

Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————

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15th June 2022

Application ref 20220531

Demolition of existing stables and removal of containers and conversion of existing framed structure to form separate bungalow with three bedrooms plus erection of detached triple garage, additional conservatory, porch and use of existing access.

Starwood, Pear Tree Lane, Shorne, Gravesend Kent DA12 3JU

The Parish Council **OBJECTS STRONGLY** to this application for the following reasons and comments:

1) Plots of land and land ownership:

The land area shown is composed of parts of two parcels of land however the ownership remains confused:

- the rear land of Starwood K424735, stated previously and presently as being in the ownership of the applicant
- the narrow access track on the west side that is part of K654169, this was established previously to be in the ownership of the applicant's children but is now stated to be in the ownership of the applicant.

The actual situation requires verification.

The manner in which proper and permanent access is to be maintained to the rest of K654169 needs to be clarified as it is not appropriate for access to be via a residential garden, or a route that might come to be in different ownership. As the existing accumulated structures are said to be redundant, we suggest that the original track on K654169 should be reinstated.

2) Green Belt Location; Landscape character

The proposed property is located in the Green Belt where a new dwelling would not normally be permitted due to detrimental impact on openness. No “very special circumstances” have been cited that might override this restriction.

The proposed location would also cause harm to local Landscape Character.

3) Backland development and precedents

The proposal would be a backland development which is by definition undesirable. Contrary to the applicant’s statement, there are no backland residential buildings on the entire north side of Pear Tree Lane. There are also not “many” (see applicant’s point 6.22) on the south side, there being only one purpose-built residential property, “Furze Bank” which was permitted in the 1950’s, and “Sunridge” which is a mixed use building, previously related to the historic Bushylees Farmhouse and converted from genuine stable use.

Permission of this proposal would create a precedent in the area which could lead to other backland proposals being impossible to resist, particularly as Starwood is already set well back on its plot.

4) Out of character with the area; Amenity of neighbouring dwellings

The area is characterised by single detached houses built on large plots, this proposal would be out of character with the area.

The proposal will be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings, especially “Colesmead” to the east.

5) Lack of planning permission for “hay barn”/“framed structure” building and other works

The “framed structure” that is the subject of this application was referred to in the previous application as being a “hay barn”. It was built without planning permission between May 2018 and April 2020 (dated by Google Earth aerial views).

As reported previously in relation to our comments on Application Ref 20210376, a sand school/menage has been constructed in Starmore Wood, also without planning permission. This is first visible in a 2011 aerial view and was subsequently enlarged.

6) Proof of redundancy of existing buildings

It is claimed that the hay barn and stable buildings are all redundant however further information is required proving this in case any conversion might lead to pressure for more barn and stable structures to be built elsewhere on the properties owned by the applicant and his children, so leading to further erosion of openness of Green Belt land.

7) Suitability of structure for conversion

The structure was built on non-residential land that was previously orchards. It appears to be merely a concrete frame with some timber posts. There does not appear to presently be a floor or

any existing services. Suitable conversion of this structure to a residence would therefore require considerable engineering works.

8) Other points about plans, layout and design:

- The plans show a structure to the east in the garden of “Colesmead” however this former tennis court cannot be identified in aerial views from 1990 onwards, since when the land there has become thickly wooded.
- A double gate is shown in the northern boundary fence, clarification is required over the need for and proposed use of this non-residential feature (see Point 1 above).
- The layout is the “wrong way round” on the site as it should relate to the roadway and not the open countryside:
 - The proposed three car garage is at the very back of the site where it maximises visual impact and encroachment on the openness of the Green Belt, and unnecessarily increases the land area needed for driveway. Note that this placement also requires two trees to be felled.
 - The proposal puts the “front door” at the rear of the property.
 - The site layout should be flipped.
- The plans do not indicate how surface drainage and sewerage needs will be met.
- We note that the applicant refers to there having been a pre-application discussion in 2020 however the Parish Council was not involved in those “without prejudice” discussions and has not been provided with a copy of the report.

We suggest that an opinion should be sought from Rural Planning regarding appropriateness and suitability of this structure for residential conversion.

The Parish Council **OBJECTS STRONGLY** to this application. **We request that the application should be refused**, and that enforcement action should be taken concerning the various buildings and structures that have been erected without planning permission, including the menage constructed in Starmore Wood, as discussed in the previous decision notice.

However, should officers be minded to permit this application we would also suggest that it could beneficially be called in to the Planning Committee to enable wider discussion and participation in any decision.

Gravesham Borough Council