

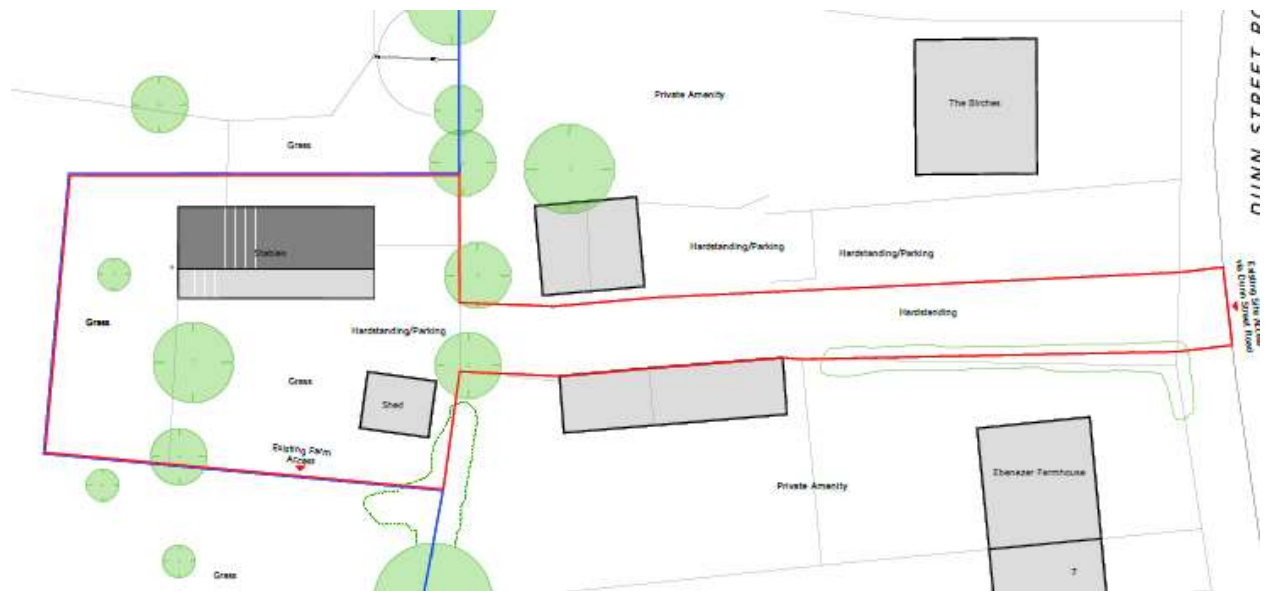
REFERENCE NO - 21/506626/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Conversion of an existing stable at Stud Farm to provide a new two bedroom dwelling with associated parking, landscaping, private amenity space and external store (Resubmission to 21/503146/FULL).		
ADDRESS Stables At Stud Farm, Dunn Street Road, Bredhurst, Kent, ME7 3NA		
RECOMMENDATION REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION Due to the building location in open countryside, the domestication of the buildings appearance with the insertion of fenestration and large hard standing areas the proposal would have an adverse impact on local character. This impact, together with the introduction of domestic paraphernalia into the open landscape would result in urbanising development in this rural landscape, causing unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The development would therefore neither maintain or enhance the distinctiveness of the countryside and Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As required by adopted policy, the application fails to demonstrate that any attempt has been made at securing an alternative commercial re use of the building such as an alternative stables use or a holiday let. The development is contrary to SS1, SP17, DM1, DM30 and DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 Policies SD9.		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Called in by Boxley Parish Council for the grounds set out in section 5 of this report.		
WARD Boxley	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Boxley	APPLICANT Ms N Hood AGENT David Bedford
TARGET DECISION DATE 01/04/2022 (EOT)		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 26/01/2022

Relevant Planning History

- 0.1 21/503146/FULL - Conversion of an existing stable at Stud Farm to provide a new two bedroom dwelling with associated parking, landscaping, private amenity space and external store.

Refused – 12/08/2021 on the following grounds:

- 0.2 The proposed development is in an unsustainable location with the proposed dwelling remote from local services and facilities which would result in future occupiers being reliant on the private motor vehicle to travel for their day to day needs and access to facilities. This would be contrary to the aims of sustainable development as set out in Policies SS1, SP17, DM1 and DM5 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).
- 0.3 The proposal, by reason of the building location in open countryside, the domestication of the building appearance with the insertion of fenestration and large hardstanding areas would have an adverse impact on the design and appearance of the building and the site generally, and this impact together with the introduction of domestic paraphernalia into the open landscape would result in urbanising development in this rural landscape, causing unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The development would therefore neither maintain or enhance the distinctiveness of the countryside and Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is contrary to policies SS1, SP17, DM1, DM30 and DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 to 2019 (Second Revision) (2014) Policies SD1, SD2, SD7 and SD9.
- 0.4 The application fails to demonstrate that any attempt has been made at securing an alternative commercial re use of the building such as alternative stables use or a holiday let, contrary to policy DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).



Existing Site Layout Plan

1 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The application site covering an area of around 0.07 hectares is located in a backland location to the rear of existing properties fronting Dunn Street Road. The site is accessed from Dunn Street Road by a long private road between two of these existing properties. The prevailing pattern of local existing development consists of buildings fronting main roads with secondary ancillary buildings in the rear gardens with the

application building located to the west of the rear garden boundary line of properties facing Dunn Street Road.

- 1.02 The application site is currently occupied by a single storey windowless breeze block stable building with a tiled roof, associated storage shed and grass paddock. The site is located within the Kent Downs AONB with a public footpath (KH9) located to the south at the end of the row of properties fronting Dunn Street Road. The site is located in the countryside by virtue of being outside any defined settlement boundary.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The application proposes the conversion of the stables into a two-bedroom dwelling with associated parking. There will be one extension to the northern elevation. This extension would project 1.8 metres from the external wall with a width of 4 metres. The extension would have a small lean to roof with a ridge and eaves height of 2.3 metres and 2.1 metres respectively. The proposed extension would house an external store and refuse area.
- 2.02 External alterations also include the introduction of several windows to the north, south and eastern elevations and sliding patio doors to the western elevation. Internal alterations include new internal walls with the dwelling providing 2 bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen and living/dining area.
- 2.03 The development would have a private amenity space. Access would be by an existing private drive and two parking spaces are shown to be provided to the south of the dwelling within the new curtilage. The existing shed to the south-east of the site will be demolished.

3. POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017:
SS1- Maidstone borough spatial strategy
SP17- Countryside
SP21 Economic Development
DM1- Principles of good design
DM2- Sustainable design
DM3- Natural Environment
DM5 - Development on brownfield land
DM23- Parking standards
DM30- Design principles in the countryside
DM31- Conversion of rural buildings

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021):
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan (2021-2026)

Local Plan Review (2021)

The Council's Regulation 19 Local Plan has recently finished public consultation and provides assessment criteria for economic development proposals in the countryside.

Whilst this document is a material planning consideration, at this time it is not apportioned much weight. The weight to be attached to individual policies will be adjusted upwards or downwards depending on whether objections have been received.

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The current programme involves submission to the Planning Inspectorate in Spring 2022.

Policy SP9 of the review has similar goals to policy SP17 stating that:

“Development proposals in the countryside will not be permitted unless they accord with other policies in this plan, and they will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.”

It also states that “Great weight should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.”

Policy DM31 is to be retained with the “Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified to reflect NPPF”.

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

Local Residents:

- 4.1 In addition to the site notice, 5 neighbouring properties were consulted by direct mail regarding the proposed development. Nine representations were received in, seven in support of the development, and two neutral.
- 4.2 The comments in support of the application are on the basis that the development would enhance the area, and there would be no loss of amenity, no increase in vehicle movements, and no adverse impact on the AONB.
- 4.3 The neutral comments relate to boundary issues and parking arrangements.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Boxley Parish Council

The NPPF supports the reuse of redundant buildings where an enhancement to their setup and to the setting would result. It is already of permanent and substantial construction (ref.8.3 in the policy) and will maintain its external features and walls being only converted internally. This will maintain its current visual external form and appearance and will be simplistic in design. It would be converted without major or complete reconstruction and remain in keeping with the landscape which was improved several years ago with green screening.

Motorised access already exists from Dunn Street. Main services already exist being mains electric and a connection to foul drainage. The applicant has attempted to sell the equestrian business but without success. There would be minimal consequences resulting from the external fabric of the building on the landscape and near neighbours.

I therefore have no hesitation in recommending to the Officer that approval be given but in the event of a recommendation for refusal I wish this application to be called in to the Planning Committee.

KCC Highways

This consultee responded with their standing advice, no objections received.

Environmental Health

No objections subject to land contamination conditions.

KCC Ecology

No objections subject to conditions relating to ecological mitigation measures and enhancements and lighting.

6. APPRAISAL

6.01 The key issues for consideration relate to:

- Principle of converting this former stable building into a dwelling
- Brownfield land DM5 and sustainability of the location
- Design, appearance, the countryside and the Kent Downs AONB
- Standard of proposed accommodation
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Ecology

Principle of converting this former stable building into a dwelling

6.02 Local Plan policy SP21 (vii) advises that the commercial re-use of existing rural buildings in the countryside will be prioritised over the 'conversion' to residential use, in accordance with policy DM31.

6.03 Policy DM31 considers the 'conversion' of rural buildings to other uses including residential stating that "Outside of the settlement boundaries as defined on the policies map, proposals for the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings which meet a number of listed criteria will be permitted. These criteria are considered below.

DM31 1 i) The building is of a form, bulk, scale and design which takes account of and reinforces landscape character

6.04 The application building currently has the functional appearance of a rural building constructed of breeze blocks and a tiled roof. There is no record of planning permission for the building. The proposal would not provide a building of a form, bulk, scale and design which takes account of and reinforces landscape character and therefore the conversion to residential use would be contrary to policy DM31, 1i).

DM31 1 ii). The building is of permanent, substantial and sound construction and is capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction.

6.05 There is no independent evidence submitted with the application that the existing building is structurally sound as was recommended in the pre application advice.

6.06 With few openings in the existing building the conversion to residential use would involve significant work to insert new windows including large patio doors that have an overly domestic appearance. With no evidence of the structural condition of the building and the significant works to insert windows and doors the submitted proposal would not meet the requirement of policy DM31 1 ii).

DM31 1 iii). Any alterations proposed as part of the conversion are in keeping with the landscape and building character in terms of materials used, design and form

6.07 The proposed changes including the insertion of large patio doors, the facing materials and the parking and garden areas would change the character of this rural building and site to one with an overly domestic suburban appearance. The current proposal seeks to use a darker coloured cladding system and would include a 'slated cover' over one of the larger patio doors. This is not assessed as preventing the building from

gaining a suburban appearance. In this context the proposal fails to meet the requirement of DM31. 1 iii).

DM 1 iv) There is sufficient room in the curtilage of the building to park the vehicles of those who will live there without detriment to the visual amenity of the countryside.

- 6.08 The submitted proposal includes a large area of hardstanding that will provide circulation space and two car parking spaces. This layout has a suburban appearance that will extend west out into the countryside past the rear garden boundary line of properties to the east. Whilst there is room within the curtilage for two parking spaces, the provision of these spaces and the circulation space will be detrimental to the visual amenity of the countryside. The proposal fails to meet the requirements of DM31 1 iv).



DM 1 v). No fences, walls or other structures associated with the use of the building or the definition of its curtilage or any sub-division of it are erected which would harm landscape character.

- 6.09 The submitted plans appear to show all the boundaries marked by "3 Bar post and riven chestnut boundary fencing". This fencing would in acceptable in landscape terms, but it is questioned whether this style of fencing would provide the necessary security and privacy to future occupants. In this context there is likely to be future pressure for more substantial boundary treatments. The proposal would meet the requirements of DM31 1 v).

DM31 3 i). Every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a suitable business reuse for the building.

- 6.10 A financial viability assessment has been submitted with the application it concludes "The outcome of these appraisals demonstrates that the conversion of the application building to a two-bedroom residential dwelling is the most financially viable alternative for the site. It is therefore submitted that the proposed development would be in accordance with policy DM31 of the adopted Local Plan (2017)." It does not

demonstrate that any attempt has been made to secure a suitable business reuse for the building.

6.11 The conclusions of the submitted financial viability report submitted with the application are in line with the evidence base behind policy DM31. Policy DM31 was adopted to ensure that business and commercial floorspace was retained where possible in rural locations. Policy DM31 is adopted as there is pressure for conversion of commercial floorspace in the countryside to more valuable residential accommodation as is proposed with the current application. The submitted financial viability assessment confirms that residential accommodation is more viable than residential use. There is no evidence available to suggest that that a further commercial use could not be accommodated within the building.

6.12 Following the above assessment, the submitted proposal fails to meet the requirements of DM31 3 i).

DM31 3 ii). Residential conversion is the only means of providing a suitable re-use for a listed building, an unlisted building of quality and traditional construction which is grouped with one or more listed buildings in such a way as to contribute towards the setting of the listed building(s), or other buildings which contribute to landscape character or which exemplify the historical development of the Kentish landscape.

6.13 The application building is a single storey windowless breeze block stable building with a tiled roof, as are found on agricultural sites throughout the Kent countryside. It is not listed and does not contribute towards the setting of a listed building. The building does not contribute to landscape character or exemplify the historical development of the Kentish landscape. The proposal does not meet the requirement of DM31 3ii). In this context this is not a building that should be preserved through conversion.



Existing Site Photograph

DM31 3 iii). There is sufficient land around the building to provide a reasonable level of outdoor space for the occupants, and the outdoor space provided is in harmony with the character of its setting.

6.14 The submitted proposal includes a large area of hardstanding that will provide circulation space and two car parking spaces. This layout has a suburban appearance that will extend west out into the countryside past the rear garden boundary line of properties to the east.

- 6.15 Whilst there is room within the curtilage for two parking spaces, the provision of these spaces and the circulation space will be detrimental to the visual amenity of the countryside. The proposal fails to meet the requirements of policy DM31 3 iii).

Brownfield land DM5 and sustainability of the location

- 6.16 Policy DM 5 of the local plan states "Exceptionally, the residential redevelopment of brownfield sites in the countryside...." will be permitted where they meet the following criteria.
- a) The site is not of high environmental value.
 - b) The 'redevelopment' will result in a significant environmental improvement.
 - c) The density reflects the character and appearance of the area (DM12).
 - d) The site is, or can reasonably be made, accessible by sustainable modes to Maidstone urban area, a rural service centre or larger village.

Consideration of DM5 a) and b) above

- 6.17 The questions here are whether the stables building and the site are currently of high environmental value, and whether the 'redevelopment' will result in a significant environmental improvement to this building.
- 6.18 The application site is in the Kent Downs AONB which falls into the definition of high environmental value. The stable building itself is not listed and has no particular merit as a rural building.
- 6.19 The submitted proposal with the changes to the appearance of this building and the introduction of hardstanding car parking and access areas to create a building with a suburban domestic appearance in this rural location is not considered to represent an improvement to the site. The proposal is contrary to DM5 a) and b).

Consideration of DM5 c) above

- 6.20 Policy DM12 advises "All new housing will be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated. Development proposals that fail to make efficient use of land for housing, having regard to the character and location of the area, will be refused permission". The density of the proposal is acceptable in this location and the development is in line with DM5c).

Consideration of DM5 d) above.

- 6.21 The previous refusal assessed that the application site is in an 'unsustainable location'. Bredhurst is approximately 0.4 miles and Lordswood is 2 miles from the application site, Bredhurst and Lordswood do not have the services or facilities such as larger supermarkets, public transport and employment opportunities that are needed to avoid the need to travel by private vehicle. The boundary of Maidstone urban area is approximately 4 miles away to the south of the application site.
- 6.22 It was assessed, that to access Maidstone urban area on foot would require walking a long distance alongside either unlit, single lane roads or roads with high-speed limits. Additionally, the distance itself makes it unreasonable to assume occupants would walk.

- 6.23 It is accepted that this is the 'situation' for dwellings in this area. However as detailed within paragraph 5.4.1 of the applicants submitted statement "Policy DM31 of the Maidstone Local Plan makes provision for the conversion of rural buildings, including to residential use (to which locational sustainability is not a criteria consideration), providing a clear acknowledgement that the principle of residential conversions in rural areas, where there will inevitably be a greater reliance on the private car can be acceptable in the context of the sustainable benefits resulting from re-use development."
- 6.24 On this basis it is assessed that this application should benefit from the same considerations and that a refusal on the basis of sustainability would not be appropriate.

Design, appearance, the countryside and the Kent Downs AONB

- 6.25 Policy SP 17 of the Local Plan provides advice on the countryside which is defined as all those parts of the plan area outside the designated settlement boundaries on the policies map. Development proposals in the countryside will not be permitted unless they accord with other policies in this plan, and they will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.26 Policy SP 17 states that great weight should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty including the management plan. Account should be taken of the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document.
- 6.27 Policy DM 30 (Design principles in the countryside) states that proposals which would create high quality design, satisfy the requirements of other policies in this plan and meet a number of stated criteria will be permitted. These criteria are considered below.
- i. The type, siting, materials and design, mass and scale of development and the level of activity would maintain, or where possible, enhance local distinctiveness including landscape features.
- 6.28 Adopted Local Plan policy DM 1 states that proposals which would create high quality design and meet a number of criteria will be permitted. These criteria include responding positively to, and where possible enhancing the local character of the area. Particular regard will be paid to scale, height, materials, detailing, mass, bulk, articulation, and site coverage incorporating a high quality, modern design approach.
- 6.29 NPPF (2021) paragraph 130 advises that planning decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area. Developments should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and be sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 134 advises that permission should be refused for development of poor design.
- 6.30 The National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government October 2019) at paragraph 38 states "An understanding of the context...of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality...".
- 6.31 The proposal will introduce a new dwelling in a backland location in the countryside that is in conflict with the existing pattern of local development. The pattern of development in this location is made up of dwellings fronting the main road with semi-

public front gardens. Land at the rear provides private rear gardens and relief in terms of noise and disturbance from the main road. The current proposal to the west of the existing properties will upset and damage this layout introducing a new dwelling in the open countryside.

ii. Impacts on the appearance and character of the landscape would be appropriately mitigated. Suitability and required mitigation will be assessed through the submission of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments to support development proposals in appropriate circumstances.

- 6.32 Policy SP 17 aims to prevent development in the countryside that would not accord with other policies of the plan, to protect the character and appearance of the countryside, and to give great weight to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.
- 6.33 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF includes the advice that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, and recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
- 6.34 Paragraph 172 advises that great weight should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and scenic beauty of protected areas such as AONBs where the current application site is located.
- 6.35 The NPPF advice regarding the countryside is clear that it is the 'intrinsic' character and beauty that should be protected, and the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs with this relating to the protection of the nature of the land in itself. This assessment is separate from considering what roadside or other public views are available (public footpath KH9 is located to the south of the site).
- 6.36 The application site is located in the Bredhurst landscape character area in the published Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment and described as an area of downland located on the upper plateau of the North Downs in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). "The landscape comprises a mixture of arable fields, paddocks, remnant orchards and small blocks of woodland...".
- 6.37 The Landscape Character Assessment reaches a conclusion of 'restore and improve' making the following comments.
- Restore and improve the rural setting to historical settlements such as Bredhurst and Stockbury villages through delivery of appropriate architectural and landscape design, increasing native tree cover and by discouraging fly tipping.
 - Avoid further built development which is out of context in terms of materials and design.
- 6.38 The proposed development does not protect or enhance this countryside location and will have an urbanising effect. The proposal will provide a building with an overly suburban and domestic appearance with large areas of hardstanding in a prominent rural location.
- 6.39 The proposal site is in an exposed and prominent location visible from local viewpoints and a new dwelling in this location with associated domestic paraphernalia would harm rural character and would fail to maintain local distinctiveness. The proposed

development does not protect or enhance what this countryside location and will have an urbanising effect.

iii. Proposals would not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads; unsympathetic change to the character of a rural lane which is of landscape, amenity, nature conservation, or historic or archaeological importance or the erosion of roadside verges.

6.40 The proposal will not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads.

iv. Where built development is proposed, there would be no existing building or structure suitable for conversion or re-use to provide the required facilities. Any new buildings should, where practicable, be located adjacent to existing buildings or be unobtrusively located and well screened by existing or proposed vegetation which reflect the landscape character of the area.

6.41 There are no other relevant buildings. The submitted proposals show open site boundaries with no proposed landscape screening.

v. Where an extension or alteration to an existing building is proposed, it would be of a scale which relates sympathetically to the existing building and the rural area; respect local building styles and materials; have no significant adverse impact on the form, appearance or setting of the building, and would respect the architectural and historic integrity of any adjoining building or group of buildings of which it forms part.

6.42 This is not considered relevant to the current application.

Account should be taken of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Guidelines SPD

6.43 The application site is found within the Kent Downs ANOB. Policy SD2 of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan states that the local character, qualities and distinctiveness of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, setting and materials of new development.

6.44 Policy SD9 of the management plan states that the particular historic and locally distinctive character of rural settlements and buildings of the Kent Downs AONB will be maintained and strengthened. The use of sustainably sourced locally-derived materials for restoration and conversion work will be encouraged. New developments will be expected to apply appropriate design guidance and to be complementary to local character in form, siting, scale, contribution to settlement pattern and choice of materials. The submitted proposal is contrary to these policies and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan.

Standard of proposed accommodation

6.45 Local Plan policy DM 1 Principles of good design states that proposals which would create high quality design and will be permitted where they respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses by ensuring that development does not result in, or excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movements, overlooking or visual intrusion, and that the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy or light enjoyed by the occupiers of Nearby properties.

6.46 The proposed dwelling with the insertion of new windows and patio doors appears to be provide good levels of daylight and sunlight for a future occupant with room sizes

suitable for their function and adequate access. The proposed dwelling in this rural location is on a substantial plot comparative to others which is remote from neighbours and future residents would have adequate private amenity space.

Neighbouring amenity

- 6.47 Local Plan policy DM1 states that proposals which would create high quality design and will be permitted where they respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses by ensuring that development does not result in, or excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movements, overlooking or visual intrusion, and that the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties.
- 6.48 Based on the location and the separation distance of the stables building from other residential properties it is not considered that this single dwelling would have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Ecology

- 6.49 Policy DM3 states "To enable Maidstone borough to retain a high quality of living and to be able to respond to the effects of climate change, developers will ensure that new development protects and enhances the natural environment by incorporating measures where appropriate"
- 6.50 Subject to conditions raised in the consultation response from KCC Ecology and the introduction of measures to achieve net biodiversity gain the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to ecology and biodiversity.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.01 The proposal, by reason of the building location in open countryside, the domestication of the building appearance with the insertion of fenestration and large hardstanding areas would have an adverse impact on the design and appearance of the building and the site generally, and this impact together with the introduction of domestic paraphernalia into the open landscape would result in urbanising development in this rural landscape, causing unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The development would therefore neither maintain or enhance the distinctiveness of the countryside and Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is contrary to policies SS1, SP17, DM1, DM30 and DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2024 policy SD9.
- 7.02 The application fails to demonstrate that any attempt has been made at securing an alternative commercial re use of the building such as an alternative stables use or a holiday let, contrary to policy DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

8. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposal, by reason of the building location in open countryside, the domestication of the building appearance with the insertion of fenestration and large hardstanding areas would have an adverse impact on the design and appearance of

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the building and the site generally, and this impact together with the introduction of domestic paraphernalia into the open landscape would result in urbanising development in this rural landscape, causing unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The development would therefore neither maintain or enhance the distinctiveness of the countryside and Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is contrary to policies SS1, SP17, DM1, DM30 and DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2024 policy SD9.

2) The application fails to demonstrate that any attempt has been made at securing an alternative commercial re use of the building such as an alternative stables use or a holiday let, contrary to policy DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Case officer: William Fletcher