

REFERENCE NO - 18/506223/FULL			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Installation of sewerage package treatment plant and associated drainage field, pipework and equipment.			
ADDRESS Parkwood House West Street Harrietsham Maidstone Kent ME17 1JZ			
RECOMMENDATION Grant planning permission subject to conditions			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development proposal would provide a method for the treatment and disposal of waste for the occupants of Parkwood House • The method of treating the waste is acceptable in relation to the potential impact on the environment • The method of treating the waste is considered acceptable by the relevant consultees. 			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Cllr Sams requested the application is called to committee for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential water course contamination into the highly sensitive chalk stream, affecting businesses including the Parkwood Trout Farm and Leeds Castle • High risk of pollution to the surrounding eco system • Visual impact to the surrounding area due to the site location • Contravention of Government guidelines regarding discharge of waste water 			
WARD Harrietsham And Lenham	PARISH/TOWN Harrietsham	COUNCIL	APPLICANT Caretech Community Services AGENT
TARGET DECISION DATE 08/04/19		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 01/01/19	

Relevant Planning History

18/502864/LAWPRO	Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) for change of use of the building to create 10 No self-contained units for supported living of service users with 24hr support from non-resident carers.	Approved 09.08.2018
18/502504/FULL	Alterations to provide new entrances to ground floor self-contained units.	Approved 23.08.2018
15/509197/FULL	Conversion of swimming pool into activities room and residential accommodation, and activities room and staff into residential accommodation within existing care home, to include alterations to fenestration.	Approved 06.01.2016

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The application site (0.018 hectares) is located on the north side of West Street, with Goddington Lane wrapping around the south west corner of the site. A section of Goddington Lane runs immediately adjacent to Ashford Road (A20).
- 1.02 Parkwood House is located broadly in the middle of the site providing a formally registered care home for 10 residents. This home would encourage residents to live

independently while providing them with extra support should it be required. The entrance in West Street is to the south east corner of the site, with a private drive running within the site from the entrance. To the rear of the house is an extension incorporating a swimming pool and at the front is a single storey extension including an activities rooms and staff room. There are a number of mature trees along the south and west site boundaries. The submitted plans show the existing septic tank for Parkwood House to the north of the building in the rear garden.

- 1.03 The ground level on the site is around 2 to 3 metres higher than the carriageway in West Street. The access driveway within the site from the south east corner has a steady slope up to the house. The ground gently slopes down from the house to the south and west before dropping sharply down to both West Street and Goddington Lane.
- 1.04 The site is located just outside the settlement boundary of Harrietsham (located on the south side of West Street) and is in the countryside. The site is in an area of archaeological importance and a groundwater source protection zone. The site is in minerals safeguarding area. The Goddington Chalk Stream and Goddington Wood wildlife site is located to the west of the application site. The stream feeds the ponds of Parkwood Trout Farm that is separated from the application site to the north by a public footpath. To the east of the site is a residential property called The Pines with Downsoak Stud and Harrietsham located further to the east.
- 1.05 There are two areas of ancient woodland near the northern part of the site, Alders is located on the opposite side of Goddington Lane to the west, 20 metres to the north east of the northern site boundary is Oxley Mead Shaw located within the Trout Farm.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The proposal is for the installation of an underground sewerage package treatment plant to process waste water from Parkwood House. The proposal includes associated drainage field, pipework and equipment.
- 2.02 The sewerage package treatment plant is located to the south of Parkwood. A revised plan submitted on 29 March 2019 showed the drainage field moved further east from the original location to provide a buffer between the development and the trees.
- 2.03 A septic tank is an underground tank where the solids sink to the bottom, forming a sludge, and the liquid flows out to a drainage field. A small sewage treatment plant, also known as a package treatment plant, works in a similar way to a septic tank but uses mechanical parts to treat the liquid to a higher standard before it goes to a drainage field. A drainage field, also known as an infiltration system, is a series of pipes with holes placed in trenches and arranged so that the effluent can trickle through the ground for further treatment.

3.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017: SP17, DM1, DM3
Supplementary Planning Documents: Maidstone Landscape Character Guidance 2012
KCC Minerals Safeguarding

4.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

Local Residents:

4.01 4 representations received from local residents raising the following (summarised) issues

- Parkwood House should be connected to the main sewage system
- The treatment plant may cause an adverse impact on the chalk stream
- The proposal may result in an adverse impact on flora and fauna
- Inappropriate siting of a treatment plant
- No provision has been made for the shelf life of the equipment.
- Medicine residues remain in discharge waters after the treatment process.
- The Environment Agency haven't taken full account of all the issues
- Drainage from existing soakaway is contributing to landslip at Parkwood Trout Farm.
- It has not been demonstrated that the treatment plant to be used will meet BS6297

Further consultation was carried out following the submission of an arboricultural report and responses have made the following points:

- Concerns that a major cause of the deterioration of drainage fields is tree root growth.
- Concerns relating to the potential loss of trees in this area.
- Potential contamination
- Modified drainage would be preferable to mechanical plant with a limited lifespan

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

(Please note that summaries of consultation responses are set out below with the response discussed in more detail in the main report where considered necessary)

MBC Environmental Services

5.01 No objection to the development proposal however, an informative is requested for compliance to the Mid Kent Code of Development Practice

Harrietsham Parish Council

5.02 Objection, the potential water contaminants to downstream residents and businesses (including the Trout Farm and Leeds Castle) have been ignored.

Further comments were received following the submission of the arboricultural report stating that their concerns remained largely the same, although the removal of any trees as a result of the application would also have a detrimental impact on the locality.

KCC Drainage

5.03 No objection - the development proposal is regarded as low risk.

Helen Whately MP

5.04 Cited concerns from the Trout Farm including the necessity of using a water treatment plant, concerns relating to the potential contamination of the chalk stream, and questioning whether the treatment plants and soakaways could be located to the south of the property.

MBC Trees and landscaping

5.05 The arboricultural report and tree protection plan is acceptable. A condition should be added to ensure that any trees damaged or lost within 5 years of the development should be replaced with appropriate species.

Environment Agency

5.06 No objection – permit issued 20 February 2019

MBC Archaeology

5.07 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential associated with prehistoric remains. For this reason a watching brief is recommended.

6.0 APPRAISAL

6.01 Main Issues

The key issues for consideration are:

- Potential visual impact including openness of the countryside;
- Potential impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties;
- Potential natural environment impact, trees, ecology and water pollution.

Background and need for the proposal

- 6.02 The current method of dealing with foul water from Parkwood House is collection in a septic tank. This current tank is located on land to the rear (north) of the main building where there is a steep slope leading down to the rear boundary of the site, with Parkwood Trout Farm beyond.
- 6.03 The applicant has explored the possibility of discharge to a public sewer stating that the nearest 'public' foul sewer "...shown on the public sewer record is approximately 425m from the application site boundary".
- 6.04 It is reported by the applicant that there are private foul sewers located at the Hollies development which are 20m from the application site boundary, but over 100m from the existing house. The applicant has contacted the developer of the Hollies about connecting to the 'private' foul drainage system. The response was that due to the capacity of the system it is not feasible to connect to this system on both financial and technical grounds.
- 6.05 The Environment Agency state on the issued permit (introductory note) that the application property "...cannot reasonably connect to the foul sewer". The applicant has also stated that the response from Southern Water was that "...a private drainage solution is advisable".
- 6.06 The current planning application for a water treatment plant to the front (south) of the site is made to provide a long term, sustainable solution to dealing with foul water from and by the new owners of Parkwood House. The application is made after it was found that the current septic tank to the rear of the site was leaking.
- 6.07 The proposed system consists of a pipe running from the rear (north) of the property along the side (west) elevation to the new treatment plant located to the front (south) of the property.
- 6.08 The underground water treatment plant works with the foul water firstly entering a settlement chamber. After the settlement chamber the clarified water passes into a aeration chamber. At this point the dissolved constituents would be removed. The treated material and 'sloughed off' bacteria would flow to a final settlement chamber and would then be discharged into the drainage field via a further filter.
- ### **Potential visual impact including openness of the countryside.**
- 6.09 Whilst the application site is located in the countryside it is screened by mature trees along the site boundary. In addition to the screening the main water treatment plant and the drainage field would be below ground with only a modest compressor above ground level.

- 6.10 It is for these reasons that the proposal is acceptable in relation to visual impact and protecting the openness of the countryside.

Potential impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

- 6.11 The closest residential property to the site of the water treatment plant is The Pines that is located 90 metres to the north east.

- 6.12 With the nature of the proposal and this separation distance it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in relation to residential amenity.

Potential natural environment impact, trees, ecology and water pollution

- 6.13 The chosen location of the proposed treatment plant is on the opposite side of Parkwood House to the existing septic tank. The drainage field would be set in from the bank adjacent to West Street by approximately 8 metres, and on average would be a distance of 15 metres from the site boundary in Goddington Lane.

- 6.14 There is currently a line of mature trees along the Goddington Lane frontage on land between the proposed underground water treatment plant and the site boundary. The submitted application includes an arboricultural report that considers the potential impact of the proposal on these trees and others on the site.

- 6.15 The potential impact of the proposal including the submitted arboricultural report and tree protection plan have been considered by the council's tree officer. With suitable conditions attached to a decision notice the proposal is acceptable in relation to the protection and long term survival of existing trees on the site.

- 6.16 The proposed site of the water treatment plant is managed open land within the grounds of the care home of Parkwood House. In this context the land has little ecological value and with the nature of the proposal it is not considered that a request for ecological mitigation would be justified. There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will cause any harm to flora or fauna and as set out below the environment agency have no objection to the proposal.

- 6.17 Neighbour consultation responses and comments from Councillor Sams have raised concerns about the potential pollution of water courses from the current proposal. This includes a concern about potential harm to the Parkwood Trout Farm.

- 6.18 The protection of water courses from pollution is considered outside the planning system by the Environment Agency under the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2016. The Environment Agency has not objected to the current planning application. After considering the potential impact, including the siting of the plant and the groundwater source protection zone, the environment agency issued a permit on the 20/02/2019 for the proposed water treatment plant.

- 6.19 The issued permit includes various conditions. These conditions include that the treatment plant shall have a written management system, competent persons and resources should be used and any complaints considered. A further condition is that the system complies with relevant British Standards.

- 6.20 To act lawfully, a decision-maker must have the legal power to make the decision that it intends to make. It is the view of officers that the proposal is acceptable (including in relation to potential water pollution), however even if this were not the case there would be no grounds to refuse planning permission for matters that are considered by the Environment Agency under separate legislation. If, as stated in responses, neighbours feel that the Environment Agency have not taken account of all the issues this is something that neighbours need to raise directly with the Environment Agency.

Other matters

- 6.21 The site is located in an area of archaeological importance. A condition is recommended seeking a watching brief.
- 6.22 The site is located in a minerals safeguarding area. The proposal is to provide a utility to an existing property and is in the curtilage of that property and on this basis the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to minerals safeguarding.
- 6.23 There are two areas of ancient woodland near the northern part of the site, Alders is located on the opposite side of Goddington Lane to the west, 20 metres to the north east of the northern site boundary is Oxley Mead Shaw located within the Trout Farm. With the separation distance of the ancient woodland from the site boundary and the distance of the water treatment plant within the site the potential impact on ancient woodland is acceptable.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.01 The application is a modest development which will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding locality or neighbouring properties. For these reasons it is acceptable in terms of planning policy and is recommended for approval.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

GRANT planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

05 Dec 2018	07 Rev 2	Location Plan
29 Mar 2019		Arboricultural Report
29 Mar 2019	190012-2 B	Arboricultural Impact Plan
29 Mar 2019		Environment Agency Permit

Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved.
- 3) The use of the water treatment plant hereby permitted shall not commence until the groundworks have been completed, including backfilling of any excavations and restoration to previous levels, and finished with seeding or turfing similar to the remaining garden area has been completed. All such landscaping shall be carried out during the planting season (October to February). Any seeding or turfing which fails to establish or any trees or plants which, within five years from the first occupation of the property, or use of the land, die or become so seriously damaged or diseased that their long term amenity value has been adversely affected shall be replaced in the next planting season with plants of the same species and size unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.
Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development
- 4) The developer shall arrange for a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the local planning authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. No works shall start on site until a written programme and specification for the work has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority;
Reason: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest.

- Informative
- 1) Applicant is advised to comply with the Mid Kent Code of Development Practice

Case Officer: Jocelyn Miller