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Planning Statement prepared on behalf of Mr B Kirrage

Land Adjacent and to the rear of Norwood Farmhouse, Meopham

March 2023
DHA/DB/20062

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by DHA Planning on behalf of Mr B Kirrage in respect of a full planning application for the erection of a three-bedroom bungalow dwelling and associated landscaping at land adjacent to Norwood Farmhouse, Meopham (the Site).
- 1.1.2 The application follows refused application 20221361 and seeks to directly respond to points of concern raised by the Council.
- 1.1.3 For the avoidance of doubt, this application relates to an alternative proposal to that already approved under planning application reference '20200206' and proposes to improve the overall design quality of the dwelling and facilitate necessary adaptations for accessibility.
- 1.1.4 Mr Kirrage secured consent for a new property via the above planning consent with the view of it being a long term investment. However, owing to a change in circumstance Mr Kirrage now intends to occupy the property himself. On this basis, as registered disabled certain adaptations are required owing to his chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) condition.

1.2 Key Issues

- 1.2.1 The site comprises an undeveloped parcel of land located to the east of Hook Green. The site is not isolated and is well-related to the general built-up area of Hook Green, located immediately adjacent to the built confines of Hook Green and in close proximity to a range of day-to-day services and frequent public transport connections within Hook Green and further afield in Meopham.
- 1.2.2 The development of an unconstrained, underutilised and sustainably located site on the immediate edge of Hook Green, in a district where there is a clear unmet need for new homes, is considered wholly consistent with the strategic growth objectives of the Plan.
- 1.2.3 It is acknowledged that the site is located in close proximity to Norwood Farmhouse, a Grade II Listed heritage asset. In response, the revised proposal has been amended to respond to the Council's previous concern. The appearance has been altered via a change in external facing material, with the design reverting to a mix of weatherboarding and brick. The scale has also been reduced to address concern that it may compete with the listed property.
- 1.2.4 Irrespective, the site already benefits from an extant permission for the erection of a single dwelling which the applicant fully intends to implement should this alternative application be refused. On this basis, the principle of development has already been established as acceptable by the Council and considered appropriate from a heritage perspective, with no adverse harm previously identified.
- 1.2.5 Turning to wider matters there are no adverse ecology, flood risk, amenity or highways impacts that would result from the proposed development that would

warrant refusal. Any trees to be removed are to be replaced on a two-for-one basis in line with the Council's preferred approach.

- 1.2.6 Moreover, Gravesham Borough Council accept that the most important policies are 'out-of-date' by virtue of the failure to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and the most recent 2021 Housing Delivery Test result, both of which independently engage the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and significantly reduce the weight to be afforded to any identified conflict with the relevant policies for housing accordingly.
- 1.2.7 In addition, given the present delay in the preparation of the Council's new Local Plan, it is vital that the development management system intervenes to take a permissive stance to development and deliver the homes that are urgently needed in the short term. Given all of the above planning context, there are clear material considerations sufficient to justify the proposed development.
- 1.2.8 In summary, the ability to deliver a higher-quality, sustainable, proportionate and sensitive development opportunity within Hook Green's Urban Area is significant given the extent of the housing land supply shortage in Gravesham and the delay in preparing a new set of strategic policies to address the shortfall. The relevance of the lack of supply is reflected in national planning policy, which requires local authorities to provide a five-year supply of housing land against their need. Critically, where authorities are unable to do so, it should weigh heavily in favour of the granting permission.

1.3 Document Structure

- 1.3.1 This statement provides an overview of the application site and proposal. It assesses the planning merits of the scheme, having regard to the relevant planning history and the applicable planning policy framework. It concludes that the proposal is appropriate in planning terms and accordingly requests that planning permission be granted.
- 1.3.2 Section 2 of this statement sets out the context of the site and immediate surroundings, including the site history.
- 1.3.3 Sections 3 and 4 have regard to the proposal and planning policy context by which the application will be considered respectively.
- 1.3.4 Section 5 considers the principle of development, housing need and other relevant planning considerations.
- 1.3.5 Section 6 draws conclusions to justify the suitability of the development.

1.4 Supporting Documentation

- 1.4.1 The application is supported by the following documents and plans:

Reference	Information Provided
APP1	Application Form (completed online)
Reports	

DHA/DB/20062	Planning Statement (this document)
Plans	
2268 - 01	Location Plan
2268 - 02	Existing Block Plan
2268 - 03	Proposed Site Plan
2268 - 04	Proposed Floor Plan
2268 - 05	Proposed Roof Plan
2268 - 06	Proposed Elevations – Southwest & Southeast
2268 - 07	Proposed Elevations – Northwest & Northeast
2268 - 08	Proposed Block Plan

Table 1.1: List of Supporting Documents

2 Site Context

2.1 Site Overview

- 2.1.1 The application site comprises a circa. 0.0985ha parcel of undeveloped land to the east of Hook Green. The site is located on the edge of the Urban Area within Hook Green's built confines with few amenities within Hook Green, and more down the road in Meopham. Consequently, the site forms a logical, contained parcel of land within Hook Green, located near frequent public transport connections.



Figure 2.1 - Site Location Plan

- 2.1.2 Access to the site is gained from Norwood Lane, southwest of the site.

2.2 Site Surroundings and Constraints

- 2.2.1 The surrounding architectural context comprises a mix of bungalows and 2-storey residential development, which are typically detached, with large gardens. The

main materials used are brick and white render on the external walls with a mix of red and grey roof tiling.



Figure 2.2 Body of the site

- 2.2.2 In terms of planning constraints, the site is not subject to any specific landscape or ecological designations and is located entirely within flood zone 1 (least likely zone to flood) and comprises a site of <1 hectare. Consequently, the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment is not required. Furthermore, the site is not located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 2.2.3 Considering heritage matters, the application site does not contain any heritage assets, however, there is a Grade II Listed Building adjacent to the site, situated just south fronting Norwood Lane: 'Norwood Farmhouse' (List UID: 1039912). There are no other Listed Buildings within close proximity to the site, nor any Scheduled Monuments or Conservation Areas.
- 2.2.4 In respect of accessibility, the site is accessible off Norwood Lane and sustainably located adjacent to the edge of the Urban Area of Hook Green and existing residential development.
- 2.2.5 Hook Green contains a few services and facilities including a church, post office, local independent employment and shops/restaurants, an elderly care home, a primary school and a specialist secondary school. Within Hook Green and the surrounding area there are recreational and Country Parks accessible to the public for enjoyment.
- 2.2.6 In terms of public transport, there are multiple bus stops along the main A227 Wrotham Road, the closest being an approximate 5-minute walk away with

service routes including the 306 Borough Green, 308 Sevenoaks, 223 Tonbridge, 305 and VIGO1 Vigo Village, 695 Rochester, 418 Wrotham, 416 and MEOPHAM1 Meopham, and G1 Longfield. Meopham train station is located *circa* 0.5 miles (10-minute walk) from the site and benefits from Southeastern service trains.



Figure 2.3 Listed Norwood Farmhouse

2.3 Planning History

The extant consent

- 2.3.1 Online records held by Gravesham Council confirm the following relevant planning applications have been made on the site:

Application: 20200206 – *Erection of 1x detached dwelling house with associated access parking and amenity space was granted permission on the 5th of June 2020 on land adjacent to and at the rear of Norwood Farmhouse, Norwood Lane, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0YF – Granted [05/06/2020]*

- 2.3.2 Application: **20200206** was approved in June 2020 for the erection of a detached dwelling house with associated access parking and amenity space.
- 2.3.3 Our client fully intends to implement the consented scheme should this alternative application be refused. Accordingly, the existing consent represents a significant material consideration in the determination of this application, given it remains extant.

Previous Refusals

- 2.3.4 **Application: 20050297** was refused on the 1st June 2005 for a larger one and a half storey development with an appeal later dismissed. Nevertheless, this

decision pre-dated the modern planning policy framework and as such is of limited weight as a material consideration.

- 2.3.5 The latest refusal was issued on 28th February 2023 under planning reference 20221361. This scheme sought the erection of a three-bedroom bungalow with a two-car garage and associated landscaping. The application was refused for three reasons:

- (1) The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, massing and siting, would result in a bulky and unsympathetic form of development on this plot that would be out of keeping with the character of development within this locality and would be harmful to the setting of the Grade II Listed Building. As such the proposed development would be contrary to Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Saved Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), as well as Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*
- (2) By virtue of the removal of 5no. established trees and lack of suitable replacement, the proposed development would result in a biodiversity net loss and as such would be contrary to Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).*

- 2.3.6 A detailed response to these reasons is provided in the context of the proposal section.

3 Proposed Development

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 This planning application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a three-bedroom bungalow with and associated landscaping at land adjacent to Norwood Farmhouse, Meopham.
- 3.1.2 This scheme still represents an alternative proposal to planning permission '20200206', compromising higher quality revisions to the design of the dwelling. Matters of access and curtilage remain unchanged from those previously approved.
- 3.1.3 Mr Kirrage secured consent for a new property via the above planning consent with the view of it being a long term investment. However, owing to a change in circumstance Mr Kirrage now intends to occupy the property himself. On this basis, as registered disabled certain adaptations are required owing to his Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) condition.
- 3.1.4 Furthermore, it is considered that there is scope to achieve a higher quality design than previously consented.

3.2 Proposals



Figure 3.1 Proposed Site Plan [2268-03]

- 3.2.1 The proposed development comprises the erection of a high-quality detached bungalow three-bedroom family home which has been carefully and sensitively designed for a sustainably located residential dwelling, appropriate to the predominant pattern and architectural context of existing neighbouring development.
- 3.2.2 The proposal includes plenty of high-quality private amenity space along with policy-compliant vehicle parking and one outside turning and parking space and a 2.4m x 1.8m lockable cycle store for 2 bicycles.
- 3.2.3 Along the eastern boundary of the site five trees have been deemed poor quality and will be removed during development. However, at least ten trees are proposed to be planted enabling appropriate landscaping and ecological enhancements to be carried out. This two-for-one tree planting is capable of being secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

3.3 Layout, Height and Scale

- 3.3.1 The proposed development comprises a bungalow with plenty of private garden amenity space reflecting the prevailing scale of development surrounding the application site and subsequently providing separation distance between the existing property to the south and the proposed dwelling. Similarly, the design of the dwelling has been carefully considered to reflect the surrounding prosperities, creating a natural extension to the area.

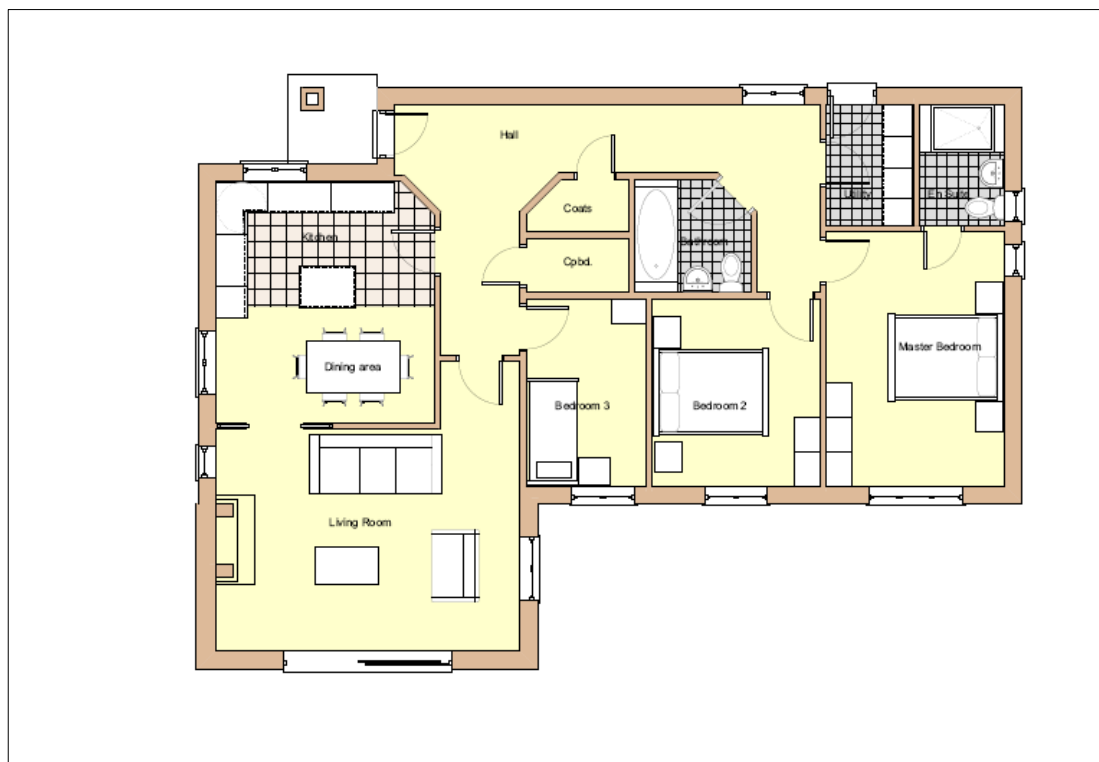


Figure 3.2 Proposed Floor Plan [2268-04]

- 3.3.2 The dwelling is located within the centre of the site with private access leading off Norwood Lane up to the house from the southwest.

- 3.3.3 The internal space of the house will have a GIA of 1222.57 sq. metres with an entry door leading from the front of the house into a hallway. In the hallway, there will be two cupboards and a bathroom with a 1-person bedroom located behind these to the east. To the south of the hallway, there will be the open-plan kitchen/diner with a spacious living room off the dining room.
- 3.3.4 To the north end of the proposed dwelling, there will be a 2-person bedroom, an ensuite master room beyond that and a utility room leading out to a hardstanding area behind the garage.

3.4 Design and Appearance

- 3.4.1 The design rationale has been readdressed following reason 2 of refusal reference 20221361. The Council stated:

'The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, massing and siting, would result in a bulky and unsympathetic form of development on this plot that would be out of keeping with the character of development within this locality and would be harmful to the setting of the Grade II Listed Building. As such the proposed development would be contrary to Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Saved Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), as well as Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).'

- 3.4.2 Accordingly, the scale of the proposed dwelling has been significantly reduced. The double garage has been removed in its entirety so the overall footprint is substantially less than previously proposed.
- 3.4.3 Furthermore, the pitch of the roof has been reduced in order to drastically reduce the bulk and massing of the building. The roof has been lowered from 6.86m to 5.58m as annotated overleaf.
- 3.4.4 Finally, given the feedback of the Council, the materials have been simplified with the street facing elevations taking on a simple horizontal boarding and white casement framed windows.
- 3.4.5 The proposed development will now be constructed using the following materials:
- *The walls will be facing stock brickwork with soldier course features over openings and horizontal boarding.*
 - *The roof will be single camber concrete plain mid-brown roof tiles.*
 - *The doors will be panel white finish.*
 - *The windows will be a casement style with white frames to match the doors.*
 - *The fascias and soffits will be white UPVC and the gutters and RWP's will be black half-round/round black UPVC.*
- 3.4.6 Overall, we consider that this amended approach overcomes the earlier concerns yet will provide a higher quality architectural design with greater visual interest and variation within the roof form, detailing and use of glazed openings compared with the extant consent. The proposed dwelling will be finished with a higher quality material palette than consent previously that combined with the proposed

alterations to the form of the dwelling, more sensitively complement the prevailing development within the area.

- 3.4.7 The proposals include high-quality, attractive landscaping with the retention of trees/hedgerows with additional trees being planted to replace poor-quality ones along the site boundaries at a rate of at least two for one tree planting. There will be private open amenity space to all sides of the home with added shrubbery along the sides of the dwelling.

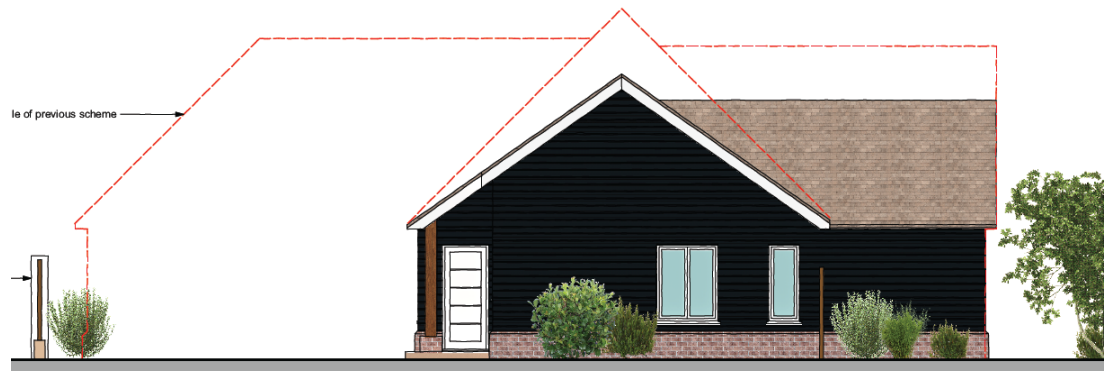


Figure 3.3 Proposed Elevations Southwest with previous scheme hatched[2268-06]



Figure 3.4 Proposed Elevations Northwest with previous scheme hatched [2268-07]

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. For this planning application, the Development Plan comprises the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and the Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994).
- 4.1.2 In addition to the development plan, the Government published an updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021. The NPPF sets out the Government's requirements and policies for planning in England. It must be deemed as a material consideration.
- 4.1.3 This chapter therefore highlights the parts of the NPPF and development plan that are most relevant to this application and the weight that can be given to the existing adopted policies.

4.2 Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- 4.2.1 The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 was adopted on 30 September 2014.
- 4.2.2 Policy CS01 (Sustainable Development) states that when the Council considers development proposals it will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF and in the Boroughs Core Strategy. The Council will work with the applicant to secure the development and improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions in the area. Where there are no policies relevant or they are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate adverse impacts would outweigh the benefits, or that specific policies should be restricted.
- 4.2.3 Policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) states that the borough is to retain and improve the existing housing stock and to make provision for the objectively assessed need for at least 6,170 new dwellings between 2011 and 2028, with at least 363 dwellings per year for 2019/2020 – 2023/2024. The policy claims that around 2,280 new dwellings will be provided on other sites in the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. In the rural area development will be supported within those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map.
- 4.2.4 Policy CS11 (Transport) asserts that new developments should mitigate their impact on the highway and public transport networks as required and the necessary transport assessments and travel plans be carried out, along with sufficient parking in accordance with the adopted parking standards.

- 4.2.5 Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) claims that a multifunctional linked network of green spaces, footpaths, cycle routes and wildlife steppingstones and corridors be created, protected, enhanced, and maintained.
- 4.2.6 Policy CS14 (Housing Type and Size) states that the Council will expect new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes considering the existing character of the area and evidence of local need to create sustainable and balanced communities.
- 4.2.7 Policy CS15 (Housing Density) lays out that sites will be developed at a variety of densities dependant on the sites location and access to public transport. All new housing will be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the surrounding area and that in the rural area, new residential development will be expected to achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 4.2.8 Policy CS18 (Climate Change) states that development will be directed to areas of low flooding risk, that surface water run-off from all new development has a no greater adverse impact than the existing use and where feasible the implementation of a Sustainable Drainage System. The Council will also seek to manage the supply of water and the affect new development will have on portable water and will aim to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the Borough.
- 4.2.9 Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) states that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic, and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area, and meet anti-crime standards.
- 4.2.10 Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) claims that there will be high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource. Proposals and initiatives will be supported where the Borough's heritage assets and their setting will be enhanced and conserved.

4.3 Local Plan First Review – Saved Policies

- 4.3.1 Policy TC2 (Listed Buildings) states that the Council will adopt the following approach to applications affecting listed buildings: -
 - i. *Proposals which involve the demolition of listed buildings will not be granted consent unless the applicant is able to demonstrate substantial and overriding reasons why such consent should be forthcoming. In those few cases where the Borough Council is satisfied that there is no alternative but to grant consent for such demolition, all available means will be used to secure early and appropriate redevelopment.*
 - ii. *In the case of applications for development involving alterations or extensions to listed buildings or affecting the setting of listed buildings, the primary consideration of the Borough Council will be the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals will also need to be sympathetic to the listed building in terms of massing, scale, appearance and materials.*

iii. Applications for the change of use of listed buildings will be considered on their merits, in relation to the land use policies set out in this Written Statement. A major consideration will be whether the character or appearance of the listed buildings will suffer as a result

- 4.3.2 Policy P3 (Vehicle Parking Standards) states that the Council will expect development to make provision for vehicle parking, in accordance with the Kent County Council Vehicle Parking Standards, as interpreted by Gravesham Borough Council, unless justified as an exception.

4.4 Material Considerations

National Planning Policy (2021)

- 4.4.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 4.4.2 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.4.3 Paragraph 8 states achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gain across each of the different objectives).
- 4.4.4 Paragraph 11 states plans, and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision- taking this means c) approving proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan; or d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 4.4.5 In terms of decision making, paragraph 38 states local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.
- 4.4.6 Paragraph 39 states early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.
- 4.4.7 Paragraph 60 states to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific

housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

- 4.4.8 Paragraph 61 sets out that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance- unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be considered in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.
- 4.4.9 In terms of affordable housing, paragraph 64 states provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.
- 4.4.10 Paragraph 69 then goes onto stress that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting housing requirements of an area and are often built out relatively quickly. Therefore, to promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions - giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable windfall sites within existing settlements.
- 4.4.11 To maintain delivery and supply, paragraph 74 requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies., or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. This supply should include a buffer of between 5% and 20%, which varies depending on the rate of past delivery.
- 4.4.12 Paragraph 79 states to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.
- 4.4.13 Paragraph 105 states the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.
- 4.4.14 Paragraph 111 states developments should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highways safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 4.4.15 Section 11 sets out how planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses, while

safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

- 4.4.16 Paragraph 120 states that planning policies and decisions should (amongst other things) encourage multiple benefits from urban and rural land, taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains and promote and support the development of underutilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained, and available sites could be used more effectively.
- 4.4.17 Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account inter alia the identified need for housing and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it as well as the availability of infrastructure and services.
- 4.4.18 Further paragraph 125 emphasises that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site.
- 4.4.19 Paragraph 126 states the creation of high-quality buildings and places are fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.
- 4.4.20 Paragraph 130 states planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
 - (1) 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.
 - (2) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - (3) 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)
 - (4) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - (5) Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - (6) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 4.4.21 Paragraph 132 states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.
- 4.4.22 Paragraph 134 is clear that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, considering any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:
- a) Development that reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or
 - b) Outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.
- 4.4.23 Paragraph 174 sets out how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
- 4.4.24 With respect to habitats and biodiversity, paragraph 180 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.
- 4.4.25 Equally proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity to seeking net gains should be supported and encouraged.
- 4.4.26 Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (i.e. such as ancient woodland) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
- 4.4.27 Section 16 of the NPPF relates to the conservation and enhancement of historic environments, whether that's buildings or sites, and states that the assets are irreplaceable resources and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 4.4.28 Paragraph 194 states that the applicant should describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by the development and that the level of detail provided reflects the significance of the asset.
- 4.4.29 In determining applications, paragraph 197 claims that local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

4.4.30 Paragraph 202 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.

Residential Layout Guidelines (adopted 1996 – amended 2020) SPG2

4.4.31 All planning applications for new dwellings, extensions to existing dwellings, flats, maisonettes, and bedsitters (new build or conversion), must comply with the Borough Council's adopted Residential Layout Guidelines.

Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (July 2006) SPG 4

4.4.32 This SPG supplements Policy TP3: Transport and the Location of Development and Policy TP19: Vehicle Parking Standards from the Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006.

5 Planning Appraisal

5.1 Principle of Development

- 5.1.1 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.
- 5.1.2 The application site lies within a second-tier settlement and lies within the urban area boundary of Hook Green. The development of this relatively unconstrained, underutilised and sustainably located site to the immediate edge of the Urban Area, where there is a clear need for new homes is considered consistent with the broad strategic objectives of the Plan and is therefore acceptable in principle, in accordance with Policies CS02 and CS19 of the Core Strategy Local Plan.
- 5.1.3 It is acknowledged that the site is located in close proximity to Norwood Farmhouse, a Grade II Listed heritage asset and therefore policy TC2 of the Saved Policies is relevant which requires development to conserve and enhance the significance of existing heritage assets. In response, the proposal has been sensitively and carefully designed and now further amended in order to minimise any potential adverse impact. By addressing the detailed concerns raised by the Council the applicant has now presented an alternative development that responds to the applicant's disability needs whilst still representing a higher quality and no more obtrusive scheme than the extant consent.
- 5.1.4 Turning to material considerations, the Council accepts that the relevant strategic policies for housing are 'out-of-date' by virtue of the failure to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and the most recent Housing Delivery Test result (67%), both of which independently engage the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
- 5.1.5 In addition, given the present delay in the preparation of the Council's new Local Plan, it is vital that the development management system intervenes to take a permissive stance to development and deliver the homes that are urgently needed in the short term. Moreover, material considerations both reduce the weight to be afforded to the strategic policies held within the development plan by virtue of being 'out-of-date' and separately justify a departure from the Plan.
- 5.1.6 Given all of the above, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

5.2 Layout, Appearance and Landscape Impact

- 5.2.1 Policy CS19 requires that new development be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive, and should therefore conserve and enhance the character of the local area in terms of the built, historic, and natural environment.
- 5.2.2 In this regard, the application site is naturally well-contained by surrounding built form to the northwest, southwest and southeast, with vegetation and fields to the northeast and beyond, allowing the new development to blend in and not impact visually on the surrounding properties. The amended design of the dwelling incorporates the retention of most of the vegetation with additional landscaping

to be included for enhancement and biodiversity net gain. This is proposed on a two-for-one planting basis.

- 5.2.3 In terms of built form, the proposal has been reduced in scale significantly and is now more consistency in scale, density, and layout compared with the extant consent. Despite the reduction, the house still benefits from plenty of private amenity space surrounding the dwelling. In terms of appearance and materials, the proposals have been sensitively designed to reflect the local design and exhibit a rich and varied external appearance with a material palette comprising of predominantly horizontal weatherboarding, with complimentary stock brickwork walls to the non-street facing aspects. A single camber concrete plain mid-brown roof shows consideration to the typical architectural materials present within Hook Green and utilises to the lowest possible pitch to achieve this.
- 5.2.4 Overall, the revised proposal, whilst not widely visible from the wider countryside, is of a high quality and distinctive design which will conserve the local sense of place, reflect the character of surrounding existing development on Norwood Lane and provide localised visual interest in accordance with policies CS01, CS02 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF.



Figure 4.1 Prevailing character of the surroundings

5.3 Residential Amenity

- 5.3.1 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF seeks to ensure an adequate level of amenity is afforded to the future occupiers of new development as well as protected the amenities of existing surrounding residents.

- 5.3.2 By virtue of the site layout, separation distances and proposed landscaping between the proposed and existing properties, it is unlikely that the scheme would result in any adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby properties including the listed building. In terms of vehicle movements, the small-scale nature of the proposed development is such that the number of anticipated vehicle movements will be minimal and certainly not to a degree that would significantly harm neighbouring amenity. The development will maintain its own private parking for both cars and bicycles which is in accordance with the KCC Vehicle Parking Standards in Policy P3 of the Local Plan Saved Policies.
- 5.3.3 Finally, the proposed dwellings are of a high-quality design and offer an excellent standard of living for future occupants with a modern layout, generous private amenity space and ample parking.
- 5.3.4 The proposed development is consequently considered to be wholly in accordance with paragraph 130 of the NPPF, policy CS11 of the Core Strategy 2014 and P3 of the Local Plan Saved Policies.

5.4 Ecology

- 5.4.1 The site comprises grassland and vegetation in the form of trees and hedgerows, scattered scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, and buildings. Development of the site is unlikely to directly impact any other designated sites.
- 5.4.2 Poor quality trees will be removed and replaced with species rich native trees at a rate of two-for-one replacement, thus providing an uplift in biodiversity potential and a net gain.
- 5.4.3 Accordingly, the proposed development is in accordance with policy CS12 of the Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 180 of the NPPF.
- 5.4.4 It is also important to state that the existing consent can be implemented without the need for any further ecological investigation.

5.5 Highways

- 5.5.1 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF 2021 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 would be severe.
- 5.5.2 The proposals are not considered to conflict with any local or national policies in regard to accessibility, sustainability and highway safety. By virtue of the relatively small scale of the proposed development and associated additional vehicle trips, no 'severe' transport impacts are expected from the development proposals, thus meeting the key text on transport set out in the NPPF.
- 5.5.3 The proposed development is compliant with policies CS11 of the Core Strategy and P3 of the Local Plan Saved Policies as it provides the necessary allowance of private vehicle and cycle parking and the proposed access point is existing, therefore no work is needed to adjoin the site to the main road.

- 5.5.4 Considering these findings, the proposals would not have a significant adverse impact in terms of transport in accordance with policies CS11 of the Core Strategy and P3 of the Local Plan Saved Policies and paragraph 105 and 111 of the NPPF and therefore there should be no sound transport-based objections to the proposals. Furthermore, the access arrangements remain unchanged from the extant consent with the same visibility achieved.

5.6 Sustainability

- 5.6.1 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 5.6.2 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives). These being 'economic, social, and environmental objectives'.
- 5.6.3 An economic role includes contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation. In this respect, the site is suitable, sustainable, available, and deliverable for development, and would help contribute to Gravesham's immediate housing need with the provision of one high-quality new family home. Even though this site will only provide one new home, paragraph 69 stresses that small sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting housing requirements of an area.
- 5.6.4 Moreover, household expenditure generated by the future residents will help to support economic activity locally and help to sustain the jobs and services within the local area.
- 5.6.5 A social objective includes supporting strong, vibrant, and healthy communities, by providing a supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; whether it be small- or large-scale development, and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.
- 5.6.6 The proposed development seeks to provide a high-quality residential dwelling to meet the needs of the local population and will contribute to the social vitality of the Hook Green community. The proposed development would provide one additional home in an accessible location close to services and facilities to meet this supply and therefore can positively contribute towards the social role identified in the NPPF.
- 5.6.7 From an environmental perspective, it is acknowledged that the proposal would result in development of a greenfield site. However, the housing need in Gravesham cannot be met by a dwindling supply of urban sites and greenfield development is inevitably required. The development of an underutilised greenfield site sustainably located adjacent to the urban area close to services, facilities and public transport connections and at an appropriate and effective density is considered a preferable location in the context of sustainability

objectives and simultaneously will make a modest contribution to reducing the need to develop into wider, more ecologically valuable and visually sensitive sites in the countryside. Moreover, the development comprises a sensitive, attractive scheme with a traditional appearance that draws strongly from surrounding vernacular design and reflects the edge of urban area location.

- 5.6.8 From a wider sustainability perspective, the proposal would not involve the loss of land that is of high agricultural or ecological value and would not comprise development in an area of high flood risk.

5.7 Planning Balance

- 5.7.1 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.

- 5.7.2 For the reasons set out in this statement, the amended proposal is demonstrated to be in accordance with relevant development plan policies CS01, CS02, CS11, CS12, CS14, CS15, CS18, CS19 and CS20 of the Local Plan Core Strategy 2004 and policies TC2 and P3 of the Local Plan Saved Policies, as well as the NPPF.

- 5.7.3 In respect of material considerations, the Council accepts that the relevant strategic policies for housing are 'out-of-date' by virtue of the failure to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and the most recent Housing Delivery Test result, both of which independently engage the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

- 5.7.4 Given this context, the application should be decided on a presumption in favour of sustainable development, granting permission unless:

- i. *the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.*

- 5.7.5 On account that the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance do not provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.

- 5.7.6 This means granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. On this basis, it would now be wrong to approach the Framework by applying a simple balance between positive and negative factors and only proposals that have adverse effects markedly or "significantly" outweighing the benefits should constitute development that was unsustainable, permission should not be granted.

- 5.7.7 In summary:

- The development will provide a higher quality new three-bedroom family home where there is a compelling need for more housing to help the Council address the growing shortfall;
- The proposed development fully accords with the principles of sustainable development as set out in national policy and provides an appropriate and accessible location for a new dwelling that makes the most efficient use of land through logical extension of a permitted development;
- The proposed development has already been established as acceptable by virtue of the extant consent and this revised scheme addresses earlier design concerns;
- The current highway infrastructure is able to accommodate the development without giving rise to any highway safety concerns;
- The proposed existing access meets with policy requirements and will adequately support the scheme;
- The development includes the retention and additional provision of high-quality landscaping and opportunity for ecological enhancement with a net gain in tree planting;
- The development is of high quality, attractive and locally distinctive design that will be of benefit to the local environment in landscape and visual terms; and
- The development will bring benefits to the rural economy and social vitality associated with the introduction of new permanent residents and additional household expenditure.

5.7.8 In contrast, there would be little or no resultant harm and certainly nothing to a level that could be considered to demonstrably outweigh the clear benefits.

5.7.9 Based on our assessment that the harm does not outweigh the benefits; we submit that planning permission should be granted.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Summary

- 6.1.1 This Statement has been prepared by DHA on behalf of Mr B Kirrage in respect of a full planning application for the erection of a three-bedroom bungalow dwelling with associated landscaping at land adjacent to Norwood Farmhouse, Meopham.
- 6.1.2 The site comprises an undeveloped parcel of land located to the east of Hook Green. The site is not isolated and is well-related to the general built-up area of Hook Green, located immediately adjacent to the existing Urban Area of the villages'-built confines and in close proximity to a range of services and public transport connections within Hook Green and further afield in Meopham.
- 6.1.3 The development of an unconstrained, underutilised and sustainably located site on the immediate edge of Hook Green, where an extant consent for residential development is already established and in a borough where there is a clear need for new homes, is considered consistent with the broad strategic objectives of the Plan. Therefore, the application site represents a logical extension of Hook Green for high-quality minor house development.
- 6.1.4 The development is demonstrated to be in broad compliance with many core objectives of the development plan with clear and tangible public benefits. Furthermore, the Council's accepted failure to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply is demonstrated to render the strategic housing policies 'out-of-date' for the purposes of decision making and any conflict can therefore attract only limited weight.
- 6.1.5 The importance of housing need and supply is reflected in national planning policy, which requires local authorities to provide a five-year supply of housing land. Where authorities are unable to do so, circumstances radically tilt decision making in favour of the grant of permission.
- 6.1.6 In addition, given the present delay in the preparation of the Council's new Local Plan and an updated set of strategic policies to address the shortfall, it is vital that the development management system intervenes to take a permissive stance to development and deliver the homes that are urgently needed in the short term. Given all of the above planning context, there are clear material considerations sufficient to warrant departure from the Plan.
- 6.1.7 In terms of wider matters, the proposal has been shown to be acceptable in respect of design, landscape, amenity and ecological impacts. Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved and the site is well located in respect of services, facilities and public transport infrastructure.
- 6.1.8 Finally, the revised scheme has responded to the two previous areas of concern by reducing the proposed scale and materials in direct response to the LPA concerns.

6.2 Conclusion

- 6.2.1 Considering the above context, we acknowledge that there are sensitive matters, to be balanced. However, the proposal is well-informed, and we firmly consider that circumstances do justify this high-quality and well-planned development proposal.
- 6.2.2 In conclusion, we firmly consider that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh any limited degree of perceived harm. Consequently, we respectfully request that the application is granted without delay.