

Wendy Lane MRTPI
Assistant Director (Planning)
Gravesham Borough Council
Civic Centre
Windmill Street
Gravesend
Kent
DA12 1AU

January 2023

Our Ref: J004301

Dear Ms. Lane,

**FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF SANDSCHOOL AT
BRIARLEA, BEECHWOOD DRIVE, CULVERSTONE, DA13 0TX**

I refer to the above. WS Planning & Architecture have been instructed by Mr Turnbull to submit a Full Planning Application for the erection of sand school at Briarlea, Beechwood Drive, Culverstone, DA13 0TX.

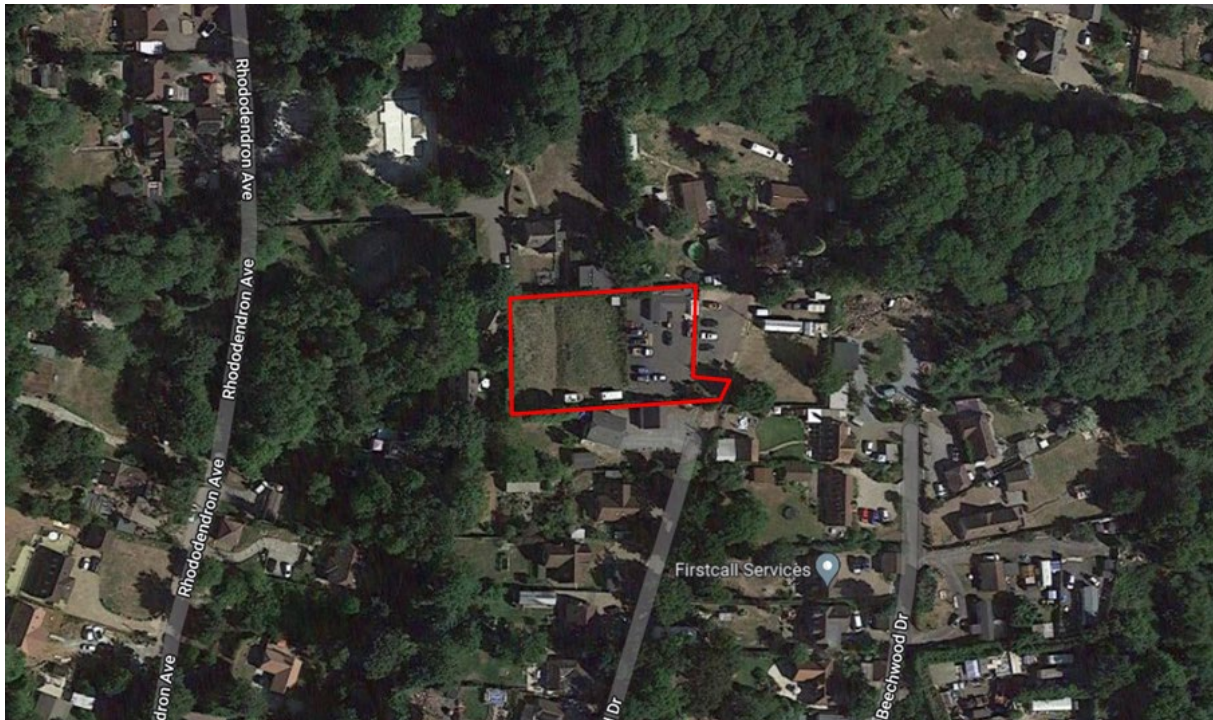
Please find enclosed the following documents to support the request:

- Application Forms
- J004301-DD-01 Site Location Plan
- J004301-DD-02 Ex Site Plan
- J004301-DD-03 PP Site Plan

Application Site

The application site is located on the north side of Beechwood Drive, on a plot of land with Rhododendron Avenue to its west and Valley Lane to the east. The surrounding area is a predominantly residential neighbourhood, featuring dense woodland which borders the plot to its northern boundary.

The site is located within the Green Belt, although is within a built-up residential area to the southeast of Culverstone Green.



Relevant Planning History

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 20210308 | Application for the approval of conditions 3 and 4 attached to planning permission reference no. 20200251 relating to hard and soft landscape proposals and arrangements for the storage and disposal of waste relating to the equestrian use. Application Approved 04 th May 2021. |
| 20200251 | REVISED Change of use of land for equestrian purposes and retention of a stables building measuring 61.08 sq. m. Application Approved 29 th November 2020. |

Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a Framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

The revised NPPF was published in 2021 with a focus on:

- promoting high quality design of new homes and places.
- stronger protection for the environment.
- building the right number of homes in the right places.

- greater responsibility and accountability for housing delivery from councils and developers.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 8 sets out the three over-arching objectives of sustainable development: *“the economic role, the social role and the environmental role”*.

Paragraph 10 states *“so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that plans and decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of plan-making this means *“plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development”*. In terms of decision-taking this means *“approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”* and *“where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date”*, permission should be granted unless the Framework provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.

Chapter 11 of the NPPF is titled “Making Effective Use of Land” where *“planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”*.

Chapter 12 refers to “Achieving Well-Designed Places” and confirms that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

Paragraph 126 states *“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”*.

Chapter 13 identifies the importance of “Protecting Green Belt Land”. Paragraph 137 states *“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 147 states *“inappropriate development, is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”*.

Paragraph 149 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, as per criteria (b), exceptions to this include *“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 Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy

The Gravesham Borough Council Local Plan Core strategy was adopted September 2014 and guides development within the Borough.

Policy CS01 states that *“When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and in this Core Strategy.”*

Policy CS02 sets out the Rural Settlements inset from the Green Belt. The application site is located in close proximity to Culverstone Green, but not located within the designated boundary of the settlement. As such the application site is located within the Green Belt and must adhere to the same criteria set out in the NPPF.

Policy CS19 refers to “Development and Design Principles”, and states that *“new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards. The design and construction of new development will incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques, be adaptable to reflect changing lifestyles, and be resilient to the effects of climate change”.*

Proposal

The proposal comprises the erection of sand school at Briarlea, Beechwood Drive, Culverstone, DA13 0TX. The material planning considerations are discussed in turn below.

Principle of Development

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy sets out that the location of the application site is located within the Green Belt, in close proximity but outside of the designated settlement boundary of Culverstone Green. Within the Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development in which Para 147 of the NPPF states *“should not be approved except in very special circumstances”*. Some of these exceptions are listed in Paragraph 149, and include:

“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 Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would fall within this exception, and would therefore be

acceptable development within the Green Belt in principle subject to an assessment on the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Impact on the Openness of the Green Belt

The provision of outdoor sport and recreational facilities are deemed by the NPPF to not be inappropriate development, as long as they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The proposal is for the erection of a sandschool within an existing equestrian use site, therefore not being detrimental to the purposes of the surrounding land whilst meeting the needs of the applicant.

The proposed sandschool is an equestrian facility, privately used by the applicant, that would not result in an urbanising effect on the openness of the Green Belt due to its naturally rural appearance that is often found within the countryside. It is also considered that a rural location is often required for the erection of sandschools due to the required land and surroundings to be suitable for equestrian facilities. The application site is rural in nature due to its Green Belt designation, although within a predominantly residential road and area. The development would not be of a substantial increase in built-form in comparison to its surroundings, and would blend into the surrounding landscape with the addition of the proposed hedgerow, therefore not detrimentally impacting the openness of the Green Belt.

Design & Character

As stated previously, the application site is located within a rural, but predominantly residential area, the surrounding roads predominantly feature a range of detached dwellings. The proposal is of minimal built form, and is of a naturally rural nature, complimenting the surrounding equestrian facilities within the site, therefore not detrimentally impacting the neighbouring areas character through inappropriate scaling or siting.

The proposed sandschool would be of a suitable size based on the applicants intended use and is considered to be of a modest scale, appropriate to that of the site. The sandschool would be bounded by a combination of a 1.2m tall post and rail fence and 1.8m close boarded fence, and would be screened significantly by the proposed hedgerow planting surrounding the plot, therefore not being of any visual detriment to the site. The design would therefore integrate well with its surroundings, enhancing the character of the nearby built environment, adhering to the "Development and Design Principles" detailed within Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed school would be located close to the nearby residential dwellings on Beechwood Drive. However, the proposed siting of the sandschool will maintain sufficient separation distances to neighbouring dwellings. The proposal would feature a neutral, rural-looking design, with a predominantly timber fence and gate, all designed to a modest scale, therefore not harming any neighbouring outlook and amenity.

Summary

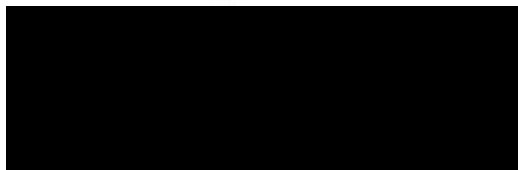
The proposed development comprises the erection of sandschool at Briarlea, Beechwood Drive, Culverstone, DA13 0TX.

The application site is located within the Green Belt, within a predominantly built-up residential area, but outside of the designated settlement boundary. The principle of development within the Green Belt is considered to be appropriate as set out within Para 149 of the NPPF, and therefore acceptable subject to a the preservation of the openness of the Green Belt. The scale and design of the proposal has been considered to not detrimentally impact the openness of the Green Belt or the character of the neighbouring area. Neighbouring amenity would also not be detrimentally impacted due to the modest, rural design, not harming neighbouring outlook.

It is therefore considered that the proposal fully adheres to the relevant central government guidance contained within the NPPF, as well as the local planning policy guidance contained in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

For the reasons stated within this letter, it is requested that the officer appointed to determine this application, look upon the proposal favourably.

Yours sincerely,



Felix Smithson
Planning Technician