

Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————

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14th April 2025

Application ref 20250270

Starwood Pear Tree Lane Shorne Gravesend Kent DA12 3JU

Demolition of 4 stable buildings, 2 canopies. Removal of 2 containers and 1 portacabin and hardsurfacing. Conversion of existing framed structure to form a detached bungalow with three bedrooms.

The Parish Council has to **OBJECT STRONGLY** to this further application, which is effectively a resubmission of previous applications Refs 20220531, 20221342 and 20230942: these were all refused permission, and the latter case was also dismissed at Appeal (Ref APP/K2230/W/23-/3336159).

As an almost identical resubmission, this application should also be **refused permission**, for the same reasons as previously.

We have the following reasons and comments:

1) Plots of land, land ownership, access:

The submitted site plan is yet again incorrect. The area shown in red is actually composed of parts of two different parcels of land: on the east side there is the true curtilage of K424735 Starwood (Appendix A) but on the full length of the west side there is the access track strip of K654169 (Appendix B).

It is not helpful that the applicant persists in confusing the ownership situation. This also raises concerns about the validity of previous permission Ref 20210376 as we do not consider that the access track strip itself can be residential curtilage, so Officers may have been misled.

As before, the manner in which proper and permanent access is to be maintained to the rest of K654169 needs to be clarified as no proper route of access is shown. It is not appropriate for access

to be via (diagonally across) a residential garden without there being a track shown, or a route that might come to be in different ownership.

As the existing accumulated structures (some of which are entirely/partly on K654169) are said to be redundant (which includes the barn structure itself) and are to be removed, we strongly recommend that the access track of K654169 should be at least functionally restored - it was previously visibly separated, as indicated on the Land Registry plan (Appendix B).

2) Green Belt Location; Landscape character

The proposed property is located in the Green Belt where a new dwelling would not normally be permitted due to detrimental impact on openness. It remains the case that no valid “very special circumstances” have been cited that might override this restriction.

The proposed location would also cause harm to local Landscape Character, through the building itself and also the additional residential paraphernalia that it would attract.

We do not share the applicant’s opinion in point 5.26 of the Planning Design and Access statement that that such a development could possibly have a positive effect on openness.

3) Grey Belt from Green belt downgrading

In points 5.14-15 of the Planning, Design and Access Statement, the Applicant decides for themselves that the site is Grey Belt, this is not acceptable or correct.

Green Belt boundaries are decided by GBC as part of a major review involving community Consultation, and cannot be pre-empted (or indeed predicted). If Green Belt land is to be downgraded to Grey Belt that can only happen during the Green Belt Review and not during an individual planning application.

This is stated in the Guidance on Traveller sites but the same principle must apply to all applications, and says: “Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If a local planning authority wishes to make an exceptional, limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary it should do so only through the plan-making process and not in response to a planning application.”

The new designation is in its infancy and still evolving, and the parameters of the category have not yet been fully defined (they are still being explored in parliament, see <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/8503/the-grey-belt/>). This plot of land does not meet the criteria that have been publicised already, so we disagree absolutely that there can be any attempt to label the application site or indeed any particular piece of land in Gravesham as “grey belt” at present, that being at best extremely premature – identification of “grey belt” land in Gravesham must await the next Green Belt Review.

As Grey Belt did not exist at the time, it is obvious that it could not have been discussed relating to previous applications.

4) Backland development and setting precedents, Sustainability

The proposal would be a backland development which is by definition undesirable. We note that the applicant no longer tries to claim that there are other examples locally on the north side of Pear Tree Lane.

Permission of this proposal would create a precedent in the area, particularly as Starwood is already set well back on its plot, which could lead to other backland proposals being impossible to resist.

The proposal would not be sustainable development as occupants would be heavily reliant on car journeys, there being no pavements, bus services, or any amenities nearby and easily accessible.

5) Out of character with the area; Amenity of neighbouring dwellings

The area is characterised by single detached houses built on large plots, this proposal would be out of character with the area.

The proposal will be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings, especially “Colesmead” to the east.

6) Proof of redundancy of existing buildings

It is claimed that the hay barn and various stable and storage structures are all redundant however further information is required proving this in case removals and any conversion might lead to pressure for more barn and stable structures to be built elsewhere on the properties owned by the applicant and his children, so leading to further erosion of openness of Green Belt land.

However, if they are all truly redundant then there is no valid reason why they should not anyway all be removed and that does not require being part of a planning application. The applicant should not be applauded or rewarded for removing buildings and structures that should not have been installed in the first place, and could and should be removed voluntarily at any time.

7) Suitability of structure for conversion

The barn structure was built on (at the time) non-residential land that was previously orchards. It appears to be merely a concrete frame with some timber posts, jut set directly into the ground. There does not appear to presently be a floor or walls, or any existing services.

We question whether the existing structure can be regarded as a “building” suitable for “conversion” and whether change to being a residence can be achieved without considerable engineering works.

8) Planning Design and Access Statement – other aspects not already covered:

- There are a number of problems with this document which refers to an Appeal throughout. It has either been poorly edited from previously or anticipates GBC’s forthcoming decision.
- Redevelopment: Under points 4.13 and 5.33.1, the proposal is not “complete redevelopment of previously developed land” or “Use of entirely previously developed land” as the plot is mostly grass and the whole plot is not being redeveloped.

- Infilling: Also under point 4.13, there is mention of “infilling” however the site is outside the recognised village/settlement envelope and anyway this was disregarded by the Appeal Inspector.
- Site relationship to London: In points 5.11 -13, we do not agree with the Applicant’s assessment and find the reference to London to be far-fetched.
- Supposed Benefits: In point 5.29 the Applicant claims benefits from the proposal that we do not agree, any effect on housing stock would be negligible. Clauses referencing major developments are not supportive.
- Freeing up general housing: In point 5.33.4, neither Starwood itself (or the proposed new house) can be assessed as a “general” type of house that would be affordable to young purchasers.

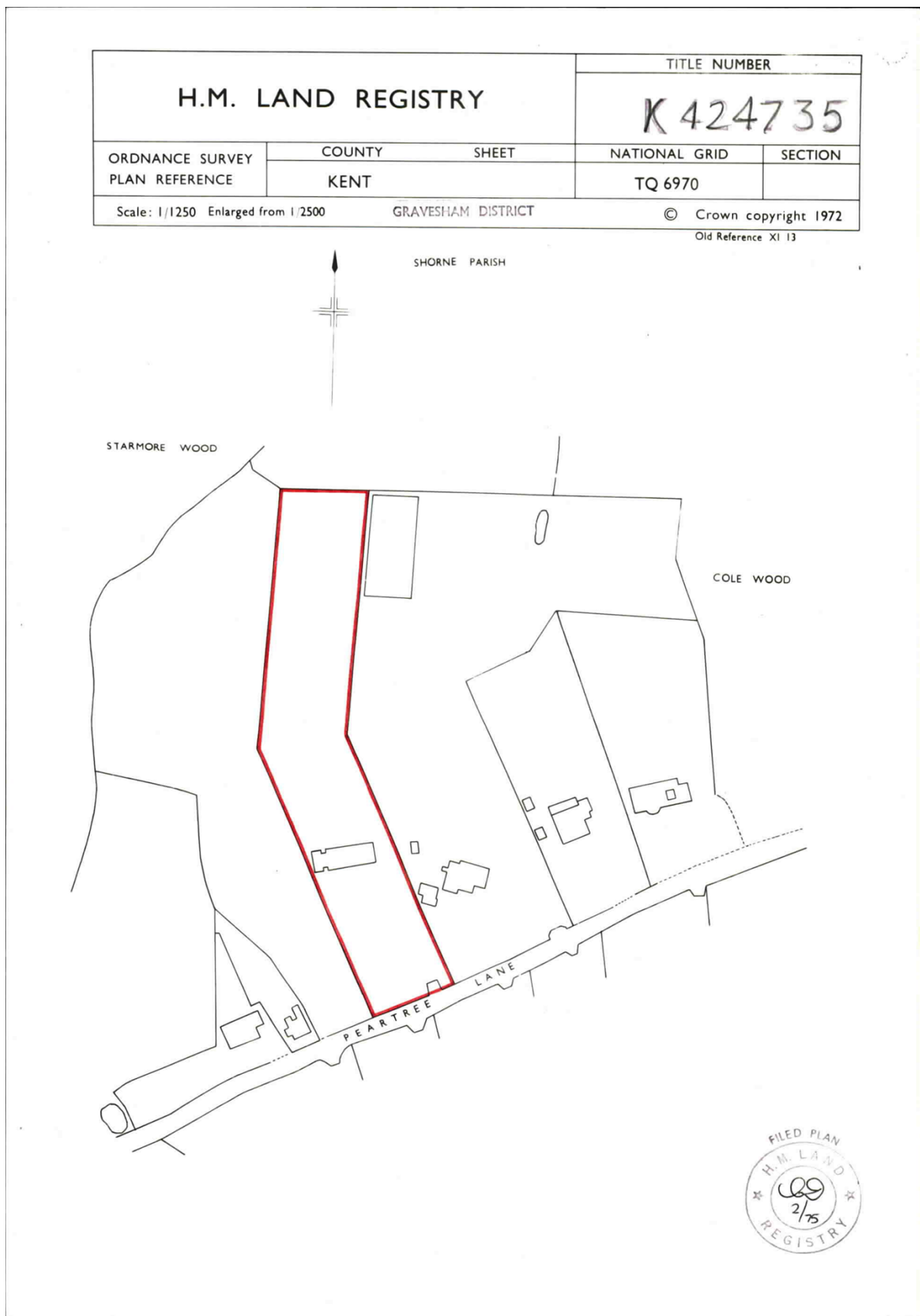
9) Other points about plans, layout and design/changes since the previous applications:

- Revised plans: The submitted plans show only minor difference from those previously submitted, refused and dismissed at Appeal. These are principally removal of the extension, but there is also an adverse increase in the area of hardstanding.
- Gate in rear fence: A double gate is still shown in the northern boundary fence, clarification is required over the need for and proposed use of this non-residential feature (see Point 1 above).
- Layout issues: The layout remains the “wrong way round” on the site, with the “front door” at the rear so not relating to the roadway but rather to the open countryside. In our opinion the layout should be turned round by 180 degrees.
- Surface drainage and sewerage: The plans do not indicate how surface drainage and sewerage needs will be met.
- Bin Store: The plans do not show a location for this near the house, and it is unknown where bins would need to be taken for attention from the refuse collection lorry.
- Cycle storage: A cycle store needs to be provided
- EV charging point: This needs to be provided as for all new dwellings
- External lighting plan: The site is in an area where the introduction and effect of light pollution would be severe, there needs to be a lighting plan with operational aspects controlled by Condition.

The Parish Council **OBJECTS STRONGLY** to this application. We request that the application should be refused as before, and that enforcement action should be taken concerning the various buildings and structures that have been erected without planning permission, including the menage constructed in Starmore Wood, as discussed in a previous decision notice.

In view of the extent of built form proposed on the site, we also request that, should Officers be somehow minded to permit the application, then as well as from points raised above, Conditions should be attached withdrawing permitted development rights for the entirety of both the quoted Land Registry titles, to prevent further encroachment onto the Green Belt, open agricultural land and woodland.

Appendix A: K424735 Title Plan - Starwood



H.M. LAND REGISTRY		TITLE NUMBER	
		K 654169	
ORDNANCE SURVEY PLAN REFERENCE	TQ 6970	Scale 1/2500	
COUNTY KENT		DISTRICT GRAVESHAM	
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