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Thursday 30th January 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

HARTSHILL BUNGALOW, THONG LANE, SHORNE, GRAVESEND, KENT, DA12 3HE

This cover letter supports a planning application submission on behalf of our client National Highways ('the Applicant'), which seeks full planning permission to demolish Hartshill Bungalow ('the Site').

In support of this application, please find enclosed the following documentation:

- Application Form
- Cover Letter
- CIL Form
- Site Location Plan / Existing Site Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Existing Floor Plan and Elevations

The required payment to the sum of **£648** will be made via the Planning Portal (including the £70 Planning Portal Fee) to cover the cost of the application.

The Site and Surrounding Area

The Site is located in a rural setting, to the north of the hamlet of Thong. Thong is located to the southeast of Gravesend in Kent. The Site is a corner plot, with Thong Lane to the west and Shorne Ifield Road to the south. The Site measures approximately 1,987sqm (0.5 acres). The Site contains a single storey bungalow that is set back considerably from Thong Lane. The Site forms part of a wider landholding that comprises open fields to the rear.

The Site is heavily screened by vegetation along Shorne Ifield Road and within the site itself which prevents views of the bungalow from Thong Lane. The Site location is shown below on Figure 1.

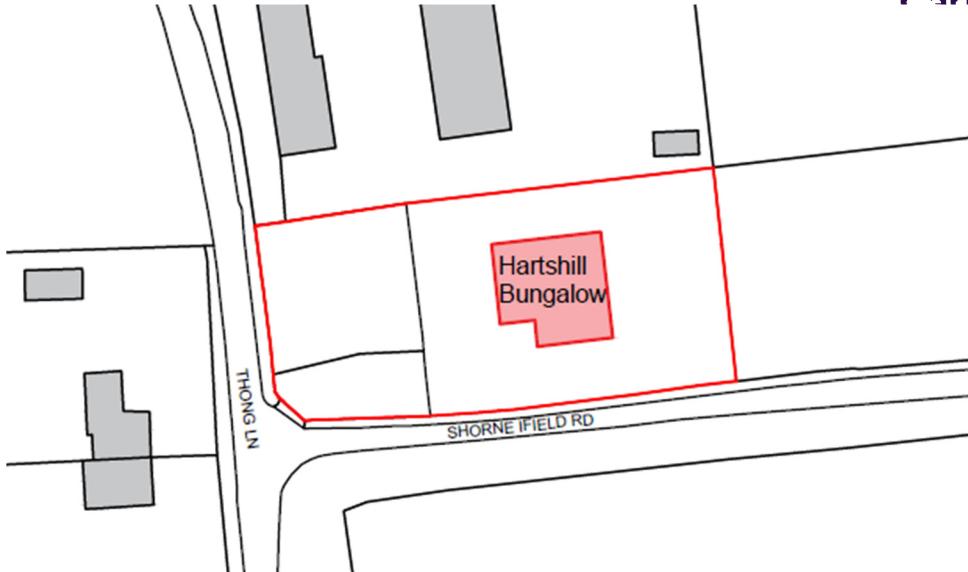


Figure 1: Site Location of Hartshill Bungalow

The original property (in 2017) was a single storey, three-bedroom bungalow. It had a kitchen, bathroom and lounge and this area is denoted by the brown roof in Figure 2 below. The grey roof area shown in Figure 2 is an extension to the property that was built without planning permission in circa 2018 has been subject to enforcement action since. This is explained in more detail in the following sections.



Figure 2: aerial view of Hartshill Bungalow

Justification for the application and Proposed Development

This planning application seeks to demolish the single storey bungalow. A planning application route is sought as there is an active breach of planning control which comprises 'development' and therefore we understand that planning permission is required for the demolition of the bungalow.

The planning history section further below demonstrates the Site has been subject to enforcement action and subsequent appeal. The enforcement notice relating to the demolition of the unauthorised extension (ref: MM/GPL006786) remains live.

The Applicant would like to demolish the property for two reasons.

1. The property poses a health and safety risk. The ground floor roof extensions and loft extension were built without building regulation approval and therefore they do not meet the necessary construction standards. It is unclear if loadings on the loft space were calculated prior to the unlawful conversion and there are missing fire doors. The property is now also suffering from damp which poses an occupational health risk.
2. The entire Site (including the fields to the rear) was originally acquired by National Highways to facilitate a Lower Thames Gateway Crossing in this location. The project is currently stalled but this major infrastructure could require demolition of the property.

Planning Designations

The Site is located within the administrative boundary of Gravesham Borough Council (the Council). The Council's Local Plan comprises a Core Strategy that was adopted in 2014, and a Local Plan Core Strategy Policies Map. Figure 1 is an extract of the Policies Map.

The Site is:

- Within the Green Belt (green shading)
- Adjacent to Thong Conservation Area (brown diagonal hatching)
- Within close proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (dark green edging)



Figure 1: Extract of the Policies Map (2014) with the Site denoted by the purple star

Green Belt

The Site and the entire hamlet of Thong is washed over by the Green Belt. Policy CS02 Scale and Distribution of Development, protects the Green Belt in accordance with national policies. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Chapter 13 outlines the government's approach to protecting Green Belt land.

At paragraph 142 it states *"the government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence."*

Paragraph 153-160 covers proposals affecting the Green Belt. Paragraph 153 outlines that *"Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."*

Conservation Area

Core Strategy Policy CS20 Heritage and the Historic Environment protects and preserves the borough's urban and rural Conservation Areas.

SSSI

Core Strategy Policy CS12 Green Infrastructure states that sites designated for their biodiversity value will be protected. An SSSI is of national importance.

Planning History

The Site has an extensive planning history consisting of applications, appeal decisions and enforcement notices. The table below provides a summary of the Site's planning history.

The planning history relates to two main development proposals:

- 1) the side and rear extensions to the bungalow; and
- 2) the erection of an outbuilding.

The side and rear extension applications and appeals are discussed in more detail further below in the table. The applications relating to the erection of the outbuilding are shaded grey.

Date (determination)	Reference No.	Type	Description	Decision
January 2017	20161214	Prior approval Extensions	Single storey rear extension with a depth of 8 metres, maximum height of 3.35 metres and eaves height of 2.4 metres.	Refused – inappropriate procedure. Planning permission is required.
February 2017	20170095	Prior approval Extensions	Single storey rear extension with a depth of 8 metres, maximum height of 3.350 metres and eaves height of 2.5 metres	Application withdrawn
June 2018	20180461 Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/18/3207317	Full planning application and appeal	Retention of a single storey rear and side extension and a raised patio at the rear.	Application refused and appeal dismissed
November 2018	20181143	Full Planning Application	Retention of a single storey rear and side extension, construction of a new pitched roof and retention of the raised patio at the rear.	Application withdrawn
December 2018	MM/GPL006786 Appeal Ref: AP2019/00004/ENF	Enforcement Notice and Appeal	Without the benefit of planning permission, the unauthorised construction of a single storey rear and side extension to the property and raised patio to the rear of the property.	Appeal dismissed in January 2020

March 2019	20190013	Proposed Lawful Development Certificate	Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed single storey rear and side extension incorporating a raised patio and flue.	Certificate Granted
May 2019	20190269	Proposed Lawful Development Certificate	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed erection of an outbuilding to form triple garage, wood store/storage and equipment store.	Certificate Refused
May 2019	20190273	Prior Approval Extensions	Single storey rear extension with a depth of 8 metres, maximum height of 3.3 metres and eaves height of 2.9 metres.	Refused
November 2019	20191003	Proposed Lawful Development Certificate	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed erection of an outbuilding	Refused and appeal dismissed
December 2019	20191296	Proposed Lawful Development Certificate	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of an outbuilding.	Granted

Planning Assessment

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted Development Plan for Gravesham Borough Council comprises the Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014) and the Local Plan First Review (1994) saved Policies.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Dec 2024) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are material considerations in the determination of any planning application.

Principle of Development

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability.

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 151 states that local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity or to improve damaged or derelict land.

Paragraph 4.143 of the Core Strategy Review states that in relation to physical infrastructure, the planning system will ensure that provision of sufficient essential services is maintained.

Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development seeks to retain and improve the existing stock of housing.

The proposed development seeks to demolish the existing bungalow which has been vacant since November 2023. The demolition of the bungalow would provide landscaping benefits and would positively enhance the Green Belt and local landscape by improving openness and visual amenity by removing derelict structures.

The structure on Site is sub-standard and does not meet building regulations standards. The building is of no architectural or design merit and is considered 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt due to the unlawful nature of the wraparound extension.

The Applicant wishes to clear the Site to allow for future Lower Thames Crossing infrastructure. This is an exceptional circumstance that justifies the loss of one vacant dwelling.

Conclusion

This planning application seeks the demolition of a dwelling and replacement with landscaping. The existing vacant structure is sub-standard and does not meet building regulation standards. The building is of no architectural or design merit and suffers from damp. The Applicant wishes to clear the Site to allow for possible future Lower Thames Crossing infrastructure. This is an exceptional circumstance that justifies the loss of one dwelling. The resulting demolition will enhance the openness of the Green Belt and improve visual amenity in the local area.

I trust the above is clear and look forward to receiving notification that the application has been registered. Should you have any queries in relation to any of the attached information, then please do not hesitate to contact me.



Jennifer Turner
Associate Partner
For and on behalf of Carter Jonas LLP

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