

# PLANNING STATEMENT

## PROPOSED REDIENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GARAGES LOCATED AT THE RUSSETS, STRAND CLOSE, MEOPHAM, DA13 0HB

For: GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

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**ON: GARAGES LOCATED AT THE  
RUSSETS, STRAND CLOSE,  
MEOPHAM, DA13 0HB**

**FOR: GRAVESHAM BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

**FRANKHAM PROJECT NO.: 700704**

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**CONTENTS**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION.....4**

**2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA.....5**

**3.0 THE PROPOSALS.....6**

**4.0 PLANNING HISTORY .....7**

**5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT .....8**

**5.0 ASSESSMENT .....11**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Frankham Projects to support a full planning application for the redevelopment of the garages at The Russets, Strand Close.

1.2 The proposal relates to the following:

**Demolition of the existing garages to provide a part-two, part-three-storey building, providing, five residential units, with associated car parking, cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping and all associated works.**

1.3 This planning statement appraises the scheme within the context of the planning policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Development Plan. It is set out as follows:

- Section 2 describes the site and surroundings.
- Section 3 provides an overview of the proposed development.
- Section 4 summarises the relevant national and local planning policies.
- Section 5 assesses the scheme against the relevant national and local planning policies with regards to the key planning considerations including the principle of the development, design, residential amenity, highways, environmental matters; and
- Section 6 draws together the conclusions.

1.4 This planning statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents and drawings which form part of the overall submission:

- Site Location Plan
- Drawing Pack
- Arboricultural Report
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
- Daylight Sunlight Assessment
- Drainage Impact Assessment
- Landscaping Plan
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and Report
- Contamination Report
- Transport Assessment
- Construction and Demolition Management Plan
- Contextual Analysis
- Fire Statements
- External Lighting Report
- Unexploded Ordnance Survey

## **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

- 2.1 The site is located along The Russets, which leads to the north of Strand Close. The site forms a rectangular shape with two rows of garages running perpendicular to The Russets. A total of 29 garages are present as existing with a small accessway to the south as well as the main entrance from the east. Of the 29 garages present, eighteen of the garages are currently let. Of the let garages, five of these are let to a residents with a postcode within the immediate surrounding area. The remaining thirteen garages are let to a postcode outside of the local area. It is likely that all of the garages will be used for general storage.

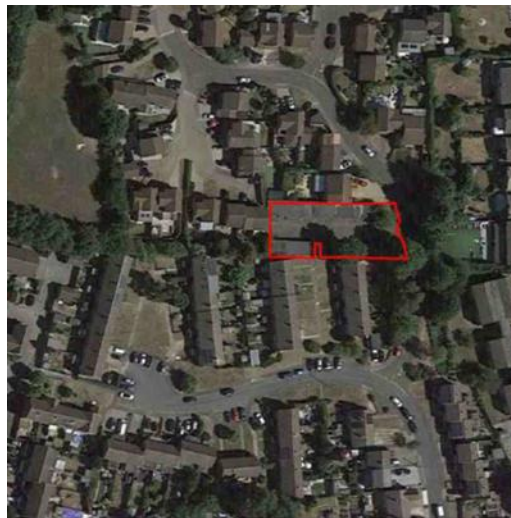


*Figure 1: Application site within red line boundary*

- 2.2 The site is located in Hook Green, approximately 1km north of Meopham. The surrounding area is residential in character with detached two storey dwellings along the Russets to the north of the site, The Strand is characterised by two-storey terraced housing.
- 2.3 The site is accessed via The Russets. There are three bus stops within 200m which provide regular services into Gravesend and Sevenoaks. Meopham Station is approximately 1.3 km from the site which provides frequent rail services into London and the south-east.
- 2.4 The application site is within Flood Zone 1 (no risk of flooding).

### **3.0 THE PROPOSALS**

3.1 Planning permission is sought for the following:

**Demolition of the existing garages to provide a part-two, part-three-storey building, providing, five residential units, with associated car parking, cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping and all associated works.**

- 3.2 The proposal relates to the demolition of the existing garages on site. Currently the site features 29 garages, which are accessed from Strand Close to the east, an additional access points leads from the south of the site.
- 3.3 The proposal relates to the erection of a part two, part three storey development which will provide five residential units. The development is accessed from Strand Close to the east of the site, with five parking spaces to the front of the site, along with refuse storage and cycle parking. Communal gardens surround the development. The proposed development would provide five two-bedroom units (3 x 2B3P and 2 x 2B4P). Each unit would be provided with a private balcony. All units would be for affordable housing.
- 3.4 The development has been designed to appear in keeping with the scale of development surrounding the site. The ridge height of the front, two-storey development would be the same height as the adjacent two-storey neighbouring property to the north. The three-storey element to the rear would have a slightly increased ridge height, which would be the same as the development to the south. The design carefully reflects the character of surrounding developments. Pitched roofs would be utilised to be in keeping with the character, the material palette would use brickwork to reflect the design of surrounding properties, along with a slate roof. The footprint of the development has been carefully considered to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties, respecting separation distances. In addition, careful consideration of root protection areas for the trees on site which are protected by a TPO have been considered to ensure the development would not adversely affect the health of these trees.

#### **4.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 Pre-application advice was sought in April 2025 for the proposed residential development at the site (pre-application reference: PRE20250104). The proposal related to the demolition of the existing garage block and the erection of a three-storey building with 5no. residential units with associated bin stores, cycle storage and car parking. A meeting was held on site to discuss the proposals, with written advice provided on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025.
- 4.2 The pre-application feedback received detailed the acceptability of the principle of development, with the density of development acceptable. The response highlighted the mixed character of the surrounding area, a two-storey development with accommodation at roof level was recommended to respond well to the surroundings. Recommendation was made to provide a design which appeared as dwellings, as opposed to a flatted development, to be in keeping with the surrounding development. In relation to residential amenity, a daylight sunlight assessment along with a section drawing showing land levels should be submitted to demonstrate the development would have an acceptable impact. The pre-application response set out what additional supporting information should be submitted in support of a future application.
- 4.3 No other relevant planning history is applicable to the proposed development and the application site.

## **5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

- 5.1 This section provides a summary of the national and local development plan policies against which the application will be assessed. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)**

- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF contains national policy on a range of topic areas. The 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' remains the central tenet of the NPPF.
- 5.3 Chapter 5 highlights the importance of delivering a sufficient supply of homes, including homes for different groups in the community such as older people. The most recent version of the NPPF emphasises the need to deliver a range of different types of housing for older people, including housing-with-care. The PPG further advises that the need to provide housing for older people is 'critical'.
- 5.4 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF (2024) supports the Government's objective to boost the supply of homes, with a sufficient amount and variety of land required to meet the needs of groups with specific housing requirements. The overall aim should be to meet the area's identified housing need with an appropriate mix to meet local community need.
- 5.5 In addition, paragraph 73 requires that in order to promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should, inter alia, "support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes".
- 5.6 Chapter 8 highlights that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places.
- 5.7 Chapter 9 seeks to ensure that transport issues are considered from the earliest stage of the development process so that:
- a) making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities;
  - b) ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places;
  - c) understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks;
  - d) realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
  - e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and
  - f) identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.

- 5.8 The NPPF states that development should be focused on locations which can be made

sustainable through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

- 5.9 Chapter 11 states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 5.10 Chapter 12 attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, with national policy placing great emphasis on the importance of creating, high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.
- 5.11 Chapter 14 seeks to ensure that new development is planned for in ways which avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. Additionally, the NPPF seeks to ensure that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding is avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 5.12 Chapter 16 states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

#### **Planning Practice Guidance (December 2024)**

- 5.13 The PPG is published by Government to provide further detailed guidance on the application of policies set out in the NPPF.

#### **The Gravesham Local Plan (2014)**

- 5.14 **Policy CS01: Sustainable Development** states '*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. It will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.*'
- 5.15 **Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development** discusses the importance of developing in appropriate areas, in an appropriate scale to fit the needs of the existing and future residents in the local area. They have a borough target of at least 438 new dwellings each year. The policy states '*Promoting regeneration by prioritising the redevelopment and recycling of underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area.*' Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy prioritises development in the urban area as a

sustainable location for development, the application site lies within an urban area. This policy also sets out the Borough's assessment for housing need, with a requirement for 6,170 new dwellings during the plan period. The Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, currently the Council can demonstrate a 3-year land supply only. In this context, relevant national planning policies (particularly the "tilted balance" under NPPF paragraph 11(d)) apply when considering housing applications.

- 5.16 **Policy CS11: Transport** states that sufficient parking in new developments, must be in accordance with the adopted parking standards, however, new developments should mitigate their impact on the highway and public transport networks as much as possible.
- 5.17 **Policy CS14: Housing Type and Size.** The council expects new developments to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes, while taking into account the existing local character, to ensure cohesion with the existing community.
- 5.18 **Policy CS15: Housing Density** discusses the need to provide an appropriate housing density, consistent and representative of the local area, for urban areas a minimum density of 40 dwellings per ha, whereas in rural areas a minimum of 30 dwellings per ha is expected.
- 5.19 **Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles** states '*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.*'

## **5.0 ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The following section assesses the scheme against the NPPF, the relevant Development Plan policies as well as any material considerations. The key planning considerations are also considered in detail.

### **Principle of residential development**

- 5.2 The proposal relates to the demolition twenty-nine garages, the erection of five units, all for affordable housing.
- 5.3 The NPPF (2024) seeks to support the Government's ambition to deliver additional housing. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF highlights that any adverse impacts should significantly outweigh the Framework when taken as a whole. Paragraph 11 seeks to focus development in sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well designed places and providing affordable homes. There is a strong presumption in favour of development on brownfield land.
- 5.4 Paragraph 73 of the NPPF (2024) identifies that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area.
- 5.5 The application site is located within an area which is designated as a 'Rural Settlement Inset from the Green Belt'. Gravesham Core Strategy (2014) Strategic Objective SO2 seeks to provide sufficient new homes to meet the future objectively assessed needs of the Borough's population, to include provision of affordable homes, homes for smaller households and older people within the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. Core Strategy Policy CS02 identifies that around 2,280 new dwellings will be provided on other sites in the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. On this basis the development of new housing in Rural Areas Inset from the Greenbelt is acceptable in principle.
- 5.6 The Gravesham Core Strategy states that new housing should meet and exceed targets and be provided in sustainable locations, close to existing facilities and by reusing brownfield sites (Strategic Objective 1). Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development states the need for at least 438 dwellings per year between 2024-2028. The proposed development will provide an additional 5 dwellings to contribute towards the borough's much needed housing provision.
- 5.7 Gravesham is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply (5YHLS) with approximately a 3-year supply of housing currently. In accordance with Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF (2024), planning permission should be granted unless:
- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; 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, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

- 5.8 In determining planning applications for housing, the Council will be required to apply a weighted balance in favour of granting planning permission in accordance with relevant policy and guidance.
- 5.9 The principle of residential development on the site was accepted at pre-application stage. The proposal relates to the demolition of garages and the erection of a three-storey building to provide residential units, all for affordable housing. The proposal would be on land which is within a settlement inset from the Green Belt and is therefore deemed to be an appropriate location for development. The site is a sustainable location for development and will contribute towards Gravesham's housing provision as well as the Government's house building agenda. The garage site is currently an underutilised facility for which a residential development would be a more appropriate use of the land.
- 5.10 On this basis, the development complies with the NPPF (2024) and the Gravesham Core Strategy (2014). A full assessment of all other relevant planning considerations is detailed below.

### **Design**

- 5.11 The NPPF (2024) states that the creation of a high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve (Chapter 12).
- 5.12 The Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024) SPD seeks to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and the character of the area.
- 5.13 The pre-application response highlighted the mixed character of the surrounding area, with two storey dwellings, terraced, detached and flatted developments all surrounding the site. The pre-application response also acknowledged that the design concept would be in keeping with the surrounding character, however consideration of the scale would be important.
- 5.14 The proposal provides a part two storey, part three storey development, where the development is three-storey, this storey is accommodated in the roof space. The development would be two-storey to the front of the site, where it would be visible from the street scene. The ridge heights of the development are the same as surrounding properties, the height has been aligned to the developments to the north and south of the site. This approach takes account of the land level changes within the site.
- 5.15 The design approach reflects the character of single dwellinghouses, in order to integrate well with the predominant character of the site. The development would utilise pitched roof construction, with materials which are in-keeping with the surroundings. On this basis, it is evident that the development reflects the surrounding character.
- 5.16 Overall, it is considered that the development responds well to the character and restraints of the site to provide a high-quality design approach which integrates well with its surroundings. As such, the development approach complies with relevant planning policies and provides an appropriate design approach.

### **Quality of Accommodation & Accessibility**

- 5.17 The Nationally Described Space Standards set out minimum space standards for residential development. All proposed dwellings on site are designed to adhere to all relevant space standards for residential developments.
- 5.18 The development has been designed to meet nationally described space standards, providing 3 x 2B3P and 2 x 2B4P dwellings.

### **Neighbouring Residential Amenity**

- 5.19 Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles of the Gravesham Local Plan states that new development will be located, designed and constructed to safeguard amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight of its occupants and close to neighbouring properties.
- 5.20 The development has been designed to ensure that residential amenity for neighbouring properties is protected. A daylight and sunlight assessment has been prepared and submitted in support of this application – this demonstrates an acceptable impact for neighbouring properties in relation to daylight and sunlight.
- 5.21 The development site is bounded by residential properties to the north, south and west. To the north of the site a two-storey dwelling abuts the site. No.47 The Russets sits to the north of the site, this dwelling was extended to provide a first-floor side extension. At pre-application stage, it was acknowledged that this dwelling has permission for a first-floor window which would look onto site, however this window has not been implemented and if it were to be implemented, it would be required to be non-opening and fitted with obscure glazing. In this context, the development will not affect this property and the potential opening. The development has been positioned to sit in line with the front building line of no.47, additionally the 45-degree line has been shown on the site plan to demonstrate that the stepped rear elevation protects the amenity of the windows to the rear of no.47.
- 5.22 As noted in the pre-application response, No.23 The Pippins is located to the west of the site and benefits from a first-floor window which looks onto the site, this window is a bathroom/landing window which raises no concern regarding loss of outlook or privacy.

### **Transport**

- 5.23 Chapter 9 of the NPPF (2024) seeks to ensure that transport issues are considered from the earliest stage of the development process.
- 5.24 Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan (2014) states that developments must meet the parking requirements as set out in the supplementary guidance and should be designed to mitigate any impacts on the local highway networks. Developments should be well designed to provide safe and convenient access whilst providing well designed car and cycle parking spaces appropriate to the development. The scheme is proposed to be 'car-free' due to the constraints on site, and the local public transport network this is deemed acceptable.
- 5.25 The application site currently benefits from twenty-nine garages which would all be demolished to allow for the proposed development eighteen of the garages are currently let.

Of the let garages, five of these are let to a resident with a postcode within the immediate surrounding area. The remaining thirteen garages are let to a postcode outside of the local area. It is likely that all of the garages will be used for general storage and not for vehicle parking. Therefore, it is not considered that the development would result in on street parking pressure.

- 5.26 Five parking spaces are proposed which complies with KCC parking guidance. The application site is within walking distance from shops and bus stops, as such the site is a sustainable location.

### **Trees and Ecology**

- 5.27 Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure states that there will be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough, and opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create and maintain habitats will be sought within new developments.
- 5.28 All trees on site are to retained, an arboricultural report is submitted in support of this application which demonstrates the trees would not be harmed by the proposed development and would be protected during construction. Where pruning works are required to trees protected by a TPO, an application will be submitted to the Council.
- 5.29 A bat survey has been carried out to support this application, which demonstrated no sign of bats on site. The Preliminary Roost Assessment states that all of the buildings were externally assessed with no visible Potential Roost Features (PRFs) identified. Whilst one of the buildings was seen to have ivy overlaying part of its roof, this feature was not considered to be suitable for roosting bats due to its limited extent and the urban nature of the site. Overall, all of the buildings present on site were considered to support 'Negligible' suitability for roosting bats.
- 5.30 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been submitted in support of this application. This demonstrates that the development will have no unacceptable impact on protected species, some recommendations for protective measures and enhancements have been made.
- 5.31 A BNG Assessment has also been submitted in support of this application, this demonstrates that a 17.23% net gain will be provided on site, this is largely due to the creation of new areas of modified grassland within the site, retention of an English walnut tree as well as new tree planting. As such, the development complies with the legislative requirements of BNG.

## 6.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The proposed development provides an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the site through the provision of a high-quality residential development which meets the needs of the community within Meopham. The impact of the development on the surrounding character and properties would be acceptable with a relatively limited impact on the character of the street scene and no harm caused to neighbouring residential amenity. Highways and transport issues have been considered acceptable. The development would meet quality of accommodation standards and would not adversely affect flood risk. The proposal provides much needed affordable housing for the area.
- 6.2 It is considered that the development proposed is acceptable in principle and complies with all relevant planning considerations. It is requested that planning permission is granted in accordance with the Development Plan.