



Delegated Report

Full Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications

Planning Application No: 20240733 (Planning and 20240729 (LBC)

Location: White House Farm, School Lane, Higham, Rochester

Description: Replacement of outbuilding forming single storey gym and retrospective external repairs to other outbuildings.

Applicant: Mr Paul Giles, Windmill Construction

Site Visit Date: 17 September 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form

Drawing no. 0010.000 (Existing block plan)

Drawing no. 0300.000 (Building 4 – Proposed floor plan and elevations as constructed)

Drawing no. 0020.000 (Building 9 – Existing plan)

Drawing no. 0030.000 (Building 9 – Existing elevations)

Drawing no. 0040.000 (Building 9 – Proposed floor plan and elevations as constructed)

Drawing no. 0306.000 (Rev. 1) (Building 9 – Proposed elevations)

Drawing no. 0200.000 Rev. 1 (Building 9 – Proposed plan)

Drawing no. 0400.000 (Building 9 – Proposed section)

Drawing no. 0301.000 Rev. 1 (Building 10 – Proposed elevations as constructed)

Drawing no. 0302.000 (Building 11 – Proposed floor plan and elevations as constructed)

Drawing no. 0303.000 (Building 12 – Proposed floor plan and elevations as constructed)

Drawing no. 0305.000 (Building 14 – Proposed floor plan and elevations as constructed)

Drawing no. 0304.000 (Building 13 – Proposed floor plan and elevations as constructed)

Location Plan

Proposal Assessment (July 2024 V.2 by Groundworks Archaeology)

Heritage Statement (July 2024 V.2 by Groundworks Archaeology)

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20210383	Application for determination as to whether prior approval is required for the proposed change of use and conversion of an agricultural barn to a dwelling.	Granted	08.06.2021
20160579	Application for determination as to whether prior approval is required for the proposed change of use of the existing agricultural buildings to a 4no. bedroom dwelling and associated operational development (Class Q(a) and (b) of Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the GPDO).	Refused Appeal allowed	05.08.2016 16.06.2017
20140194	Retrospective Listed Building Consent for alteration of internal doors, architraves and skirting boards, the removal of two raised steps at the head of the ground	Permitted	01.10.2014

	floor staircase, with subsequent alteration of floor levels and alteration of the staircase to the attic, replacement of missing section of handrail at first floor level, installation of underfloor heating, internal wall insulation, reinstatement of timber beam on ground floor ceiling, installation of external alarm system, and installation of fire/heat detection system.		
20120540	Application for approval of conditions 3, 4, 5(a)(b)(c)(d)(e), 6 and 8 attached to Listed Building Consent reference number 20120109 and planning permission reference numbers 20120110 relating to the external materials, revised drawings, joinery details and the archaeological watching brief.	Approval of details	28.11.2012
20120109	Application for Listed Building Consent for erection of a two storey extension on north east corner to provide enlarged lounge at ground floor with bedroom and ensuite shower room/wc together with alterations to scheme previously approved under Listed Building Consent reference number 20100780.	Permitted	18.05.2012
20120110	Erection of two storey extension on north east corner to provide enlarged lounge at ground floor level with bedroom and ensuite shower room/wc together with minor alterations to the scheme previously approved under planning permission reference number 20100779.	Permitted	17.05.2012
20110987	Application for removal/variation of conditions 3, 4(b)(d), 5 and 6 attached to Listed Building Consent reference number 20100780 for internal and external alterations including the erection of a single storey side/front extension and first floor rear extension; demolition of existing front lobby and erection of new front porch, screen wall with railings and removal of single storey 1960's rear projection in order to require the submission of details of materials of the different elements of the permitted proposals at different stages and the removal of requirements to submit details for works which are now no longer proposed.	Approval of details	07.03.2012
20110984	Application for removal/variation of conditions 3, 4(b)(d), 5, 7 and 8 attached to planning permission reference number 20100779 for erection of single storey side/front extension and first floor rear extension to form sun lounge at ground floor level and a bedroom at first floor level and erection of a front porch to replace lobby in order to require the submission of details of materials of the different elements of the permitted proposals at different stages and the removal of requirements to submit details for works which are now no longer proposed.	Approval of details	07.03.2012
20110733	Application for approval of conditions 4(a) and 4(c) attached to planning permission reference number 20100779 and listed building consent reference number 20100780 relating to the joinery details and front porch details.	Approval of details	10.02.2012
20100780	Application for Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations including the erection of a single storey side/front extension and first floor rear	Permitted	30.03.2011

	extension; demolition of existing front lobby and erection of new front porch, screen wall with railings and removal of single storey 1960's rear projection.		
20100779	Erection of single storey side/front extension and first floor rear extension to form sun lounge at ground floor level and a bedroom at first floor level and erection of a front porch to replace lobby.	Permitted	30.03.2011
19880557	Application for listed building consent for the demolition of the chimney stack on the west roof slope.	Permitted	04.08.1988
19870252	Erection of a single storey rear extension to form an enlarged day room and erection of a front porch	Permitted	07.07.1987
19870253	Application for Listed Building Consent for elevational and internal alterations erection of a single storey rear extension to form an enlarged day room and erection of a front porch	Permitted	07.07.1987
19861048	Application for Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations in connection with the renovation of the premises	Permitted	06.04.1987

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS19 – Design and Development Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Policy for Listed Buildings
- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Section 16(2) and Section 66(2) (respectively) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires special regard to be paid to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)
- Listed Buildings – A Guide for Owners and Occupiers – Informal Guidance (2020)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society notes that works could affect the setting of the two listed buildings and structures of historic interest may have already taken place. The Society would support a review and action to reversal of changes that are considered prejudicial.

Internal Consultees

GBC Conservation

Following our site meeting with the applicant and agent, which was very helpful, I can confirm that the proposals are generally acceptable and offer the opportunity to secure the refurbishment of a number of structures within the curtilage of the listed building.

It will be important to secure these as ancillary to the main farmhouse/dwelling in order to avoid subdivision.

In terms of conditions, if it is not possible prior to determining the application to confirm that the flint retaining wall is rebuilt adopting the same brick and flint pattern then this will need to be conditioned. In this respect we discussed with the applicant/agent adopting knapped flint blockwork and incorporating the existing bricks, which should be salvaged.

Also with respect to replacement oak posts, these do not need a protective coating and should be left to weather to a silver grey colour. Fortunately the wax coating used elsewhere will eventually weather down if left untouched.

We also discussed the finish to the tarmac surface and this will need to be addressed either in this application or a further one. The use of tar and chippings would be acceptable but we will need to agreed the type and colour of finish.

Other than this I raise no adverse comments.

Neighbouring properties

The applications have been advertised to 2 neighbouring properties, on site and in the press. The overall consultation period expired on 20 September 2024.

No letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties.

Higham Parish Council and Local Ward Councillors were also consulted, and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

Various works have already been undertaken at the property prior to the submission of these applications. These applications seek planning permission and listed building consent for the following existing and proposed works:

1. Replacement of outbuilding (Building 9) forming single storey gym, including demolition and removal of floor slab, new floor slab and oak timber posts, new roof and weathering, and new aluminium sliding doors.



2. Retrospective external repairs to other outbuildings including:
 - Building 1 (Farmhouse): slate paving/steps and low retaining walls to east.



- Building 4 (Office): Refurbished and converted to office. Exterior weatherboarded, new tiled roof.
- Building 10 (Store/workshop): Remove existing roof coverings and replace with 'Onduline' black corrugated sheet roofing; repoint/repair flint/brickwork panels to south-east external wall; overlaid existing brickwork with timber weathering; new rainwater goods.



- Building 11: Remove existing roof coverings and replace with 'Onduline' black corrugated sheet roofing fixed to purlins between new timber frames; new oak timber posts; replace existing weatherboarding to walls; new steps and single door opening to south-west elevation; new floor slab; new cast iron rainwater goods.



- Building 12 (Garages): Demolition and replacement with new oak posts; weatherboard cladding to sides; 4 new clear glazed aluminium folding garage doors; new concrete floor slab and finish to garage flooring; repoint/repair flint/brickwork panels to boundary wall.



- Building 13: Demolition and replacement with new oak posts; weatherboard cladding to sides; new concrete floor slab.



- Building 14: New roof, repoint/repair flint/brickwork.



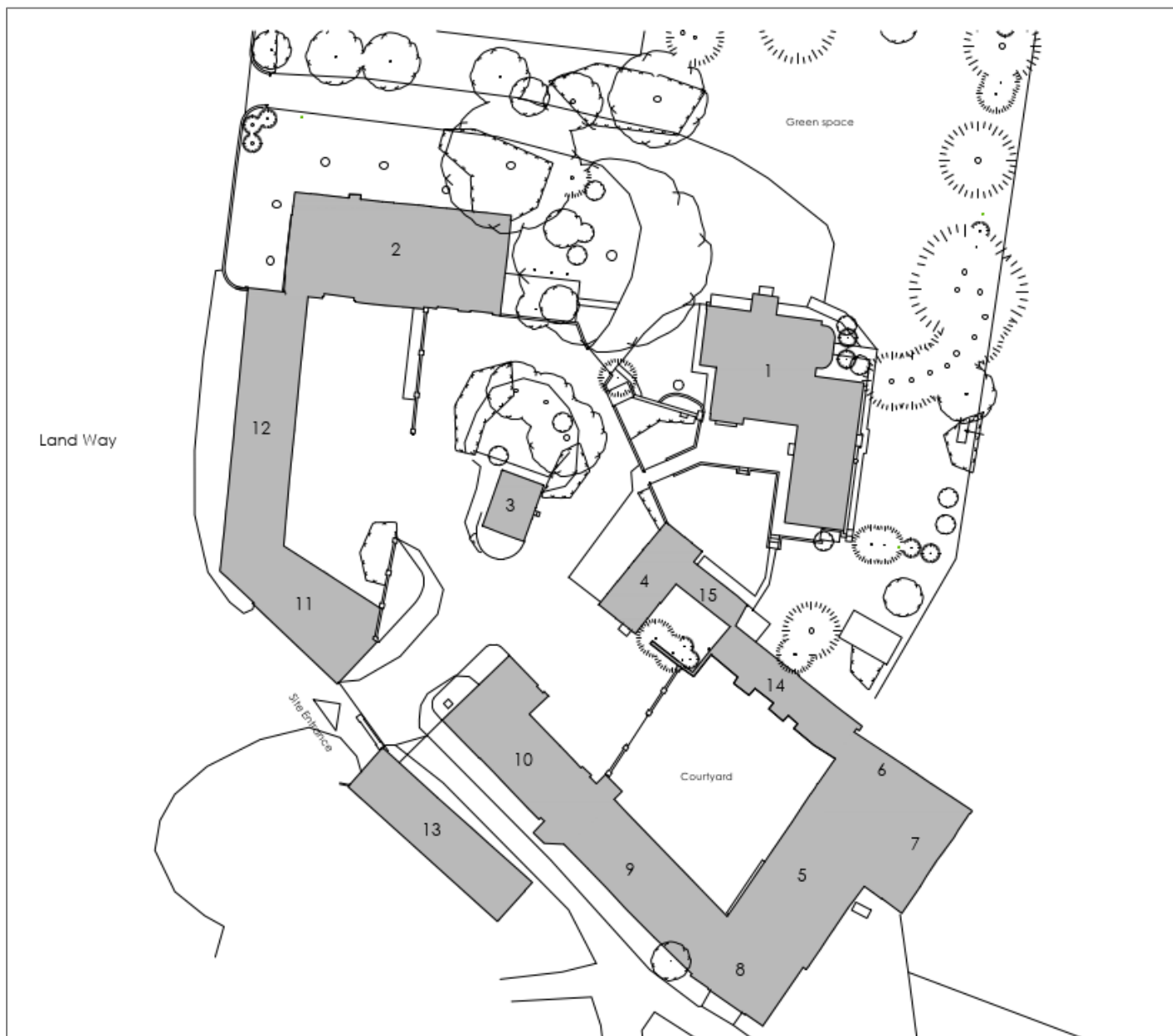


- Building 15: Repair/replace flint/brickwork to south-east elevation.

Additionally, a new brick wall and gates have been constructed to the entrance:



Existing Block Plan



Site Description

White House Farm is located on the eastern side of a track called Land Way, which is accessed from School Lane to the west or Lower Rochester Road to the north. The site is surrounded by agricultural fields.

Current Google Earth Image



The previous farmstead comprises 15 buildings, with the main farmhouse positioned to the north-east corner of the site. The house is Grade II Listed. The listing description is as follows:

C16 or C17 from appearance of brickwork on north front and moulded beams internally. South front probably circa 1800. Two storeys and attic in gable on north front. Three sash windows. Upper floor with glazing bars. Bay on east front with quadrant brick sides. Early C19 stair semi-circular with swept handrail.

The northern most barn to the west of the farmhouse is also Grade II Listed. The list description for the barn is as follows:

C16 or C17. Probably contemporary with farmhouse. Weatherboarded. Tiled roof with added lights. Queen post roof.

The remainder of the buildings are listed by virtue of their positioning within the residential curtilage of the site.

Principle Issues

The main issues to consider in the determination of these applications are as follows:

- the principle of development in the Green Belt;
- the design of the proposals and the impact on the architectural and historic interest of this Grade II

listed building

- the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural landscape;
- the effect of the proposal on the amenities of existing neighbouring properties, as well as whether the proposed development itself will provide satisfactory living accommodation for future occupiers; and
- its impact on highway safety and parking provision.

As it will be demolished and replaced, it is the proposed replacement gym building that requires the widest consideration in relation to planning policy. As the remainder of the proposals have already been carried out and largely involve repairs, these only require consideration in relation to listed building impacts.

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (paragraph 142 of the NPPF 2023). Paragraph 152 of the NPPF 2023 states that 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.

Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the Core Strategy 2014.

Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt (paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2023). However, there are exceptions to this which, as in the case of this proposal, and as set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2023, include:

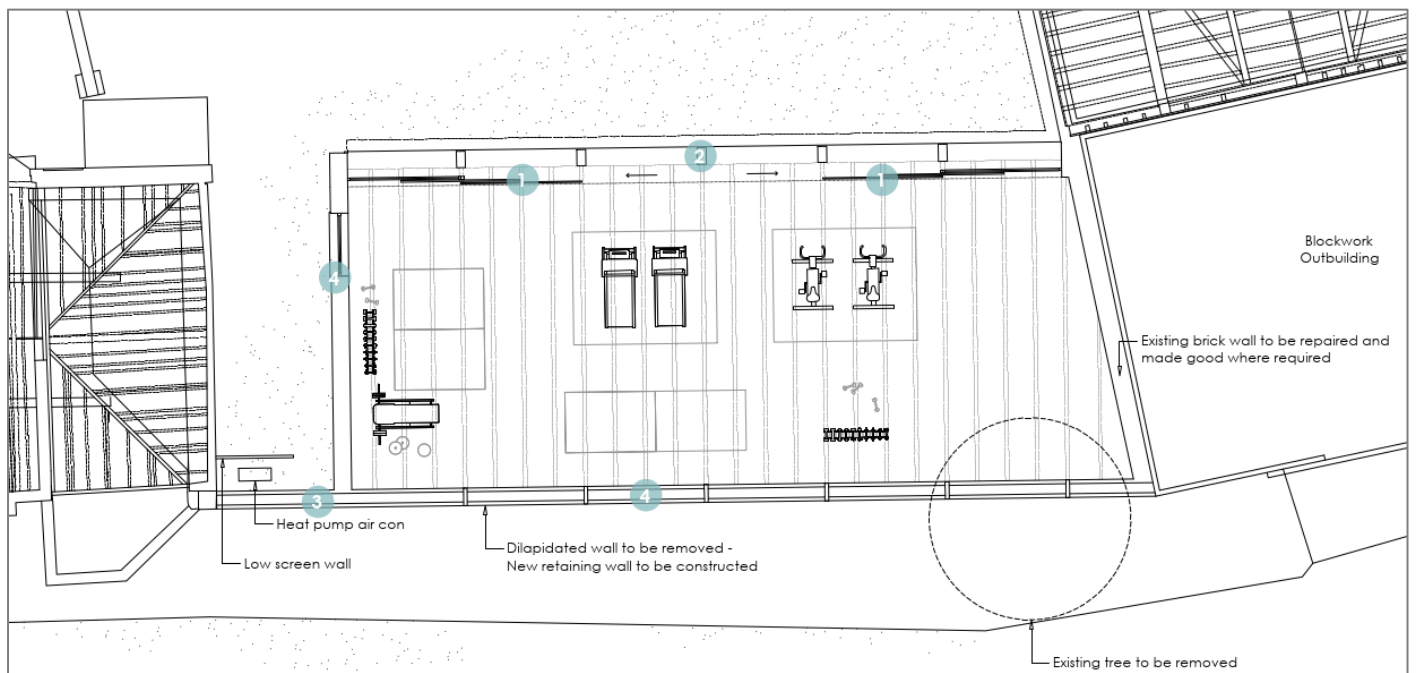
(d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Saved Policy C11 of the Local Plan 1994 also permits the conversion of farm buildings to other uses, subject to various criteria.

The proposal would replace the existing Building 9 for a gym use in connection with the existing residential use of the site. The existing building is a lean-to structure built onto the original farmyard flint boundary wall. The supporting Heritage Statement states that the building is '*constructed from modern machine cut timber and is open fronted with a beaten earth floor. The upright timbers supporting the open front are set into concrete pads and the roof is of corrugated tin. This building was built as an animal winter cover in the early 20th century, a function that was maintained until the farm ceased operation.*'

The following extracts from the submitted plans illustrate the differences between the existing and proposed building:

Existing floor plans and elevations:



In terms of the proposed size and height of the proposed replacement gym building, it will be smaller in footprint than the existing structure, but slightly higher. The use of the building will remain the same, as it is a building within a residential curtilage in incidental residential use. On this basis, as the proposal is for a replacement building that will be in the same use and will not be materially larger than the one it replaces, it would therefore fall within one of the exceptions set out in paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2023 and would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Design and Impact on Listed Building

Development Plan policy places considerable emphasis on the importance of achieving high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2023 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.

The NPPF 2023 also places great significance on the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets, and on new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 196). This is echoed in Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that the significance of the Borough's heritage assets and their setting should always be preserved or enhanced. Saved Policy TC2 of the Local Plan 1994 sets out that for development involving alterations to listed buildings or affecting the setting of listed buildings, the primary consideration is the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals must be sympathetic in terms of their appearance and materials.

The proposals seek to retain works that have been carried out without Listed Building Consent, and offer some improvements to the buildings, such as the repair of original flintwork with lime mortar and replacement oak posts. The repairs and replacement materials, including timber weatherboarding, clay roof tiles, oak posts, slate paving etc. are considered to be high quality and maintain the integrity and setting of the listed buildings within the curtilage of this site.

The only slight element of concern is the existing flint retaining wall that Building 9 backs onto (see photo above). This is in a state of significant disrepair. As part of the proposals for the replacement gym building, the wall is proposed to be rebuilt in brick. However, it would be preferable for this to be replaced adopting the same brick and flint pattern as the existing, incorporating the existing salvaged bricks. This should be conditioned.

The Council's Conservation Officer has raised no objections to the proposals, including the works already carried out, and has commented that the proposals offer the opportunity to secure the refurbishment of a number of structures within the curtilage of the listed building. The Conservation Officer has also recommended that new oak posts should not be treated in order to enable them to age and colour naturally, and those that have already been put in should no longer be treated. This can be added as an informative.

Overall, the proposals would comply with the requirements of Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, Saved Policy TC2 of the Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 131, 135, 196 and 203 of the NPPF 2023.

Character and Appearance of Surrounding Area

With regard to the impact on the landscape, Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 is relevant to this application, relating to green infrastructure. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 2009 will be taken into account in determining applications. The site is located within the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area.

Whilst the proposals would result in some new built development on the site notably in the form of the proposed replacement gym building, this would not represent a significant change in the character and appearance of the site and would not therefore result in any adverse visual impact on landscape character.

Overall, the proposals comprise appropriate alterations in terms of their size, scale and appearance, and would maintain the character and appearance of the site and landscape quality of the surrounding rural area. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in design and landscape terms and would comply with the requirements of Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, and paragraphs 135 and 180 of the NPPF 2023.

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2023 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 135f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land.

Future Occupiers

The proposed changes would not introduce any amenity issues for future occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Neighbouring Properties

Due to detached nature of the property and lack of immediate neighbours, plus the minor nature of the proposals, they would not cause any significant loss of light or privacy, nor have any dominant impact on neighbouring properties.

The proposals would comply with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Parking and Highways

There are no changes to the parking or access arrangements. There would not be a significant impact on parking or highway safety. The proposal would therefore comply with Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Local Plan 1994 and Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Subject to conditions, overall the proposals would be appropriate in the Green Belt and would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding rural landscape. In addition, they would have no adverse impact on the architectural integrity or the setting of the listed buildings on the site. The proposals are also considered to be acceptable with regards to residential amenity and highway matters.

As such, the proposals would comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS11, CS12, CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policies TC2, T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 115, 131, 135, 154, 180, 196 and 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

The listed building consent and planning applications are therefore recommended for permission.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	2 October 2024	Dated:	