

Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230058

Location: Briarlea Beechwood Drive Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of sandschool

Applicant: Mr B Turnbull

Site Visit Date: 23rd February 2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

Cover Letter

Application Form

J004301-DD-01 – Site Location Plan

J004301-DD-02 – Site Plan as Existing

J004301-DD-03 – Site Plan as Proposed

Email from Agent received on 21/02/23

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20200251	Change of use of land for equestrian purposes and retention of a stables building measuring 61.08 sq. m.	Permitted	19.11.2020

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS13 – Green Space, Sport and Recreation
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- C17 – Horse Riding and Stables
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network

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

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

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

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

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors: No comments received.

Meopham Parish Council:

Meopham Parish Council raises no objections to this planning application providing that:

- *GBC being satisfied that the size of the sand school is appropriate to the applicants' equestrian requirements.*
- *GBC Conservation Officers report*
- *No external lighting should be used; therefore, we request a condition be applied that the sand school is not used after sundown*
- *No use of the sand school other than by the applicants*

Neighbouring properties

4no. surrounding properties were consulted and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application follows recent planning consent under ref 20200251 for 'Change of use of land for equestrian purposes and retention of a stables building measuring 61.08 sq. m.' and its associated approved conditions.

This application seeks to erect a sandschool for equestrian use associated with the land approved for equestrian use.

For clarity the site plans are shown below (Not to Scale):



Existing



Proposed

As can be seen, there would also be some associated landscape changes including:

- Removal of existing Hedgerow
- Creation of accessway

Principle Issues

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development in the Green Belt;
- Impact on openness and the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Residential amenity;
- Highways.

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

The site is within the Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 states that development in the Green Belt will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting Green Belt.

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

Paragraph 149 of the NPPF 2021 states that ‘A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt.’ One exception to this is listed under paragraph 149 (b):

‘the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;’

This would apply to the proposal here and so, as long as the development would preserve the openness, it would be considered as development which is acceptable in principle. It would, however, be subject to a balancing of all other material planning considerations.

Impact on openness and character and appearance

Saved Policy C17 of the Gravesham Local Plan 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.

The application site is surrounded by residential properties on generous plots. The stable building is located in the top north-east corner of the application site. The proposed sandschool would be located west of this on a discreet area of the plot which has the appearance of underuse. The land sloped downwards from east to west and this area is less visible given its lower land level.

The sandschool would be bounded with 1.2m high timber fence posts. There would be no change in levels and the material used to surface the proposed access would be shingle as per the email confirmation received from the agent on 21st March 2023. This would result in a minimal level of hard surfacing in this plot in the rural countryside.

On the recent assessment for the stable building the officer stated:

With regard to the impact on the landscape, Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 is also relevant, relating to green infrastructure. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment 2009 will be taken into account in determining applications. The site is located within the Havel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. As the stable building is within the vicinity of the existing residential plot of Briarlea and surrounded by other residential properties, the proposal sustains one of the key characteristics of the landscape: a haphazard mosaic of residential plots and small holdings set within the woodland. It is considered that the proposed development will not adversely impact on this landscape. The proposal would therefore comply with the requirements of Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014.

This assessment would continue to be relevant when applied to the sandschool, given its minimal interruption to the landscape, lack of level changes and appropriate use of materials.

Overall and on this basis, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014, Policy C17 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and Section 13 of the NPPF 2021.

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2021 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 130f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air, odour and light pollution (amongst other things).

From an environmental health perspective, there are no issues that would justify an objection on nuisance grounds. Due to the fact this is not a commercial use and the modest scale of the sandschool, the impact on the surrounding properties will be minimal.

It would be considered appropriate to include conditions on any forthcoming planning permission to ensure no business or other use operates from the site, as was the case with the consent for the stable building. This will help control the use of the site and help protect neighbours' amenities.

Overall, it is considered the development would have an acceptable impact on neighbouring properties in terms of amenities. As such, the proposal would comply with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF 2021.

Highways

On the basis that the existing stables and the proposed sandschool are for private use with no commercial activity, traffic generation would not be a concern. There would also appear to continue to be adequate visibility and turning areas etc. on the site.

It is therefore considered that there would be no adverse parking or highways impacts from the proposal, and it would therefore comply with saved Policy P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development complies with all relevant national and local planning policies subject to conditions. The recommendation is therefore to approve.

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

Case Officer:	Ms Lisa Williams	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	22 nd March 2023	Dated:	22nd March 2023