

Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Planning Application No:	20250724
Location:	Bramblehall Farm, Oakenden Road, Luddesdown, Gravesend
Description:	Change of use of part of the farmhouse to a Community Interest Project, together with a two storey extension to the dwellinghouse.
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs P Engeham
Site Visit Date:	Desktop assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Planning Statement
Location Plan
Drawing no. E19.1A (Proposed Floor Plans)
Drawing no. E19.2B (Proposed Elevations)
Drawing no. E19.3 (Existing Plans)
Drawing no. E19.4 (Existing Elevations)
Existing Block Plan
Proposed Block Plan

Superseded drawings:

~~Drawing no. sk.2 (Proposed Floor Plans)~~
~~Drawing no. E19.2 (Proposed Elevations)~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20130765	Demolition of existing building and erection of a stable block comprising six stables.	Permission	07.10.2013
20130764	Change of use of farm to equestrian use and construction of a 20 x 60 metre outdoor riding area.	Permission	04.10.2013
19940510	Erection of 6.0 metre high flag pole to front elevation of existing garage.	Permission	17.10.1994
19850212	Erection of detached double garage to replace existing	Permission	25.04.1985
19560256	Stationing of 2 caravans for residential purposes	Temporary Permission	11.02.1957
19510056	Use of land for siting one caravan	Temporary Permission	02.08.1951
19500203	Erection of cow shed and farm store	Permission	05.02.1951

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 – Extensions to dwellings in the Countryside
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 – Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 (amended June 2020)
- SPG 4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- The Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2021-2026
- Landscape Character Assessment Update 2020
- Planning Practice Guidance: Green Belt (2025)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

GBC Environmental Protection

There is no objection to this application or adverse comments to make.

KCC Heritage

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, based on existing Historic Environment Record data for the area and the relatively limited extent of the proposed works, I consider it unlikely that these proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour letters to 2 properties. The overall consultation period expired on 3 September 2025.

No letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties.

The Kent Downs AONB Unit, KCC Biodiversity and Local Ward Councillors were also consulted but no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks permission for a change of use of part of the farmhouse to a Community Interest Project, together with a two storey extension to the dwellinghouse.

The plans for the extension have been amended following design negotiations to make the extension more subservient.

The Planning Statement sets out that the proposal is for the conversion of part of the dwelling for a new business Reset Remedy Community Interest Company, with the construction of a two storey extension to replace the accommodation used for the new business.

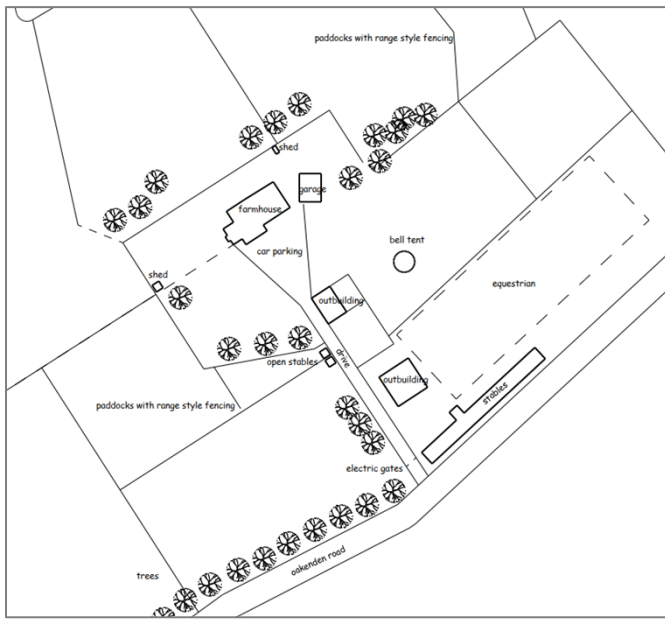
The Community Interest Company (CIC) is a registered charity; the company is currently being set up by the applicant and is at present using a bell tent on site as temporary accommodation. It is separate to the ownership of the house. The CIC will be supporting vulnerable adults and traumatised families, and will involve meditation, crafts and cooking in a family environment. The website for Reset Remedy sets out that it involves 'equine-assisted self-development and learning in the heart of nature'. There is 1 existing full time employee and 3 are proposed (2 full time and 2 part time).

The layout in the existing dwelling for the new business on the ground floor would include a kitchen, meeting room, workshop, office, store and toilet. The kitchen would be used by families to learn baking and general cooking. The meeting room would be used for group therapy, meditation, grounding exercises. The workshop would be used for arts and crafts. The office would be used for administration and interviews.

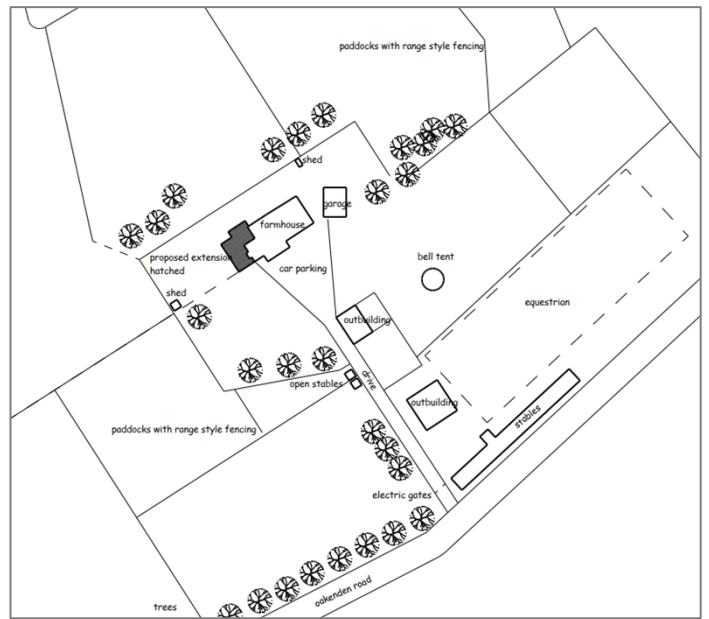
The applicant has provided further information about the nature of the proposed use. There will be no use of the residential space in relation to the business. There will be no overnight visitors. The maximum number of visitors would be 15 (2 families and therapists), with 3-4 sessions per day, over a 9am to 5pm period. There is no dedicated parking, but there is ample space for parking on the site. The bell tent would be used in the summer as an extension of the facilities.

With regard to the proposed extension for the dwelling, this would accommodate a dining room/kitchen on the ground floor and a family bathroom and bedroom on the first floor. The property currently has three bedrooms, but this will increase to four.

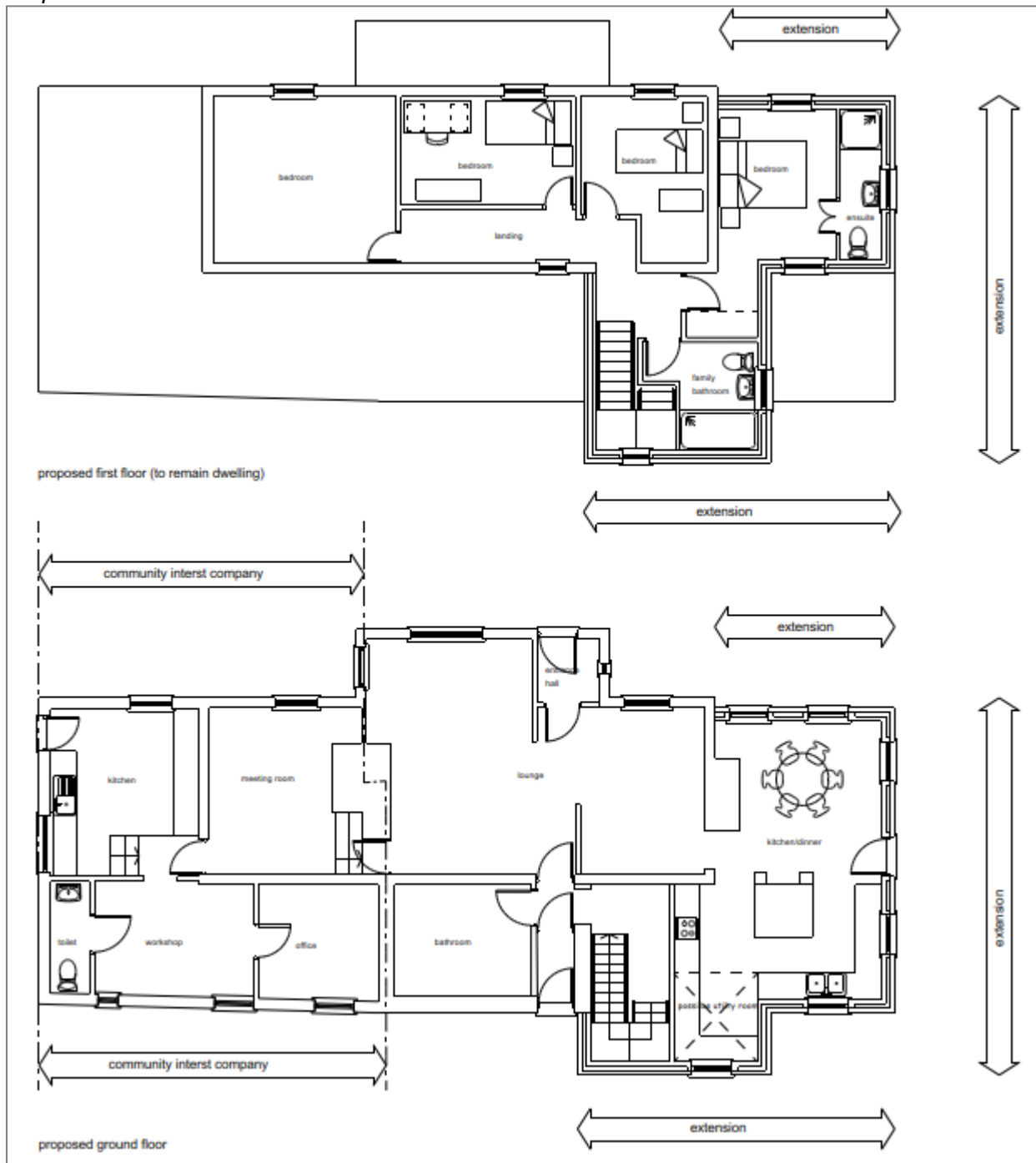
Existing Block Plan:



Proposed Block Plan:



Proposed Floor Plans:



Proposed Elevations:

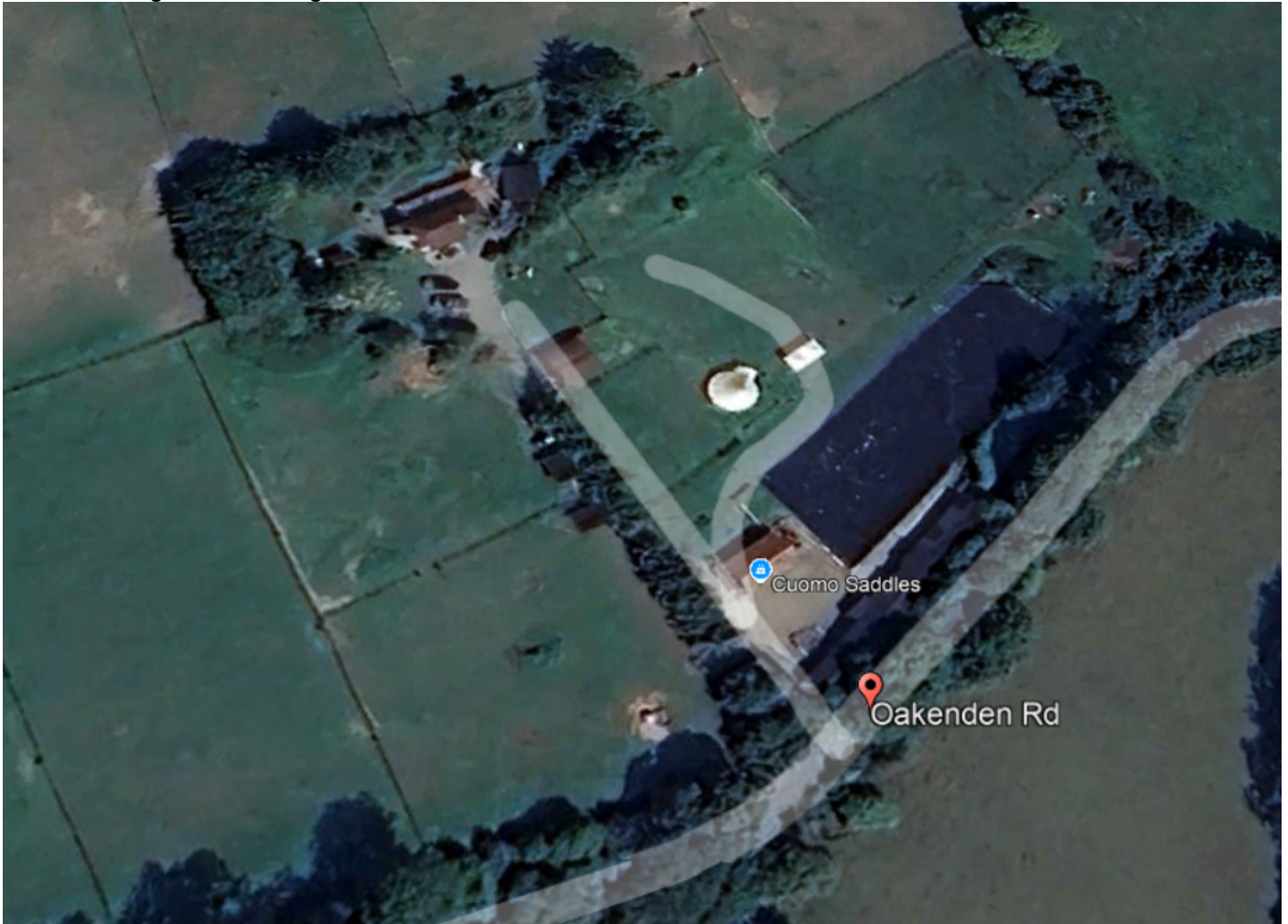


The proposed extension would utilise the same materials as the existing.

Main Issues

Bramblehall Farm is a detached dwelling located in the countryside completely surrounded by fields. There are no other dwellings close by. The property has current private equestrian uses. The site is located in the countryside in the Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB) and in the Green Belt. It is also located in the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area.

Current Google Earth Image:



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

- Principle of development in the Green Belt
- Impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area
- Design
- Impact on amenity of future occupiers

Due to the location of the proposed extension and use of the property away from neighbouring residential dwellings, as well as the ample and unaffected parking space at the property, matters relating to neighbouring residential amenity and parking and highways impacts are not likely to be a concern and will therefore not be discussed in this assessment.

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the Core Strategy 2014.

Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (paragraph 142 of the NPPF 2024). Paragraph 153 of the NPPF 2024 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances'

will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Local Planning Authorities should regard development as inappropriate in the Green Belt, unless certain exceptions apply (paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2024). In the case of these proposals, which relate to an extension to the main dwelling, the following paragraph 154 exception is applicable:

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

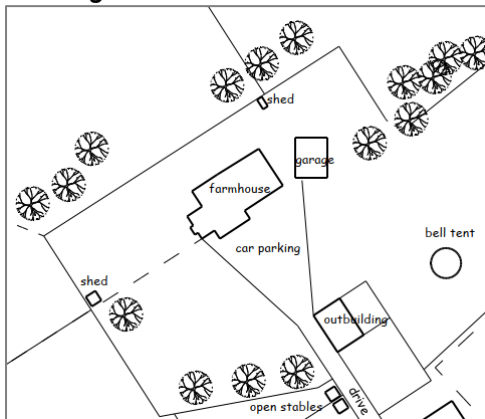
In addition, saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994 relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside and generally seeks to maintain the open character of the Green Belt and retain a stock of rural dwellings of modest size. In relation to this proposal, criterion (ii) is relevant, which states that there will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling. Criteria (v) and (vi) are also relevant:

(v) The dwelling to be enlarged must have sufficient curtilage to accommodate the extension without undue visual intrusion into the open countryside.

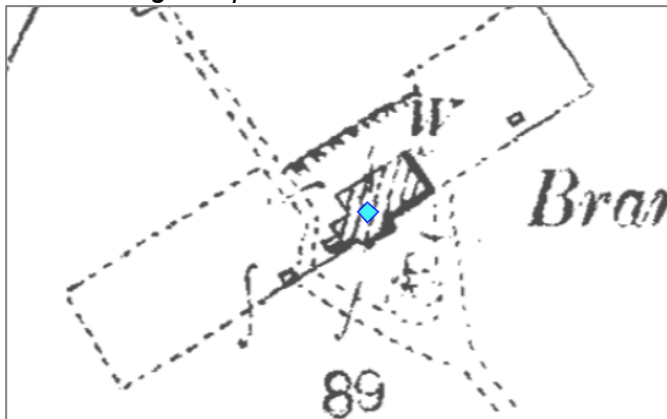
(vi) The appearance, massing, scale, form and materials of any extension shall be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.

“Original dwelling” for the purpose of Policy C13 means the building in permanent residential use at 1st July 1948. Whilst there is some planning history relating to the property, there are no planning records of any extensions. According to KCC’s Heritage Maps, the footprint of the dwelling appears to be the same as that of the building shown on the 1897-1900 and 1929-52 maps, and to the best of the Council’s knowledge, the current dwelling is therefore unchanged and original:

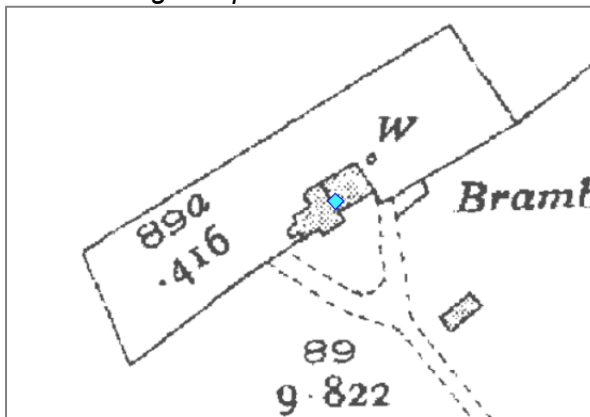
Existing Block Plan:



KCC Heritage Map 1897-1900:



KCC Heritage Map 1929-1952:



Turning to the matter of the impact of the proposed extension in this location in the Green Belt, it will clearly increase the size of the original building.

	Existing dwelling	Existing dwelling plus proposed extension	Increase over existing (%)
Gross external floor area (m²)	164m ²	242 (>78) m ²	47%

The proposed extension would undoubtedly be larger than the general one third limit on the increase in the size of a property, though there is the proviso with Policy CS13 that an increase of more than a third may be considered where the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling. In this case, as the original property has not been extended, and the extension has been designed in a subservient manner that allows the original building to remain dominant, in line with the Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD, the proposed extension would respect the character of the original building.

Such an extension would meet the NPPF 2024 paragraph 154(c) exception criterion, which seeks to ensure no disproportionate additions are carried out over and above the size of the original building.

With regards to the second part of the proposal to change the use of part of the farmhouse to a Community Interest Project, in terms of assessing inappropriateness, this would fall to be considered under exception (g) of paragraph 154:

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.

The proposed use of part of the existing dwelling for a Community Interest Project would have to be found not to cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt in order to be considered not inappropriate under paragraph 154(g).

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF 2024 states that 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. Paragraph 013 of the Planning Practice Guidance 2025 on Green Belts looks to assess the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt by taking into account the spatial and visual aspects of a development, its duration and remediability, and the activity levels generated.

Bramblehall Farm is a detached dwelling located in the countryside completely surrounded by fields. There are no other dwellings close by. The property itself is well screened by existing vegetation and boundary treatments. The proposed Community Interest use would be within the existing dwelling on part of the ground floor, which is currently used as a kitchen/dining room/utility room/store. The proposed use of this space in the manner proposed has given rise to the need to extend the property to create a new kitchen/diner/utility space on the ground floor. It is recognised that the extra bedroom, ensuite and family bathroom upstairs would be additional to requirements in this regard.

The proposed change of use and related extension of the property would not alter the main dwellinghouse use of the property; the majority of the building would remain in residential use. The additional built development would remain related and attached to the existing building, and it would not excessively increase the bulk of the property nor adversely impact on either the character and appearance of the building or the wider site and surrounding area. The proposed Community Interest use is relatively low key, with low activity levels and standard hours of operation. However, as any intensification of the proposed use would have the potential to impact on the main dwelling use in this Green Belt location, it will be important to condition the proposed use with regards to numbers of visitors and hours of operation, as well as tying the permission to the applicant to enable future control over further changes of use, and reverting

the business space back to residential when no longer required. Subject to such conditions, in terms of the nature of this proposed Green Belt development, it would not cause substantial harm to openness in this location.

Such a proposed change of use would meet the NPPF 2024 paragraph 154(g) exception criterion, and the proposed change of use is therefore not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Conclusions on Green Belt Issues

In summary, the proposed Community Interest use and extension meet the relevant Green Belt exceptions and would therefore not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would comply with the requirements of Section 13 of the NPPF 2024 relating to the protection of Green Belt land and Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2024.

Landscape Character

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy reflects these aims and requires that new development is well-designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 aims for development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape. Reflective of paragraph 189 of the NPPF 2024, Policy SD2 of the Management Plan 2021-2026 recognises the need to conserve and enhance the local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the National Landscape. Principle SD8 seeks to ensure that proposals do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the area.

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

The key characteristics of the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area are undulating topography with arable farmland and pasture, irregular field patterns, fields divided by native hedgerows and areas of native woodland. The guidelines for the area focus on conserving the distinctive features that are found in the area to protect and maintain its character and quality, including conserving hedgerows.

The main aspect of the proposal that has the potential to affect the character and appearance of the area is the proposed extension. However, as it would be viewed within the localised context of the existing dwelling, there would be unlikely to be any concerns about the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural landscape, and there would be no conflict with the aforementioned landscape policies on this basis.

Design, Character and Appearance

Section 12 of the NPPF 2024 relates to achieving well-designed and beautiful places and sets out the Government's requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 131 emphasises the importance of achieving high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. 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.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 also seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy

2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The design of the proposed extension complies with the Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide. Section 9 sets out key principles for new development. Paragraph 9.2 states '*Your proposal should reflect and respect the original character [of the existing dwelling] and respond to its features. In order to achieve this as a starting point all residential extensions and alterations should be subordinate to the host property/building, allowing the original building to remain dominant*'.

The proposed extension has a lower roofline and is set back behind the front building line, allowing the original property to remain dominant. It will be important to ensure matching materials are used to complement the existing building; this should be conditioned.

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2024 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 135f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land, and avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution. As the site is very well separated from any neighbouring dwellings there will be no impact on neighbouring amenity both in terms of the proposed extension and use of the property.

Future Occupiers

In terms of the proposed extension, the accommodation would provide an acceptable living space for the occupiers of the property and there would be ample garden space retained about the property.

As discussed above, the proposed use of the property by the Reset Remedy Community Interest Company has the potential to impact on the occupiers of the existing dwelling. The Council's Environmental Protection team has raised no objections to the development. Whilst the proposed use is low key and in line with the existing private equestrian use of the site, there is the potential for noise and disturbance to be experienced by the existing occupiers from the associated coming and goings of clients. However, it is considered that this can be adequately controlled through restricting hours of use and numbers of visitors, as well as linking the permission to the business to enable any other subsequent changes of use to be properly assessed in terms of their amenity impact. If the business were to cease, the space should also revert back to the original residential use. On this basis, the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of Bramblehall Farm would be acceptable and would comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Local Plan and paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Rural Economy

The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 88 sets out that the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas should be enabled, including through the conversion of existing buildings. Policy CS07 of the Local Plan also seeks to support proposals that promote the expansion and diversification of the rural area economy including the conversion of rural buildings to employment use/live/work units where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt, and where it accords with policies in the Plan.

The proposed change of use of part of the farmhouse to an equine-assisted self-development and learning community interest use is considered to comply with the requirements of the aforementioned policies, as the equine related therapy use would be commensurate with the rural location and current use of the site.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

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

Biodiversity net gain is a way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This statutory framework is referred to as 'biodiversity net gain' in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains.

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

No Biodiversity Net Gain information has been submitted with the application. However, as the proposed change of use will not involve any new built development and the proposed extension relates to the householder use of the property, in this case the proposal is considered to fall under the *de minimis* exemption, where development does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, and 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerows. Therefore, the development would not be subject to biodiversity net gain.

Archaeology

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, based on existing Historic Environment Record data for the area and the relatively limited extent of the proposed works, it is considered unlikely that the proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 203 of the NPPF 2023.

Bell Tent

There is an existing bell tent on the site that is being used temporarily for the Reset Remedy use. This application does not seek its retention and therefore an informative will be included on any forthcoming planning permission to advise the applicant to contact the Local Planning Authority to seek further advice on the requirement for planning permission.

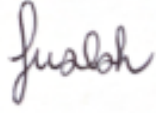
Conclusion

Subject to conditions, the proposed change of use of part of the farmhouse to a Community Interest Project, together with a two storey extension to the dwellinghouse, are acceptable in terms of meeting the relevant exceptions for development in the Green Belt, as well as with regard to the design and impact on the application building and the character and appearance of the surrounding rural landscape, and residential amenity and biodiversity matters. The proposal would therefore comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS07, CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994, and paragraphs 88, 131, 135, 142, 154, 187 and 189 of the NPPF 2024.

Recommendation

Permission with conditions.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	14 th October 2025	Dated:	21 October 2025