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Design and Access Statement

18th July 2022

Information to support a Planning Application for:

Land at Badgers Wood, Valley Lane, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0DG

Proposals:

New dwelling

On behalf of:

Mr. Connor Cutts

4 Boleyn Road, Kemsing, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN15 6RY

Introduction

The proposed development is to demolish the existing derelict chalet accommodation and to construct a new dwelling on Land at Badgers Wood, Valley Lane – the development will also include landscaping and a detached garage with office space above.



Existing front view of site

Proposals

The new dwelling is to be a modest four-bedroom detached market house that is intended to provide a comfortable family home with spacious internal areas and large open external amenity spaces.

A separate detached garage is included to provide secure parking for one vehicle and cycle storage and includes a study/office area within the roof space.

The site will also require minimal landscaping with the dwelling and detached garage inset into the contours of the land with levelled areas for access and amenity spaces and by retaining many of the existing landscape features.

Location

The land is within the district of Gravesham, situated in the valley between Harvel and Culverstone at the northern end of Valley Lane and total area is approximately 0.16 ha. The site borders to the North with the adjacent plot, Robins Hill, and a vacant plot of land to the South between this site and Maple House which is the nearest building and the scale and appearance of the nearby dwellings are the basis for the design in this application.

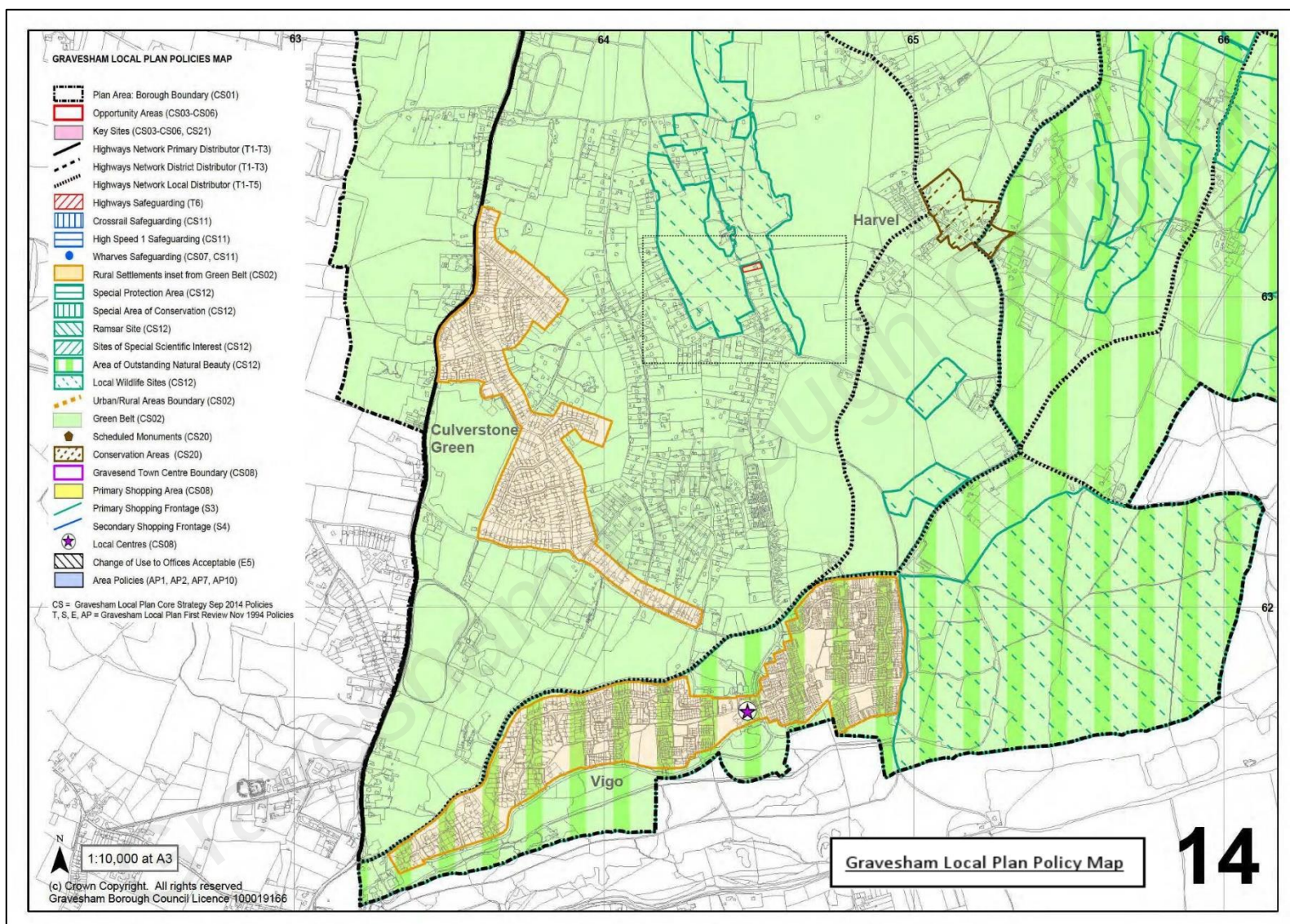
All of the land in this section of Valley Lane has been designated as green belt and opposite the site to the West is Coopreed Wood and to the rear of the site to the East is Willowlands Wood that extends onto the site at the Eastern edge - both woodland areas are designated as ancient woodland.

Badgers Wood is the penultimate plot of land in this section of Valley Lane which is not in a conservation area or within the setting of any listed buildings.

The Gravesham Local Plan Policy Map confirms the site is within the green belt area but is not included within the designated local wildlife site area.



Site position relative to wildlife site



Site history

The open areas of land either side of Valley Lane were divided into large individual plots in the 1960's which were used as holiday home and chalet accommodation. Over time many of the chalets have either been extended or rebuilt to form permanent dwellings which are widely spaced and have been constructed using traditional methods and materials with a general built form that is a chalet type low-rise building utilising spaces within the roof with either roof windows or small pitched roof dormers.

The chalet accommodation erected on this site was abandoned some time ago and the buildings are now derelict.

Access and position

The general topography of the land slopes gently down from East to West and from South to North with some sections around the existing derelict chalets that have already been levelled with banks that step up to the upper levels at the rear.

The site increases in width towards the rear of the property and the new dwelling is to be centrally located in the plot with the front elevation of the dwelling set back from the site entrance and generally in line with the nearest adjacent property at Maple House.

Access to the site is currently via a large single wooden gate which is set back from the track road to allow vehicles to stand off of the road whilst opening the gate and the gate position is to remain in the new development. A detached garage is to be offset to the right at the front of the land and will be immediately accessible for vehicular access.

The site is within 900m of the centre of the Culverstone Green Village and 600m of Harvel Village by following a direct line but the journey by road would be slightly longer.

Site location to local services

The existing communities of Culverstone Green, Harvel and Vigo all contribute to the local facilities that will be available to this site. Although the facilities are also available further afield in Gravesend and Dartford it is expected that the residents will make use of everything nearby and add to the economy and vitality of the local communities.

Bus services - Culverstone green is reasonably well served with Bus routes that include regular services to and from Gravesend, Vigo, Meopham, Northfleet, Sevenoaks, West Kingsdown, Bluewater, Tonbridge and Dartford.

Rail services – the nearest train station is at Meopham which has regular and direct routes into London and the East Kent coast.

Schools and education – there are two primary schools located nearby – Culverstone Green Primary School in Culverstone Green and Vigo Village School in Vigo both with an Ofsted rating of 2-Good. The nearest secondary school is Meopham School in Meopham and has an Ofsted rating of 1-Outstanding. Meopham also has a primary school Meopham Community Academy and an independent special school - Helen Allison School

Retail facilities – Culverstone Green, Vigo and Harvel all offer a selection of essential services and
Supplies which serve the existing community.

Medical facilities – the local GP is situated at Meopham Medical Centre and the nearest main hospitals are Gravesham Community Hospital and Darent Valley Hospital

Amenity areas sport and recreation – The surrounding villages and communities have a wide range of sporting facilities including Harvel Cricket Club, White Horse Farm Equestrian Centre in Harvel and Vigo Rugby Club in Vigo. Large open amenity spaces are available in Culverstone Green Playing Fields.

Employment opportunities – businesses offering employment in this area are widely spaced and offer limited but viable opportunities and there is the option of commuting to London or the South East coast using the train routes through nearby Meopham. However, by including an office/study area above the detached garage it is expected to attract residents that will work from home in support of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy - September 2014 to diversify and strengthen its economy and reduce out-commuting with work from home offices.

Design considerations

The proposals require demolition of the existing derelict chalet type accommodation with minor alterations to the land topography to provide level areas for a rear garden and vehicle parking. All land along the boundary to follow the existing gradient with sloping ground or retaining walls enclosing the level areas.

The new dwelling to be single storey chalet type accommodation with rooms within a half-hipped gable style roof space. Natural light is to be made available to all rooms within the roof space with either Velux type roof windows or small dormer windows which will provide a suitable outlook and means of escape to habitable rooms and will also provide the potential for a minimum 0.750m approach route to enable wheelchair users to approach the window.

Traditional methods of construction are to be used using external materials that complement the setting with plain roof tiles, red brick masonry and timber cladding and to be consistent with the current built form of the surrounding dwellings.

The design considerations are for a visitable dwelling with ambulant access to the ground floor which is achievable through the primary access door at the front and there are

potential areas within the property for a through floor lift. The entrance level to have an accessible WC.

The gradient of the land and the situation of the property would also make it suitable for future upgrading to M4(2) Category 2: Accessible and adaptable dwellings with the installation of ramps or external lifts between level changes.

Appearance

The proposed chalet style bungalow design will consist of a brick-built ground floor section and a half-hipped gable style plain tile roof which includes roof windows and dormers and all masonry walls above ground floor window height to be clad with timber cladding.

The detached garage is to be constructed with similar style construction, materials and proportions.

Roof lines are to be broken with half-hips to the main roof and hipped roofs over the dormers including bonnet hip tiles in keeping with the overall traditional design.

It is intended that all methods and styles of construction are consistent with the built form of the surrounding properties and the proposed materials for the construction are:

- Walls (ground floor to window lintel height) – red facing brickwork
- Walls (masonry above window lintel height) – timber cladding
- Roof (pitched roof) – plain clay or concrete tiles
- Roof (hips) – mortar bedded bonnet tiles
- Doors and windows – white powder coated aluminium
- Garden retaining walls – red facing bricks
- Garage external stairs – black painted iron

Scale

The new dwelling is to be inset from the side boundaries by a minimum of 1.900m to make efficient use of the land and to allow side access to the rear garden and amenity spaces and will include inclined retaining walls to maintain the existing sloping ground levels at the boundaries.

When set against the backdrop of the rising land and ancient woodland to the rear the low-rise dwelling will not detract from the openness of the site particularly when the roof tiles and timber cladding have weathered over time merging with the view of the woodland behind.

The size and shape of the new dwelling will be consistent with the character and scale of the other dwellings in this area.

Spaces

The size of the new dwelling has been designed with the current Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard March 2015 and the Residential layout guidelines (amended 2020) in mind and floor areas are noted as follows:

- Gross internal floor area – 224.00m²
- Living/kitchen/dining areas – 81.00m²
- Master Bedroom – 24.65m²
- Bedroom 1 – 16.79m²
- Bedroom 2 – 18.14m²
- Bedroom 3 – 9.91m²
- Built-in storage – 4.59m²
- Rear garden outdoor level amenity area – 22.00m²
- Combined off-road allocated parking areas – 78.00m²
- External adjacent parking space – minimum 3.300m width

Floor to ceiling heights to be approximately 2.400m at ground floor level and 2.400m for 79% of the floor area in the roof space and hallway and landing widths to be minimum 0.900m.

Note: rooms in roof space shown on plans are 1.500m above finished floor and 2.400m sections indicated with dotted lines

Overlook

The location on site and proximity to other buildings will be such that all external door and window openings in habitable rooms will be on the front or rear elevations and will not directly overlook any neighbouring properties.

Parking

All parking for this development is to be off road with one secure parking space in the lockable garage which will also be available for secure cycle storage. The open section of the garage will also provide two parking spaces under cover and there will be one outside space for visitors with a minimum of 3.30m width to enable use by wheelchair users.

In addition, the proposed parking locations will allow installation of a minimum of one electric vehicle charging point in compliance with the Government proposals that all new homes should provide the facility for charging electric vehicles.

Drainage

There are currently no known public sewers in this area and soil drainage is proposed with a cesspit under the new driveway which will include level alarms to ensure timely emptying of effluents.

A surface water drainage system soakaway is proposed for the management of the surface water from roofs and paving with the design based on sustainable drainage principles. The system is also to be linked to a rainwater harvesting system that is directly pumped and backed up from the incoming main which will reduce the impact of an additional dwelling on the current water supply to the area.

Landscaping

The existing boundary fencing is constructed using timber posts and rails and access to the site is through a timber rail style gate from Valley Lane. The boundary fencing is to be retained and renewed as required with vehicular access through a new pair of wooden gates and pedestrian access through a single wooden gate, both to match existing style.

Traditional style paving to be provided at the front for vehicular access and around the building to the garden levels for pedestrian access and amenity use.

Landscaping to the rear from the main dwelling to be onto a raised, level paved area that steps up to a higher paved and lawned area leading to further level changes into the retained woodland to the rear of the property.

The upper levels of the site are to remain as existing with native plants and shrubs extending into the woodland beyond and native tree and hedgerow species to be planted along the boundaries in strategic places to add an element of privacy to the property without removing the openness. Raised planters between stepped levels to be planted with a mix of native plants and flowers.

A lockable garden shed is to be provided in the rear garden area for secure storage of garden maintenance equipment and bicycles if there is insufficient space within the detached garage to accommodate the entire family.

Existing trees to the front of the site will need pruning or removal for construction of the new detached garage and to be replaced as required with similar species and the remaining areas of natural grassland are to be retained and allowed to grow and prosper with strategic maintenance.

Biodiversity and natural habitats

All new development on this site is within the natural grassland areas and the net biodiversity impact of the new development is considered to be low or negligible with no loss of habitats and ecological features.

The surrounding area/habitats to remain in their current states with minimal disturbance to existing trees or landscaping and it is proposed to make a notable enhancement to biodiversity on the site by additional planting of native shrubs and wildflowers along the boundaries.

There are no designated natural habitats on this site that will be disturbed by this development according to Defra's Magic interactive mapping system illustrated on page 13 of this statement.

Supporting documents

Additional plans and documents are attached to the application as follows:

- BWVL001 - Detached Garage Elevations
- BWVL002 - Detached Garage Floor Plans and Dimensions
- BWVL003 - New Dwelling Floor Plans and Elevations
- BWVL004 - Dimensions, Site Location Plan, Block Plans and Site Levels
- BWVL005 - Site Landscaping Plan

Planning application history

There have been several historic applications on this site as follows:

Appeal decision of application GR/ 20171080 - Appeal Ref: PP/K2230/W/18/3196924
Appeal submitted – 4th July 2018
Appeal dismissed – 17th October 2018

GR/ 20171080 – Application for new dwellings on land at Badgers Wood and Robin Hill - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of two 3 bedroom detached dwellings each with a detached double garage at the front.
Application to develop land – 2nd November 2017
Decision refused – 8th December 2017

GR/ 20010487 – Outline planning application for new dwelling on land at Badgers Wood.
Outline application to develop land – 18th June 2001
Decision refused – 6th September 2001

GR/ 20000497 – Use of land for stationing of a caravan.
Certificate of lawful use – 10th July 1998
Decision refused – 1st December 2000

Planning policies

General considerations are given according to planning and design principles detailed in the following documents:

- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)
- Gravesham Development Management Policies Document 2018
- Gravesham Local Plan Policy Map
- National Planning Policy Framework

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

Strategic Objective - SO2 to provide sufficient new homes to meet the future needs of the Boroughs population.

Whilst the strategy prioritises the development in the urban area and in rural settlements inset from the Green Belt to meet the housing needs, there should also be provision for high quality larger homes. This site presents an ideal opportunity to add a larger detached property in the borough where space may be limited in urban areas and rural settlements.

SO2 relevant core strategies

- CS01 – sustainable development.
- CS02 - scale and distribution of development.
- CS14 – housing type and size

Strategic Objective – SO8 to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and maintain national and local planning purposes

The site is not included in the designated open spaces in the borough according to Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment 2016 but the design will seek to maintain the openness of the site with a reduced height dwelling set against the backdrop of the ancient woodland to the East.

SO8 relevant core strategies

- CS01 – sustainable development.
- CS02 – scale and distribution of development.

Strategic Objective - SO9 Conserve and enhance the diverse rural landscape

Most of the existing natural features of the site are to remain and development is in the grassland areas of the site only. Permanent use of the site will encourage permanent conservation and enhancement of the landscape.

SO9 relevant core strategies

- CS01 – Sustainable development
- CS12 – Green infrastructure

Strategic Objective - SO14 *Ensure that all new development makes a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the Borough, minimises the risk of crime, responds to climate change, and integrates into the existing built, historic and natural environment.*

The proposed development by character of construction methods and materials used will provide a new dwelling in keeping with the current built form in the area and one that will meet the recently improved energy efficiency standards. The design also seeks to use external materials that will over time blend in with the surrounding natural environment.

SO14 relevant core strategies

- CS01 – Sustainable development
- CS12 – Green infrastructure
- CS15 – Housing density
- CS18 – Climate change
- CS19 – Development and design principles

Strategic Objective - SO15 *Improve opportunities for recreation, sport, walking and cycling.*

The site is surrounded by sports facilities, public footpaths, and established long distance walking routes which will be within easy reach of the residents.

SO15 relevant core strategies

- CS01 – Sustainable development
- CS12 – Green infrastructure

Strategic Objective - SO16 *Safeguard and enhance the biodiversity of the Borough.*

The site is located within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network biodiversity opportunity area and residents will provide a permanent enhancement and maintenance strategy for biodiversity on this site.

SO16 relevant core strategies

- CS01 – Sustainable development
- CS12 – Green infrastructure

Gravesham Development Management Policies Document 2018

Core strategy considerations in this application

CS01 – Sustainable development – the type of dwelling proposed would accord with the three dimensions of sustainable development by introducing additional contributors to the local economy, high quality housing that will enhance the vitality of the community and will maintain the natural environmental features of the site.

CS02 – Scale and distribution of development – whilst the green belt in Gravesham has been identified as a broad location for future growth this development will improve the existing stock of quality housing by use of underused land without the risk of urban sprawl due to the designations assigned to the surrounding land.

CS12 – Green infrastructure – the development represents a multi-functional green space and will provide enormous quality of life benefits for residents while conserving and maintaining a net gain in biodiversity.

CS14 – Housing type and size – a larger detached dwelling would be a positive and valuable addition to the housing needs of the borough.

CS15 – Housing density – the design and position of the new dwelling on this site will make efficient use of the land and also maintain the spacing and distinctive character of the area.

CS18 – Climate change – this site is not at risk from flooding and a surface water drainage system is to be managed and designed using Sustainable Drainage System techniques. Water demand management will also be used for the design to accord with the Code for Sustainable Homes in terms of water use of 105 litres per person per day consumption. In line with the recent amendments to the Building Regulations the fabric design and construction will comply with the improved energy efficiency standards. Air and ground source heat pumps are to be considered for the development and a study to be undertaken before development takes place to assess the suitability in terms of efficiency of operation.

CS19 – Development and design principles – the proposed design is to be consistent with the local character in terms of materials and architectural features and will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines (amended 2020). The overall design and location will make this accessible to all and a desirable place to live and work.

Gravesham Local Plan Policy Map

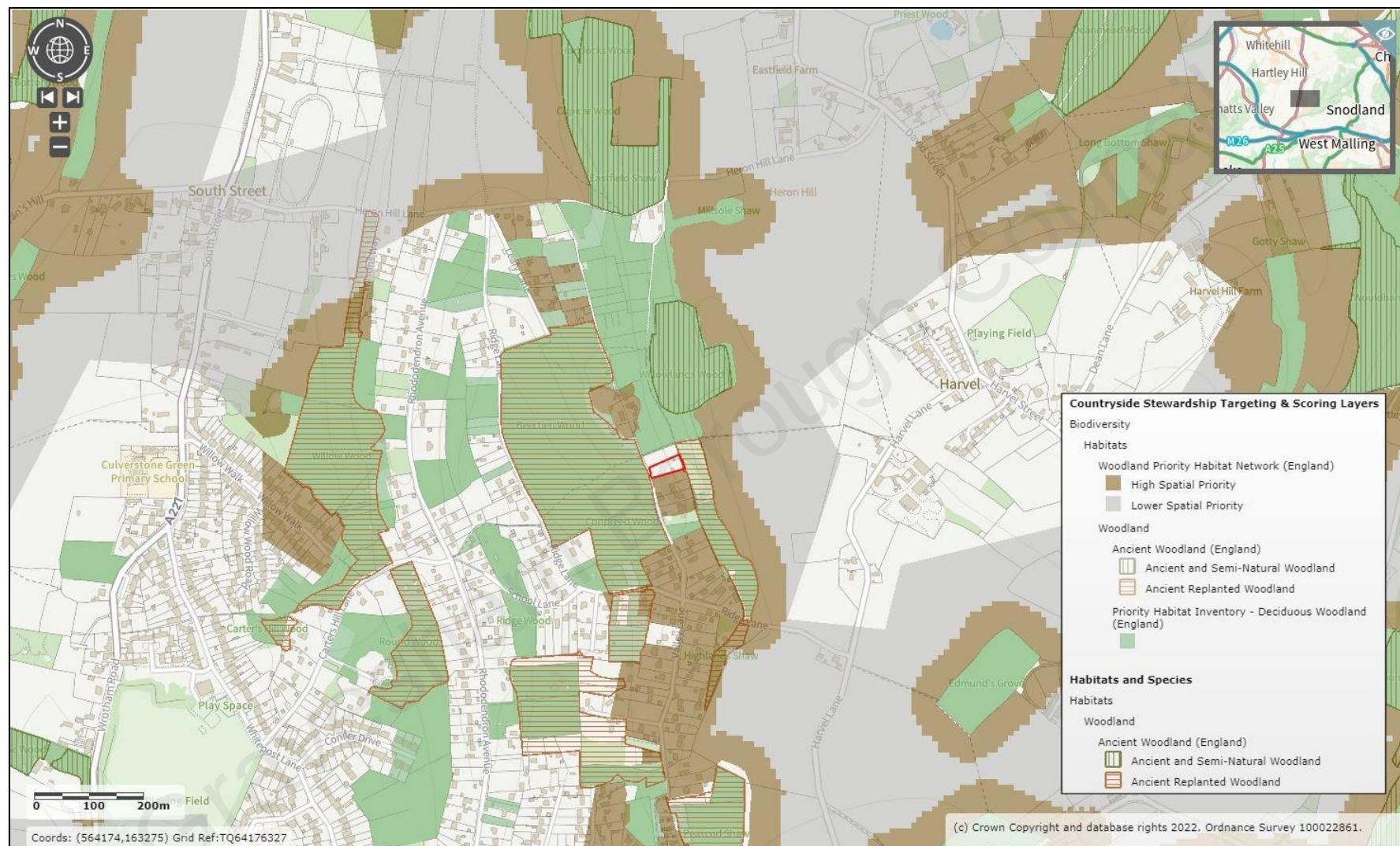
The site lies within the designated green belt areas detailed on the Gravesham Local Plan Policy Map 14 on page three of this statement but it is outside the adjacent local wildlife areas.

Further checks on Defra's Magic interactive mapping system indicate no further constraints on this site in respect of woodland and priority habitats or RAMSAR sites according to the following check report and interactive map copy below.

Site Check Report generated on Mon Jul 11 2022 - Centroid Grid Ref: TQ64476309

The following features have been found in your search area:

- Ancient Woodland (England) - No Features found
- Ramsar Sites (England) – points - No Features found
- Woodland Priority Habitat Network (England) - No Features found
- Ancient Woodland (England) - No Features found
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England) - No Features found



Defra Magic interactive site map

National Planning Policy Framework – July 2021

The local policies detailed above are enhance national policies to accord with local requirements and additional national policy considerations are as follows:

Paragraph 79 – encourages the promotion of sustainable development and this site presents the opportunity for economic support to all of the local villages.

Paragraph 85 – this development will go some way to support local community needs and should be encouraged where the site is physically well-related to an existing settlement.

Conclusion

The construction of a new dwelling on the land at Badgers Wood, Valley Lane by use of features and materials that are already present in the buildings nearby will result in a sympathetic and positive addition to the existing rural residential area.

The underlying aim of green belt designation is to encourage regeneration of urban areas and prevent the post war sprawl from merging towns and cities whilst encouraging growth of communities. This land has previously been a residential site with chalet accommodation as part of an existing rural settlement and will not contribute to the urban sprawl or the expansion of the Boroughs rural settlements which is limited by the woodland and habitat constraints outside the boundaries of this plot.

According to the Gravesham Regulation 18 Stage 2 LPCS Partial Review and Site Allocations Main Document Final v2 it is acknowledged that the Borough cannot meet its housing needs in the urban area and in rural settlements inset from the Green Belt alone and recognises that some green belt land will be required for development.

The new dwelling will be a larger detached property with open and private amenity spaces and where the opportunities for such a development is limited within the urban and rural development areas set aside within the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) development will provide a small but valuable contribution to meet the housing needs of the Borough.

The Green Belt Study Stage 2 identifies this site in its assessment to reflect the harm to green belt development with a Moderate parcel rating and is not included in the designated open spaces in the borough according to Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment 2016

It is expected that the type and size of property proposed will introduce a relatively affluent household to the area which will have positive economic and social contributions to the local community. The office/study area above the detached garage should also encourage residents to work from home and reduce the need for vehicle use and commuting to work.

The proposals will also make good use of underused land and improve the visual appearance with removal of the existing derelict buildings and land maintenance by residents and it is considered that the benefits far outweigh any negative impacts of this development which is consistent with national policies for protecting the green belt.

Gravesham Borough Council