



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No:	20231000
Location:	Boughurst Farm, Leywood Road, Meopham, Gravesend
Description:	Demolition of existing workshop and storage building and construction of a new car port, workshop and storage building with associated turning and visitor parking area.
Applicant:	Mr Ohlson & Till
Site Visit Date:	Desktop assessment (see previous application)

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Design and Access Statement including Heritage Statement
Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey
Drawing Issue Sheet
Drawing no. SP_01 (Location Plan)
Drawing no. SP_02 (Block Plan Existing)
Drawing no. SP_03 Rev. A (Block Plan Proposed)
Drawing no. EX_01 (Existing Workshop and Store Building)
Drawing no. EX_05 (Existing South Facing Site Context Elevation)
Drawing no. E_11 Rev. A (Proposed Ground Floor Plan, South and East Elevations)
Drawing no. E_12 Rev. A (Proposed Roof Plan, North and West Elevations)
Drawing no. E_15 Rev. A (Proposed South Facing Site Context Elevation)
Drawing no. P_01 Rev. A (Illustrative Partial Site Plan)
Drawing no. S_01 Rev. A (Illustrative Site Section)

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230393	Demolition of existing workshop and storage building and construction of a new car port, workshop and storage building with associated landscaping, turning and visitor parking areas.	Refused	13.06.2023
20210920	Application for Listed Building Consent for conversion of existing outbuilding to two bedroom all year round holiday let.	Withdrawn	22.02.2022
20210919	Conversion existing outbuilding to two bedroom all year round holiday let.	Withdrawn	22.02.2022
20171004	Application for the approval of condition 2 attached to planning permission reference no. 20170711 relating to details of the extractor fan.	Approval	18.01.2018
20170711	Application for Listed Building Consent for the retention of the en-suite shower room and cupboard in	Permission	24.08.2017

	the fourth bedroom at first floor level.		
20120667	Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of secondary glazing to all windows at first and second floor levels.	Permission	19.09.2012
19980461	The installation of a Yorkstar 24 oil fired condensing boiler in lobby leading to ground floor toilet, with a rear exit external flue.	Permission	25.09.1998
19860199	Use of land as residential garden and erection of 2.75 metre high perimeter fence to tennis court	Permission	27.06.1986

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development and Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

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)

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- SPD – Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (October 2021)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standards (2015)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2026
- Landscape Character Assessment Update 2020
- The Setting of Heritage Assets by Historic England (2017)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Dickens Country Protection Society

The Society notes the site is in an area within which Green Belt policies apply and the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposal would also affect the setting of a listed building. If consent is granted, the Society would suggest that conditions are imposed to control any potential residential use.

KCC Biodiversity

Initial comments 25 October 2023:

No ecological information has been submitted with this application. As a result of reviewing the data we have 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 proposal is adjacent to Luxon Wood, Great Buckland LWS and Ancient Woodland and the proposal is for the demolition of a building and the creation of a car parking area adjacent to an existing pond. Due to the potential for protected species to be present (including reptiles and GCN) within the area it is possible that protected species may be impacted by the works. However, from the information provided, it has not been possible to fully assess the likelihood of any constraints relating to ecology.

To establish the potential for protected species presence, that must be taken account of in the planning decision, in the first instance, high quality, labelled, photographs of all aspects of the building, and the construction zone should be requested. These can then be reviewed by Kent County Council Ecological Advice Service (KCC EAS). These photographs may satisfy KCC EAS that no ecological surveys are necessary at the site. However, where photographs are inconclusive, or indicate possible features suitable for protected species, a simple Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) may need to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist¹, in accordance with good practice guidelines. Any EclA would need to include the following:

- Details of the impacts of development proposals on the ecological baseline established via a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and any additional surveys undertaken;
- Details of any appropriate and achievable ecological mitigation measures;
- Identification of any residual ecological effects after avoidance and mitigation measures have been considered, and any compensation measures required to offset residual effects;
- Details of ecological enhancement measures; and
- Provision of sufficient information to determine whether the project accords with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation.

The above is in line with paragraph 99 of ODPM 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”.

The above is also in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Act 2006.

Further comments 27 November 2023

We have reviewed the ecological information submitted by the applicant and advise that sufficient ecological information has been provided. We agree with the conclusions that it is unlikely that bats will be roosting within the building. There are no suitable opportunities for nesting/roosting barn owls but the site may be used by breeding birds.

The proposal will result in the creation of a turning area, and we understand that no trees will be cleared to create this area. The submitted ecological information did not cover the turning area footprint but based on limited images on google earth and the picture provided by the applicant we are satisfied that it is unlikely that the creation of the turning area will have a significant impacts on biodiversity. We are satisfied that the ecological information does not need to be updated to include the turning area.

While the building does not have potential to be used by roosting bats any lighting associated with the proposal could have a negative impact on bats and other nocturnal animals. Therefore, we advise that any lighting installed must be as follows:

- Downward facing
- On a motion sensor

As the presence of breeding birds cannot be ruled out, we recommend that the following breeding bird informative is included if planning permission is granted:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this Act.

Habitats are present on and around the site that provide opportunities for breeding birds. Any work to vegetation/structures that may provide suitable nesting habitats should be carried out outside of the bird breeding season (1st March to 31st August inclusive) to avoid destroying or damaging bird nests in use or being built. If vegetation/structures need to be removed during the breeding season, mitigation measures need to be implemented. This includes examination by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist immediately prior to starting work. If any nesting birds are found, works must cease until after the birds have finished nesting

Ecological Enhancements

Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and paragraphs 174 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced through the planning system. The ecological report has recommended that 1 bat and 2 bird boxes as installed to enhance biodiversity. As such, if planning permission is granted, we advise the condition(s) below are/is included:

Within 3 months of works commencing an ecological enhancement plan is submitted to the LPA for written approval. It must demonstrate where the bat and bird boxes detailed within the Preliminary Roost Assessment; Arbtech will be located within the site. The plan must be implemented as approved.

Luddesdown Parish Council and the Kent Downs AONB Management Unit were consulted but have not responded.

Internal Consultees

GBC Conservation

I see that this is a resubmission of the previous application 20230393 for the replacement of the workshop, which was refused due to its size. This proposal has reduced the footprint from an L shaped plan to a straight building with no return. The replacement building is still larger than the existing workshop. The appearance will be appropriate to the historic context and when compared with the existing workshop will enhance the setting of the historic group. On balance this proposal would not detract from the setting of the adjacent historic buildings, subject to detail design and materials, which should be conditioned if considered acceptable within the Green Belt.

I assume restrictions will be necessary to ensure there is no change of use to residential, which would

adversely impact on the setting of the listed building.

GBC Environmental Protection

No objection. Code of practice on construction, lighting and asbestos informatives are recommended.

GBC Highways

There are no highway implications, I have no objections.

The car port is suitable for two cars and the pea shingle visitor parking and turning area is remote from the highway, with minimal if any risk of shingle being dragged onto the highway.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 3 properties, on site and in the press. The overall consultation period expired on 3 November 2023.

One letter of support has been received from a neighbouring property. There have been no objections.

The Local Ward Councillors were also consulted and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing workshop and storage building and the construction of a new car port, workshop and storage building with associated landscaping, turning and visitor parking areas.

The proposal is a revision to the previous refused scheme under application 20230393.

The proposed building will be located in the north-eastern corner of the site, in place of an existing building used as a workshop/garden machinery store.

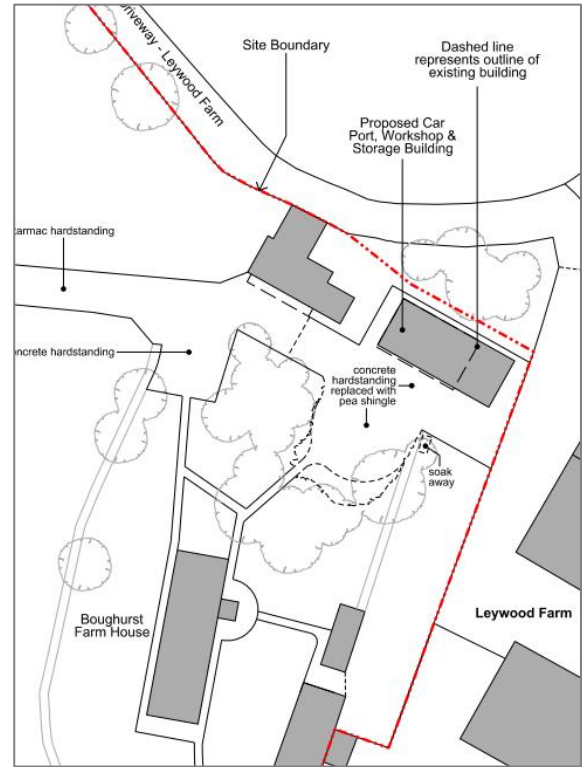
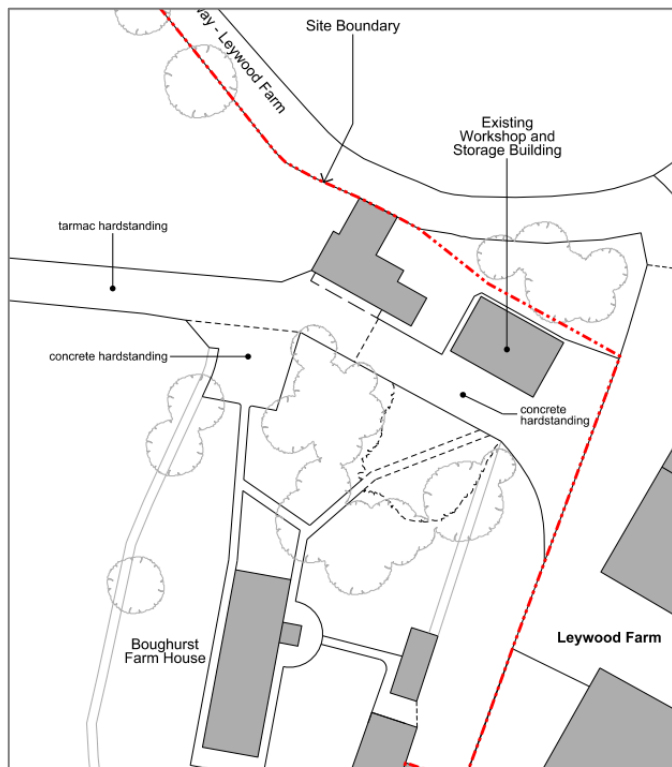
Submitted photos of existing building to be demolished



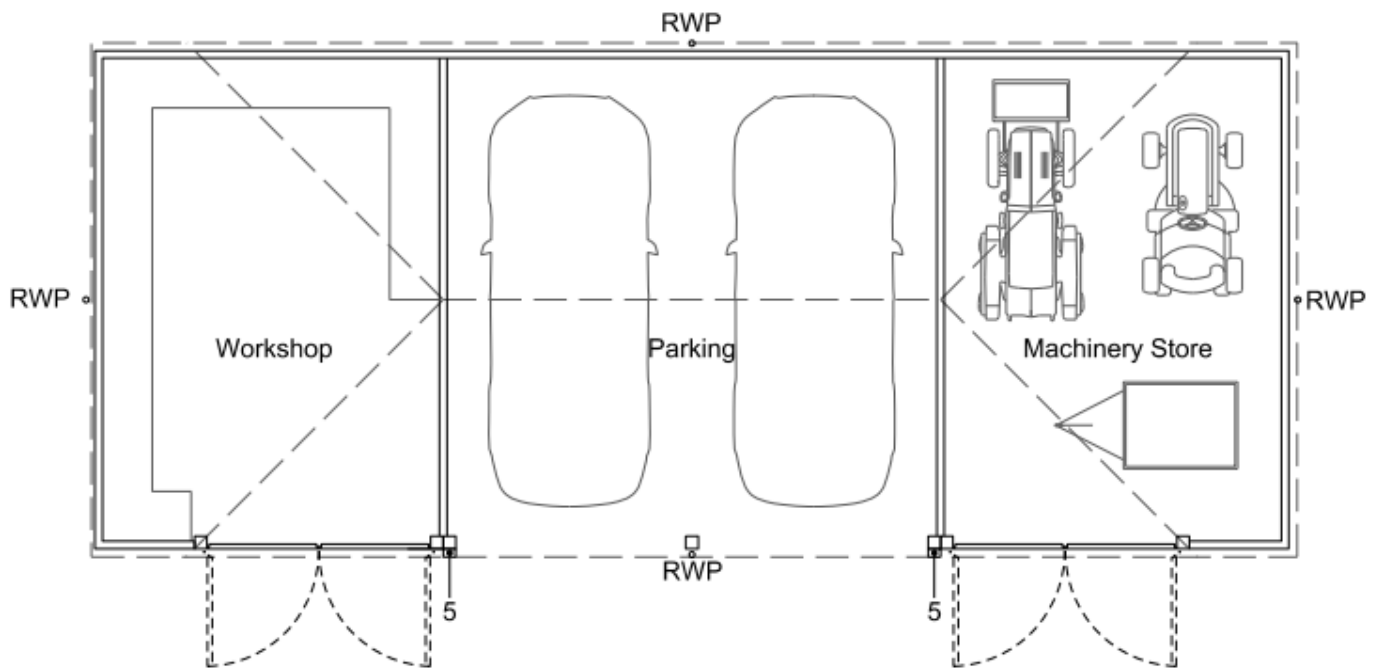
The proposed building will be single storey with a pitched roof. It will have an oak frame, with a brick plinth, black feather-edged horizontal weatherboarding, clay roof tiles and an external downlight on a PIR sensor. The building will be approximately 14.4m wide, 6m deep, and 4.7m high to the top of the pitched roof.

Extract from existing block plan:

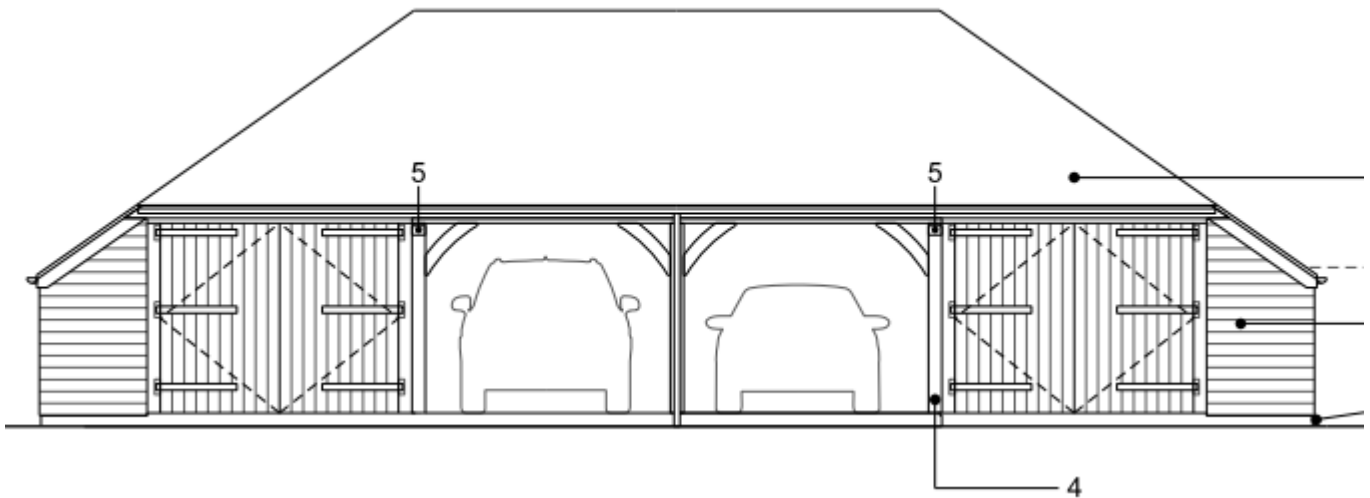
Extract from proposed block plan:



Proposed floor plan



Proposed front (south) elevation



The proposal also involves forming a new turning area with space for visitor parking in front of the proposed new building, which will be shingled.

Background

The proposal is a revision to the previous scheme under application 20230393, which was refused on the following grounds:

1. *The proposed replacement outbuilding, by virtue of its excessive size, is an inappropriate and harmful development in the Green Belt that would be contrary to the requirements of Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 147, 148, 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.*
2. *The proposed replacement outbuilding, by virtue of its excessive size, would fail to conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area. As such, the proposal would fail to comply with the requirements of Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, and paragraphs 130, 174 and 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.*
3. *The proposed outbuilding, by virtue of its excessive size, would adversely affect the setting of the original Grade II Listed Gatehouse and Farmhouse buildings on the site. As such, the proposal would fail to comply with the requirements of Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 190 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.*

This application has reduced the size of the building in an attempt to overcome the refusal grounds.

Main Issues

The application site is located in the countryside in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and in the Green Belt. It is also located in the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area. The main dwelling, Boughurst Farm, is Grade II listed.

The main issues for consideration with this proposal are as follows:

- Principle of development in the Green Belt
- Impact on openness and the landscape character of the surrounding area
- Impact on the main listed building and curtilage listed building on the site.

As before, there are no design, residential amenity or highways concerns.

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 137 of the NPPF 2023). Paragraph 147 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.

Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt (paragraph 149 of the NPPF 2023). However, there are exceptions to this which, as in the case of this proposal, 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;

(g) the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development or would not cause substantial harm to openness and would contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need.

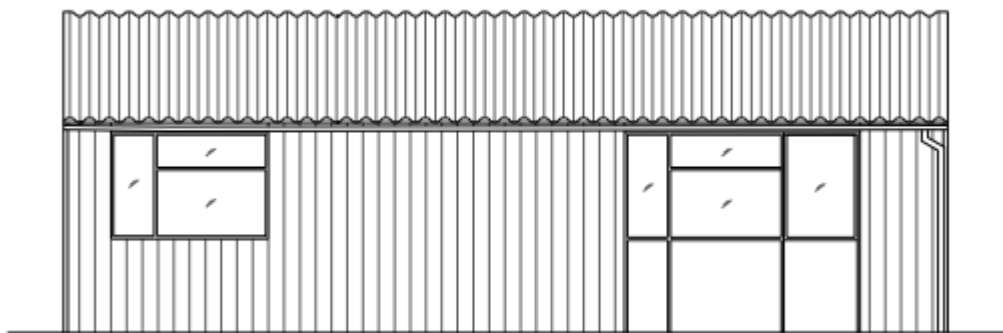
Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those 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.

Saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994 relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, and generally seeks to maintain the open character of the Green Belt and retain a stock of rural dwellings of modest size. In relation to this proposal, criteria (vii) is relevant, which 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.

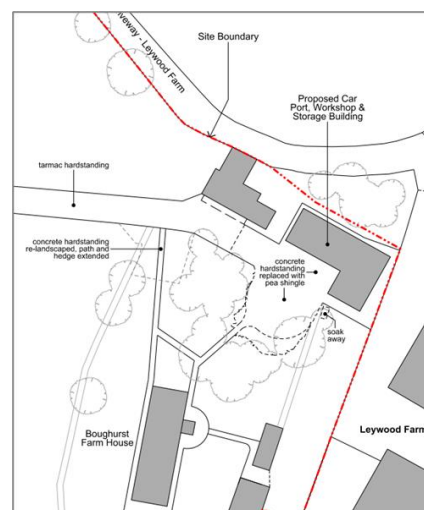
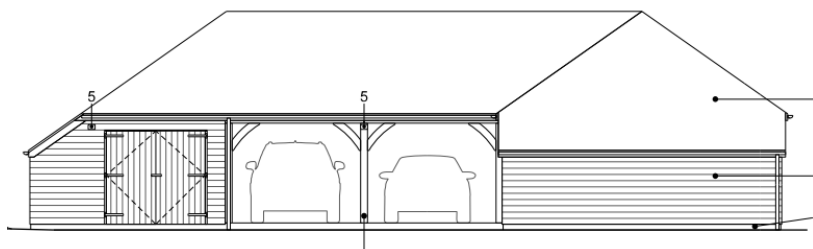
Turning to the matter of the impact of the replacement domestic and ancillary outbuilding in this location in the Green Belt, the proposed replacement outbuilding is increased in size and height compared to the existing outbuilding but is significantly reduced in size compared to the previous proposal at now less than a third increase in size:

	Existing outbuilding	20230393 Proposed outbuilding	Current Proposal	Increase over existing (%)
Gross external floor area (m²)	65 m ²	127 (>62) m ²	86.4 (>21.4) m ²	(20230393) 49 % (Current) 25 %
Ridge / eaves height (m)	3.6 / 2.3 m	4.7 / Between 1.6-2.5 m	4.7 / Between 1.6-2.5 m	23 % (ridge)

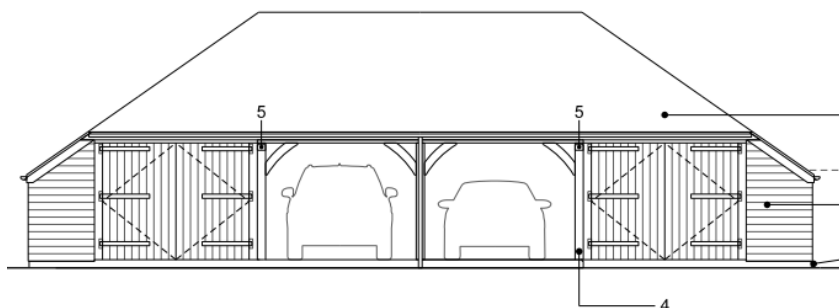
Existing outbuilding (south elevation):



Previous proposed outbuilding:



Currently proposed outbuilding:



The previous proposal sought a replacement outbuilding that was double the size of the existing outbuilding. The reduction in the size of the replacement building under the current proposal to 25% larger than the existing outbuilding, means that it would no longer be considered significantly larger than the existing outbuilding. The proposal would therefore comply with the requirements of paragraph 149 (d) the NPPF; it will not be materially larger than the building it will replace.

Furthermore, whilst the proposed outbuilding would be larger than the existing outbuilding, within the context of the main dwelling and considering its domestic use, the garage would not be a disproportionate addition to the property. As the outbuilding would be located on the site of an existing building, this will also

restrict the spread of development on the site. Overall, the proposal would therefore be an appropriate development in the Green Belt.

As part of the assessment of this proposal, the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt must also be considered.

Impact on Openness and Character and Appearance of Surrounding Area

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF 2023 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Paragraph 001 of the Planning Practice Guidance 2019 on Green Belts looks to assess the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt by taking into account the spatial and visual aspects of a development, its duration and remediability, and the activity levels generated.

As established above, the application proposal, by virtue of its reduced size, would not involve an inappropriate form of development at the application site that would be harmful to the Green Belt.

The application site can be described as previously developed land as it is part of an existing residential site. As the proposed development would not provide affordable housing, the proposal can also be judged against the first part of paragraph 145(g) of the NPPF 2019, which seeks to prevent a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development on a site. In this case, the proposal is considered as an appropriate development but its impact on the openness of the Green Belt must be also assessed, and in turn the impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The existing outbuilding is a fairly modestly sized, subservient, domestic storage building within the curtilage of a large, detached dwelling on a very generous plot. The proposed replacement outbuilding will introduce a larger structure than what is existing. However, the footprint of the proposed outbuilding would no longer be larger than that of the main dwelling on the site (which is approximately 115m²) and would be more in line with the size of the Gatehouse adjacent to it (70m²) and would therefore comprise a more appropriately sized replacement domestic outbuilding. Given the reduction in the size of the proposal and the fact that the proposal involves a replacement building, the amount of harm to the openness of the Green Belt in this location will be limited and localised, and is therefore not considered to adversely impact openness.

Landscape Character

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 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 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well-designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF 2023 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 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Reflective of paragraph 176 of the NPPF 2023, 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 AONB. 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 AONB.

The application site is also located in the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area 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 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) will be taken into account in determining applications.

In relation to the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area, the LCA states the area is defined by undulating topography with arable farmland and pasture, irregular field patterns, fields divided by native hedgerows and areas of native woodland that all contribute to the rural character of the area. The condition of the landscape is generally good, its sensitivity high. The guidelines for the area focus on maintaining the character of sparse and distinctive built development and conserve small-scale farmsteads.

The site is fairly open at the front with post and rail fencing and open gates, though Boughhurst Farm and the existing outbuilding are set well back from the road. The larger scale of the proposed outbuilding would be visible from the front of the site, but given that the proposal involves a replacement building with a much reduced footprint, it would not enclose the corner of the site or restrict views through to the rear to any significant degree.

Photo of Site Frontage:



The proposed replacement outbuilding is well designed with the use of high-quality materials. It is traditional and in keeping with the character and appearance of domestic storage/garaging in the rural area. The layout is acceptable, and access would be appropriate. The proposed re-organisation/shingling of an existing hardstanding for parking/turning is also acceptable, and landscaping/planting details for this area could be conditioned to ensure their quality.

Overall, the impact from a public vantage point would be limited and very localised. Whilst the proposal would result in additional built development on the site, the garage/carport would be subservient in relation to the main dwelling and would not represent a significant change in the overall character and appearance of the site. The reduced size of the outbuilding would therefore not significantly impact on the surrounding

Landscape Character Area and would not be considered to be intrusive within the AONB setting.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed outbuilding would not detract from the openness of the Green Belt and would conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the AONB and Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area. As such, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 130, 149, 174 and 176 of the NPPF 2021.

A condition should be attached ensuring that the garage is not used for any other purpose other than a garage to ensure its use remains incidental.

Design and Impact on Listed Building(s)

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 197). 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 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 massing, scale, appearance and materials.

The main house, 'Boughurst Farm' is a Grade II Listed Building. The Gatehouse building immediately adjacent to the existing outbuilding to be replaced is a curtilage listed building. The current outbuilding is clearly subservient in scale, massing and appearance to both the adjacent Gatehouse and main dwelling, but the existing modern structure has no historic significance.

It is appreciated that the appearance of the existing outbuilding is utilitarian and nondescript, and that it would be worthy of replacement.

This proposal has reduced the footprint from an L shaped plan to a straight building with no return. The replacement building is still larger than the existing workshop. However, the appearance will be appropriate to the historic context and when compared with the existing workshop, it will enhance the setting of the historic group. The revisions to the scheme result in a proposal that would not detract from the setting of the adjacent historic buildings, subject to detail design and materials, which should be conditioned.

Restriction via condition will be necessary to ensure there is no change of use to residential, which would adversely impact on the setting of the listed building.

On the basis of the revisions, the proposed replacement building would comply with the relevant conservation requirements of Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, Saved Policy TC2 of the Local Plan 1994 and section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Biodiversity

Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect sites designated for their biodiversity value based on their level of importance and enhance, restore, recreate and maintain habitats particularly within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, which is a designation of this site.

The development is located within the curtilage of a residential property and on the site of an existing outbuilding.

The submitted ecological information, including a Preliminary Roost Assessment Survey, was considered to be sufficient, and concluded that it is unlikely that bats will be roosting within the building. The turning area

will not have significant impacts on biodiversity.

Lighting should be conditioned to take account of bats and other nocturnal animals. In addition, the details about the bat and bird boxes recommended within the submitted ecological information, should be conditioned to be submitted for approval.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposal would not be significantly detrimental to biodiversity and therefore is acceptable in this regard.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Under this revised proposal, the reduced size of the proposed new car port, workshop and storage building would not harm the openness of the Green Belt and would conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Luddesdown Downs Landscape Character Area. Additionally, the revised proposal would not adversely affect the setting of the original Grade II Listed Gatehouse and Farmhouse buildings on the site. As such, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS12, CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policies TC2 and C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 130, 149, 174, 176, 190 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

The previous refusal grounds are considered to have been overcome and the application is accordingly recommended for permission.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision.)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	27 November 2023	Dated:	28 November 2023