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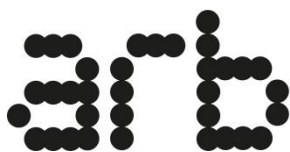
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My Ref: 539
27 March 2023

Proposed Replacement Dwelling on the site of "Nutfield Farm",
Priestwood Road, Harvel, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0DA: Mr & Mrs Stephen Church

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



Architects
Registration
Board

RIBA 

Chartered Practice

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1.0 Introduction

1.01. This is an application for Full Planning Permission to erect a detached three-bedroom bungalow with an associated detached double garage and mower store to replace the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings. *(figure 1)*



Figure 1: The proposed new dwelling and associated garage with mower store

1.02. This application includes the following documents: -

- My measured survey drawings of the existing dwelling and specified outbuildings. (Drawings numbers 539/01-/05 inclusive) The site plan has been produced using topographical levelling information from Messrs Enka Surveys of Crowborough, East Sussex.
- My proposal drawings. (Drawings numbers 539/PL01-/PL06 inclusive).
- This Design and Access Statement.

1.03. The proposal takes into account and addresses the issues associated with the previous proposal for a chalet bungalow on the site, which was refused planning permission by Gravesham Borough Council on 09 September 2022 under reference **20220792**. Those issues included ridge height, bulk, mass and an excessive increase in floor area.

1.04. The proposal specifically addresses the Council's previous concerns about planning reference **20220792** through well thought-out positioning and considerate design, which results in a replacement dwelling and outbuilding with reduced height, footprint and volume when compared with the existing dwelling and outbuildings.

1.05. The proposal is for a high-quality, beautiful, and sustainable home following Paragraphs 126 and 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.06. The proposal has been prepared in full consultation with my clients who have lived at Nutfield Farm since 2021.

2.0 The Application Site

- 2.01.** “Nutfield Farm” (*figure 2*) is located on the east side of Priestwood Road, approximately 100 metres north of the junction with Chandler’s Hill. The property forms much of what was the original core of a much larger site. It is no longer a farm but has full C3 use without restriction.



Figure 2: Nutfield Farm

- 2.02.** The site is a rural location within the Metropolitan Green Belt and it is also within the Harvel Wooded Downs Designated Landscape Character Area and within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.03.** The application site has an area of 0.37 hectares (0.91 acres).
- 2.04.** The application site includes the present single-storey dwelling, together with a number of outbuildings, including a large, green-coloured garage, two substantial sheds, a mower store, three greenhouses and a canopied area.
- 2.05.** There is an extensive amount of concrete and unmade hardstanding on the front part of the site and this is shown on the as-existing site plan.
- 2.06.** The site slopes gently down eastwards from Priestwood Road in the west by approximately 2.6 metres. (From a level of approximately 152.3 metres AOD along Priestwood Road to 149.7

metres AOD along the rear boundary). That averages out at an approximate gradient across the site of 1:35.

- 2.07.** The site is well screened from Priestwood Road by a dense conifer hedge, 3 metres high, along the length of the frontage. (*figure 3*)



Figure 3: 3 metre high hedge screening the site from Priestwood Road

3.0 Harvel Wooded Downs Designated Landscape Character Area

3.01. The site is located, as previously stated, within the Harvel Wooded Downs Designated Landscape Character Area.

3.02. The relevant key characteristics of the Landscape Character Area are: -

- Varied topography with steep valley sides and plateaux
- Ancient Woodland, chestnut coppice and small paddocks and pasture
- Haphazard mosaic of residential plots and small holdings set within the woodland

3.03. The overall condition of the Harvel Wooded Downs character area is considered to be moderate. This is recognised as a balance between the poorer condition of many of the plotlands which lie to the north and west, and the stronger 'cultural integrity' of Harvel. Sensitivity is assessed as moderate. Harvel can be considered to have a stronger sense of place and historic continuity than the plotland areas, but strong visual containment is also considered to reduce sensitivity. The application site would be deemed to be a part of the plotlands to the north of Harvel village.

3.04. The area typically consists of a mix of predominantly chalet bungalows and full two-storey dwellings built with a varying variety of materials ranging in quality from poor to good.

4.0 Planning History

- 4.01.** The original Nutfield farmhouse appears on the 1936 Ordnance Survey map, but not on the 1908 map. It was still there in similar form in 1961, together with several outbuildings, which still exist. See *figures 4 to 7* below. It is apparent by reference to later planning applications, that it was still there in a similar form in 1980.



Figure 4: Nutfield Farm from 1908 Ordnance Survey. The approximate position of the application site is shown tinted red.

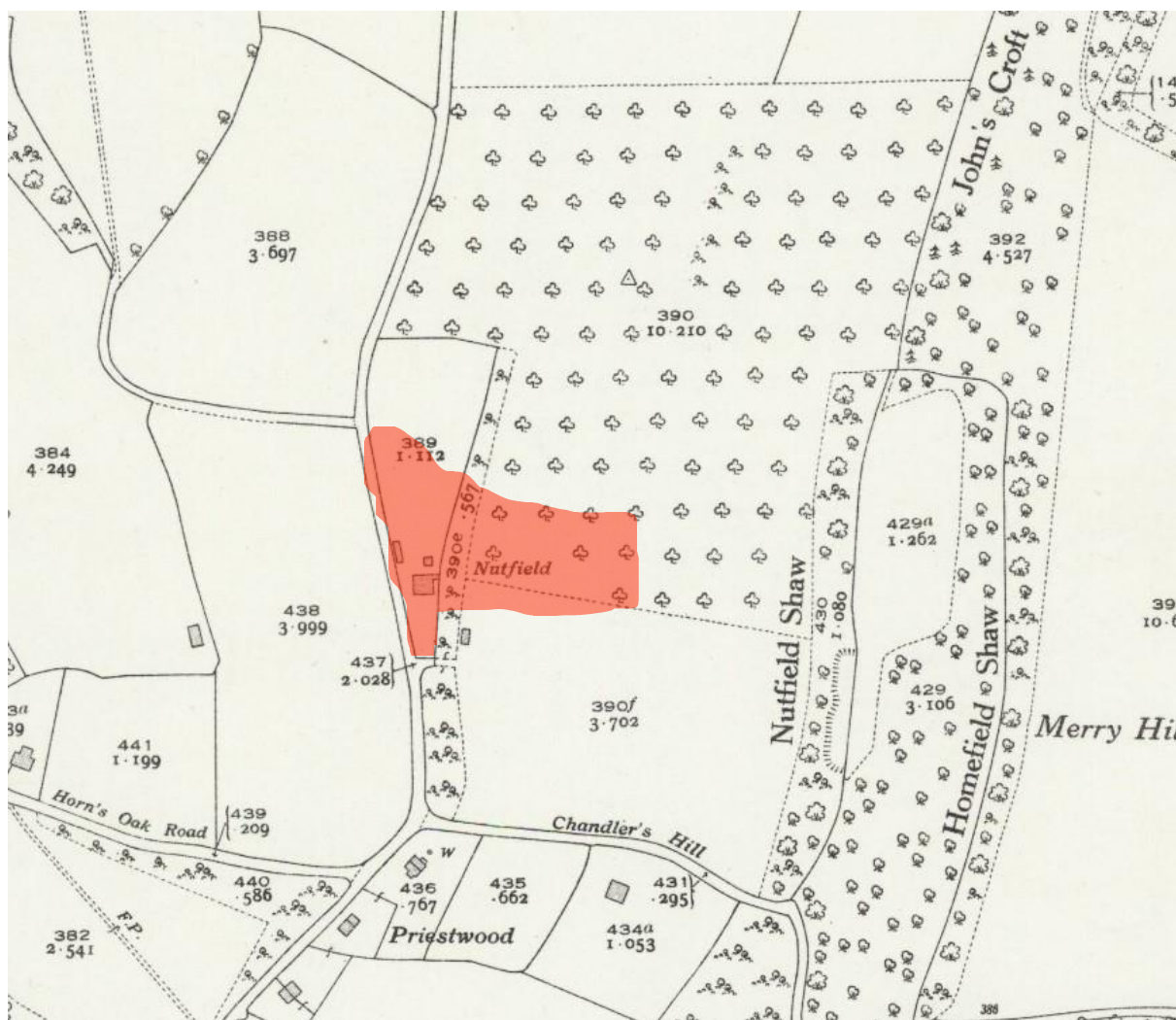


Figure 5: Nutfield Farm from 1936 Ordnance Survey. The approximate position of the application site is shown tinted red.

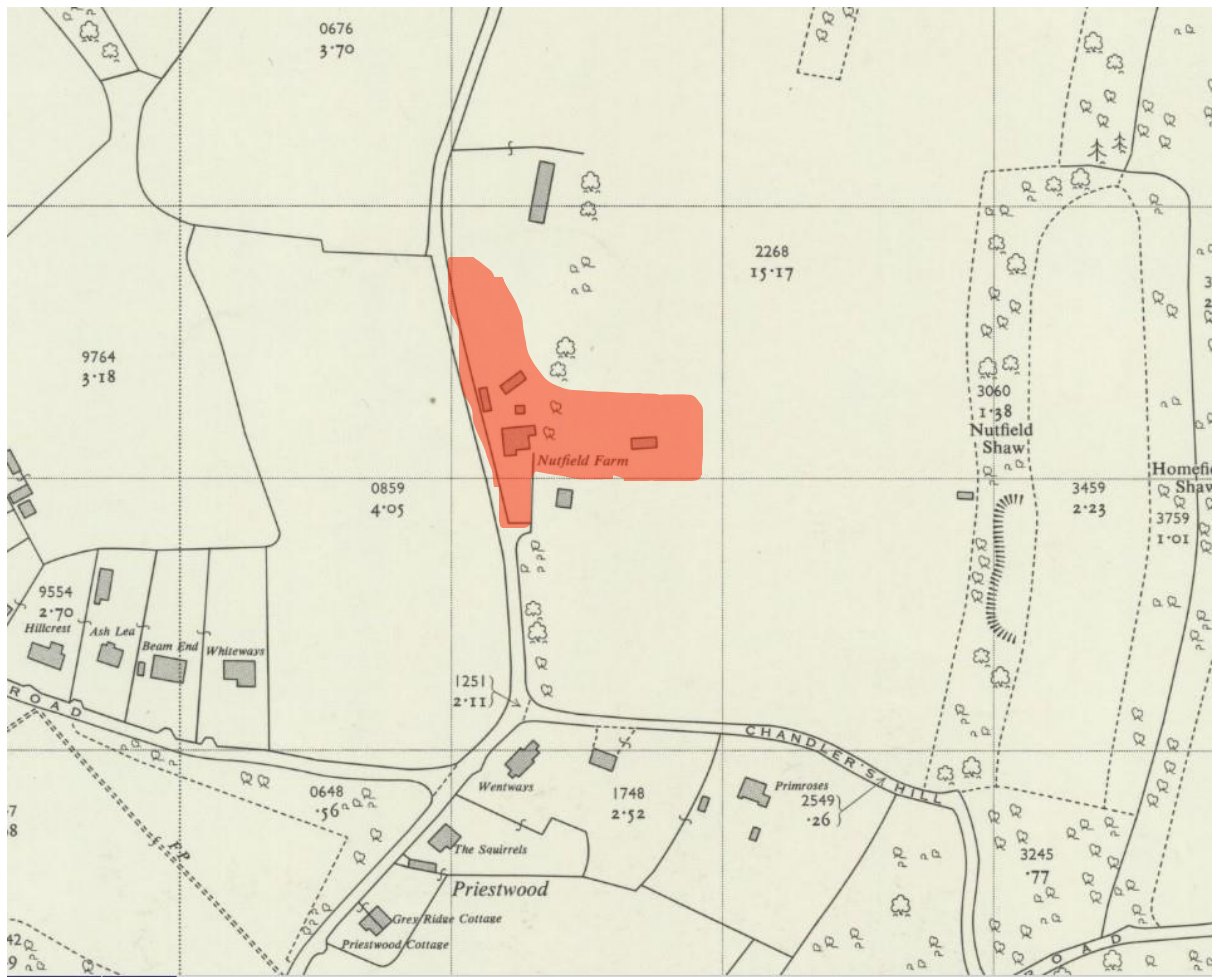


Figure 6: Nutfield Farm from 1961 Ordnance Survey. The approximate position of the application site is shown tinted red.



Figure 7: Nutfield Farm from 2023 Ordnance Survey. The approximate position of the application site is shown tinted red.

- 4.02. The original farmhouse was destroyed by fire. Planning Permission was granted on 28 July 1980 under reference **19800421** for a replacement agricultural bungalow taking the form of a “Colt” timber frame structure. The application details stated that the owner controlled about 33 acres adjoining the proposed development. Nutfield Farm comprised a viable 60-sow pig unit at the time, with associated farm buildings of owned land, plus 80 acres of securely rented land.
- 4.03. An application to extend the replacement bungalow was granted on 28 September 1983 under reference **19830409**, with modifications to reduce the size of the proposal. It would appear that this is current dwelling as it now stands.
- 4.04. An application to remove the restrictive agricultural occupancy condition imposed on planning permission **19800421** was granted on 20 April 2011 under reference **20100364**. By that time, a combination of personal and commercial factors had led to the large majority of land and buildings being disposed of.

- 4.05.** An application to replace the present dwelling and outbuildings by a chalet bungalow and detached garage was refused planning permission by your Council on 09 September 2022 under reference **20220792**. The application was prepared and submitted by another agent. The single reason given for refusal was: -

The proposed replacement dwelling and garage will have an adverse cumulative impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area, by virtue of disproportionate scale and increase in overall height and bulk which would be highly visible from the street scene and surrounding area. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to the Design Guidance SPD (2021), Policy CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), as well as Sections 12 and 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

- 4.06.** This revised proposal seeks to address all of the issues and concerns arising from planning refusal reference **20220792**. The proposal is fully explained elsewhere within this document.

5.0 Adjoining Dwellings

5.01. There are two modern dwellings immediately to the north and to the south of the application site and they have each been built on parts of the site which formerly comprised “**Nutfield Farm**”. These are “**Merryhill Farm**” (*figure 8*) and “**Nutfields**” (*figure 9*).

5.02. “**Merryhill Farm**” lies immediately to the north of the application site and “**Nutfields**” to the south.

5.03. “**Merryhill Farm**”



Figure 8: “Merryhill Farm”

The dwelling was granted permission on 08 April 2003 under reference **20020753** as a replacement bungalow for a previously existing mobile home / dwelling on the site. It is set behind a pre-existing barn which, according to Condition 4 of the approval, is kept for storage purposes and which presumably, existed when the site formed a part of the working “**Nutfield Farm**”.

The dwelling has external walls of red brick facing brick with feather-edge weatherboarding under a pitched roof covered with plain tiles. It has high level windows serving the hall and bathroom.

“**Merryhill Farm**” has an eaves height of 153.57 metres AOD and a ridge height of 157.03 metres AOD.

5.04. “Nutfields”



Figure 9: “Nutfields”

“**Nutfields**” was originally known as “**Nutfield Bungalow**” when it was a timber framed structure dating from the late 1920s. It was then a chalet annexe ancillary to “**Nutfield Farm**”. The property was sold off in 1983.

An application to extend the bungalow was granted on 17 November 1980 under reference **19800813**.

An application to remove the agricultural occupancy condition was refused on 19 December 1988 under reference **19880735**.

An application to extend the property and to erect a detached double garage was approved on 28 June 1988 under reference **19880152**.

An application for a replacement dwelling on the site was approved on 04 May 1989 under reference **19890327**. It would appear that the replacement dwelling was built as a chalet bungalow with habitable accommodation at first floor level.

A subsequent application to insert a dormer window in the front roof slope and to provide additional bathroom accommodation at first floor level was approved on 24 August 2007 under reference **20070608**.

The current dwelling has external walls of red brick facing brick under pitched roofs covered with plain tiles.

“**Nutfields**” has a large detached double garage in the front garden, which is both in line with the front of the dwelling and closer to the road than the dwelling.

“**Nutfields**” has a ridge height of 158.41 metres AOD. The eaves height could not be determined by the topographical survey.

6.0 The Existing Dwelling at “Nutfield Farm”

- 6.01. The existing dwelling is a timber framed structure, which was manufactured by W.H. Colt, Son & Co. Ltd. of Bethersden, Ashford, Kent using prefabricated panels and delivered to the site in sections.
- 6.02. The external walls are hung with cedar shingles sitting on a brick plinth. The bricks used are LBC Flettons. Bricks such as these are usually hidden behind other finishes, are not frost resistant and are not considered to be a suitable facing brick. Similar examples of dwellings manufactured by Colt with cedar shingle cladding can be found all over the UK and they are not particularly characteristic of a vernacular dwelling to be found within the North Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 6.03. The external walls are only 150mm thick, including all the attached finishes comprising cedar shingles externally and plasterboard internally. That thickness includes plasterboard, studs, sheathing board, battens and cedar shingles and it can only mean that the structural timber studs have a maximum depth of 75mm. A 75mm thickness of glass fibre insulation placed between the studs falls far short of the thickness required to meet the thermal performance levels of Part L of the Building Regulations. The timber studs used in contemporary timber-framed structures would need to be at least 150mm deep in order that the requirements of Part L of the Building Regulations can be met.
- 6.04. The 22½° pitched roof is covered with artificial slate. This material, manufactured by Speakers Eternit Ltd, originally had a sprayed on painted finish, which has weathered away to reveal the mucky grey substrate. It would have been a cheap option with which to cover the roof. It really looks rather unsightly.
- 6.05. The small, enclosed porch has a flat roof covered with roofing felt.
- 6.06. The rear extension approved under planning reference 19830409 was built in the same fashion as the original, using Colt components, and appears indistinguishable from the original structure.

6.07. The amount of exposed brick supporting wall increases rearwards, as the external ground level drops by about 830mm. By the time the rearmost part of the existing dwelling is reached, there is a large amount of exposed and unattractive Fletton brick walling in plain sight.

6.08. The accommodation includes the following: -

Existing Dwelling				
	Room	Floor Area (m ²)	Footprint (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
	Living Room	21.714		
	Dining Room	21.908		
	Kitchen	17.614		
	Bedroom 1	12.706		
	Bedroom 2	13.207		
	Bedroom 3	8.776		
	Bedroom 4	12.475		
	Bathroom	5.487		
	WC	1.429		
	Porch / Hall	3.161		
	Inner Hall	6.738		
Total areas & volume		130.760	138.294	572.387

6.09. The dwelling suffers from very poor internal circulation, reminiscent of a Russian doll, where rooms are within rooms, within rooms and within rooms. All rooms other than the kitchen and wc compartment are inner rooms to various degrees and they are all finally accessed from the kitchen. The living room is an inner, inner room and bedroom 4 is an inner, inner, inner room. The internal layout is far from ideal, where all rooms should be accessible directly from a hallway.

6.10. It goes without saying that the dwelling is very poorly insulated and of inferior construction. It has in short, reached the end of its useful life.

7.0 The Existing Outbuildings at “Nutfield Farm”

7.01. Several outbuildings have existed on the site for many years. The largest of these is used as a garage for the parking of cars (*figure 10*) and another is used as a storage area for a ride-on motor mower, which is required due to the large size garden. They are all dilapidated and unsightly, being clad variously with corrugated iron, rendered breeze block and timber boarding. They do not contribute positively to the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The garage block in particular, is situated very close to Priestwood Road, as can be seen from the photograph.



Figure 10: existing garage

7.02. The existing outbuildings include the following structures: -

Specified Outbuildings		
	Footprint (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
Garage	56.775	158.245
Mower Store	15.480	40.093
Shed 1	15.710	40.688
Shed 2	21.364	42.728
Total footprint areas & volumes of specified outbuildings	109.329	281.754

7.03.01 There are other outbuildings on the site, including three greenhouses and a canopied area, which I have not included in my assessment of area and volume.

8.0 The Existing Hard Landscaping at “Nutfield Farm”

- 8.01.** There is over 366m² (3,943 ft²). of concrete and unmade hardstanding on the site. It is frankly, unsightly and excessive.
- 8.02.** A raised terrace extends rearwards from the back wall of the dwelling for 4 metres. It has a parapet wall of concrete bricks with infill panels of concrete California screen blocks. The structure below terrace level is formed from breeze blocks. The terrace is raised above the garden by about 1.22 metres (4ft). It is raised due to the sloping site and the need for it to relate to the finished floor area of the dwelling.
- 8.03.** In summary, the total footprint areas and volumes of the existing dwelling and selected outbuildings on the site are as follows: -

Existing Dwelling & Selected Outbuildings		
	Footprint (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
Total footprint areas & volumes of existing dwelling & specified outbuildings	247.623	854.141

9.0 The Proposed Dwelling at “Nutfield Farm”

- 9.01.** The proposal takes into account and addresses the issues associated with the previous proposal for a chalet bungalow on the site, which was refused planning permission by Gravesham Borough Council on 09 September 2022 under reference **20220792**. Those issues included ridge height, bulk, mass and an excessive increase in floor area.
- 9.02.** The proposal specifically addresses the Council’s previous concerns about planning reference **20220792** through well thought-out positioning and considerate design, which results in a replacement dwelling and outbuilding with reduced height, footprint and volume when compared with the existing dwelling and outbuildings.
- 9.03.** The proposed replacement dwelling will be set a further 17 metres back from Priestwood Road than the existing dwelling. It will also be set at a lower level than the existing dwelling and its roof height will be lower than the existing dwelling. Its impact on the street scene will therefore, be lower than that of the existing dwelling.
- 9.04.** The proposed replacement dwelling will be a bungalow (*figures 11 & 12*) and it will be of traditional masonry construction with gabled roofs. The external walls will be clad with feather-edged oak weatherboarding, naturally weathered, on low red brick walls. The roof covering will be of plain clay roof tiles. The roof pitch will be 35°, which is the recommended minimum pitch for a plain clay machine-made tile. The roof will be capped with half round terracotta ridge tiles. The gable bargeboards will also be of oak. There will additionally be an open oak framed porch with a 45° pitched roof against the front entrance door.

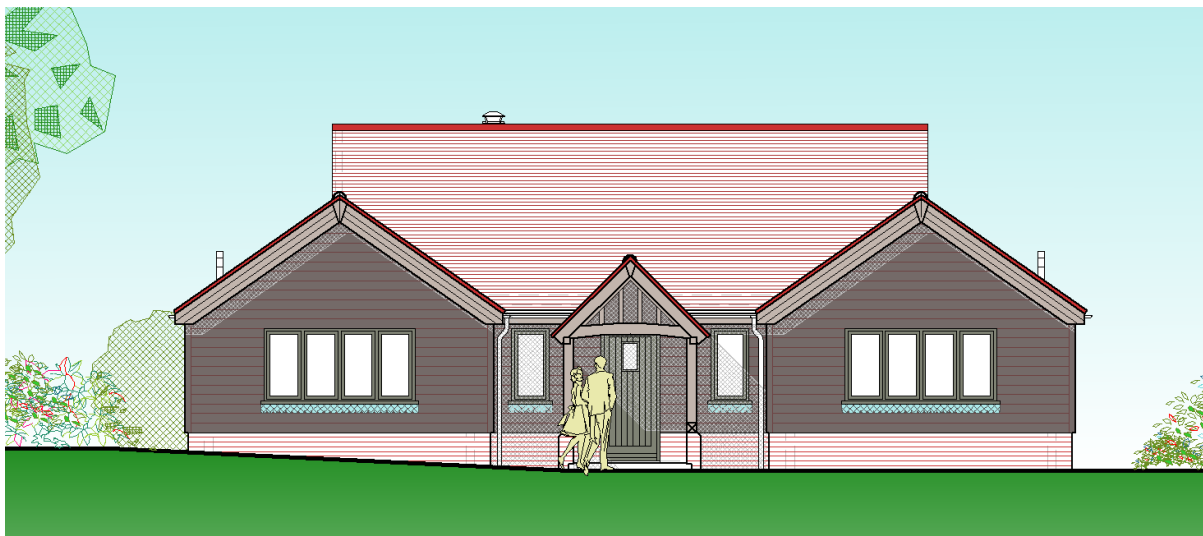


Figure 11: front elevation of proposed replacement dwelling

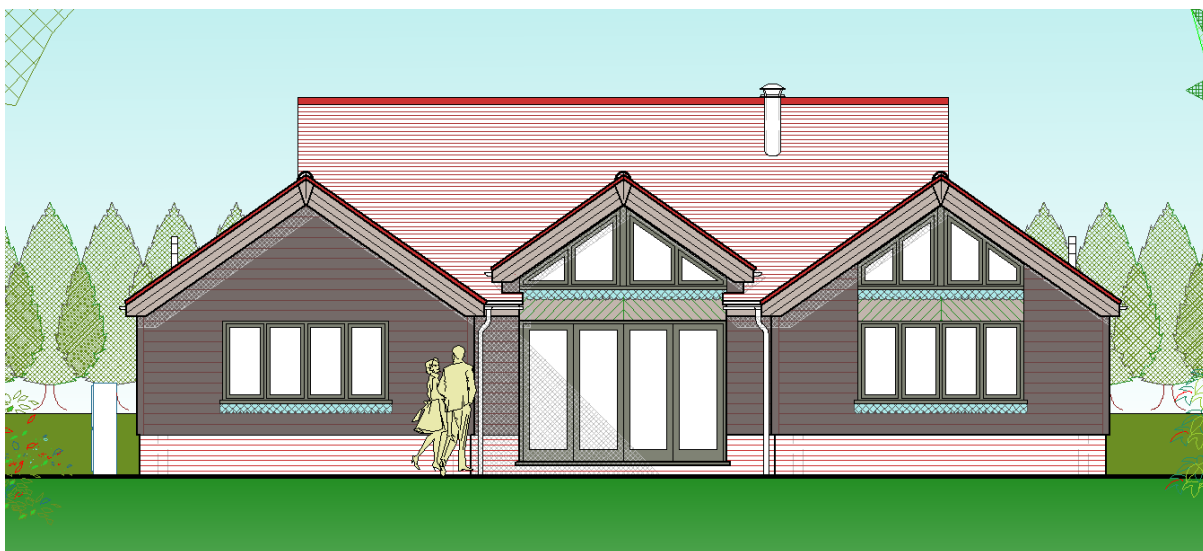


Figure 12: rear elevation of proposed replacement dwelling

9.05. The replacement dwelling will be set back from the existing, which is really too close to the road. It will relate better in this position to the adjoining dwellings, “**Merryhill Farm**” and “**Nutfields**”.

9.06. The finished ground floor level will be approximately 150mm above natural ground level at its highest point. This will be at a much lower level than the existing dwelling, because of the sloping nature of the site. The finished floor level of the existing dwelling is shown at 152.46 metres AOD on the topographical survey. The finished floor level of the proposed replacement dwelling will be 151.30 metres AOD. That is to say, the new finished floor level of the replacement dwelling will be 1.16 metres lower than that of the existing dwelling.

- 9.07. Whereas the existing dwelling has four bedrooms, the proposed new dwelling will have just three double-size bedrooms.
- 9.08. The layout will be in the form of a capital H, which will enable the pitched roofs above to be kept to a minimum height and pitch suitable for plain clay tiles. The roofline will be broken up to reduce the bulk and massing of the proposal in comparison to the existing structures.
- 9.09. The new replacement dwelling will remain as a bungalow and it will be lower than the existing dwelling, despite it having the steeper roofs which are necessary for plain clay tiles. The feather-edged oak weatherboarding over a low brick wall will relate in design terms to the adjacent “**Merryhill Farm**” and the plain tiled roofs will relate in design terms both to “**Merryhill Farm**” and the similarly adjacent “**Nutfields**”.
- 9.10. A number of mature trees on the site have suffered from Ash Dieback (*hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) and have had to be removed. Many mature trees remain on the site, are identified on the site plan and they will be kept in-situ. None of the above are covered by a Tree Protection Order.
- 9.11. The proposed replacement dwelling will be set further back from Priestwood Road than the existing dwelling, but it will still be possible for emergency and service vehicles to access the property safely.
- 9.12. It is highly unlikely that remedial work will be required to clean up the soil as no industrial activity has ever taken place on the site.
- 9.13. No special acoustic design is needed to achieve the noise levels suggested in the World Health Organisation (WHO) Environmental Health Criteria 12 guideline, as described in PPG24 Annex 2 (5,6). Standard double-glazing will be adequate and it will be installed as a matter of course to satisfy Part L of the Building Regulations.
- 9.14. Air quality around the proposed replacement dwelling is within guidelines and no remediation measures will be required.

- 9.15.** The submitted details comply with Gravesham Borough Council's adopted *Residential layout Guidelines*, published in 2020 and with the standards published in *Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard*, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2015. The space standards for the proposed internal layouts and amenity areas are in excess of these guidelines. See below for details of the proposed accommodation.
- 9.16.** The bathroom windows will have obscure glazing.
- 9.17.** The proposed development is for a replacement family-sized home in an area with an appropriate garden size.
- 9.18.** The submitted details include a landscaping scheme, including details of existing, surface treatments, screening by walls, fences or other means and the planting of new trees, hedges, shrubs and grassed areas. Fencing will be provided for the protection of the retained trees during construction to your Council's requirements.
- 9.19.** The proposed accommodation will include the following: -

Proposed Replacement Dwelling			
	Room	Floor Area (m ²)	Footprint (m ²)
	Living Room	24.552	
	Kitchen/Dining Room	27.112	
	Utility Room	5.296	
	Bedroom 1	18.221	
	Bedroom 1 En-Suite Bathroom	4.725	
	Bedroom 2	13.665	
	Bedroom 3	14.06	
	Bathroom	5.582	
	Linen Cupboard	1.676	
	Hall	14.83	
	Total areas	136.314	166.369

- 9.20.** The external walls of the proposed new dwelling will need to be much thicker than the flimsy walls of the existing dwelling, in order to comply with the thermal insulation requirements of Part L of the Building Regulations and for structural stability reasons. Whereas the existing wall thickness, including finishes, is only 150mm, the new wall thickness, including finishes, will need to be 470mm – that is more than 3 times the thickness of the existing external walls. That will inevitably have a knock on effect with regard to the footprint of the proposal. The build-up of the new external wall construction from outside to inside will be: -

Feather edge oak weatherboarding on 25x50mm vertical battens on 100mm block outer leaf (red stock facing brick below weatherboarding), 150mm cavity filled with glass fibre wall batt insulation, 140mm block inner leaf & 12.5mm plasterboard with skim finish on dabs.

- 9.21.** Whereas the internal floor area of the proposed dwelling will be 136.314m² and similar to the internal floor area of the existing dwelling measuring 130.760m², the footprint will be greater proportionally, due to the requirement for much thicker external walls. This is compensated however, when the footprints and volumes of the specified outbuildings to be removed are also taken into account. A detailed analysis of the areas and volumes of the existing and proposed buildings is attached as an appendix to this statement.
- 9.22.** The site will continue to be well screened from Priestwood Road by the existing dense conifer hedge, 3 metres high, along the length of the frontage.

10.0 The Proposed Garage and Mower Store at “Nutfield Farm”

10.01. This planning submission includes for a detached double garage with an attached mower store (figure 13). This is a replacement for the existing separate garage and mower store accommodation, which already exist on the site and the layout is intended to meet the minimum parking area requirements set out by Kent County Council. The outbuilding will also be similar in size to the numerous other garage buildings belonging to other residential properties along Priestwood Road.

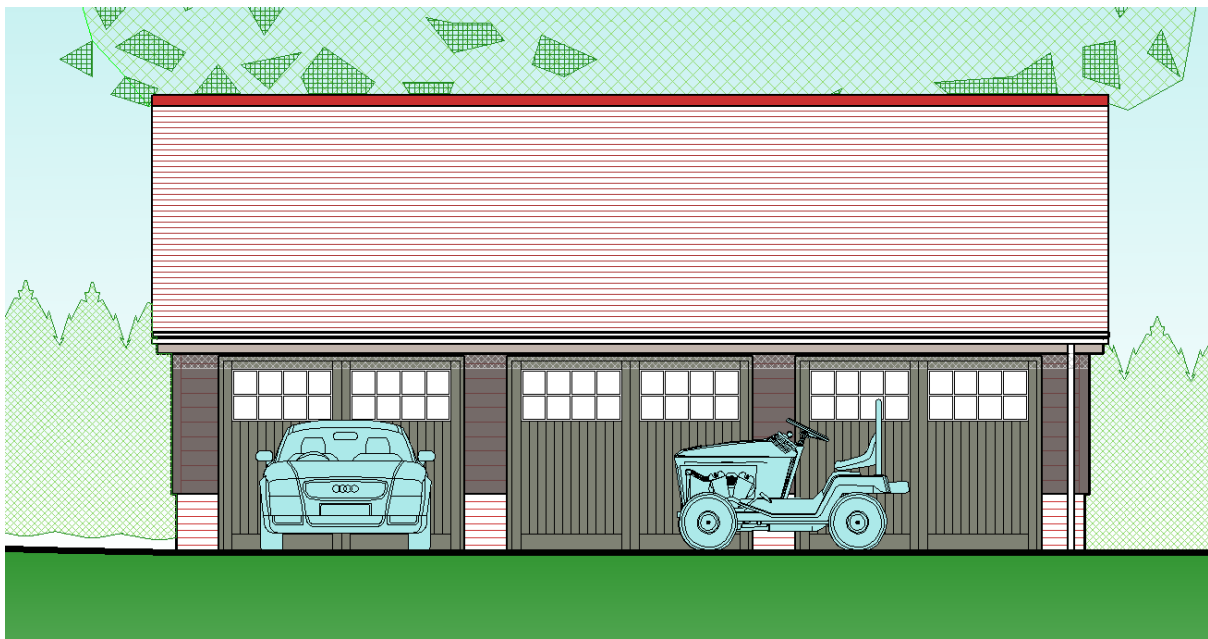


Figure 13: front elevation of proposed replacement garage & mower store

10.02. The separate mower store will be for my clients’ ride-on motor mower. A motor mower is necessary for a garden of this size.

10.03. All of the existing motley collection of outbuildings will be removed from the site to consolidate the built form, increase openness and visually enhance the area.

10.04. The garage block will be set forward of the replacement dwelling but it will still be subservient to it. This, together with the replacement dwelling, will form two adjacent sides of a courtyard and will create the most compact built-up area configuration on this site. The block will be orientated to minimise the view from Priestwood Road and it will be shielded by the backdrop of the neighbouring large barn.

- 10.05.** The proposed new garage block will be set further back from Priestwood Road than the existing dwelling and outbuildings, including the existing garage block; with the exception of shed 2. Its impact on the street scene will be less than the present dwelling and motley assortment of outbuildings, including the green-painted garage block, which it will replace.
- 10.06.** The unsightly extent of concrete and unmade hardstanding will be dug-up and replaced by a gravelled drive extending from the bell mouth entrance onto Priestwood Road, to the new garage block; a total length of approximately 29 metres. The driveway width will enable cars to turn within the site and to exit onto Priestwood Road in a forward direction. A flagstone path will lead away from the gravelled drive to the front door of the replacement dwelling and it will be set at a gentle slope downwards to enable wheelchair access to the new dwelling in accordance with the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations and other wheelchair accessible legislation.
- 10.07.** The rest of the existing hardstanding will be laid to lawn and to flower beds.
- 10.08.** It will be possible to park two cars in the new replacement garage block and for other cars to be parked on the gravel drive.
- 10.09.** Kent County Council parking standards suggest that, in suburban and rural areas such as this, where public transport opportunities are limited and schools, shops and places are not provided locally, a maximum of two car parking spaces should be provided. The proposals meet this requirement and it will also be possible to accommodate bicycles. The proposals also provide for a wall-mounted electric vehicle charging point situated within the replacement garage block.
- 10.10.** The case officer's report relating to planning refusal reference **20220792** refers in some detail to the proposed detached garage forming a part of that application. It refers to the fact that *the failed garage proposal would have a ridge height of 5.47m and an eaves height of 2.95m, which is 880mm and 130mm greater than the existing house respectively and as such is considered to be imbalanced and disproportionate. It would also have an external footprint of 42.6m² which constitutes a 31.5% increase over the existing host dwelling.* I am not sure where the case officer got those figures from, as the existing dwelling actually has a footprint of

138.294m² and the proposed garage would have been considerably smaller than it. The case officer goes on to suggest that *the failed proposal, by virtue of its closer proximity to the highway than the replacement dwelling, will perceptively disrupt the hierarchy of heights between outbuilding and dwelling*. The garage was considered to *be an incongruous and dominant addition, constituting inappropriate development in the Green Belt*. It was also considered to be *imbalanced and disproportionate especially in terms of ridge height as this would be greater than the existing property*. *An outbuilding should appear subservient to the main dwelling and according to the SPD should reflect its design, character and style, which was not achieved in this proposal*.

- 10.11.** I would take issue with the case officer's argument that the proposed garage "*by virtue of its closer proximity to the highway than the replacement dwelling, will perceptively disrupt the hierarchy of heights between outbuilding and dwelling*".
- 10.12.** I consider that a detached garage can be set forward of the host dwelling if it remains subservient to it. There are many such examples of this within Gravesham Borough, including along Priestwood Road, immediate neighbouring properties and within the local area. See for example, the garage in the front of "**Chandler's Lodge**", which is the next but one property to the south. This was permitted under planning reference **20090513** on 06 August 2009.
- 10.13.** See also the erection of the detached double garage at adjoining "**Nutfields**", which was approved under planning reference **19880152** on 28 June 1988.
- 10.14.** See also the erection of the detached garage at "**Priesthood**" permitted under planning references **20130892** on 08 April 2014 and **20170545** on 18 July 2017.
- 10.15.** See also the erection of a detached double garage and gym at "**Pine Glen**", David Street, Harvel, permitted under planning reference **20201371** on 23 February 2021. The Council also permitted a raised ridge height in this particular case.
- 10.16.** See also the erection of a detached two-storey four bedroom replacement dwelling with detached double garage, shed and summerhouse and siting of a free standing 7.5 metre high wind turbine at "**The Orchard**", Priestwood Road, Meopham, Gravesend, DA13 0DA, which

was approved under planning reference **20070027** on 07 March 2007. The new garage is set forward of the replacement dwelling.

10.17. I would also refer to the following planning submissions of my own, which have triple detached garages set forward of the dwelling within Gravesham Borough, namely: -

- **20021037** approved on 03 March 2003 for the demolition of existing house and erection of a detached two storey 4 bedroom dwelling with a **detached triple garage**. **“Dabbs Place Farmhouse”**, Jeskyns Road, Cobham, Gravesend, DA13 9BL. (A Green Belt location) and
- **20130391** approved on 28 June 2013 for erection of part single-storey, part two-storey side/rear extension to form enlarged kitchen, dining area, utility room, gym, plant room and games room at ground floor level with two enlarged bedrooms and ensuite accommodation at first floor level; erection of a **detached triple garage** at the front and replacement of existing doors and windows. **“Pitfield House”**, Meopham Green, Meopham, Gravesend, DA13 0PZ. (A Conservation Area location).

11.0 Comparison of Areas and Volumes at “Nutfield Farm”

11.01. The footprint areas and volumes of the proposed dwelling and garage / mower store will be:-

Proposed Dwelling & Garage / Mower Store		
	Footprint (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
Total footprint area & volume of garage and mower store	60.506	221.994
Total footprint area & volume of proposed dwelling	166.369	608.981
Total footprint area & volume of proposed dwelling and garage / mower store	226.875	830.975

11.02. The footprint areas and volumes of the existing and proposed dwellings and outbuildings will be: -

Comparison areas and volumes between existing and proposed dwellings and outbuildings		
	Footprint (m ²)	Volume (m ³)
Existing dwelling and specified outbuildings	247.623	854.141
Proposed dwelling and specified outbuildings.	226.875	830.975

11.03. It can be seen from the above, that the proposal will have a total footprint area 20.748 m² and a volume 23.166 m³ smaller than the existing property on the site.

11.04. The following is relevant with regard to height comparisons between the existing and proposed dwelling and garage: -

	Existing Dwelling	Proposed Dwelling	Proposed Garage Block	“Merryhill Farm”	“Nutfields”
Finished floor level (m) AOD	152.46	151.3	151.5		
Eaves height (m) AOD	154.77	153.63	153.73	153.57	
Ridge height (m) AOD	156.83	156.64 to higher roof 155.52 to lower roofs	156.22	157.03	158.41

11.05. It can be seen from the above that the ridge height of the proposed replacement dwelling will be lower than the existing dwelling by 190mm at its highest point and by 1.31 metres when measured from the more extensive ridge points of the lower roofs. It will be lower than “Merryhill Farm” by 390mm and it will be lower than “Nutfields” by 1.77 metres. The eaves line will also be lower than the existing dwelling by over a metre. All this has been achieved, even by having roofs of a steeper pitch than the existing dwelling and covered with far higher quality materials, which are more suited to this AONB. The proposed garage, will be subservient to the dwelling, by virtue of the fact that it will have a lower roof and it will also have common design elements to the dwelling. The proposed garage will be set further back from Priestwood Road than both the existing dwelling and the existing garage block. Its orientation will minimise its visual impact from Priestwood Road and the backdrop of the large neighbouring barn will ensure that no views within the AONB will be obscured by it.

11.06. Taking all of the above facts into account, the overall impact on the Green Belt for the proposal will be less than the impact the existing dwelling and outbuildings currently have on it. The proposal will have a positive overall impact on its Green Belt location with a design, scale, siting, landscaping and use of materials which are much better suited to the neighbourhood than the existing structures. The resultant replacement dwelling will also be considerably more energy efficient to help create a sustainable and green new home for my clients.

12.0 Access

- 12.01.** The finished ground floor level of the proposed dwelling will closely relate to the existing site levels.
- 12.02.** Access to the site will be via the existing access point onto Priestwood Road.
- 12.03.** Access to the front door will be via a ramped path with a gradient of 1 in 18. The floor layout will conform to the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations, where the living accommodation is wheelchair accessible and the bathroom will have an outward opening door.

13.0 Amenity Space

- 13.01.** Amenity space will be provided within the existing boundary hedgerows. If any fences require repair, they will be renewed to match the existing.
- 13.02.** Hard paved areas for refuse storage are indicated on the site plan.
- 13.03.** The frontage will be provided with soft landscaped areas and they will be enhanced by the removal of the large amount of existing concrete hard landscaping.

14.0 Environmental Considerations

- 14.01.** In view of its continuing residential use, this property would not be designated “Contaminated Land” within the meaning of Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

15.0 Crime Prevention Measures

- 15.01.** Crime prevention measures, Circular 1/2006 “Guidance on changes to the Development Control System” states in Paragraph 87, that Design and Access Statements for outline and

detailed applications should demonstrate how crime prevention measures have been considered in the design of the proposal and how the design reflects the attributes of safe, sustainable places as set out in Safer Places – the Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM/Home Office, 2003). The new dwelling will be adequately secured via a modern alarm and the layout of rooms and windows will provide good security and overlooking of the main access.

16.0 Climate Change

- 16.01.** The supplement to PPS1 “Planning and Climate Change” requires local planning authorities to request of applicants, through their Design and Access Statements, how the proposed development will contribute to Key Planning Objectives set out in PPS1 and relevant DPD policies consistent with it.
- 16.02.** The replacement dwelling will be provided with an air source heat pump to provide space heating and hot water. This will be supplemented by an “Ecodesign” multi-fuel burning stove situated in the living room.
- 16.03.** The site will actively contribute towards a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, with considerably enhanced levels of insulation, as advocated by paragraph 42 of the supplement to PPS1.

17.0 Planning Context

17.01. This application has been prepared having all due regard to the relevant planning policies in place for the site.

17.02. I consider that the following Gravesham Borough Council policies are relevant to the application: -

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 - Sustainable Development
- CS02 - Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 - Green Infrastructure
- CS18 - Climate Change
- CS19 - Design & Development Principles

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards
- C12 - Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
- C13 - Extensions in the Countryside

17.03. I consider that the following have a material consideration: -

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Kent Design Guide

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan:

- SD2 - The local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, siting, landscaping and materials of new development, redevelopment and infrastructure and will be pursued through the application of appropriate design guidance and position statements.
- SD7 - New projects, proposals and programmes shall conserve and enhance tranquillity and where possible dark night skies.
- SD8 - Ensure proposals, projects and programmes do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the Kent Downs AONB.

17.04. I will now refer to all of the above in turn.

17.05. Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- **CS01 - Sustainable Development**

Paragraph 4.1.6 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan for Gravesham will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 4.1.7 goes on to state that 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.

The NPPF states that there are three overarching objectives to achieve sustainable development including: -

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

This proposal is for a replacement dwelling with a detached garage and mower store where such facilities already exist. It will therefore meet the economic objective. It will also meet the social objective for the same reason and it will also meet the environmental objective by using sustainable materials and by adopting the highest levels of insulation. It will also use renewable energy by utilising a heat pump for space heating and hot water.

- **CS02 - Scale & Distribution of Development**

Paragraph 4.2.24 states that the development strategy for the Borough is to retain and improve the existing stock of housing.

The existing dwelling is clearly of inferior construction and is in need of replacement by a new dwelling that is built to current Codes of Practice and which meets the insulation requirements to help build a green economy. This proposal will clearly help to improve the housing stock within the Borough.

- **CS12 - Green Infrastructure**

Paragraph 5.7.26 refers to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the overall landscape character and it particularly refers to the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, which are relevant to this site.

The replacement of an inferior cedar shingle clad and artificial slate roofed dwelling and motley collection of outbuildings by a purpose-built and well-designed replacement dwelling and detached outbuilding will undoubtedly enhance the overall landscape character of the area.

- **CS18 - Climate Change**

This policy focuses on flood risk, water quality, sustainable drainage and surface water run-off, water demand management, carbon reduction. Paragraph 5.15.8 in particular states that there is a strong case for seeking improvements to achieve more sustainable new development.

The proposal will use sustainable building methods and building materials to help to address the causes and effects of climate change.

- **CS19 - Design & Development Principles**

Paragraph 5.15.14 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.

The proposal will meet this requirement by the use of sustainable materials and with a design that is embedded in the local vernacular by the use of traditional local materials including feather-edge oak weatherboarding, red stock brick and plain clay roof tiles.

17.06. Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- **P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards**

There will be no parking or highways issues related to this proposal. The proposed garage can accommodate two cars and there will be additional and sufficient additional space for parking on the gravel drive. The proposal will therefore, comply with Gravesham Borough Council's adopted parking standards (SPG 4) (2006).

- **C12 - Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside**

Policy C12 states that there will be a strong presumption against allowing the replacement of existing dwellings which will only be set aside if the following criteria are satisfied: -

(i) The existing dwelling must be an "original dwelling" in permanent use as a dwelling. Proposals for the replacement of dwellings which are not "original" but which have gained immunity from the enforcement of planning control will be considered on their individual merits, having regard to their origins, their location and the nature of the accommodation they currently provide.

(ii) The existing dwelling must be in an appropriate location, meaning that it must be well related to existing roads and to essential services and must be in or close to an established rural settlement. The only exception to this criterion will be where the proposed replacement dwelling is required on the site for an agricultural worker, where the standard agricultural occupancy condition will be imposed.

(iii) The replacement dwelling must be of similar scale and mass to the existing dwelling and must be no larger than the existing dwelling, unless it can be demonstrated that modest enlargement+ is required to allow the provision of essential basic amenities such as a bathroom, toilet or kitchen, which currently do not exist or are clearly inadequate or to meet the special needs of the occupants.

(iv) The internal layout of the replacement dwelling shall not be such as to facilitate its later subdivision.

(v) The replacement dwelling should normally occupy the same site as the existing dwelling. Where it is agreed that the replacement dwelling may be located elsewhere on the plot, adequate safeguards will be required to ensure the demolition of the existing dwelling.

(vi) The existing or proposed means of access, including access for fire fighting appliances, must be satisfactory.

(vii) The existing or proposed site drainage and means of soil and waste disposal must be satisfactory.

The existing dwelling has lawful C3 use and it is in an appropriate location. The proposal is for a bungalow and not for a two-storey structure and it will be of a similar size to the existing dwelling.

The proposed internal layout of the replacement dwelling will not facilitate its later subdivision.

The proposed footprint areas and volumes of the proposed replacement dwelling and outbuilding will be less than those of the existing dwelling and outbuildings and they will also be lower. Mass and bulk will therefore, be less than the existing. The existing and proposed means of access for fire engines are fully in accordance with the County of Kent Act 1981. The existing cesspool will be replaced by a sewage treatment plant and this will be of benefit to the environment. Surface water will be disposed of by soakaways which are ideally suited to the chalk substrate on which the land lies.

- **C13 - Extensions in the Countryside**

The proposal is for a replacement dwelling and outbuilding and not an extension. Nevertheless, it will be of a similar size to the existing dwelling and the outbuilding will both be subservient to the dwelling and well-designed. It will also be discreetly placed on the site.

17.07. National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

See my comment above regarding Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS01 - Sustainable Development

Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places

See my comment above regarding Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS19 - Design & Development Principles

Section 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land

Paragraph 149 defines the construction of new dwellings as inappropriate in the Green Belt apart from certain exceptions including: (d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

The proposal is for a new building (a replacement dwelling and a replacement garage / mower store) in the same use and not materially larger than those being replaced. The proposal therefore, complies with this section.

Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

See my comment above regarding Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS12 - Green Infrastructure.

17.08. Kent Design Guide

The proposal will comply with all the relevant provisions contained in the Kent Design Guide and which are also detailed in the above policies. These include:- respecting the context and character of the area, sustainability, creating an attractive, safe and secure place, mitigating against the effects of climate change, landscape setting, designing in context, hierarchy of form, attention to detail, choice of building materials and energy efficiency.

17.09. Kent Downs AONB Management Plan:

SD2 - The local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, siting, landscaping and materials of new development, redevelopment and infrastructure and will be pursued through the application of appropriate design guidance and position statements.

The proposal will enhance the Kent Downs AONB by replacing the existing dilapidated dwelling and unsightly outbuildings with a far superior design, appropriate to its setting and with the use of materials which are in accordance with the AONB design guidance.

SD7 - New projects, proposals and programmes shall conserve and enhance tranquillity and where possible dark night skies.

The proposal will set the replacement dwelling and outbuilding further away from Priestwood Road than the existing dwelling and outbuildings. There will be no external lighting within the proposed design to address the dark night skies requirement. The proposal will therefore, be a more tranquil place in which to live.

SD8 - Ensure proposals, projects and programmes do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the Kent Downs AONB.

The proposal will respect the Kent Downs AONB in all of the above respects and it will not impact negatively on them.

18.0 Summary

- 18.01.** I consider that this proposal will have a positive impact on the character of the area, by virtue of the fact that a contemporary building of a high-quality design will occupy the site. The proposal will be in keeping with the area and street scene in terms of design, height, scale, and massing, and it will not detract from the essential character of the area.
- 18.02.** The scale and massing of the replacement dwelling will be in keeping with its surroundings. Its design will respect the character and appearance of the neighbourhood and it will safeguard the privacy and amenity of adjoining residents.
- 18.03.** Materials used will be of excellent quality and sympathetic to the area concerned.
- 18.04.** It will comply in all respects with the Council's planning policy requirements for replacement dwellings and their associated outbuildings located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It will also enhance the setting of this land within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 18.05.** For all these reasons, the Council is requested to grant Full Planning Permission for this development.

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Appendix A: Table of areas and volumes

Nutfield Farm, Priestwood Road, Harvel													
Areas & Volumes													
			length (m)	breadth (m)	footprint (m²)	total footprint area of each building (m²)	total footprint area of all buildings (m²)	area (m²)	height (m)	volume (m³)	total volume of each building (m³)	total volumes (m³)	internal floor area (m²)
Building	Section	Sub-Section											
Existing Dwelling													
	main building												
		Building to sloping part	15.400	8.690				133.826	0.945	63.233			
		Main bulk of building	15.450	8.740	135.033			135.033	2.371	320.163			
		Eaves line	15.850	9.340				148.039	0.190	28.127			
		Pitched roof	15.850	9.340				148.039	2.058	152.332			
	flat roof porch												
		Main bulk of building	2.630	1.240	3.261			3.261	2.421	7.895			
		Eaves line	2.830	1.040				2.943	0.216	0.636			
						138.294							
											572.387		
													130.760
Existing Garage													
	main building deepest section												
		Main bulk of building	5.025	5.545	27.864			27.864	2.190	61.021			
		Slither of building between lower and higher eaves	5.025	2.272				11.417	0.268	3.060			
		Eaves line	5.125	5.545				28.418	0.156	4.433			
		Pitched roof 1	5.125	3.273				16.774	0.950	7.968			
		Pitched roof 2	5.125	2.272				11.644	0.682	3.971			
	main building shallower section												
		Main bulk of building	4.900	4.545	22.271			22.271	2.458	54.741			
		Eaves line	4.900	4.545				22.271	0.156	3.474			
		Pitched roof	4.900	4.545				22.271	0.682	7.594			
	side section lean to												
		Main bulk of building	1.855	3.580	6.641			6.641	1.211	8.042			
		Pitched roof	1.855	3.580				6.641	1.187	3.941			
						56.775							
											158.245		
Existing Mower Store													
		Building to sloping part	4.300	3.600				15.480	0.550	4.257			
		Main bulk of building	4.300	3.600	15.480			15.480	1.855	28.715			
		Pitched roof	4.300	3.600				15.480	0.920	7.121			
						15.480							
											40.093		
Existing Shed 1													
		Building to sloping part	5.380	2.920				15.710	0.550	4.320			
		Main bulk of building	5.380	2.920	15.710			15.710	1.855	29.141			
		Pitched roof	5.380	2.920				15.710	0.920	7.226			
						15.710							
											40.688		
Existing Shed 2													
		Building to sloping part	5.450	3.920				21.364	0.300	3.205			
		Main bulk of building	5.450	3.920	21.364			21.364	1.500	32.046			
		Pitched roof	5.450	3.920				21.364	0.700	7.477			
						21.364							
											42.728		
							247.623						
												854.141	

			length (m)	breadth (m)	footprint (m²)	total footprint area of each building (m²)	total footprint area of all buildings (m²)	area (m²)	height (m)	volume (m³)	total volume of each building (m³)	total volumes (m³)	internal floor area (m²)
Building	Section	Sub-Section											
Proposed Dwelling													
	Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility & Bedroom 3												
		Brick wall below weatherboarding	13.390	4.790				64.138	0.600	38.483			
		Weatherboarded wall	13.490	4.890	65.966			65.966	1.709	112.736			
		Eaves line	13.790	5.190				71.570	0.175	12.525			
		Pitched roof	13.790	5.190				71.570	1.918	68.636			
	Bedroom 1, Ensuite Bathroom, Bathroom, Linen Cupboard & Bedroom 2												
		Brick wall below weatherboarding	13.390	4.790				64.138	0.600	38.483			
		Weatherboarded wall	13.490	4.890	65.966			65.966	1.709	112.736			
		Eaves line	13.790	5.190				71.570	0.175	12.525			
		Pitched roof	13.790	5.190				71.570	1.918	68.636			
	Living Room & Hall												
		Brick wall below weatherboarding	7.890	4.410				34.795	0.600	20.877			
		Weatherboarded wall	7.990	4.310	34.437			34.437	1.709	58.853			
		Eaves line	8.290	4.010				33.243	0.175	5.818			
		Pitched roof	8.290	4.010				33.243	3.003	49.914			
		Section of higher roof each side of living room	2.985	2.705				8.074	1.085	8.761			
						166.369							
											608.981		
													136.314
Garage & Mower Store													
		Brick wall below weatherboarding	9.410	6.430	60.506			60.506	0.600	36.304			
		Weatherboarded wall	9.510	6.530				62.100	1.457	90.480			
		Eaves line	9.810	6.830				67.002	0.175	11.725			
		Pitched roof	9.810	6.830				67.002	2.492	83.485			
						60.506							
											221.994		
							226.875						
												830.975	