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Planning Statement for Land at Dawes Cottage, Northfleet Green,
Gravesend

June 2021 Ref: 15791

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by DHA Planning on behalf of the application, Mr and Mrs Martin, in support of a retrospective planning application for the erection single storey detached games room in the curtilage of Dawes Cottage, Northfleet Green, Gravesend.
- 1.1.2 This Statement provides an overview of the site, its context and the relevant planning history; and a review of all applicable development plan and emerging policies as well as the NPPF and other relevant guidance. It also demonstrates the appropriateness of it in the context of the locality and the sustainability of the site. The merits of the proposed development are then discussed having regard to this context and policy framework.
- 1.1.3 The report concludes that the proposal is sustainably located, appropriate in planning terms and accordingly requests that planning permission be granted.

1.2 Application Documents

- 1.2.1 This document should be read in conjunction with the following plans and documents which are submitted as part of the application:
- Location Plan. 21.02902. The Duncan + Graham Partnership
 - Proposed Scheme. 21.02901. The Duncan + Graham Partnership

2 Site and Surroundings

2.1 Application Site

- 2.1.1 The application site comprises the property known as Dawes Cottage and its surrounding curtilage. Located to the east of Northfleet Green Road the property is a detached house located rather centrally to the south of the site. The remainder of the site immediately surrounding the dwelling comprises private amenity area and residential outbuildings.



Figure 2.1: Aerial view of site and surrounding area (Google Earth)

- 2.1.2 To the north of the dwelling lies an area of open land which is used as ancillary to the residential property. Previously agricultural land, the site gained permission in 2017 for use of the keeping of horses and livestock ancillary to Dawes Cottage and permits a number of outbuildings including stables, tack room and hay barn associated with the recreation use. Currently this area of the site comprises a barn, two outbuildings and the leisure building to which this application relates.
- 2.1.3 The site is located in the countryside, to the north west of the village of Istead Rise and to the east of the village of Southfleet. Immediately surrounding the site lies a number of residential, commercial agricultural premises and operations.
- 2.1.4 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is not subject to any other environmental designations or restrictions. According to the Government's flood map for planning the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding.

2.2 Planning History

- 2.2.1 According to the Gravesham Borough Council public access system, the site has a complex planning history in relation to the commercial activities which operate from the site. A summary of relevant planning applications is provided overleaf:

Application ref.	Description	Decision
19780040	Outline application for the erection of a single storey agricultural dwelling	Refused
20100761	Change of use of agricultural land to residential amenity land.	Refused
20110730	Change of use of land from agricultural use to a children's petting farm.	Withdrawn
20120475	Continued use of land for keeping of chickens and horses incidental to the enjoyment of Dawes Cottage, including the erection of 4 no stables, tack room, hay barn and 3 no chicken coups.	Permitted
20140450	Continued use of the land for the keeping of horses and livestock including the erection of a hay barn and block of 2 stables with tack room, retention of vehicular access onto Northfleet Green Road and associated concrete hard standing and retention of 2m high close boarded fence to western boundary.	Permitted
20190280	Retention of a single storey building for leisure and a games room.	Refused. Appeal Dismissed.

Table 2.1: Site Planning History

- 2.2.2 This application constitutes a re-submission of refused application 20190280. It is considered the need of this building

3 Proposed Development

3.1 Description of the Proposal

3.1.1 The description of development is as follows:

'Retrospective application for the erection of a detached timber log games and leisure room'

3.1.2 The proposal seeks retrospective consent for the erection of a single storey leisure room within the curtilage of Dawes Cottage for use which is considered incidental to the main dwelling. The building was erected as the replacement of an existing outbuilding, which was initially located to the rear of Dawes Cottage, as detailed in the below aerial shot from 2013.

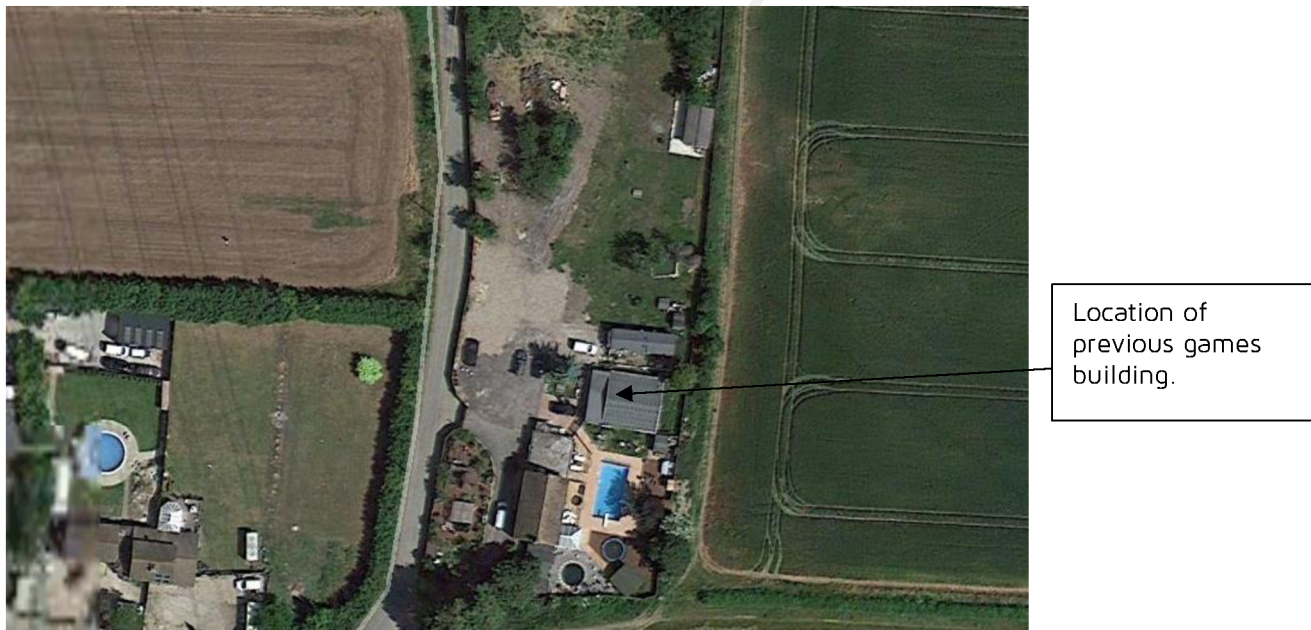


Figure 3.1: Aerial View of Site in 2013 (Courtesy of Google Earth)

3.1.3 At one-storey in height the proposal represents a minor addition which will sit comfortably between the existing barn and adjacent storage buildings. In terms of materials, the exterior of the building forms timber logs and all windows and doors are timber to match the details of the main unit. The use of timber has been carefully chosen to ensure the extension carefully assimilates with the surrounding rural area.

3.1.4 The unit connects with the existing barn to its southern elevation and the stables to its northern elevation which are now used for storage purposes. As detailed on the accompanying plans the majority of the unit comprises a garden leisure room, with an internal wall creates a separate games room. The unit has been kept to a limited height in order to remain subservient to the existing barn, limiting visual impact on the surrounding area.

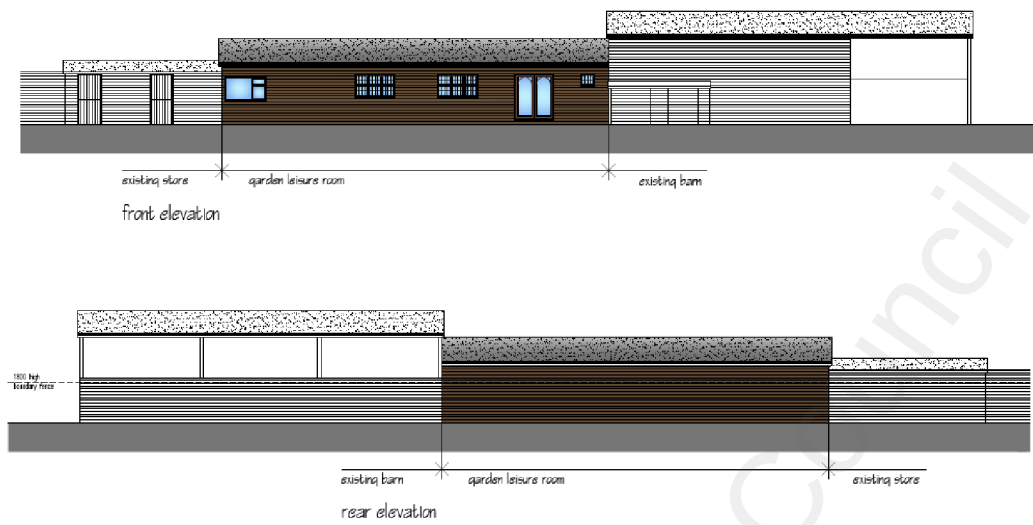


Figure 3.1: Proposed Elevations (The Duncan and Graham Partnership)

4 Planning Policy Framework

4.1 Statutory Development Plan

- 4.1.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act (2004), applications for planning permission are required to be determined in accordance with the development plan in force unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.1.2 In this case the Development Plan in force comprises the Gravesham Borough Council Core Strategy (2014) and the Saved Policies of the Gravesham Local Plan (1994).

4.2 Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- 4.2.1 Policy CS01 (Sustainable Development) of the Core Strategy states that applications that accord with the development plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It also states that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and will work proactively with applications to find solutions. The policy then states that proposals will be approved unless any adverse impacts outweigh the benefits or unless specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.
- 4.2.2 Policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) refers more specifically to the location of development, seeking to place the majority of new homes and employment provision within sustainable locations. The only element of relevance to this appeal relates to the rural area and 'development within the Green Belt' but it is suggested that again the thrust of this policy has greater relevance when considering development other than extensions.
- 4.2.3 Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) seeks for new development to 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 policy then lists a number of criteria that development should adhere to. These are summarised below:
- Using the collaborative approach advocated in Building for Life 12 and in line with the guidance set out in Kent Design, the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings.
 - New development will encourage sustainable living and choice through a mix of compatible uses which are well connected to places that people want to use, including the public transport network, local services and

community facilities; encourage sustainable travel; enhance Green Grid links and encourage healthier lifestyles;

- New development will be located, designed and constructed to safeguard amenity, avoid adverse environmental impacts, and not impact on ground water etc.
- Development will accord with the Council's Residential Layout Guidelines
- Development will be inclusive
- Development will have the appropriate level of amenity space

4.3 Gravesham Local Plan Saved Policies (1994)

4.3.1 The Gravesham Local Plan First Review was initially adopted in 1994. In 2014 following the adoption of the Gravesham Core Strategy these policies were reviewed.

4.3.2 **Policy C13** discusses extensions to dwellings in the countryside. Point 7 however states that proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.

4.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

4.4.1 The NPPF was originally published in March 2012 to provide a single overarching national policy document. A revised NPPF was published in February 2019 and is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

4.4.2 This framework sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

4.4.3 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- 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) 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;

- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 4.4.4 So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.4.5 Section 11 of the NPPF outlines the policy for making effective use of land. Paragraph 117 highlights that planning policies and decision should make an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 4.4.6 Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decision should ensure that developments:
- a) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
- 4.4.7 Section 13 outlines protecting Green Belt land. Paragraph 143 highlights that Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. '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 (**Paragraph 144**).
- 4.4.8 Paragraph 145 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- 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) 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;
- 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, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

5 Planning Considerations

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 It is necessary to consider whether the application proposal is in line with the statutory development plan and NPPF and if not, whether any material considerations indicate, that planning permission should nevertheless be granted.
- 5.1.2 The following planning policy considerations are assessed in this section in relation to the proposal:
- 1) The Principle of Development;
 - a. Impact on the Green Belt
 - 2) Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area;
 - 3) Residential Amenity.

5.2 The Principle of Development

- 5.2.1 The proposal seeks permission for the erection of a one storey leisure and games room building to be used as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling at Dawes Cottage, Northfleet Green.
- 5.2.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF highlights that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. There are three dimensions to this sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. This principle is reflected by policy CS01 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.2.3 As a result of Core Strategy policy CS01 it is acknowledged that the site would not normally be considered as an appropriate location for new development. This is partly due to its location outside of urban confines as outlined within this policy. It is acknowledged that the site sits within the open countryside and Green Belt where policies generally seek to resist new development.
- 5.2.4 As demonstrated by policy C13 of the Local Plan First Review, the extension of dwellings can be considered appropriate in countryside locations. Policy C13 outlines a number of restrictive criteria for extensions to dwellings in the countryside. Criterion 7 states that proposals for domestic garages and other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits, but will be required to be well designed, discreetly site and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.
- 5.2.5 This ancillary outbuilding has been designed to meet this criteria. Sited between two existing structures on the site, the proposal presents a small-scale infill within the site and has been limited in height and scale to remain subservient to the existing storage barn and nearby main dwelling. This provides a character and appearance that one would expect within this rural location – which is characterised by ad-hoc development over the passage of time. This therefore ensures that the building carefully respects the surrounding area and will not result in visual intrusion to the open countryside, given it would be viewed in the context

of the existing structures on site. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in this regard.

Impact on the Green Belt

- 5.2.6 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is acknowledged that both national and local policy seeks to protect the openness of the Green Belt, and as such, new development in this locality is generally resisted, unless it is for one of the exceptions where development can be considered appropriate, or that very special circumstances exist which are sufficient to outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.2.7 Core Strategy policy CS02 outlines that national policy will be applied in the case of Green Belt land. Green Belt policy seeks to prevent inappropriate development which is, by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances.
- 5.2.8 The proposal is for the retention of an outbuilding within the land associated with Dawes Cottage. At present, this part of the site is used for recreation and equestrian purposes, [REDACTED]
- 5.2.9 The development lies within an area which is already characteristic of both commercial and residential uses, and there would be no increase in the presence of residential paraphernalia in association with the use of the building. In addition, the building is located within a line of residential outbuildings and merely presents a minor infill of established curtilage buildings and is contained wholly within the site boundaries. The scheme would therefore not encroach into the wider countryside and Green Belt in this regard and there would be no impact upon the openness of the locality.

Purposes of including land within the Green Belt

- 5.2.10 The NPPF identified five purposes of the Green Belt at paragraph 134, we consider the proposed extension in relation to these five purposes as follows:
- 1) **To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas:** the proposed development would not affect the boundaries of any nearby settlements and would not contribute to urban sprawl;
 - 2) **To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another:** the site is a contained area separate from urban areas and as such would not prevent the Green Belt serving that purpose in the local area;
 - 3) **To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment:** the proposed scheme would be confined to one part of the site, situated between two existing building. As such it is not a form of development which would result in the encroachment of built form into the otherwise open countryside;
 - 4) **To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns:** there are no historic towns in the vicinity of the proposed site;

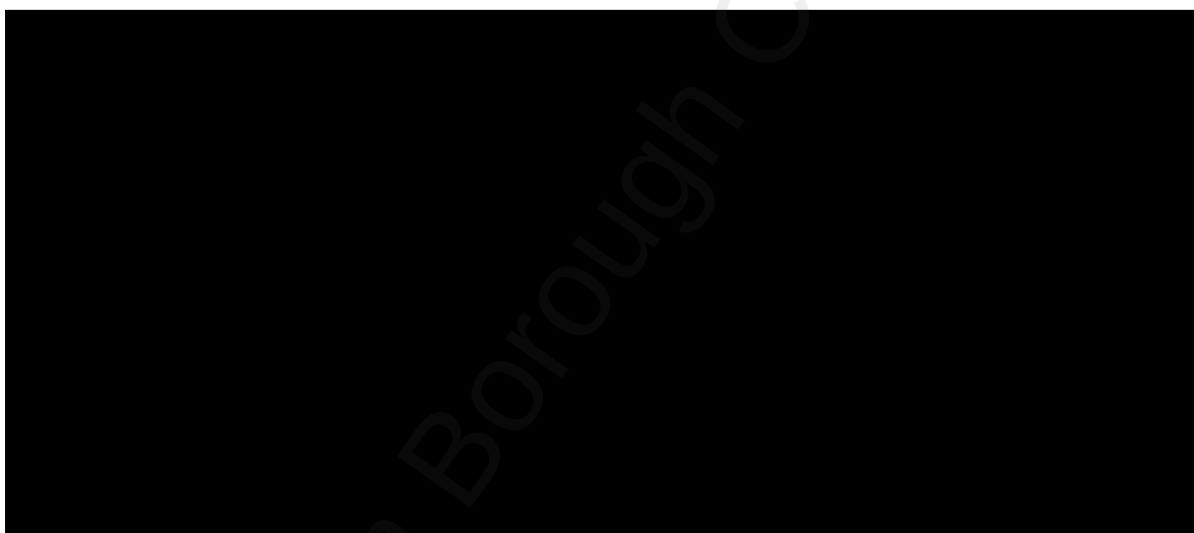
- 5) **To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land:** the proposed development is for an operational use on a site which is already used for residential and leisure purposes and as such does not prevent the recycling of derelict and other urban land for development more suited to urban regeneration.

- 5.2.11 As the above demonstrates, the proposed development does not therefore conflict in any way with the purposes of the Green Belt.

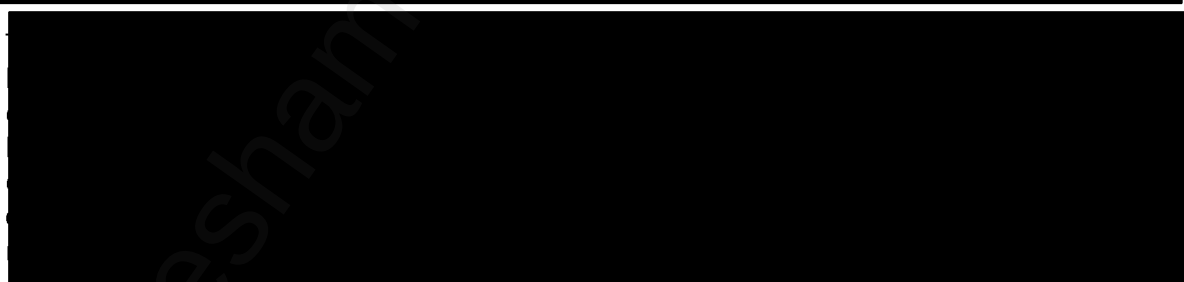
Very Special Circumstances

- 5.2.12 For the reasons outlined above we consider the proposal represents an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. Nonetheless, should the Council take a differing view, we consider that the applicant's personal circumstances outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt.

- 5.2.13



- 5.2.14



- 5.2.15 It is therefore submitted that these factors, along with those discussed in previous sections, amount to very special circumstances for the purposes of considering development on land in the Green Belt.

5.3 Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 5.3.1 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF outlines a list of design criteria that all developments are required to meet. Core Strategy policy CS19 requires all new development to be visually attractive and conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic, and natural environment.

- 5.3.2 In terms of design, the proposed development has been carefully designed in order to respect the surrounding area. The use of timber for the walls is characteristic of the rural nature of the site and surrounding area. Furthermore, the height of

the building has been limited to avoid any overbearing impact to the surrounding open countryside. In doing so, the building remains at a lower height to the adjacent barn, resulting in staggered height of the outbuildings as one moves north along this part of the site. This further reduces the overall bulk and mass of the unit and provides an outbuilding sympathetic to the site and wider area. Furthermore, through careful placement of the unit this ensures the building is well contained on the site and does not extend into the surrounding area. As such, the building is entirely contained within the site and would not encroach into the surrounding countryside and represent inappropriate development in the countryside and Green Belt.

5.4 Residential Amenity

- 5.4.1 The outbuilding has been carefully designed to respect the amenity of the surrounding area. Given its location towards the far side of this part of the site, it is set back from the main dwelling and as such is not considered to give rise to any impact on amenity. No other residential units lie within close proximity of the building and as such it is not considered to give rise to impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of overbearing, loss of light or privacy to neighbouring occupiers.

6 Summary and Conclusion

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by DHA Planning on behalf of the applicants, Mr P and Mrs M Martin, in support of a retrospective planning application for the retention of a one-storey outbuilding for use as a leisure and games room within the curtilage of Dawes Cottage, Northfleet Green.

6.1.2



6.1.3 To put it very simply, the level of harm to the family (should this building be removed) would be far greater than any impact upon the character, appearance and openness of the countryside and the Green Belt.

6.1.4 The location and design of the building has been carefully considered to respect the setting of the surrounding countryside and wider Green Belt. Locating the building between two existing structures ensures the proposal represents a limited infill within the site and does not encroach into the wider countryside area. It is clear that the scheme is not at odds with any of the aims of Green Belt designation.

6.1.5 As a result of the above, we consider the proposed development presents a proportionate and appropriate addition to the curtilage of Dawes Cottage and remains consistent with both local and national Green Belt policy, amounting to appropriate development.

6.2 Conclusion

6.2.1 For the reasons set out in this statement, it is considered this proposal is entirely acceptable, and compliant with planning policy. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.