

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240826

Location: Commority Farm, Harvel Road, Meopham, Gravesend DA13 0UA

Description: Erection of an Agricultural Livestock Building.

Applicant: Mr Steve Jones, A B Jones & Partners

Site Visit Date: 6 November 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Statement by BTF Partnership
Existing site plan
Proposed site plan
Proposed plans
BNG Metric
Pre-development baseline map
BNG Plan

Relevant Planning History

20230643	Application for a determination as to whether prior approval is required for the erection of 2 no. agricultural storage buildings.	Prior approval not required.	28.06.2023
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Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- 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 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design for Gravesham: Design Code (2024);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2021-2026

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Meopham Parish Council

Following discussion by our Planning Applications Working Group; the Council wishes to provide the following response:

Due to the nature and content of the proposed change Meopham Parish Council raises no objection to the application.

We therefore have no objection to this proposal.

MPC were reconsulted when the revised plans were submitted and they responded:

Following discussion by our full council meeting; the Council wishes to provide the following response: Meopham Parish Council raises no objection to the application.

Kent Police Designing Out Crime (two letters received with the same content)

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 boundary treatments be a minimum of 2m and the installation of lockable gates to the sides of the unit to provide controlled access to the rear. These gates must be flush to the building line to optimize surveillance. If a boundary is made up of hedging, we require 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. 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. Cycle storage must be well lit and with natural surveillance. We recommend the sold secure or SBD recommended products for additional security.
5. Lighting - Please note, whilst we are not qualified lighting engineers, any lighting plan should be approved by a professional lighting engineer (e.g., a Member of the ILP), particularly where a lighting condition is imposed, to help avoid conflict and light pollution. we recommend that a suitable lighting policy is installed to ensure that the units and staff have safe access to and from the units and to help deflect criminality. External lighting to conform to min standard of BS5489-1:2020.
6. CCTV to be installed, especially in areas with limited natural surveillance such as rear of the units, utility areas/ bin stores and on the access/ exit road. We also recommend cameras in the following areas to keep users safe and monitor their movements; any stairs, emergency access doors, lifts, loading/ unloading areas, car park and reception, main office/ safe. The CCTV must not infringe any lighting plan.
7. We strongly recommend alarms, with an auto-dial function, be installed on all external doors, including emergency exits.
8. 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+. Please Note, PAS 24: 2012 tested for ADQ (Building Regs) has been superseded and is not suitable for this development.
9. Windows on the ground floor to meet PAS 24: 2022 UKAS certified standard, STS 204 Issue 6:2016, LPS 1175 Issue 8:2018 Security Rating 1/A1, STS 202 Issue 7:2016 Burglary Rating 1 or LPS 2081 Issue 1.1:2016 Security Rating A. Glazing to be laminated. Toughened glass alone is not suitable for security purposes. Any curtain walling and fixings should be tested and meet BS EN 1627:2011 and/or be certified to LPS 1175: Issue 7, SR1 or STS 202: Issue 3, BR1.
10. 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
11. Bin Stores 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.
12. If any buildings are to have roof access for maintenance of solar panels and lift shafts etc., we recommend that ladders/ access doors to these areas are securely locked so that members of the public are unable to access this area. We also require CCTV to cover this area in order to monitor unauthorized access.

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.

KCC Biodiversity

Originally KCC responded with the following:

SUMMARY – FURTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED

We have reviewed the ecological information submitted in support of this application and advise that further information is requested from the applicant prior to determination of the planning application. This includes:

- A Statutory Biodiversity Metric completed by a suitably qualified ecologist; and
- An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA).

ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATIONS

No ecological information has been submitted with this application. As a result of reviewing the data available to us and the information submitted with the planning application, we advise that further information is sought from the applicant with regards to the potential for ecological impacts to arise.

The application site is located within Whitehorse Wood and Holly Hill Local Wildlife Site/potential ancient woodland. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are important for the conservation of wildlife at the county level. These are non-statutory designations which are generally recognised by local authorities and given weight and protection by inclusion in development plan policies in accordance with paragraph 192 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024. Whitehorse Wood and Holly Hill LWS is designated for the following features:

- Diverse fungal flora;
- Active badger setts;
- Brown hare;
- Adder, slow worm and common lizard; and
- Numerous priority breeding bird species.

Deer Spring wood itself is not described as 'ancient' (i.e. continuously wooded since 1600AD) in its LWS citation (which we can provide on request) as it falls outside of the ancient woodland inventory boundary. Many small ancient woodlands of <2ha in area are not included in the ancient woodland inventory; this does not mean they are not ancient. The woodland is visible in OS maps going back to the 19th century and aerial imagery from the 1940s. If it is indeed an ancient woodland (which should be established as part of an Ecological Impact Assessment), then our standard guidance on ancient woodlands will apply. This guidance is included below in the form of an appendix.

In any case, the proposals fall squarely within the LWS boundary and the proposed barn is located within 15m of it, so it is concerning that the Design & Access Statement (BTF Partnership, undated) states in section 7.0 "[the] site does not fall within any environmental, heritage or landscape designations". LWS boundaries are publicly available on KLIS.

The potential for protected species presence and impacts to irreplaceable habitats must be taken account of in the planning decision. As such, an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.

The EcIA will include the following:

- Details of the impacts of development proposals on the ecological baseline established via a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and any necessary additional surveys undertaken;
- Details of any necessary and achievable ecological mitigation and/or compensation measures;
- Details of ecological enhancement measures, and;
- Provision of sufficient information to determine whether the project accords with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation.

To ensure that the planning determination is adequately informed in respect of all potential ecological impacts, we advise that the EcIA is sought prior to determination of the planning application. This is in accordance with paragraph 99 of the ODPM Circular 06/2005 which states "it is essential that the presence

or otherwise of protected species and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision”.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Under the Environment Act 2021 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), all planning applications received in England (with a few exemptions) must deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) from the 12th February 2024 and all minor applications from the 2nd April 2024. Where required, the Defra Statutory Metric will need to be used to demonstrate a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. Local policy may request a higher level of net gain. Significant gains will need to be secured for at least 30 years.

Biodiversity net gain is a statutory requirement of this proposed development. References to the biodiversity value of any habitat or habitat enhancement are to its value as calculated in accordance with the biodiversity metric. We are aware of discussions surrounding whether the de minimis exemption applies in this instance (as the hardstanding foundation of the barn already exists) and advise that it would not apply anyway, as the creation of access will result in the degradation/loss of >25m² in any case.

A copy of the Small Sites Metric (Stephen Jones, November 2024) has been submitted describing site as 0.2ha of modified grassland. This is not correct, as the entire redline boundary of the site needs to be included, meaning the LWS/potential ancient woodland through which access is proposed. We will require a full Statutory Biodiversity Metric filled out by a qualified ecologist given the sensitive nature of the site. Ancient woodlands are to be marked as irreplaceable habitat.

Grassland enhancement measures have been outlined in the metric and draft Biodiversity Gain Plan (Stephen Jones, November 2024); these are supported but the above issues are material so no condition wording is suggested at this point.

OTHER ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

Applicant notes in the draft Biodiversity Gain Plan that they “will be fitting owl boxes to the building and providing platforms for sparrows and house martins.” These measures are supported and can be secured with suitable condition wording.

The applicant revised their site plan and KCC have amended their comments below:

SUMMARY – NO FURTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED

We have reviewed the ecological information submitted in support of this application and advise that no further information is requested from the applicant prior to determination of the planning application. Informative/condition wording is recommended.

ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATIONS

Our previous comments (of 17 December 2024) requested a full Ecological Impact Assessment as the proposed barn was to be constructed adjacent to a priority/ancient woodland which fell under the Whitehorse Wood and Holly Hill Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designation and would be accessed via the same woodland/LWS.

The proposals and redline boundary have now been amended such that the barn is proposed >15m from the woodland/LWS boundary and the access to the site does not incorporate any priority habitats/designated sites. As such, no Ecological Impact Assessment is required as no impacts are anticipated.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

Our previous comments also highlighted that the submitted Small Sites Metric (SSM) had been filled out incorrectly. Given the redline boundary included priority habitats/designated sites, the SSM could not be used and a full Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM) filled out by an ecologist was requested.

As the redline boundary has been amended to exclude the woodland/LWS, the SSM has been revised and no SBM/consultation with an ecologist is required.

The new SSM describes the site as 0.34ha of temporary grass and clover leys and a small area of artificial unvegetated land. 0.16ha of grassland will be lost to facilitate the proposed development (the barn itself is <400m²). This habitat loss will be compensated for with the creation of 0.1ha of tussocky arable field margins adjacent to the woodland. These gains are feasible and non-significant, delivering an overall 11.17% biodiversity net gain (BNG). The following condition applies by default but should be included in any decision notice as an informative for avoidance of confusion:

GENERAL BNG CONDITION: The development hereby permitted is subject to the general condition of planning permission relating to biodiversity gain as per Schedule 7A 13(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The condition is that the development may not be begun unless—

- (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and*
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.*

The condition cannot be varied or removed. An application must be made to discharge it as any other condition.

The government's published Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) template should be used:
Biodiversity gain plan - GOV.UK.

OTHER ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

The previous draft Biodiversity Gain Plan stated that the applicant *"will be fitting owl boxes to the building and providing platforms for sparrows and house martins."* We suggest the following condition wording to evidence the implementation of these measures:

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT EVIDENCE: Within twelve months of first use of the development hereby approved, photographic evidence of the implementation of such habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement measures as are detailed in the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan as well as evidence of the onsite provision of owl boxes and sparrow terraces (both of durable construction and suitably located) shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The approved details shall be thereafter retained.

Reason: In accordance with paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 and local policy CS12.

Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society has no objection to a building for livestock rearing but notes that development appears to have already taken place, including engineering works. This should be regularised before any new consent is granted.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by site notice and individual letters to two neighbouring properties. 72 letters of support have been received.

A summary of the letters is below:

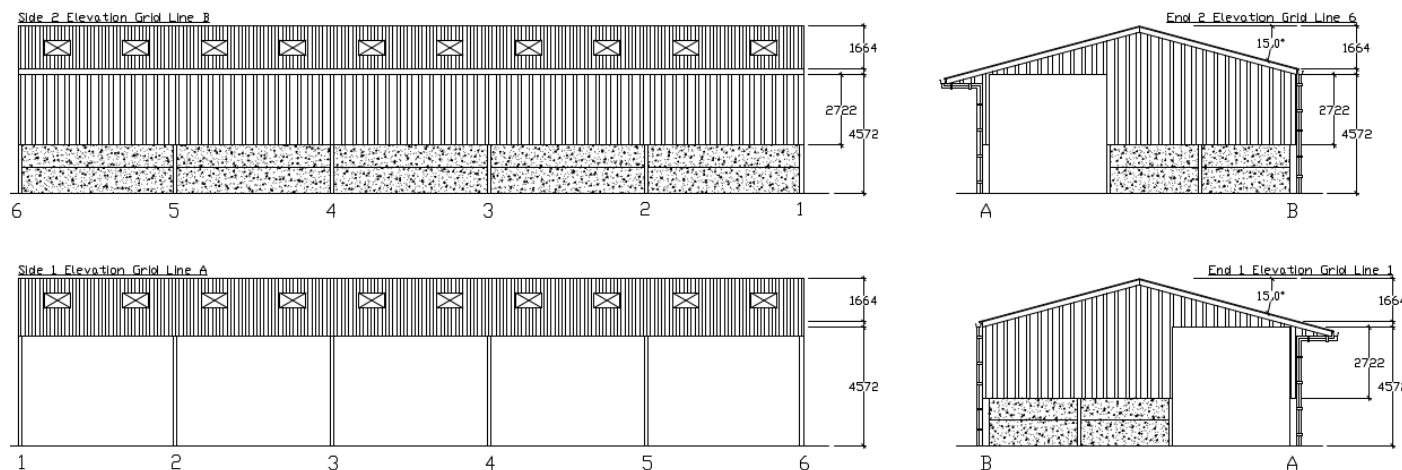
- Support British farming
- Brings investment to the local community
- Provides local produce
- Lovely to see animals in the village
- Vital for the livestock in winter and inclement weather
- Application ensures the land is kept for agricultural use
- The farmer is already there and no nuisance

- Better to have farm buildings than houses

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of an agricultural livestock building. The building will be approx. 12m wide, 30m deep and 6.5m high with a pitched roof:



The building is to be constructed of steel portal frame construction with pre-cast concrete pane lower elevations and profile metal sheet upper elevations beneath a pitched fibre cement sheet roof. One side elevation will remain open with an overhang roof.

Background

20230643 granted prior approval for the erection of two agricultural storage barns. There is a listed building (Swanswood Farm) within 400m of the application site which means a building for livestock requires planning permission and therefore this procedure cannot be used for this application.

The above application came about as the applicant had the opportunity to purchase much of the tenanted farm known as Harvel House Farm. A condition of this sale was that he lost the tenancy of the buildings and farmhouse at Harvel House Farm and therefore lost the existing farm complex. The above application was the immediate concern as the farm equipment needed to be stored. Now that requirement has been met the farm is seeking to address the lack of livestock accommodation.

Prior to moving from Harvel House Farm the livestock consisted of 110 cattle, 350 sheep and 250 turkeys. The plan is to build the farm up to accommodate that number again by 2026. The building will be used for livestock and in the summer will be used to store machinery.

Principle

The application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Green Belt

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Green Belt serves five purposes:

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

Para. 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 states that:

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. 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.

Para. 154 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:

a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

e) limited infilling in villages;

f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- i. mineral extraction;
- ii. engineering operations;
- iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for

cemeteries and burial grounds); and

vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

The proposal for a cattle barn would fall under exception (a) of para. 154 and therefore the principle of development is acceptable.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 allows development in the rural area, outside of rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt, provided the proposals are compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the local plan.

Diversification of the Rural Economy

Policy CS07 Economy, Employment and Skills States that:

'The Council will support proposals that promote the appropriate expansion and diversification of the rural area economy'.

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF 'supporting a prosperous rural economy' states that planning policies and decisions should enable:

- the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;
- the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside;
- the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

The proposed building will support the appropriate expansion of this rural business and therefore accords with local and national policies in this regard.

Design, Character and Appearance

The application site is also located with the Kent Downs National Landscape, Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area and the Whitehorse Wood and Holly Hill Local Wildlife Site.

Impact on the Kent Downs National Landscape

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 site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB), within the West Kent Downs Landscape Character Area of the Kent Downs Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Update 2020, and within the Luddesdown Sub Area. Reflective of paragraph 189 of the NPPF 2024, Policy SD2 of the Management Plan 2021-2026 recognises the need to conserve and enhance the local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the National Landscape. Principle SD8 seeks to ensure that proposals do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the National Landscape.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 imposed a new statutory Duty on the Council such that the Council **must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape in carrying out its functions**, including as a Planning Authority. In determining this application, the Local Planning Authority is meeting this Duty by considering the impact of

the development on the National Landscape below:

The proposed agricultural building is in keeping with other farm buildings both on this site and the surrounding landscape. It is located close to vegetation that goes some way to screening it, as opposed to being located in the middle of an open field. Whilst there will be an impact on the wider landscape, it is a feature that is common within the area and a feature of the agricultural landscape within which it is located.

The building will therefore not impact the wider landscape and is considered to conserve the local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the National Landscape in accordance with policy SD2 of the Management Plan. Likewise, its containment close to the site boundaries will ensure that the development does not impact negatively on the distinctive landforms, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the National Landscape in accordance with policy SD8 of the Management Plan.

Policy LLC1 supports and pursues the protection, conservation and enhancement of the special characteristics and qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the Kent Downs National Landscape. Policy FL5 seeks to promote appropriate farm diversification. It sets out that farm diversification activities will be supported if they help achieve the vision, aims and principles of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan. The proposed development allows for the farm to house cattle and therefore is considered to support this aim.

Landscape Character

The application site is also located in the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area within the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment 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. The LCA states the area is defined by relatively level topography with dense wooded areas. The condition and sensitivity of the landscape is moderate and the aims are to conserve and create.

No landscaping is shown on the plans however there will need to be some provided in order to accord with the Biodiversity Net Gain condition and therefore this is likely to soften the appearance of the development. As stated above, the site is well screened to the south by ancient woodland and therefore the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the wider landscape.

Design

The design and scale of the building is in keeping with other agricultural buildings on the site and in the wider area. No objection is raised to its design however a condition is recommended that full details and/or samples of the proposed building are submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority as these have not been provided in any detail.

The proposed development therefore accords with Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Amenity

Neighbouring Amenity

The nearest property is more than 200m away from the application site and therefore there will be no detrimental impact to any neighbour in terms of loss of outlook, privacy, sunlight or daylight.

The use is not likely to cause significant impact in terms of noise as the barn is required to shelter cattle that are already grazing on the site.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Biodiversity Net Gain

The ecological information submitted is sufficient and no further information is required from the applicant prior to determination of the application.

The proposals and redline boundary have been amended such that the barn is proposed >15m from the woodland/LWS boundary and the access to the site does not incorporate any priority habitats/designated sites. As such, no Ecological Impact Assessment is required as no impacts are anticipated.

Likewise, as the redline boundary has been amended to exclude the woodland/LWS, the SSM has been revised and no SBM/consultation with an ecologist is required.

The new SSM describes the site as 0.34ha of temporary grass and clover leys and a small area of artificial unvegetated land. 0.16ha of grassland will be lost to facilitate the proposed development (the barn itself is <400m²). This habitat loss will be compensated for with the creation of 0.1ha of tussocky arable field margins adjacent to the woodland. These gains are feasible and non-significant, delivering an overall 11.17% biodiversity net gain (BNG). The following condition applies by default but should be included in any decision notice as an informative for avoidance of confusion:

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- (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and*
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.*

The condition cannot be varied or removed. An application must be made to discharge it as any other condition.

The previous draft Biodiversity Gain Plan stated that the applicant “*will be fitting owl boxes to the building and providing platforms for sparrows and house martins.*” The following condition wording to evidence the implementation of these measures is recommended:

Within twelve months of first use of the development hereby approved, photographic evidence of the implementation of such habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement measures as are detailed in the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan as well as evidence of the onsite provision of owl boxes and sparrow terraces (both of durable construction and suitably located) shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The approved details shall be thereafter retained.

Reason: In accordance with paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 and local policy CS12.

Subject to these conditions, the proposed development accord with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Parking and Highways

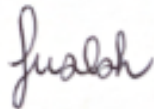
The barn is proposed to shelter cattle and therefore will not give rise to additional parking requirements. The access is existing and therefore no concerns are raised to this.

Conclusion

The proposed development is not considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt and will have no significant detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape, neighbouring amenities, parking or highway safety and therefore accords with the abovementioned policies and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation:

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	8 April 2025	Dated:	11 April 2025