



# Delegated Report

## Planning Application

**Planning Application No:** 20211294

**Location:** Eastfield Farm Stables Heron Hill Lane Meopham Gravesend

**Description:** Demolition of an existing stable complex and construction of a new equestrian barn/stables.

**Applicant:** Mr & Mrs C Oakes

**Site Visit Date:** 11 December 2021

### Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form;
- Planning, Design & Access Statement;
- Site Location Plan, plan no. DHA/15967/01;
- Existing Site Plan Layout, plan no. DHA/15967/03;
- Existing Stables Layout, plan no. DHA/15967/03;
- Existing Stables Elevations, plan no. DHA/15967/04;
- Proposed Site Layout, plan no. DHA/15967/05;
- Proposed Barn Stabling Floor Plan Layout, plan no. DHA/15967/06;
- Proposed Stables Building Elevations, plan no. DHA/15967/07.

### Relevant Planning History

| Application Ref. No. | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Decision |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 20170113             | Retention of stable block.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Approved |
| 20181292             | Application for the approval of condition 3 attached to planning application reference number 20170113 relating to details of the arrangements for the storage and disposal of waste bedding, stable waste and manure (including the means of enclosure where necessary)                        | Approved |
| 20190593             | Application for the removal of conditions 5 & 6 attached to planning permission reference no. 20170113 for the retention of stable block; to allow the retention of the existing visibility sight lines and the existing gates.                                                                 | Refused  |
| 20210112             | Application for variation of conditions 1 and 6 and removal of conditions 5 and 7 to planning permission reference no. 20170113 for the retention of stable block; to allow the relocation of the existing gates and allow retention of the existing visibility sight lines and parking layout. | Approved |

## **Development Plan**

### Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS07 – Economy, Employment and Skills
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS13 – Green Space, Sport and Recreation
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development and Design Principles

### Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- Policy C17: Horse Riding and Stables
- Policy T1: Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- Policy T2: Channel traffic to the Primary and District Distributor Network
- Policy T3: Development not well related to the Primary and District Distributor Network
- Policy T4: Development outside the Built-Up Area
- Policy T5: New Accesses onto Highway Network
- Policy P3: Vehicle Parking Standards

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.

### National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development;
- 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy;
- 11 – Achieving well designed places;
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places;
- 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land;

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Kent Design Guide (SPG 5 published December 2005, adopted July 2006)
- Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG 4 published in 2003 and adopted in 2006)
- Vehicle Accesses on Classified Highways (SPG6 November 1992)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, May 2009 (a technical document which underpins Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS12).

## **Consultations, Publicity and Representations**

### Meopham Parish Council

Objection raised in relation to size and overdevelopment of site.

### GBC Highways

Objection raised mainly due to the increased stables.

#### KCC Heritage

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential, but considered unlikely the proposed works will have a significant archaeological impact.

#### KCC Public Right of Way Officer

Objects as the Public Right of Way runs south of the site and may be affected by the application.

#### Rural Planning Ltd

No objection raised, but outstanding queries not addressed.

#### Neighbouring properties

A site notice, press notice and nine surrounding properties were consulted on the application. One objections were received. The consultation period ended on 26/11/2021.

Objections summarised below;

- Eastern canopy to be removed where it abuts the garden of the adjoining sites;
- A new fence along the eastern boundary that will now be exposed by the new stable block to keep horse out of neighbouring gardens.

The following was mentioned but not considered material planning consideration, as it refers to matters outside the parameters of the current application and also outside the redline boundary of the site;

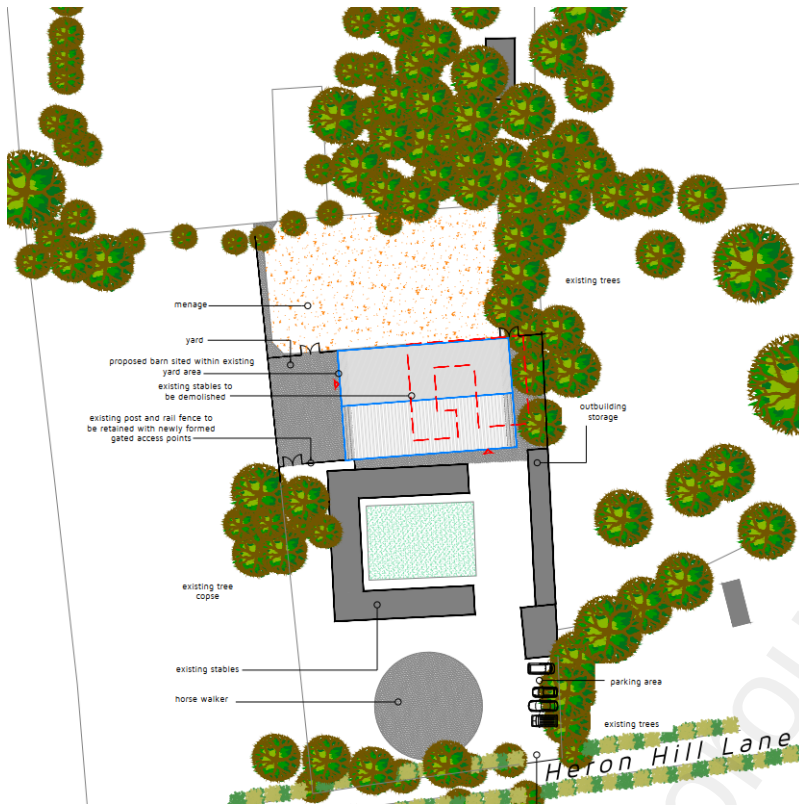
- The semi-derelict existing storage outbuildings to be replaced with new or removed as they are collapsing onto our garden.

#### Site and Surroundings

The application site is located to the north side of Heron Hill Lane about 200m west of the junction to Whitehill Road (David Street). It has a frontage to Heron Hill Lane of 42m and an overall depth of 92m and a site area of 0.38 hectares. The site access is at the eastern end of the road frontage. The site and surrounding area are within the Green Belt.

The wider site, under the applicants ownership, comprises of an approved C-shaped 14 unit stable block (subject of the previous application 20170113) south of the application site. The proposed site plan and photos indicate the location of the existing stables in relation to the application site.

### *Proposed Site Plan*



### *Photos of the existing approved stables (viewed within the mouth of the C shaped stables)*



The application site houses an existing stables north of the approved stables, which it was established in the previous application (20170113) was erected around 1990. The approved stables is an inverted U shaped building north of the approved stables, but is of poor condition as indicated by the photo below.



There is a slightly smaller field to the west of the application site within the applicants' ownership but overall, Heron Hill Lane is a narrow metalled road lined by hedgerows but which is a public footpath NS284 or more correctly termed a byway open to all traffic.

### Proposal

### **Officer's Analysis**

The site is located within Green Belt and, as such, the assessment of the application will cover the following areas:

- Principle of Development and Appropriateness of the Development in the Green Belt
- Design and Impact of the Development on the Character and Appearance of the Countryside;
- Impact upon the Amenity of Neighbouring Properties
- Highways and Parking Impacts.

#### **1. Principle of Development and Appropriateness of the Development in the Green Belt**

As all of the site is located within the Green Belt, adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) policies CS02 apply to the proposals alongside part 13 of the NPPF (Protecting GB land). Also relevant to the application is Saved Policy C17 of the Local Plan First Review (1994) (LPFR).

##### *i. Whether the proposals constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt*

The site is identified on the Core Strategy Proposals Map as being within the Green Belt where Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Core Strategy apply. This Policy sets out the Council's development strategy which prioritises focussing new development in the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. Within the rural area, outside defined inset settlements development is supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and other policies in the Core Strategy. Policy C17 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 this Plan. Where proposals are acceptable in principle, the Borough Council will expect stables and horse shelters to be properly designed and constructed of sound materials appropriate to the countryside and to be in an acceptable location within the site.

Paragraph 137 within Chapter 13 of the NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and that the "fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and their permanence." Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that "Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green

Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances". Paragraph 148 goes on to state that local planning authorities should ensure that "substantial weight" is given to any harm to the GB and that VSC will not exist unless the potential harm to the GB by way of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

With reference to proposed new buildings in the Green Belt, paragraph 149 of the confirms that a local planning authority should regard their construction as inappropriate, with the following exceptions:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- 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 GB and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- 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;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
  - not have a greater impact on the openness of the GB than the existing development; or
  - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the GB, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

The Planning Statement supplied with the application maintains the following;

*'the revised barn style design is responsive to the need to have modern equestrian facilities for animal welfare and security requirements....In respect of material considerations, paragraph 149 of the NPPF allows for 'appropriate' facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and so lend support for the continuation of this rural enterprise. Taking into consideration the above context, the proposal is considered to comply with the development plan and consistent with national Green Belt policy'.*

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) agrees paragraph 149(b) of the NPPF (2021) is the most appropriate exemption to inappropriate development, however, the applicant fails to reference the entirety of the subsection (b) paragraph, particularly the latter part. As highlighted above, subsection (b) of paragraph 149 maintains appropriate facilities for, in connection with the existing use of land (or a change of use) for outdoor sport or outdoor recreation is considered an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, the latter part of 149(b) caveats this exception with 'as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the GB and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it'.

Therefore, the LPA does not agree with the conclusion at paragraph 1.8.3 of the Planning Statement which asserts that the proposal maintains the open character of the Green Belt and, thus represents appropriate development.

The LPA appreciates the applicants desire to update the existing stables which are of poor condition, however, the proposed stables are of a different scale compared to the existing development.

To demonstrate below is a comparison between the existing and proposed site plans/elevations and a table comparing the footprint and height of the existing and proposed stables.

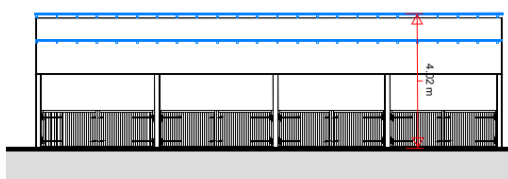
### Existing Site Plan



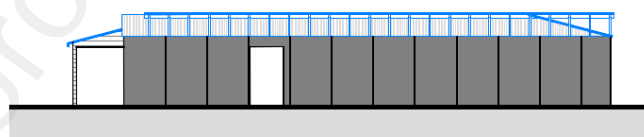
Proposed Site Plan



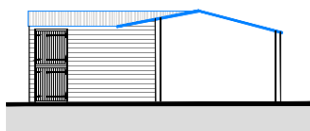
### Existing Elevations



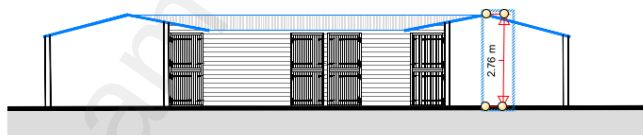
ELEVATION/SECTION C-C



ELEVATION/SECTION D-D

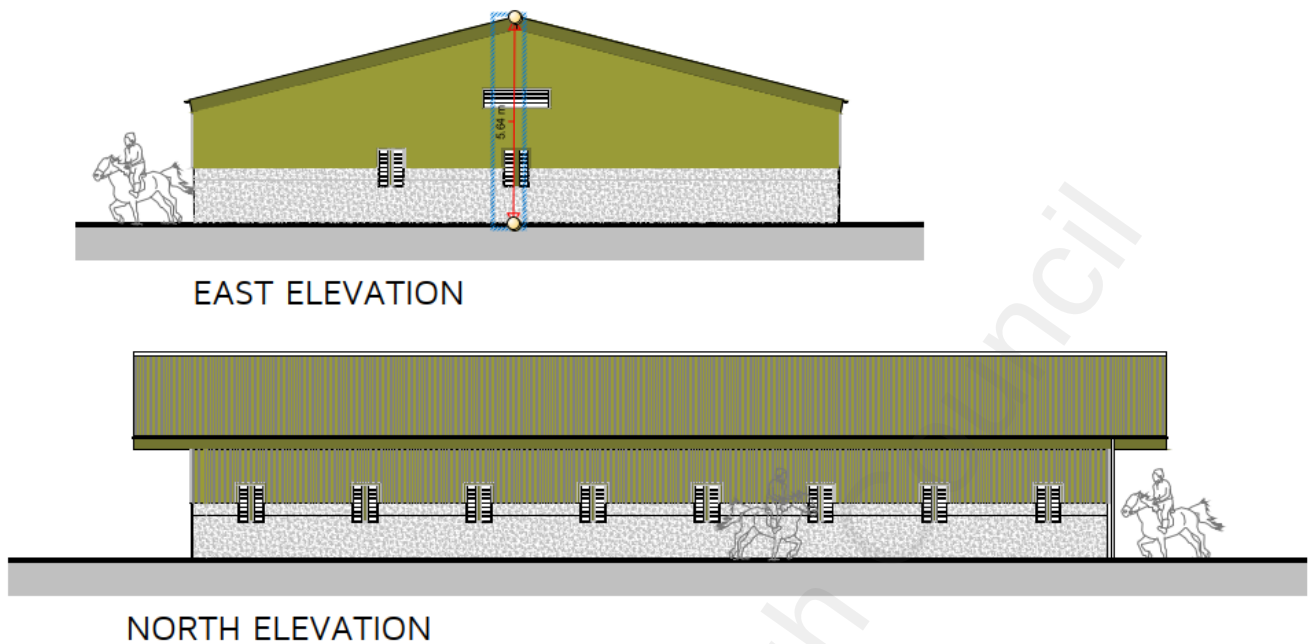


SECTION E-E



SECTION F-F

### SECTION E-E Proposed Elevations



#### Numerical Comparisons

|                                                     | Existing Stables | Proposed Stables | % increase above original |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Footprint (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>                    | 160.1            | 44.2             | 176.5%                    |
| <b>Height (m)</b><br>(of main part of the building) | 2.76             | 5.64             | 104.3%                    |

Evidently, from the table above, in terms of footprint and height, the development would represent a significant increase in built form at the site compared with the current development. In terms of the height comparisons, the height of the existing stables was taken from the main part of the stables and not the 4 loose box area to the east of the main building, as the main building is the largest part of the development. Volume comparisons could not be made due to the nature of the existing plans, nevertheless, the details above clearly demonstrate the proposed stables would in fact be materially larger than the existing stables and, therefore, the facilities provided fail to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

In light of the above, and, in terms of the applicant's reference of 149(b), the LPA considers there are three aspects of this subsection of paragraph of the NPPF. The first part being the exemption of the appropriate facilities, but the latter parts condition the 'appropriateness' of these facilities by stating a) as long as the facilities preserve the openness and b) do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Therefore, in order for the applicant satisfy the requirements of paragraph 149(b) the proposal needs to both preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt (as specified in paragraph 138). Whether the proposal conflicts the Green Belt purposes has been assess in the next section, which concludes, the application does not, but the proposal still amounts to definitional harm. Notwithstanding, the proposed development not conflicting with the purposes of the Green, the above demonstrates there would still be definitional harm to the Green Belt and harm it's open character.

Furthermore, as noted above the application is also subject to saved policy C17 (LPFR) since the proposal seeks recreational use of land in the countryside for horse-riding, riding schools and the erection of stables

if deemed compatible agricultural, landscape and transport policies. At this stage, without assessing the compatibility of the development the proposed development is considered acceptable in principle given the recreational use of the site. However, the site is within the Green Belt and this is also key in determining whether application is acceptable in principle.

On this basis, the LPA notes the applicants desire to extend the rural enterprise at the site, however, the proposal does not fall within any of the exceptions to inappropriate development as defined in paragraph 149 of the NPPF. While the site is not devoid of built form and contains an existing stables, the proposal seeks to significantly increase the quantum of development at the site and, thus, fails to preserve the openness character of the Green Belt. Consequently, the proposal clearly comprises of inappropriate development in the Metropolitan Green Belt, which is harmful by definition with reference to the NPPF and Core Strategy Policies CS02. In accordance with the NPPF (para. 148), substantial weight should be given to this harm.

ii. The effect of the proposals on the open nature of the GB and the purposes of including land within it

The analysis in the paragraphs above concludes that the proposal is inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the GB (NPPF para. 147). However, it is also necessary to consider whether there is any other harm (NPPF para. 148). As noted above paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that the fundamental aim of GB policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the essential characteristics of GBs being described as their openness and their permanence. The proposals would comprise a substantial amount of new built development area. Advice published in NPPG (Jul 2019) addresses the role of the Green Belt in the planning system and, with reference to openness, cites the following matters to be taken into account when assessing impact:

- openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects;
- the duration of the development, and its remediability; and
- the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation

It is considered that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on both the spatial and visual aspects of openness, i.e. an impact as a result of the footprint of development and building volumes. The applicant has not sought a temporary planning permission and it must be assumed that the design-life of the development would be a number of decades. The intended permanency of the development would therefore impact upon openness. Finally the development is likely to generate a degree of activity, like traffic and activity from the increased recreational use of the site and surrounding site within the applicants ownership, and the increased activities are likely to impact negatively on the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, it is considered that the scale of the development, the increase in stables proposed would significantly reduce the openness of the site. As a consequence the loss of openness, which is contrary to which is contrary to the NPPF, should be afforded substantial weight in the consideration of the application.

Paragraph 138 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes which the GB serves as follows:

- a. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b. to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- c. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

As acknowledged above, the current proposals would lead to harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriate development (i.e. definitional harm), would be harmful by way of loss of openness and would be harmful. However, in terms of the purposes of the Green Belt, the LPA conclude there would not be direct conflict purposes listed above, the proposal still constitutes inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

- iii. Whether the harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations as to amount to VSC necessary to justify inappropriate development

Paragraph 148 of the NPPF states that, when considering any planning application, local planning authorities - “should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very Special Circumstances (VSC) will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”

Neither the NPPF nor the adopted Core Strategy provide guidance as to what can comprise VSC, either singly or in combination. However, some interpretation of VSC has been provided by the Courts. The rarity or uniqueness of a factor may make it very special, but it has also been held that the aggregation of commonplace factors could combine to create VSC (.i.e. ‘very special’ is not necessarily to be interpreted as the converse of ‘commonplace’). However, the demonstration of VSC is a ‘high’ test and the circumstances which are relied upon must be genuinely ‘very special’.

In considering whether VSC exist, factors put forward by an applicant which are generic or capable of being replicated on other sites, could be used on different cases leading to a decrease in the openness of the GB. The provisions of VSC which are specific and not easily replicable may help to reduce the risk of a precedent being created. Mitigation measures designed to reduce the impact of a proposal are generally not capable of being VSC. Ultimately, whether any particular combination of factors amounts to VSC will be a matter of planning judgement for the decision-taker.

The Planning Statement supplied does not explicitly state acknowledge the application amounts to inappropriate development and, thus, no formal VSCs have been submitted to support the case. However, a few points that have been listed within the application that could be tantamount to VSCs in support of the case.

These are addressed below;

*a) Relevance of Achieving Sustainable Development*

The Planning Statement supplied references paragraph 8 and 11 of the NPPF (2021). Para. 8 states achieving sustainable development, means that planning system has 3 overarching objectives of the planning system. The 3 objectives are economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 10 maintains that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

However, for decision taking paragraph 11(c) and (d) confirms the application of presumption in favour of sustainable development as:

*(c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*(d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date(8), granting permission unless:*

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed(7); or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

The footnote (7) from the above extract includes the Green Belt as an area or asset of particular importance. Succinctly put, land designated as Green Belt provides a strong reason for refusing the application and the current proposal could not be viewed as ‘Achieving Sustainable Development’ since this would directly contravene the NPPF’s policies on ‘Protecting Green Belt land’ (Chapter 13). Therefore, this factor is afforded very limited weight.

### *b) Relevance of Making Effective Use of Land*

Section 1.7.1 of the planning statement mentions that the existing stables has capacity for 11 loose box (stable units for each horse) and essentially maintain that given relation to the existing development and, the existing use of the site, the site's access to fenced grazing area and a horse ménage facility supports the contention that increase in proposed development is not out of scale.

While paragraph 120(a) of the NPPF maintains that planning decisions should encourage multiple benefits from rural land, however, the LPA does not dispute the use of the site for equestrian activities is appropriate. Although, for reasons already addressed above, the increase from a 11 unit stable to a 18 unit stable and given the increase dimensions referenced in the table above, and some of the structures are of a temporary nature and low level in height. Therefore, the LPA is of the view the quantum of development proposed is considered excessive and effectively harms the openness character of the site. This factor is afforded very limited weight.

### *c) Relevance of Achieving Well Designed Places / Building a strong, competitive economy*

Paragraph 130(c) of the NPPF, under the heading achieving well designed places, stipulates that planning decisions should ensure that planning decisions are sympathetic to the local character and history. The planning statement provided acknowledges the site is within a sensitive location, within the countryside, which involves associated rural activities being keeping and riding of horses.

The statement concludes that the development is 'entirely appropriate...given its role as an important rural business' and 'that the design and layout of the of the building has been designed in such a way as to preserve the character and the and appearance of the countryside setting... modest in nature and consistent with other developments accepted in the borough'.

To reiterate, the appropriateness of the development in the Green Belt has been addressed above and the LPA still maintain that the proposed building fails to preserve the openness character of the Green Belt. The reference to other developments accepted in the borough is noted, but each application is considered on its own merits and this application is no different.

It is acknowledged that the NPPF is supportive of a prosperous rural economy, particularly leisure developments, which respect the countryside. Notwithstanding this, the LPA of the view that given the scale of the development, compared to the existing scale of the existing stable blocks/structures, it is considered that the proposed buildings/stables fails to respect the character of the countryside and/or the Green Belt character. This factor is afforded very limited weight.

### *VSC conclusion*

As paragraph 148 of the NPPF requires that for VSC to exist harm to the GB and any other harm must be clearly outweighed. With reference to the case for VSC, an assessment of the factors is provided in the analysis above. The factors promoted above attract only limited weight and, the LPA are of the view, should be afforded no weight at all.

## **2. Design and Impact of the Development on the Character and Appearance of the Countryside;**

Part 12 of the NPPF (Achieving we-designed places) emphasises the importance of good design and Policy CS19 states that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive.

The development needs to be judged on whether the design of the building is appropriate and whether there is any significant harm to the character and appearance of the existing countryside and landscape.

The existing site is open countryside is location surrounding by hedging and trees with a recently approved stable buildings to the south of the application site.

The proposed building would have a pitch height of 5.64m and would be approximately 25m from the main road Heron Hill Lane with equestrian uses within the immediate locality. Notwithstanding this and, as noted above, the proposed development represents significant amount of development at the site and fails to preserve the countryside and Green Belt character of the site.

The nature of the existing buildings are a low level structures averaging with a pitch height of 2.76m and the proposed footprint, massing, scale and height of the development is considered to significant harm the character of the site. Saved policy C17 maintains the Council expects stables and horse shelters to be properly designed and constructed of sound materials appropriate to the countryside. The existing stables are constructed of timber/wooden materials and the proposed development would comprise of a 1.5m concrete plinth, followed by uPVC plastisol coated profile steel sheeting in green for the walls and roof. Thus, given the overall scale proposed, it is considered the materials are not appropriate in the countryside/Green Belt setting, furthermore, the approved stables to the south of the site was constructed with timber materials.

It should also noted the Council agricultural advisor has been consulted on the application and does not raise a concern with the overall design of the stables and the number proposed, although, comments do not consider the impact to the rural and Green Belt character of the site.

Therefore, given the massing and scale combined with the materials proposed, the current proposal is considered out of character of the rural location and contrary to the requirements of policy C17 of Gravesham Local Plan First Review and CS19 of the Core Strategy.

### **3. Impact upon the Amenity of Neighbouring Properties**

Comments were received in relation to the current application and one of the comments mentions how the stables abuts a neighbouring dwelling, however, the all the neighbouring properties are over 45 metres from the eastern boundary.

A specific comment made requested the canopy of the stables to be removed. In the event of an approval, this, this would be deemed unnecessary given the distance from the neighbouring properties and the scale of the adjoining gardens it is not considered there would be a significant impact in terms of overbearing impact to neighbouring amenity.

A further request was made relating to the appropriate fencing to ensure the exposed part of the site, as a result of the proposed development, should be fenced off to ensure horses to not wonder into neighbouring gardens. The LPA appreciates this concern, however, the location plan and proposed site plan both show the existing stables and the proposed stables site away from the eastern boundary. Therefore, given the sites current equestrian uses and the position of the existing/proposed stables, in the event of an approval, it is not considered a fencing condition would be reasonable. The re-installation of fencing would be deemed a civil matter.

### **4. Highways and Parking Impacts**

Heron Hill Lane is a narrow metalled road but is also on the KCC footpath map as a byway open to all traffic.

KCC Public Right of Way (PROW) Officer was formally consulted and objected to the application on the grounds of the increase of the size of the stables and disagrees with the statements assertion there would be no increase in traffic and no material impact on the local highway network.

GBC Highways were also consulted on the current application and agrees that the increase in stables would likely result in additional activity relating to the commercial enterprise at the site. Overall, the GBC Officer views is that there is insufficient information to support the application in relation to appropriate sightlines and passing places. The Officer noted these requirements would be outside the redline boundary and, therefore, recommended a refusal on this basis.

The consultation comments above are noted in relation to the public footpath and the narrow nature of the road and the nature of the proposal to accommodating the needs rural business. The site fronts Heron Hill Lane which is approximately 200m from David Street which is a Highways Network Local Distributor.

Saved Policy T3 (LPFR) states the LPA/Highways authority will not normally permit ant proposed development that generates significant volumes of commercial vehicle traffic, if it is not well related to a primary and district distributor network. The site is connected to a local distributor highway network and, given the increase in commercial activity at the site, the narrow nature of the access of the site along with the activities associated, it is considered there is insufficient information provided to access the impact to the highway network.

Therefore, the site is not appropriately connected with a primary/district network and, for instance, a travel statement/assessment has not been supplied to demonstrate the impact to the highway network. To this end, the current proposal is contrary to the requirements of policy T3 of Gravesham Local Plan First Review and CS11 of the Core Strategy.

## 5. Other Matters

As mention above, the LPA has consulted the Council's agricultural/rural planning consultant in relation to the application has initially queried about how the site operates and how the site would continue following the proposed expansion. It was confirmed that the increase in stables is a like for like replacement, necessary for the husbandry of the horses trained, but also required to increase the stock at the site.

The agricultural consultant concluded that it could be possible that the feeding regimes for the types of horses kept do not require much grazing land, but the applicant did not provide any further information in relation to this specific point. Nevertheless, there still remains objections to this application.

## Conclusion

It is acknowledged the site, and the wider site, is practically operating in equestrian uses for Kent Horse Producers which are already operating at the site, but the existing stables subject of this application, are in poor condition and in need of replacing. Notwithstanding this, the application site is within a rural location in the Green Belt.

While the application comprises of the demolition of the existing stables, the proposed stables proposes a significant increase in size and, therefore, fails to preserve the rural and Green Belt character of the site.

In addition, there further concerns and objections to the design and the impact to the highway network.

It is considered that the proposal does not complies with local and national planning policy.

## Recommendation

Refusal

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

|                      |                    |                     |                                  |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Case Officer:</b> | Ms Genna Henry     | <b>Team Leader:</b> | <b>Richard Hart</b>              |
| <b>Signed:</b>       | G.Henry            | <b>Signed:</b>      | <i>R Hart</i>                    |
| <b>Dated:</b>        | 16th December 2021 | <b>Dated:</b>       | <b>16<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b> |

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Gravesham Borough Council