

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NUMBER: 23/503936/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL: Partial demolition and conversion of existing redundant stable building to a single dwellinghouse with associated parking, ecological enhancements, and landscaping (resubmission of 22/505429/FULL).		
ADDRESS: The Old Stable Dunn Street Road Bredhurst Gillingham Kent ME7 3LY		
RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestication of the building with insertion of fenestration and domestic paraphernalia would have an adverse impact on the design and appearance of the building and local character of this open rural landscape causing unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the Kent Downs National Landscape. • Development would neither maintain or enhance the distinctiveness of the countryside and Kent Downs National Landscape, contrary to policies SS1, SP17, DM1, DM30 and DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 to 2019 (Second Revision) (2014) Policies SD1, SD2, SD7 and SD9. • Fails to demonstrate that an alternative commercial use would not be feasible contrary to policy DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). 		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE: Call in by Bredhurst Parish Council if officer recommendation is to refuse permission. The Parish Council did not give any planning reasons for the committee referral.		
WARD: Boxley	PARISH Bredhurst	COUNCIL: APPLICANT: Ms Deana Foulds AGENT: Bloomfields
CASE OFFICER: Francis Amekor	VALIDATION DATE: 14/09/23	DECISION DUE DATE: 29/02/24
ADVERTISED AS A DEPARTURE: No		

Relevant planning history

- a) 22/505429/FULL Partial demolition and conversion of existing stable building to a dwellinghouse with associated parking, ecological enhancements and landscaping including changes to fenestration. Refused 13.01.2023 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 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*

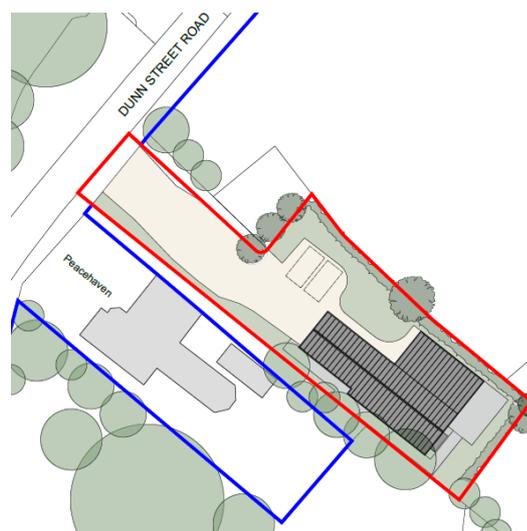
Policy Framework (2021) and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 to 2019 (Second Revision) (2014) Policies SD1, SD2, SD7 and SD9.

- 2) *The application fails to demonstrate that any attempt has been made at securing an alternative commercial re use of the building, contrary to policy DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*
- 3) *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).*

MAIN REPORT

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The site is in the countryside and in the Kent Downs National Landscape (previously known as the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The site is occupied by a single storey disused stable building set back from and accessed from Dunn Street Road. The building has a rectangular shape with blockwork external elevations. The shallow pitched roof is covered in fibre cement roof. There is a hardstanding area in front of the building used for parking.
- 1.02 To the south of the site is the residential dwelling known as 'Peacehaven'. To the north and east there are paddocks that form part of the open countryside character. The Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment identifies the wider area as falling within the Bredhurst to Bicknor North Downs Landscape Character Area. The advice is to improve and conserve character where condition is poor.
- 1.03 A public footpath (KH55) runs north south across the open countryside to the east of the application site.



Proposed Block Plan

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.01 This application proposes demolition of the south-eastern part of the existing stable building (40m² of floorspace equating to 20 percent of the total footprint). It is proposed that the retained part of the building (floor area of 166m²) is converted into a four- bedroom dwelling. The building will have a zinc roof and timber cladding to the external elevations of the lean to.

- 2.02 The existing area of hardstanding (circa 234m²) will be retained as the setting to the converted building, with an additional car parking area provided (45m²). The land to the side of the building provides an amenity area.
- 2.03 Internally, it is proposed to introduce new internal walls to provide an open plan living room, dining area, 4 bedrooms which will include storage space, one ensuite bathroom, and a family bathroom.
- 2.04 The current application is a resubmission of the previously refused planning application under reference number 22/505429/FULL. The changes include the following:
- Introduction of timber cladding, recladding of the roof with zinc.
 - Reduction in the amount of fenestration openings to follow existing stable openings where possible.
 - Structural details of the existing building
 - Financial viability report
 - Reduction in hardstanding with surface material changed from tarmac to grid meshed parking system.

3. POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2011-2031):

SS1 Maidstone borough spatial strategy.

SP17 Countryside.

DM1 Principles of good design.

DM3 Natural environment.

DM5 Development on brownfield land.

DM8 External lighting.

DM12 Density of housing development.

DM21 Assessing the transport impacts of development.

DM23 Parking standards.

DM30 Design principles in the countryside.

DM31 Conversion of rural buildings.

Emerging Draft Policy: Maidstone Draft Local Plan:

The Regulation 22 Local Plan Review (LPR) submission comprises the draft plan for submission (Regulation 19) dated October 2023, the representations and proposed main modifications. It is therefore a material consideration and attracts some weight. The LPR has been through Stage 1 and 2 Hearings and the main modifications the Inspector considers are required to make it sound are out to public consultation, so it is at an advanced stage. However, responses to the consultation need to be considered by the Inspector along with him producing his Final Report so the LPR is considered to attract moderate weight at the current time. The relevant policies in the Maidstone Draft Local Plan are as follows:

SS1 – Maidstone borough spatial strategy

SP9 – Development in the countryside

SP15 – Principles of good design

Q & D4 – Design principles in the Countryside

HOU5 – Density of residential development

TRA4 – Parking standards (Appendix B)

Q&D6 – Technical Standards

Q&D7 – Private open space standards

The National Planning Policy Framework -NPPF (2023)

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 4 – Decision Making

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places.

Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG).

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: National Design Guide.
- Government's Technical Housing Standards: Nationally Described Space Standards (March 2015).
- Kent Downs AONB (National Landscape) Management Plan (2021 – 2026)
- Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (2013)

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

Local residents

- 4.01 1 representation received in support of the application for the following (summarised) reason:
- The proposal would enhance the visual appearance of the site.

Bredhurst Parish Council

- 4.02 Support.
- Wish to see the application approved and if officers are minded to refuse permission request that the application is reported to the planning committee. No reasons provided.

5. CONSULTATIONS

KCC Highways

- 5.01 No objection subject to conditions on:
- provision and permanent retention of secure, covered cycle parking facilities
 - Provision and permanent retention of the vehicle parking spaces and/or garages.
 - Use of a bound surface for the first 5 metres of the access
 - Provision and permanent retention of the vehicle turning facilities.

6. APPRAISAL

- 6.01 The key issues are:
- Countryside location and policy SP17.
 - Policy DM31 - Conversion of rural buildings.
 - Policy DM5 and PDL
 - Standard of accommodation
 - Neighbour amenity
 - Highways, access and parking

Countryside, Kent Downs National Landscape and policy SP17

- 6.02 The application site is in the countryside and the starting point for assessing all applications in the countryside is Local Plan policy SP17. Policy SP17 states that development proposals in the countryside will only be permitted where:
- a) there is no harm to local character and appearance, and
 - b) they accord with other Local Plan policies.
- 6.03 Policy SP17 does not specify an acceptable level of harm to local character and appearance and all proposals in the countryside are likely to result in some degree of harm. In this context all development outside the designated settlements does not accord with this part of SP17.

- 6.04 In certain circumstances where there is locational need for development (equestrian, rural worker dwelling agricultural buildings etc) other Local Plan policies permit development in the countryside subject to listed criteria. If development accords with one of these other Local Plan policies, this compliance generally outweighs the harm caused to character and appearance with a proposal found in accordance with policy SP17 overall.
- 6.05 On the 22 November 2023 the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation was relaunched and renamed. The new designation the Kent Downs 'National Landscape' brings the designation in line with National Parks. The application site is in the Kent Downs 'National Landscape'.
- 6.06 As part of the relaunch, Parliament passed the Government amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to enhance AONB and National Park Management Plans and the Bill is now an Act. The Kent Downs Management plan states that a threat is "*Loss of and damage to the quality and character... through the cumulative effect of inappropriate, poorly designed general development*" (paragraph 4.4).
- 6.07 The changes strengthen the Duty of Regard under section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act for relevant authorities such as Maidstone Council. The change was from:
- "... a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty" to
 - "a relevant authority ... must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty".
- 6.08 Paragraph 182 of the NPPF (19 December 2023) states "*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and ... [National Landscapes] ...which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues*".
- 6.09 Local Plan policies DM1 and DM30 promote high quality design. Development is encouraged which accords with the countryside in terms of bulk, scale, massing, visual amenity, and landscape character. Criteria include responding positively to, and where possible enhancing the local character of the area.
- 6.10 In this case, local plan policy DM31 permits the conversion of buildings in the countryside subject to several listed criteria. The submitted proposal is assessed against DM31 below.

Policy DM31 – Conversion of rural buildings

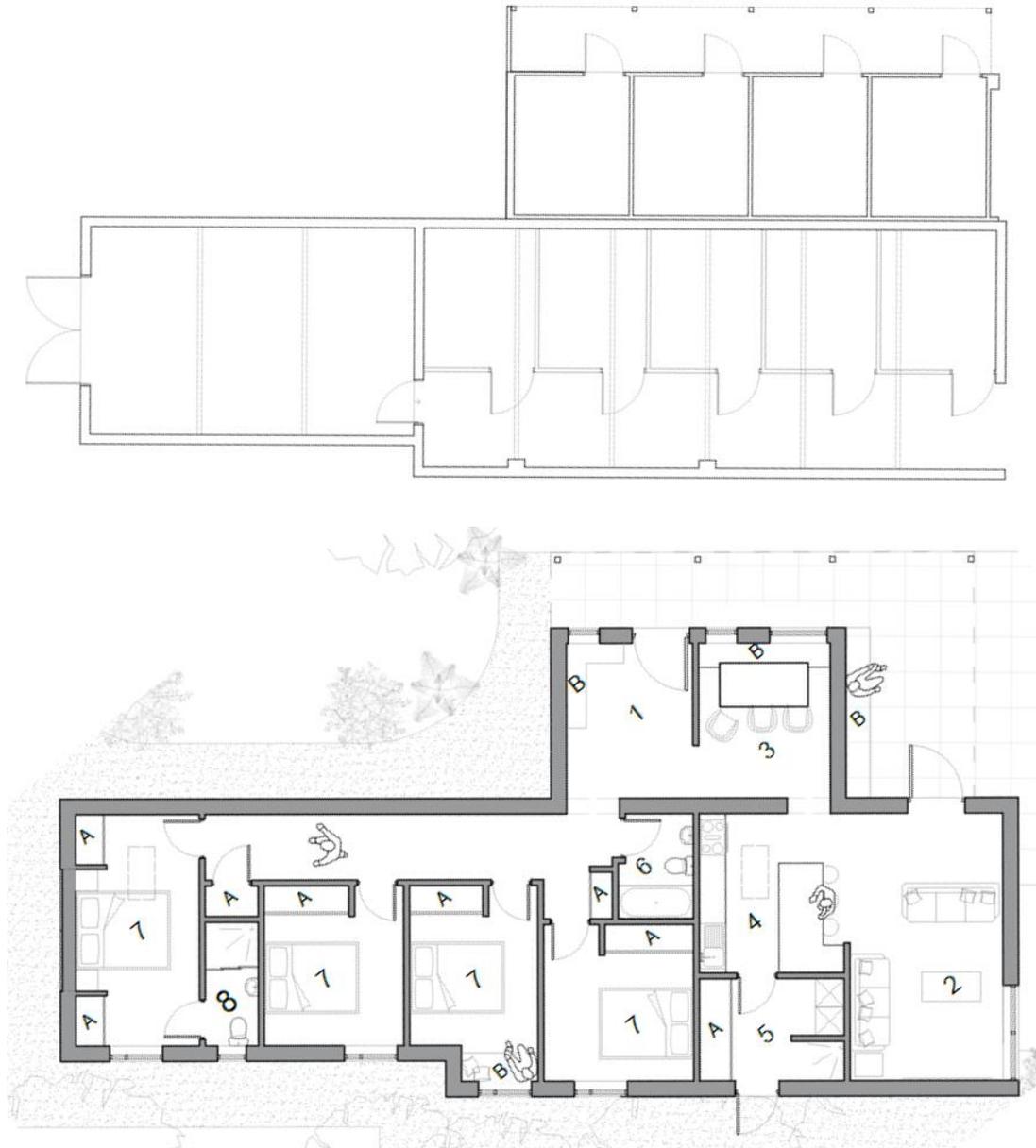
- 6.11 The supporting text to policy DM31 advises that an overarching objective is to only allow conversion of rural buildings where the buildings have sufficient value (such as Oast houses). In pursuant of this objective, the policy sets out several criteria that proposals for the conversion of existing rural buildings must meet and these are assessed below:

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

- 6.12 With reference to buildings with the quality of Oast Houses, policy DM31 permits the retention and conversion of rural buildings that 'reinforce landscape character'.
- 6.13 The existing building has a utilitarian design and a functional appearance, and the external elevations comprise blockwork, with timber truss and a fibre cement roof.

- 6.14 The building is not 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).

Existing and proposed floorplans



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

- 6.15 The submission is supported by a structural assessment prepared by the applicant. The assessment states:
- No indication of any structural movement, distress, or structural failure.
 - Building for its age is sound throughout and maintained reasonably well.
 - Fibre cement roof sheeting has undergone some repair, and if tested in extreme conditions would not be weathertight.
 - Substantial masonry envelope will be capable of carrying the additional loading of proposed internal lining and any changes to the external cladding of the envelope of the structure.

- 6.16 It is concluded from this assessment and the submitted drawings that the existing building is of permanent, substantial, and sound construction and is capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction. The submitted proposal would not meet the requirement of policy DM31 1 ii).

Existing and proposed southwest elevations.



Alterations proposed as part of the conversion should be in keeping with the landscape and building character in terms of materials used design and form. DM31-1(iii)

- 6.17 The proposed changes made as part of the conversion are not in keeping with the existing character of the site, including the number and style of new window and door openings (changes to the southwest elevation highlighted above).
- 6.18 The submitted proposal includes the retention of the significant existing area of hardstanding that provides a poor building setting to Dunn Street Road. The proposal also includes loss of adjacent unmade ground with provision of car parking spaces additional to and adjacent to the existing hardstanding.
- 6.19 The domestication of the building appearance with the new fenestration retention of hardstanding areas and new parking area 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.
- 6.20 In this context the proposal fails to meet the requirement of DM31. 1 iii).

There is sufficient room in the curtilage of the building to park the vehicles of those will live there without detriment to the visual amenity of the countryside DM31-1(iv)

- 6.21 The site layout includes the retention of a large area of hardstanding that provides the building setting. A proposed additional area adjacent to the hardstanding provides two car parking spaces. The existing area of hardstanding has a negative visual appearance on the character and appearance of the area. The submitted application fails to provide any improvement to the existing situation with the harm increased by the additional parking area. The application fails to provide any justification for this large area of hardstanding and why existing hardstanding is not sufficient for car parking.
- 6.22 This layout has a suburban appearance and will be detrimental to the visual amenity of the countryside. The proposal fails to meet the requirements of DM31 1 iv).

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 and visual amenity. DM 1 v).

- 6.23 Although not shown on the submitted drawings, the submitted Planning Statement outlines that the curtilage will have a post and rail fence. This post and rail 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 and as a result there is likely to be 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.

- 6.24 A viability assessment has been submitted with the current application. The assessment concludes that the use of the building as office accommodation or a holiday let is not financially viable, with conversion to residential use reported to be the only viable option.

- 6.25 The main reasons behind adopted Local Plan policy DM31 include:
- Ensuring that only rural buildings that are of sufficient quality and appearance (DM31-1(i) and DM31 3 (ii)) are retained and reused for other uses.
 - Ensuring that "*Every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a suitable business reuse for the building*". This is due to residential use generally being considered the most valuable and sought after land use in rural areas and to ensure that other uses are considered prior to acceptance of residential.

- 6.26 The financial viability of conversion to non-residential uses is not a policy test in policy DM31. The previous reason for refusal did not refer to viability stating, "*The application fails to demonstrate that any attempt has been made at securing an alternative commercial re use of the building...*".

- 6.27 In situations where financial viability is a policy test (affordable housing or loss of a public house) financial information is subject to independent third-party review. With no viability test here, the submitted information has not been subject to third party review and therefore minimal weight is placed on the conclusions reached. Various points made in the viability assessment are also questioned, including the reported inadequacy of the 10 metre wide existing access from Dunn Street Road and the difference of £415,000 in gross return between a holiday let and residential use.

- 6.28 Policy DM31 (3)i requires that 'every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a suitable business re-use for the building'. No evidence has been submitted to demonstrate any marketing has been carried out as required in policy DM31, and the information provided in the financial viability assessment is insufficient in demonstrating the proposal meets the requirement of policy 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.

- 6.29 The application building is a single storey breeze block and brick stable building with a fibre cement 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.

- 6.30 The existing building does not meet the building quality threshold where policy DM31 would support retention and conversion to alternative uses. The proposal does not meet the requirement of DM31 3ii).

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.

- 6.31 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. Land to the side of and around the car parking spaces and to the rear of the building provide external amenity space. The quality of some of the external space is questionable due to its size and location to the north of the building.

- 6.32 In summary on this basis, the proposals would fail to meet all the relevant requirements and would be contrary to policy DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017). The proposal would also conflict with the objectives of Policy SP17 of the Local Plan in so far as it seeks to resist development that is harmful to the landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside.

Policy DM5 Development on brownfield land

- 6.33 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

- 6.34 The questions here are whether the stable building and the site are currently of high environmental value, and whether the 'redevelopment' will result in a significant environmental improvement to this building.

- 6.35 The application site is in the Kent Downs National Landscape (formally 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. The submitted proposal with the changes to the appearance of this building, retention of existing hardstanding and new car parking area are of suburban domestic appearance in this rural location, and they are not considered to represent an improvement to the site. The proposal is contrary to DM5 a) and b).

Consideration of DM5 c) above

- 6.36 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.

- 6.37 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.

- 6.38 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.
- 6.39 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."
- 6.40 Appeals on local sites such as 'Land at Forge Lane' (APP/U2235/W/16/3164561 relating to 16/504798/FULL) and other applications in the vicinity (18/505079/FULL and 18/506630/FULL) have concluded that this is broadly a sustainable location for development, essentially on the basis that Bredhurst has a primary school, village hall, church, public house, recreation facilities and regular bus services.
- 6.41 On this basis it is assessed that this application should benefit from the same considerations and that a refusal based on sustainability would not be appropriate.

Standard of accommodation

- 6.42 Local Plan policy DM1 advises that proposals will be permitted where they *"...provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development..."*. The policy seeks to ensure that occupiers are not *"...exposed to, excessive noise..., overlooking or visual intrusion..."*. The NPPF advises of the importance of good design, creating well designed accommodation with a high standard of amenity for future residents.
- 6.43 The proposed dwelling will provide good levels of daylight and sunlight for a future occupant. All habitable rooms would comply with space standard set out in the emerging draft Maidstone Local Plan. These standards require habitable rooms of a sufficient size for daily activities and with sufficient natural light.
- 6.44 Policy LPRQ&D7 of the Emerging Draft Local Plan sets out the amenity space standards for new houses. Land to the side of and around the car parking spaces and to the rear of the building provide external amenity space. The quality of some of the external space is questionable due to its size and location to the north of the building.

Neighbouring amenity

- 6.45 Local Plan policy DM 1 states that proposals will be permitted where they respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties. Development should not result in, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movements, overlooking or visual intrusion. Built form should not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties.
- 6.46 The main proposed doors and windows would not overlook any neighbour. The proposed dwelling maintains acceptable separation distances from neighbouring properties, and this will not impose any adverse effect in terms of overshadowing. The development would not create any significant noise issues and is unlikely to be affected by traffic noise.

- 6.47 The proposals are acceptable in terms of maintaining the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and providing adequate amenities for future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. The current proposal is in accordance with policy DM1 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and LPRQ&D7 of the Emerging Draft Local Plan.

Highways, access and parking

- 6.48 Policy DM23 of the Local Plan sets out the parking standards for the Borough. The policy adopts a flexible approach to minimum and maximum parking standards to reflect local circumstances and the availability of alternative modes of transport to the private car.
- 6.49 The submitted site layout plan indicates provision of 2 car parking spaces for future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. There is sufficient turning space within the site for vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear. The proposals would comply with the standards in policy DM23.
- 6.50 Access to the site is gained via the existing entrance from Dunn Street Road. The access has adequate visibility for drivers and there is no vehicle safety issue. The access would not have any significant impact on the free and safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians along Dunn Street Road and its vicinity.
- 6.51 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF (2023) states that development should only be refused on transport grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impact of the development would be severe. With the existing use and small scale of the development, any increase in car journeys resulting from the proposed scheme would not be significant enough to pose any additional highway safety challenges.
- 6.52 The Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment identifies the wider area as falling within the Bredhurst to Bicknor North Downs Landscape Character Area (area 2) and the relevant advice for this area is to improve and conserve character where condition is poor.

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 6.53 Due regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.54 The proposed development is CIL liable. The Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy on 25 October 2017 and began charging on all CIL liable applications approved on and from 1 October 2018. The actual amount of CIL can only be confirmed once all the relevant forms have been submitted and relevant details have been assessed and approved. Any relief claimed will be assessed at the time planning permission is granted or shortly after.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.01 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reiterates The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires by law that planning applications "must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise".
- 7.02 The proposal, by reason of the building location in open countryside, the domestication of the building appearance with the insertion of fenestration and 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 National Landscape. The development would therefore neither maintain or enhance the distinctiveness of the countryside and Kent Downs National Landscape. . This is contrary to policies SS1, SP17, DM1, DM30 and DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 to 2019 (Second Revision) (2014) Policies SD1, SD2, SD7 and SD9.

- 7.03 The application fails to demonstrate that a real 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 (2023).

8. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reasons:

- 1) Notwithstanding the changes in this current scheme, the proposal, by reason of the building location in open countryside, the domestication of the building appearance with the insertion of fenestration and 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 National Landscape. . The development would therefore neither maintain or enhance the distinctiveness of the countryside and Kent Downs National Landscape. . This is contrary to policies SS1, SP17, DM1, DM30 and DM31 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 to 2019 (Second Revision) (2014) Policies SD1, SD2, SD7 and SD9.
- 2) The application fails to demonstrate that a real 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 (2023).

NB: For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.