



Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Planning Application No:	20260027
Location:	Chambers Farm Town Road Higham Rochester
Description:	Erection of an extension to the existing Cold Store/ Packhouse/ Distribution Building.
Applicant:	Mr. T Chambers, WB Chambers Farms Ltd
Site Visit Date:	3 February 2026

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Planning Statement
BNG Metric
Drawing no. 01 (Site Location Plan)
Drawing no. 02 (Existing Block Plan)
Drawing no. 03 (Existing Ground Floor Plan)
Drawing no. 04 (Existing First Floor Plan)
Drawing no. 05 (Existing Elevations)
Drawing no. 06 (Proposed Block Plan)
Drawing no. 07 (Proposed Ground Floor Plan)
Drawing no. 08 (Proposed Elevations (1 of 2))
Drawing no. 09 (Proposed Elevations (2 of 2))
BNG Metric
Biodiversity Net Gain Proposed Layout V2
Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline Layout V2
Preliminary Ecological Assessment & Biodiversity Net Gain Plan

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20250594	Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed; Installation of solar panels to the roofs of the existing security/storage building and extended section of the existing packhouse/coldstore building, of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J.	No decision	28.08.2025
20250213	Widening of an existing access to a Classified Road including alterations to the fencing.	Permitted	09.07.2025
20230678	Use of land for the stationing of 20 caravans for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers.	Permitted	14.09.2023
20211530	Erection of extension to existing storage/cold store/packhouse building.	Permitted	16.03.2022

20210645	Erection of general purpose agricultural storage building.	Permitted	15.07.2021
20201290	Use of land for the stationing of x28 caravans for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers, 8 caravans to be occupied all year round with 20 occupied in main season.	Temporary permission	08.03.2021
20200143	Use of the land for the stationing of 4 x caravans for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers all year round; the stationing of 15 x caravans for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers from 01 March to 31 October and the unoccupied storage of the 15 caravans over winter (part retrospective)	Temporary permission	06.04.2020
20190385	Use of the land for the stationing of 4 x caravans for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers all year round; the stationing of 16 x caravans for occupation by seasonal agricultural workers from 01 March to 31 October and the unoccupied storage of the 16 caravans over winter.	Temporary permission	31.07.2019
20191007	Application for Certificate of Lawful Development in respect of retention of polytunnels.	Granted	14.01.2020
20160071	Erection of general purposes agricultural storage/cold store building and hard surface yard area.	Permitted	27.05.2016

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS07 – Economy, Employment and Skills
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development and Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites
- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the identified Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making

- Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

KCC Biodiversity

SUMMARY: SUFFICIENT INFORMATION

We have reviewed the information submitted by the applicant and advise that sufficient ecological and biodiversity net gain information has been provided for determination. Recommended condition wording is provided below.

A summary of our review of the submitted biodiversity net gain information is provided below. Detailed comments on the submitted ecological and biodiversity net gain information follow the subheadings below.

Table 1: To show a summary of our review of submitted biodiversity net gain information

Percentage Net Gain Required	Percentage Net Gain/Loss Reported for Area Habitats	Percentage Net Gain/Loss Reported for Linear Habitats	Net Gain Proposed: 1 – all on-site; 2 – no significant on-site and off-site; 3 - significant on-site and off-site	On-site 'significant' Net Gains Proposed (Yes/No)
10%	15.35%	10.36%	3 - significant on-site	Yes

DETAILED COMMENT

Precautionary Works Method Statement

We understand that the proposed development is an agriculture site that is heavily managed, and as such it provides limited foraging/resting habitat for protected/notable species.

However, to protect from limited adverse impacts to protected/notable species during clearance and construction we recommend a precautionary works method statement is a condition attached to planning permission if granted, with the suggested wording below.

From commencement of works (including site/vegetation clearance), and for the duration of construction, all mitigation for amphibians, reptiles, bats, badgers, nesting birds and small mammals shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in sections 5. Discussion & Recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Assessment & Biodiversity Net Gain Plan; JW Biodiversity Management; 20/12/2025 report.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Under the Environment Act 2021 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), all planning applications¹ for development (unless exempt^{2,3}) must deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), shown via use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric prior to commencement of any development.

Significant on-site gains, and all off-site gains will need to be secured for at least 30 years.

Having reviewed submitted information⁴, we consider a 10% biodiversity net gain is a statutory requirement of this proposed development. We consider there is no local policy biodiversity net gain requirement above 10% for this development.

We consider that the proposed habitat creation/enhancement and proposed BNG of 15.35% of habitat units and 10.36% of hedgerow units is achievable and realistic.

Information has been submitted with this application to give confidence that the biodiversity gain hierarchy can be effectively applied to this application, and how conditions should be applied should planning consent be granted.

Significant on-site gains

Significant on-site gains are areas of habitat creation or enhancement which contribute significantly to the proposed development's biodiversity net gain relative to the biodiversity value before development. Retention of existing habitat cannot count as an on-site significant gain.

Non-significant enhancements are those whose loss will not significantly decrease the development's biodiversity value e.g., private gardens or container planting. These types of enhancements do not normally require maintenance provisions and so no Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, legal agreement or commitment to maintain them is required.

We consider the enhancement of modified grassland to other neutral grassland and the creation of species-rich native hedgerow to constitute significant⁵ on-site gains. Government guidance states: *"The maintenance of these significant enhancements must be secured with a legal agreement (planning obligation or conservation covenant) or planning condition for 30 years in the same way as off-site gains. LPAs will consider the most appropriate mechanism and this will need to be agreed at the planning permission stage."*⁶

National guidance indicates that significant enhancements contribute significantly to the proposed development's biodiversity net gain relative to the biodiversity value before development e.g.,:

- Habitats of medium or higher distinctiveness in the biodiversity metric;
- Habitats of low distinctiveness which create a large number of biodiversity units relative to the biodiversity value of the site before development;
- Habitat creation or enhancement where distinctiveness is increased relative to the distinctiveness of the habitat before development;
- Areas of habitat creation or enhancement which are significant in area relative to the size of the development;
- Enhancements to habitat condition.

In Kent, guidance indicates that the delivery of above 0.5 (total) relevant biodiversity units is considered the threshold for on-site significance for created or enhanced habitats.

Units created via habitat/hedge with a medium distinctiveness with a total of **1.19 units** is made of :

- Habitat enhancement from modified grassland to other neutral grassland : 0.54 units
- Hedge creation of species rich native hedgerow : 0.65 units

These habitats do need to be secured for 30 years.

However, due to the amount of habitat created, or ease with which it can be created and maintained, it is

not considered proportionate to implement LPA oversight through the collection of monitoring fees and the submission and approval of monitoring reports to the LPA.

It is likely to be appropriate to recommend an HMMP be included on the decision notice if planning permission is granted. The HMMP will still include monitoring by a competent person where LPA oversight is not considered necessary.

Suggested Condition Wording:

The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan, and based on the most up-to-date and/or relevant ecology surveys as determined by a suitably qualified ecologist, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The Plan shall include:

- a) a non-technical summary;*
- b) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP; c) the planned habitat retention, creation and enhancement works (including detailed landscaping plan(s) and planting schedule(s)) to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;*
- d) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and*
- e) the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the retained, created or enhanced habitat*

The retained, created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be implemented, managed, maintained and monitored in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Submission of Biodiversity Gain Plan

We advise that the following information should be submitted as part of the 'deemed condition' discharge as appropriate:

- How the biodiversity gain hierarchy has been applied;
- The relevant date for the habitat baseline and reason for choosing an earlier date (if relevant);
- The completed biodiversity metric calculation tool(s) based on final detailed designs;
- Pre-development and post-development plans;
- A description of any irreplaceable habitat present on the relevant date;
- Information concerning any relevant habitat degradation;
- Any registered off-site biodiversity gain, evidence of its value and evidence that it has been allocated to the development;
- Evidence of the purchase of any biodiversity credits;
- Name and address of the person completing/submitting the Plan;
- A description of the development and planning permission reference number to which the Plan relates;
- A description of the arrangements for maintenance and monitoring of the habitat enhancement where applicable.

We advise the local planning authority that there may be conditions attached to the decision notice should planning permission be granted that are linked to the biodiversity gain plan. Wording should be included in such conditions to ensure that it is clear that any documents/plans are produced in accordance with the 'approved biodiversity gain plan'. Relevant conditions where this is likely to be appropriate include soft and hard landscaping conditions, and any other ecology/biodiversity conditions. Other relevant conditions may include drainage conditions.

KCC Heritage

In this instance I suggest that no archaeological measures are required.

KCC Highways

Access will remain the same with a pre-existing access point in use.

No additional parking is to be added with no amendments to be made. This is acceptable to KCC Highways.

It is important to note that Local Planning Authority (LPA) permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Any changes to or affecting the public highway in Kent require the formal agreement of the Highway Authority, Kent County Council (KCC), and it should not be assumed that this will be a given because LPA planning permission has been granted.

For this reason, anyone considering works which may affect the public highway, including any highway-owned street furniture or landscape assets such as grass, shrubs and trees, is advised to engage with KCC Highways and Transportation at an early stage in the design process.

Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens and near the highway that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the public highway.

Some of this highway land is owned by Kent County Council whilst some is owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have 'highway rights' over the topsoil.

Works on private land may also affect the public highway. These include works to cellars, to retaining walls which support the highway or land above the highway, and to balconies, signs or other structures which project over the highway. Such works also require the approval of the Highway Authority.

Kent County Council has now introduced a pre-application advice service in addition to a full formal technical approval process for new or altered highway assets, with the aim of improving future maintainability. Further details are available on our website below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>.

This process applies to all development works affecting the public highway other than applications for vehicle crossings, which are covered by a separate approval process. Further details on this are available on our website below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/apply-for-a-dropped-kerb/dropped-kerb-contractor-information>

Once planning approval for any development has been granted by the LPA, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that before development commences, all necessary highway approvals and consents have been obtained, and that the limits of the highway boundary have been clearly established, since failure to do so may result in enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority.

The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under the relevant legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Further guidance for applicants, including information about how to clarify the highway boundary and links to application forms for vehicular crossings and other highway matters, may be found on Kent County Council's website:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>.

Alternatively, KCC Highways and Transportation may be contacted by telephone: 03000 418181.

Kent Police

We have reviewed this application in regard to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Applicants/agents should consult us as Designing out Crime Officers (DOCO's) to address CPTED and incorporate Secured By Design (SBD) as appropriate. We use details of the site, relevant crime levels/type and intelligence information to help design out the opportunity for Crime, Fear of Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Nuisance and Conflict.

There is a carbon cost for crime and new developments give an opportunity to address it. Using CPTED along with attaining an SBD award using SBD guidance, policies and academic research would be evidence of the applicants' efforts to design out the opportunity for crime.

We recommend SBD guidance is utilised to address designing out crime to show a clear audit trail for Designing Out Crime, Crime Prevention and Community Safety and to meet our Local Authority statutory duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The points below identify my recommendations for the layout and design of this scheme.

1. We recommend the applicant review current site boundary treatments. We advise boundary treatments be a minimum of 2m and any secondary rear/side access points to be secured by gates that can be locked either side. If a boundary is made up of hedging, we advise the hedges be dense, and where possibly prickly, with a secondary layer for security purposed such as a mess fence to avoid trespassers.
2. We recommend natural surveillance for parking areas associated with this proposal. As a secondary layer of security, we would also recommend CCTV be installed to further monitor use. We also strongly recommend gating access roads/ parking areas to prevent nuisance parking and misuse out of hours.
3. Defined pedestrian routes to/ from the building are recommended to improve safety and avoid pedestrian and vehicle conflict.
4. If Cycle storage is proposed, we advise this area to be well lit and with optimal natural surveillance. We recommend the sold secure or SBD recommended products for additional security.
5. CCTV to be installed, especially in areas with limited natural surveillance such as rear of the unit(s), bin stores and on the access/ exit road. We also recommend cameras in the following areas to keep users safe and monitor their movements; loading/ unloading areas, car park and main office/ safe location if there is one. The CCTV must not infringe any lighting plan.
6. We strongly recommend alarms, with an auto-dial function, be installed on all external doors, including emergency exits.
7. All external doorsets (a doorset is the door, fabrication, hinges, frame, installation, and locks) including folding or sliding to meet PAS 24: 2022 UKAS certified standard, STS 201 or LPS 2081 Security Rating B+.
8. Any Shutters should be as close to the building line as possible and must avoid the creation of a recess. Shutters must be certificated to LPS 1175: Issue 7, SR2; STS 202: Issue 3, BR2; Sold Secure Gold or PAS 68:2013.
9. Bin Stores associated with this proposal must be secure, lit and, if in an area with limited natural surveillance we recommend CCTV cameras be installed. We also strongly advise against placing this store close enough to the building that it can be used as a climbing aid into the building when closed. Please note where there is a mixed-use building, residential and commercial bins must be segregated.

If approved, site security is required for the construction phase. There is a duty for the principle contractor

“to take reasonable steps to prevent access by unauthorised persons to the construction site” under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007. The site security should incorporate plant, machinery, supplies, tools and other vehicles and be site specific to geography and site requirements.

We welcome a discussion with the applicant/agent about site specific designing out crime. If the points above are not addressed, they can affect the development and local policing.

This information is provided by Kent Police DOCO's and refers to situational crime prevention. This advice focuses on CPTED and Community Safety with regard to this specific planning application.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>.

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Internal Consultees

GBC Environmental Protection

There is no objection to this application. It's not clear if any new external plan is to be fitted? If new external plant is proposed, the following is advised:

Noise Control

The rating noise from fixed building services/mechanical plant/equipment associated with the development shall be at least 10dB below the existing LA90 background level at the nearest noise sensitive receptors (i.e. dwellings) when measured and assessed in accordance with BS4142:2014.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 5 properties and on site. The overall consultation period expired on 10 February 2026.



No letters of representation have been received neighbouring properties.

Local Ward Councillors were also consulted. A response was received from Councillor Pearton:

As Ward Councillor, I would like to comment that I have no objection to this application on the proviso that the Planning Officer deems that the construction is within reasonable dimensions, sizing, and positioning, etc. Chambers Farm is a growing farming enterprise which is well-placed in the rural community of Higham. It provides employment and British farming produce which, in my opinion, is essential to maintain in this progressively reduction of green belt land in this area of North Kent.

Officer's Analysis

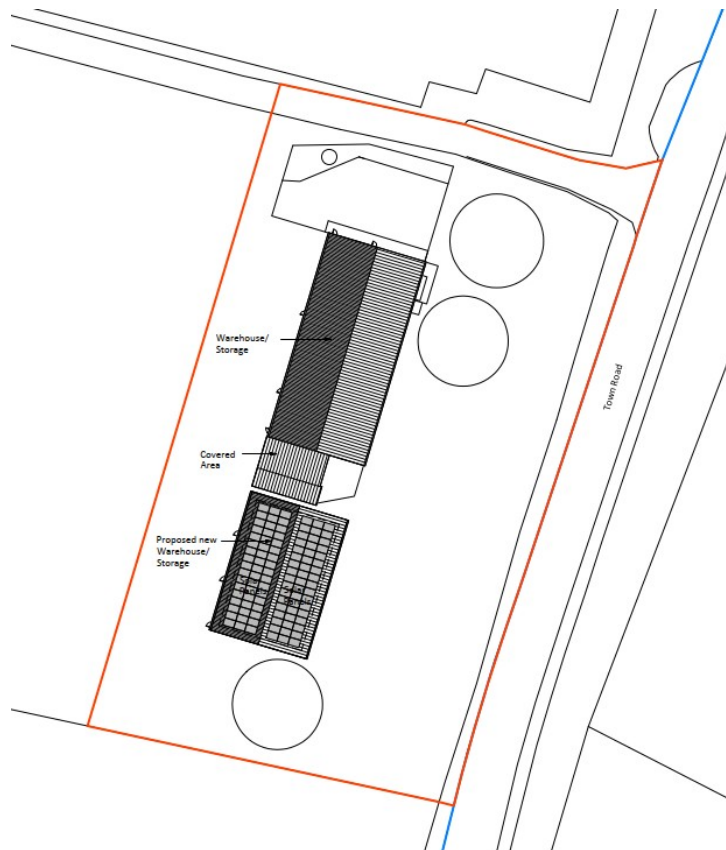
Proposal

This application seeks permission for the erection of an extension to the existing cold store/ packhouse/ distribution building.

Current Google Earth Aerial View:

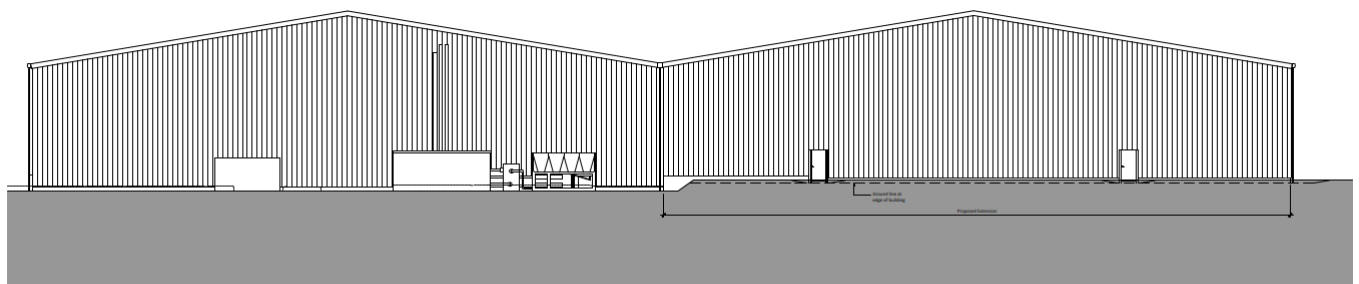


Proposed Block Plan:

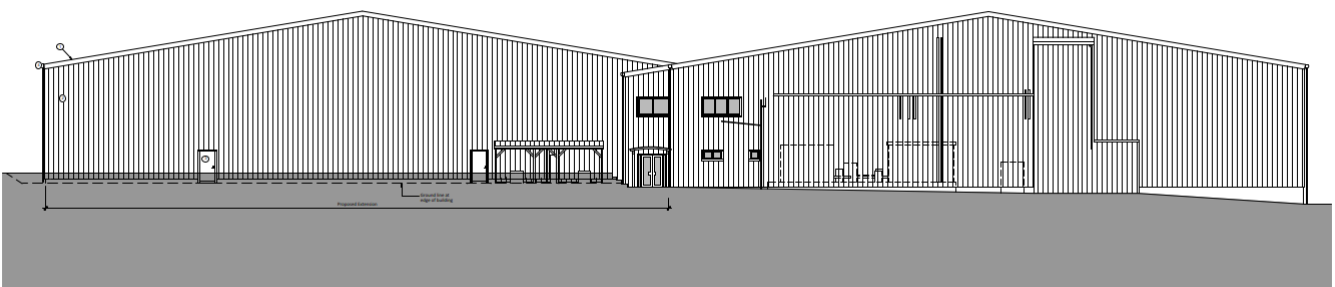


The proposed extension would be located to the west side of the existing packhouse/cold store. It will be approximately 40m in depth, 40m long, 7.6m to eaves and 10.9m to the ridge. It would be clad externally in green profiled metal sheeting on the walls and roof. Solar panels would also be placed on the roof.

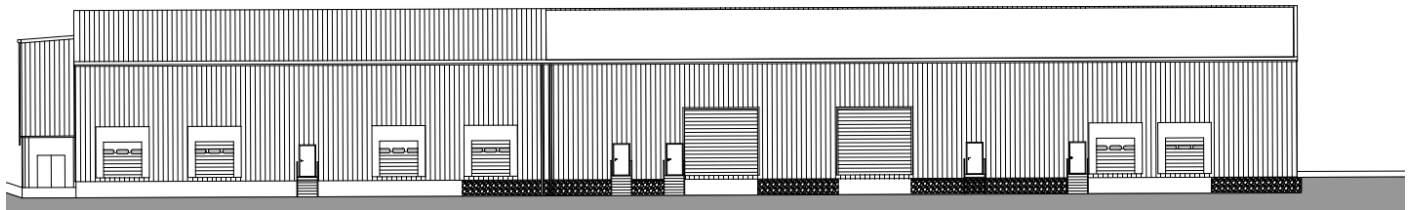
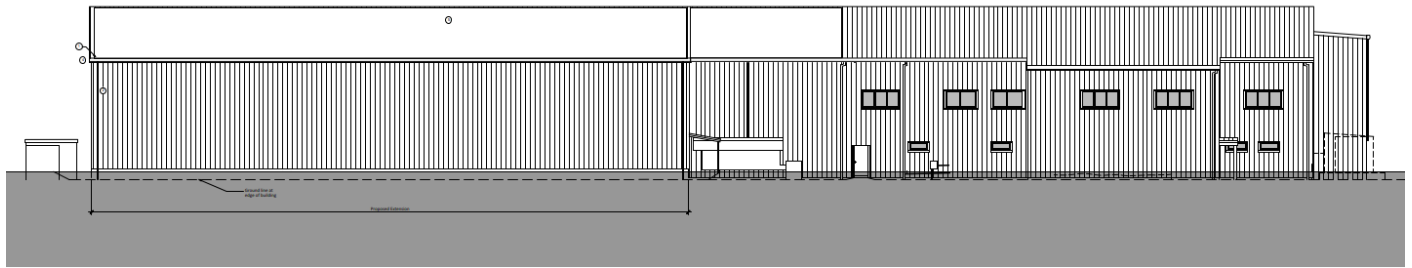
Proposed Elevations:



Proposed North Elevation
1:500



Proposed South Elevation
1:500



The submitted Planning Statement explains that the extension is required to increase the available space within the existing building for the storage, processing, packing and onward distribution of the produce generated on both the existing farm holding as well as from the applicant's other holdings across north Kent. The production from Chambers farmed land has significantly increased in the last few years and is set to increase further with new plantings. There is not enough space in the packing area and stores to accommodate the increased volumes of fruit and packing machinery.

Principle Issues

The application site is part of Little Mockbeggar Farm, which is used for soft fruit production under polytunnels. The applicant is WB Chambers Farms Ltd, which has around 44ha of land at Little Mockbeggar and at Mockbeggar Farm on the eastern side of Town Road. The business also farms land at Southfleet and Sutton at Hone as well as other land within Swale Borough, and land at Cooling and Dillywood Lane, as well as Lynsted in Sittingbourne, all of which is serviced from Little Mockbeggar Farm. They also have land in the Maidstone area, where their holdings and business are managed.

Paragraphs 88 and 89 of the NPPF 2024 relate to supporting a prosperous rural economy. The development and diversification of agricultural rural businesses should be enabled, and it should be recognised that proposals to meet local business needs may be required in such areas, in locations that are not well served by public transport. It will be important, however, to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).

Policy CS07 of the Core Strategy 2014 also supports proposals that promote the appropriate expansion and diversification of the rural area economy. Policy CS02 supports development outside rural settlements, including proposals to diversify and maintain the rural economy, where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan.

National and local policy is generally supportive of rural business development and expansion, subject to compatibility with policies for protecting the Green Belt and other policies in the development plan.

This proposal site is located in the countryside, outside any rural settlement, in the Green Belt and in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area.

The site lies on the western side of Town Road, beyond an existing storage building and irrigation tanks that are part of an extensive yard. The site itself is approximately 1.2ha in size and contains an existing cold store/packhouse, which was granted permission in 2016 and first extended in 2022. Beyond the yard, there

are polytunnels to the north, east and west, and further polytunnels and worker caravans to the south. The westernmost part of the application site currently contains polytunnels.

The Thames Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites and South Thames Estuary and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lie beyond the north of the site.

Given the designations of the site, the main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Appropriateness of development in the Green Belt
- Design and landscape impacts
- Residential amenity matters
- Parking and highways issues
- Biodiversity impacts.

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the Core Strategy 2014.

Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (paragraph 142 of the NPPF 2024). Paragraph 153 of the NPPF 2024 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations

Any harm to the Green Belt should be given substantial weight. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless either one of the exceptions in paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2024 applies.

In this case, the most relevant exception relates to the following:

a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;wse

Building and need for agriculture

The principle of the erection of agricultural buildings on this site has already been established by previous permissions, including application 20211530 for the erection of an extension to existing storage/cold store/packhouse building and application 20210645 for the erection of a general purpose agricultural storage building.

This proposal is for an extension to an existing building used as a cold store/ packhouse/ distribution building related to the farming operation of the site, as set out above. The extension will provide additional space for the storage, processing, packing and onward distribution of the produce generated on both the existing farm holding as well as from the applicant's other holdings across north Kent. Increased crop planting and production across the holdings has necessitated further investment in cold storage, particularly as such capacity is in short supply. The proposal can be considered under the paragraph 154 exemption, as it involves a building for agricultural purposes. The proposal is therefore not inappropriate in the Green Belt and no further considerations are required in this regard.

Design and Landscape Impact

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be

visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well-designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 aims for development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The application site is located in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area within the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (GLCA) and as such, Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2014 is also relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham LCA will be taken into account in determining applications.

In relation to the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area, one of the key characteristics of the area is the open, gently undulating farmland, which provides high visibility across the area. The overall condition of the landscape is poor and has moderate sensitivity. It is recommended that key landscape elements should be restored and created. Proposals that introduce extensive or obtrusive elements within visually sensitive areas of the open landscape should be resisted.

The proposed extension will be added to the rear of the existing cold store/packhouse building, which is within the existing working yard area of the farm. The proposal will extend the existing built form to the rear of the yard into an area of fruit planting under polytunnels. The extension will be the same height as the existing building. Whilst large, the design of the extension is considered to be in keeping with its rural, agricultural surroundings, and it would not be detrimental to the rural qualities of the area. It is suitably designed and located for its purpose and will be largely screened behind the existing vegetated boundaries along Town Road (the B2000), as well as the surrounding polytunnels and other agricultural buildings, which will limit its visual impact. It would therefore not be widely visible in the surrounding landscape and would not have a significant impact on landscape character.

Some soft landscaping details are provided on the submitted biodiversity net gain plans, which show enhanced grassland and new hedgerows to the north and south of the existing building. No landscaping is shown around the proposed extension itself. The submitted plans do not make clear what the area to the south of the proposed extension and immediately to the rear of the existing building will be used for, though it is described as 'developed land; sealed surface' on the submitted biodiversity net gain plans. Given this area is currently planted, it will be important to condition landscaping details for this area, as well as further details around the proposed extension.

Overall, provided that the retention of the existing boundary vegetation and the submission of any landscaping details are controlled by condition, it is considered that the proposed development would not be significantly detrimental to visual amenities or landscape character and would be in line with the requirements of Paragraphs 135 and 187 of the NPPF 2024, Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2014 and the GLCA (2009).

Restricting the use of the building to that proposed, removing it when it becomes redundant and removing permitted development rights for further buildings/operations will further aid the protection of the Green Belt and character of the site.

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2024 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 135f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land, and avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution.

The closest residential properties to the application site are Nos. 1 and 2 School Cottages, which are located to the south-east of the site, over 100m away. Nos. 1 and 2 Rose Cottages are located some 270 metres to the south.

As a result of the distance between the proposed development and the existing residential properties, and the screening provided by existing vegetation on the site boundaries, it is considered that there would be no adverse overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts on neighbouring properties from the proposal.

In terms of general activity levels and noise and disturbance, the proposed extension would not significantly increase activity at the site.

In the context of distance from residential properties, the existing busy road and the existing agricultural use for agricultural operations, it is considered that the proposed development would have no significant adverse impacts on residential amenity and on this basis, the proposal would be in compliance with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and relevant NPPF paragraphs.

Parking and Highways

There are no objections to the proposal from KCC Highways. The proposed extension would be accessed via an existing access and areas within the site for the parking and turning of vehicles would be unaffected. There are no concerns in parking and highways terms and the proposal would comply with saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Local Plan 1994 and Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Archaeology

The NPPF 2024 places great significance on the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets (paragraph 203). This is echoed in Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that the significance of the Borough's heritage assets and their setting should always be preserved or enhanced. Saved Policy TC7 states that development on important archaeological sites will not normally be permitted.

The site is within an Area of Archaeological Potential. KCC Heritage has confirmed that no archaeological measures are required in respect of the development. It is therefore unlikely the proposal would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact.

In this respect the proposal complies with the relevant requirements of saved Policy TC7 of the Local Plan 1994, Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014 and Section 16 of the NPPF 2024.

Biodiversity

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity. Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect sites designated for their biodiversity value based on their level of importance and enhance, restore, recreate and maintain habitats.

Under the Environment Act 2021 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), all planning applications for development (unless exempt 59,60) must deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), shown via use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric prior to commencement of any development.

Having reviewed the submitted information, KCC Biodiversity confirm a 10% biodiversity net gain is a statutory requirement of this proposed development. There is no local policy biodiversity net gain requirement above 10% for this development.

The proposed habitat creation/enhancement and proposed BNG of 15.35% of habitat units and 10.36% of

hedgerow units is achievable and realistic.

Information has been submitted with this application to give confidence that the biodiversity gain hierarchy can be effectively applied to this application, and how conditions should be applied should planning consent be granted.

The enhancement of modified grassland to other neutral grassland and the creation of species-rich native hedgerow to constitute significant on-site gains. A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) condition is recommended. A Biodiversity Gain Plan should be included.

KCC Biodiversity reviewed the proposal and state that the site is agricultural and heavily managed and as such, provides limited foraging/resting habitat for protected/notable species. However, a precautionary method statement condition is recommended to protect from limited adverse impacts to protected/notable species during clearance and construction.

On the basis of the recommended conditions, the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of paragraphs 187 and 193 of the NPPF 2024 and CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion

The proposed extension is 'a building for agriculture' and would meet the relevant exception set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2024, as it would fulfil a functional agricultural purpose, and would therefore not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposed development would not have a harmful effect on visual amenities or landscape character in the context of this agricultural site and its surroundings. In addition, the proposal would not cause harm to residential amenities or highway safety and would be acceptable in terms of archaeology and biodiversity matters.

The proposals would therefore comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS07, CS11, CS12, CS18, CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policies T1, T5 and P3 of the Local Plan 1994, and paragraphs 88, 116, 131 135, 182, 187, 193 and 203 of the NPPF 2024.

Recommendation

Permission subject to conditions.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	<i>F Walsh</i>
Dated:	16 March 2026	Dated:	19 March 2026