finished in timber cladding and painted black and therefore will blend well into the landscape and countryside location. The proposals therefore accord with this Policy.

### **Neighbouring Amenity**

The nearest property is approx. 85m away from the proposed barn. Due to the distances involved and the fact this is a replacement building there will be no detrimental impact in terms of loss of outlook, privacy, sunlight or daylight.

The proposal therefore accords with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and para. 135f of the NPPF (2023).

### **Parking and Highways**

The proposal will not result in any significant additional vehicular movements. The access is existing and will not change; therefore no objection is raised on highways grounds.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

The application site is located within a biodiversity opportunity area. The proposed replacement barn will be repositioned, further from the existing Beech Tree and no longer involves its removal.

Although the beech tree is diseased, as evidenced in the design and access statement, KCC Biodiversity raised concerns that it is a likely roost for protected bat species. Therefore, by locating the new stables further back into the site, in order to retain the tree there is no need to attach the recommended bat emergence condition to this permission. As a European protected species, all bat species, their breeding sites and resting places are fully protected by law, and therefore if the tree is used as a roost then it is protected by law.

There will be conditions attached relating to the hard and soft landscaping, as well as external lighting proposed on the building, to ensure that biodiversity is enhanced and safeguarded.

Therefore, subject to conditions, the development will be in accordance with Policy CS12 (LPCS), which states that opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create and maintain habitats will be sought.

### **Other material considerations**

*Use of the Building* – The building contains a wc/shower and as such there are concerns relating to the potential for future conversion into a residential use. This could be achievable under Class Q of Schedule 2, Part 3 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 and would not be acceptable in terms of the impact on the Green Belt and local character. Therefore, a condition is recommended to remove this right to ensure planning permission is required for such a change of use. The stables are to be used for personal use only and there are no plans to provide livery. A planning condition can be imposed to control this.

*Drainage and Waste* – The proposed wc/shower and kitchenette would require the installation of drainage for the building and therefore another concern is the storage of waste and drainage. However, both of these can be dealt with by appropriate planning condition.

### **Conclusion**

The application has been fully considered and is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

The proposed barn, subject to appropriate conditions, will have no detrimental impact on the Green Belt, landscape character, amenities, parking or highway safety and therefore accords with the above mentioned policies and is recommended for approval.

### **Recommendation**

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

|                      |                                                                                     |                     |                                                                                       |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Case Officer:</b> | Mr Ethan Bonthron                                                                   | <b>Team Leader:</b> | Miss Faye Hobbs                                                                       |
| <b>Signed:</b>       |  | <b>Signed:</b>      |  |
| <b>Dated:</b>        | 23 April 2024                                                                       | <b>Dated:</b>       | 26 April 2024                                                                         |