

REFERENCE NO: 23/501579/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL: Change of use of former telephone exchange (Sui Generis) to an office (Class E(g)), including erection of a single storey side extension (resubmission of 22/505768/FULL).		
ADDRESS: Former telephone exchange, Ashford Road, Hollingbourne, Kent		
RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the planning conditions set out in Section 8 of this report.		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is acceptable in relation to the minimal level of harm that will be caused to the character and appearance of this rural area. • The proposal is acceptable in relation to heritage impacts, neighbour amenity, and biodiversity. • The access and parking arrangements revised from previous applications following comments from KCC Highways are acceptable. 		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The officer recommendation is contrary to the views of Hollingbourne Parish Council. 		
WARD North Downs	PARISH Hollingbourne	COUNCIL APPLICANT: Mrs Anna Al-Shawi AGENT Lusher Architects
CASE OFFICER: Tony Ryan	VALIDATION DATE: 19/04/23	DECISION DUE DATE: 29/07/2023
ADVERTISED AS A DEPARTURE: No		

Relevant planning history

- 18/501322/FULL- Conversion of former telephone exchange and erection of a single storey side extension to form a one bedroom dwelling with parking – Refused 23 May 2018 for the following reasons:
 - (1) *In the absence of relevant information, the application has failed to demonstrate that there is no prospect of securing an alternative suitable business use for the former telephone exchange building and that residential conversion is the only means of providing a suitable re-use of this building, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of policy DM31 and government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.*
 - (2) *With the site location between the A20 and the M20 and the nearby channel tunnel rail link the application has failed to demonstrate that the proposal will provide an adequate standard of living accommodation in relation to noise and disturbance and the amenities of future occupiers. It is therefore contrary to the provisions of policy DM1 (iv) of the adopted local plan and government guidance in the NPPF.*

(3) The proposal has failed to demonstrate that vehicle movements associated with the development including servicing and deliveries would not have an adverse impact on highway safety and free flow of traffic onto the A20, Ashford Road.

- 18/504363/FULL- Conversion and single storey side extension to former telephone exchange to create a one bedroom dwelling with associated parking, vehicle turntable, timber gates and new bike shed – Refused 9 November 2018 for the same reasons as 18/501322/FULL that are listed above (As it found that it would not be used, the addition of a vehicle turntable did not remove the earlier grounds for refusal).
- Appeal submitted against the refusal of application 18/504363/FULL dismissed with the Inspector noting:
 - (i) "...do not find that reasonable attempts have been made to secure a business re-use for the building as required by the policy (DM31), and therefore it has not been shown that residential conversion is a suitable re-use for it (Para 7).
 - (ii) "...it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would result in suitable living conditions for future occupiers with respect to noise. It would therefore conflict with Policy DM1(iv) of the Local Plan..."(Para 12).
 - (iii)The Council is concerned that it would not be able to compel drivers to use the turntable, which could result in vehicles reversing onto the A20, and that any associated condition would be difficult to enforce (Para 14). "... development would ...would conflict with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan, insofar as it requires that new development creates a safe environment that safely accommodates vehicular and pedestrian movement through the site access" (Para 15).
- 22/505768/FULL Proposed change of use from telephone exchange (Use Class Sui Generis) to Class E(g) and single storey extension Refused 08.02.2023 for the following reasons (*NB Inspector's point (i) above relating to marketing for a business use and point (ii) residential amenity were no longer relevant as this application did not include a residential conversion*).

"The proposal has failed to demonstrate that vehicle movements associated with the development including servicing and deliveries would not have an adverse impact on highway safety and free flow of traffic onto the A20, Ashford Road contrary to Policies DM1 and DM23 of the Local Plan".

MAIN REPORT

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The site (291 square metres) is in the open countryside as designated by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017. The site has no special landscape designation but is in the KCC Minerals Safeguarding Area. Hollingbourne Railway Station is 3 minutes by car to the north and Harrietsham Village Hall 5 minutes by car to the south east.
- 1.02 The site is on the north side of Ashford Road (A20), with first the M20 (circa 105 metres) and then the Channel Tunnel railway link (circa 167 metres) located to the north. Agricultural land is to the west, east and north of the application site.
- 1.03 The land on the south side of Ashford Road including the Leeds Castle visitor car park (Leeds Castle building is 0.5 miles to the south) is in Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and is a registered park. Oakfield House (Grade II listed building) is located circa 128 metres to the north west.
- 1.04 The application site is rectangular in shape and occupied by a small single storey brick building with a pitched tiled roof. The existing building previously served as

a telephone exchange (circa 1950's) and has a gross internal area (GIA) of 9.3 square metres. Site boundaries have trees / planting and a low-level wire fence between concrete posts. The application site has existing vehicular access to Ashford Road

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The application is for the change of use from telephone exchange (Use Class Sui Generis) to an office use (planning use class E(g)). With a single storey side extension, the building GIA will be increased to 15 square metres.
- 2.02 With reference to the planning history planning applications 18/501322/FULL and 18/504363/FULL (dismissed appeal) involved conversion of the application building to residential use. Planning permission was refused for residential use on two grounds, firstly that the applicant had not demonstrated that the building could not accommodate a business use and secondly highway safety issues. No parish council or third party objections to these applications.
- 2.03 Application 22/505768/FULL involved conversion of the building to an alternative business use. Planning permission was refused for a single highway safety ground (objection from KCC Highways) as the applicant had failed to demonstrate that safe vehicle access could be provided. Parish council objection on highway safety grounds.
- 2.04 The current application includes a supporting transport note. This transport note provides all the information that KCC Highways required to assess the highways impact of the development. KCC Highways have no objection to the current application.

3. POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Adopted October 2017,
 SS1: Maidstone Borough spatial strategy
 SP17: Countryside
 SP18: Historic Environment
 SP21: Economic development
 DM1: Principles of good design
 DM3: Natural environment
 DM4: Development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets
 DM23: Parking standards
 DM30: Design principles in the countryside
 DM31 Conversion of rural buildings

Maidstone Borough Council – Local Plan Review, draft plan for submission (Regulation 22) dated October 2021.

The Regulation 22 draft is a material consideration however weight is currently limited, as it is the subject of an examination in public that commenced on the 6 September 2022 (Stage 2 concluded on the 9 June 2023).

The relevant policies in the draft plan are as follows:
 LPRSS1 Maidstone Borough Spatial Strategy
 LPRSP9 Development in the Countryside
 LPRSP11 - Economic development
 LPRSP11(B) - Creating new employment opportunities
 LPRSP12 - Sustainable transport
 LPRSP14 - Environment
 LPRSP14(A) - Natural environment

LPRSP14(B) - Historic environment
 LPRSP14(C) - Climate change
 LPRSP15 - Principles of good design
 LPRSS1 - Spatial strategy
 LPRTRA2 - Assessing transport impacts
 LPRTRA4 - Parking
 LPRENV1 - Historic environment
 LPRQ&D1 - Sustainable design
 LPRQ&D2 - External lighting
 LPRQ&D 4 Design principles in the countryside

Supplementary Planning Documents:
 Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment
 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

Local residents

4.01 No representations received.

Hollingbourne Parish Council

- 4.02 Objection and request refusal for the following reasons:
- The plot is only 7m wide and there is not the space to turn a car, plus the applicant is proposing two car parking spaces.
 - KCC Highways have recommended rejection of the two previous planning applications for this building due to the danger in reversing onto the A20.

Councillor Garten

- 4.03 Objection for the following reasons:
- The application site is only 7 metres wide
 - The site is not designated for commercial development and the applicant does not show an exceptional need for an office
 - The parking, the access and the extension will overwhelm and are disproportionate to the existing building.
 - The existing building is not an exceptional building and the applicant does not show how they will make the building sustainable in terms of energy conservation.
 - There is concern about the highway impact during the construction phase.
 - There is concern about arrangements for on site sewage treatment.
 - The predicted service trip levels are unrealistic.

5. CONSULTATIONS

KCC Highways

5.01 No objection.

MBC Environmental Health

5.02 No objection.

MBC Conservation officer

5.03 No objection subject to the following comments:

- The building with local interest due to the materials and simple design and its former use is a non-designated heritage asset.
- The design is considered suitable.
- The use of UPVC doors is not appropriate on a non-designated heritage asset.
- The building is well screened by trees and vegetation and due to its location would not harm the setting of Leeds Castle or the Grade II listed Oakfield.

6. APPRAISAL

6.01 The starting point for assessment of 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

6.02 Policy SP17 does not specify an acceptable level of harm and all proposals in the countryside are likely to result in some harm to local character and appearance. In this context all countryside development does not accord with this part of SP17.

Character and appearance

6.03 Supporting text to policy SP17 advises "*The countryside has an intrinsic character and beauty that should be conserved and protected for its own sake*". Policy DM30 states that materials, design, mass, and scale of development should maintain, or where possible, enhance local distinctiveness including landscape features. Impacts on the appearance and character of the landscape would be appropriately mitigated.

6.04 In terms of assessing this intrinsic character in the Council's published Landscape Character Assessment, the application site is in the Leeds Castle Parklands character area. The summary of actions in this area include:

- Conserve the traditional parkland character of the landscape
- Conserve the remote qualities of the Len Valley and its setting,
- Conserve and restore tree cover, which helps to screen views of major infrastructure routes
- Ensure continuity of mature isolated trees through planting new stock
- Restore hedgerow boundaries where they have been removed
- Resist field segregation, avoiding fence line boundaries.

6.05 The site is on the north side of Ashford Road (A20), with first the M20 (circa 105 metres) and then the Channel Tunnel railway link (circa 167 metres) located to the north. The land on the south side of Ashford Road including the Leeds Castle visitor car park is in Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and is a registered park. Agricultural land is to the west, east and north of the application site.

6.06 The proposal involves the retention and reuse of the existing brick built former telephone exchange building; the building is set back circa 34 metres from the Ashford Road carriageway. The extension (as discussed below) is in keeping with and to scale with the existing building.

6.07 The existing tree at the site entrance will be retained as part of the current application. The existing landscaping along the south east site boundary and the existing landscaping in the middle of the site and in front of the building will be retained and enhanced. This is in line with the character assessment relating to conserving landscape boundaries. The building is screened in existing views from the north west along Ashford Road by roadside planting in adjacent fields.

- 6.08 The site has an existing vehicular access and the proposed parking and turning area will be surfaced with a permeable stone resin surface. It is accepted that this change will have a visual impact on the site frontage, however this impact will be reduced by screening provided by existing and proposed new planting.
- 6.09 The vehicular access will be more discrete than other existing access points along this stretch of Ashford Road. The visual impact of the site access (or visual impact of the building extension) was not raised as an issue as part of three earlier decisions to refuse planning permission or by the appeal Inspector.
- 6.10 Although not directly relevant, Local Plan policies SP21 and DM37 are generally supportive of proposals for economic development in the countryside subject to listed criteria. The assessment above shows that the new building is *"...an appropriate scale for the location and can be satisfactorily integrated into the local landscape"*.
- 6.11 Other Local Plan policies permit development in the countryside in certain circumstances (and subject to listed criteria). If development accords with one of these other policies, this compliance generally outweighs the harm caused to character and appearance with a proposal in accordance with policy SP17 overall.

Images of the existing brick application building.



- 6.12 Policy SP21 (vii) states that improving the economy and providing for the needs of business will be achieved through *"Prioritising the commercial re-use of existing rural buildings in the countryside over conversion to residential use, in accordance with policy DM31"*. LP policy DM31 relates to the conversion of certain rural buildings and the criteria is assessed below:

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

- 6.13 In terms of the general condition and state of repair of the application building, a submitted building survey report has been submitted. In summary, the survey report found
- Main roof good state of repair, no sign of missing or broken tiles and pointing to the ridge tiles intact. Water staining to soffits likely due to gutters not been cleared.
 - Brickwork and pointing good condition with no sign of cracks.

- Original door frame still in place, Lintel above in good condition.
- Original metal frame window to the front in good condition with no broken glass or sign of decay. Lintel above in good condition.
- All gutters and downpipes in good condition although likely require clearing of leaves due to the number of surrounding trees.
- *"...structure is in a good state of repair and does not require substantial works to get it back into use".*

- 6.14 To bring the application building back into beneficial use and provide viable and practical floorspace a building extension is proposed. The extension will not involve major or complete reconstruction and the proposal complies with this criterion in policy DM31.

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

- 6.15 With reference to buildings with the quality of Oast Houses, policy DM31 permits the retention and conversion of rural buildings that 'reinforce landscape character'. The attractive existing brick built former telephone exchange has the building quality and character to be covered by policy DM31 which reinforces landscape character.

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)

- 6.16 The existing former pumping station building has a modest character with small high level windows in the two end walls. The building is of a scale and appearance that does not overly dominant the street scene and the existing rural character. The proposed extension *"...is detailed to match the existing with a roofline stepped down by 450mm from the existing ridge line"* (applicant's Design and Access Statement). The front elevation of the extension is also set back one metre from the front elevation of the building.

- 6.17 The existing or proposed uses are not residential and there is no specific guidance available on the volume of extensions to commercial buildings. The Council does have SPG guidance on extensions to residential buildings and this guidance says

"In considering an extension to a residential dwelling in the countryside, the Local Planning Authority would normally judge an application as modest or limited in size if, in itself and cumulatively with previous extensions, it would result in an increase of no more than 50% in the volume of the dwelling...The gross volume will be ascertained by external measurement taken above ground level and include the volume of the roof".

- 6.18 The volume of the proposed extension (circa 22 cubic metres) with the set back from the main roof and the set back from both the front and rear elevations will be less than 50% of the existing building (circa 49 cubic metres). The form, scale and detailing of the extension has been designed to match the existing building.

- 6.19 The applicant has stated *"The rest of the site will remain as overgrown native planting except for a new permeable resin bonded drive area and a permeable block pathway leading to the new entrance to the building"* (applicant's Design and Access Statement).

- 6.20 The applicant has sought materials in the extension that match the existing building as closely as possible. These materials include Michelmersh Multi Stock Facing Brick and Wienerberger Plain Brown roof tiles.

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 current application is for office use and the submitted plans show provision of two off street car parking spaces.
- 6.22 A consistent reason in the decisions to refuse four earlier planning application for this site has been highway safety in relation to vehicles leaving the application site (highway safety discussed later in this report and the car parking space width). The site layout now proposed with onsite turning space offers the correct balance between making beneficial use of site, ensuring the long term survival of the building and highway safety.

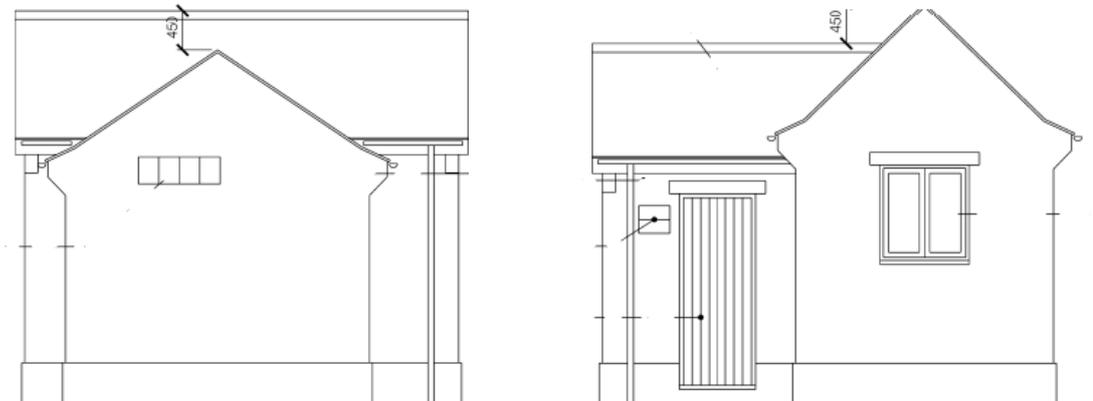
No fences, walls or other structures associated with the use of the building or the definition of its curtilage or any sub-division of it are erected which would harm landscape character and visual amenity. DM31-1(v)

- 6.23 The applicant has stated that boundary treatments will be wire mesh and concrete post fence. This type of fence is largely transparent and is appropriate for the application site and will maintain landscape character.

The traffic generated by the new use would not result in the erosion of roadside verges, and is not detrimental to the character of the landscape; DM31-2(i)

- 6.24 The extended building provides a modest area of floorspace, and the traffic generated by the use would not be detrimental to the character of the countryside.

Front and side proposed elevations



Heritage

- 6.25 Policy SP18 of the Local Plan relates to the historic environment and requires that, inter-alia, the characteristics of heritage assets are protected, and design is sensitive to heritage assets and their settings. Policy DM4 of the Local Plan also relates to development affecting designated heritage assets and requires applicants to ensure that new development affecting heritage assets conserve, and where possible enhance, the significance of the heritage asset.
- 6.26 The NPPF (paragraphs 201 and 202) requires the impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset to be assessed as either "substantial harm" or "less than substantial harm" with NPPG guidance setting out that "substantial harm" has a high threshold "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm

should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”.

- 6.27 NPPF guidance (paragraphs 199 and 200) states that when assessing the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm to significance amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.
- 6.28 Oakfield House (Grade II listed building) is located circa 128 metres to the north west. With the distance between the two buildings, and the design, scale and appearance of the building and the proposed extension the impact of the application on the significance of the nearby designated heritage assets will be less than substantial. This conclusion is reached for the following reasons:
- existing building and extension single storey in height,
 - separation distance,
 - existing and retained screening landscaping.
- 6.29 The ‘less than substantial harm’ has been weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, and the harm is outweighed by the benefits from the reuse of this site.

Neighbour amenity

- 6.30 Local Plan policy DM1 states that development must “*Respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses by ensuring that development does not result in, or is exposed to, excessive noise, 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*”.
- 6.31 The nearest residential dwelling is Oakfield House located circa 128 metres to the north west. Office uses are generally appropriate near residential dwellings and in this case with the separation distances there are no issues present in relation to residential amenity.

Traffic, transport, and highways.

- 6.32 The NPPF states Planning decisions “*...should recognise that sites to meet local business...needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development ... does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads...*”.
- 6.33 The site is outside of a settlement, but Hollingbourne Railway Station is 3 minutes by car to the north and Harrietsham Village Hall 5 minutes by car to the south east.

Car parking

- 6.34 Local Plan policy DM 23 states that the car parking provided for non-residential uses will consider the following:
- The accessibility of the development and availability of public transport.
 - The type, mix and use of the development proposed, and
 - Whether development proposals exacerbate on street car parking to an unacceptable degree.

- 6.35 The car parking standards for non-residential uses set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG 4 Kent Vehicle Parking Standards July 2006. These standards are generally set as maximum (not minimum) and require one space per 20 square metres.
- 6.36 The site is proposed to be provided with two car parking spaces and will utilise the existing crossover from Ashford Road. whilst above the maximum levels in the SPG guidance, the parking provision is acceptable in this location and is sufficient for the potential level of use.

Cycle parking

- 6.37 The parking standards for non-residential uses set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG 4 Kent Vehicle Parking Standards July 2006. The applicant has indicated that a cycle hoop will also be installed adjacent to the new entrance into the building, and this is in line with standards that require 2 spaces

Site access

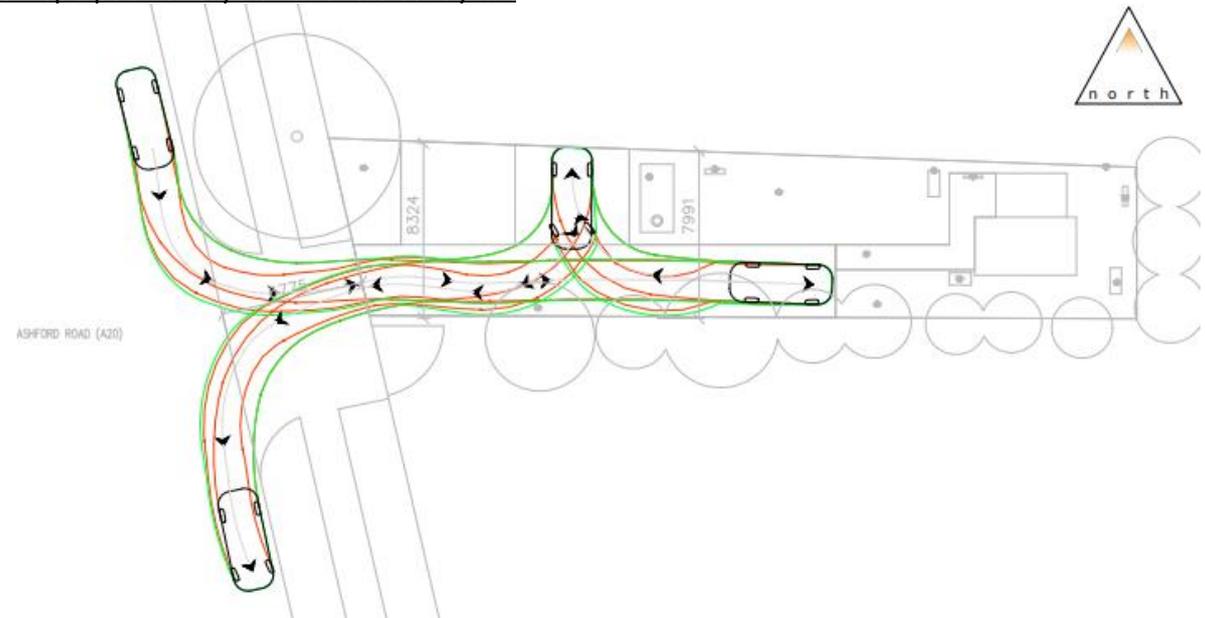
- 6.38 Local Plan policy DM 1 states that proposals will be permitted, where they can safely accommodate the associated vehicular and pedestrian movement on the local highway network and through the site access. An existing double crossover shared with the adjoining site provides vehicular access on to Ashford Road.
- 6.39 In response to KCC Highways comments on earlier applications, the applicant has submitted a transport note with the current application. This note considers in turn the points made by KCC Highways in relation to missing information and these responses are summarised below:
- Personal Injury Collision Data for the most recent five year period.
- 6.40 The applicant has used the website Crashmap.com to identify accidents that have occurred on Ashford Road in the vicinity of the site over the last 5 years. It was found that one accident occurred within 100m of the site access. It has been concluded that this incident was due to driver error and not fault with the highway network. The applicant concludes that the increase in traffic associated with the development is unlikely to cause any road safety issues.
- Revised drawings to demonstrate sufficient widths, distances and visibility as required from Manual for Streets and the Kent Design Guide.
- 6.41 The single refusal ground for earlier applications for business use related to on site vehicle parking and turning, with vehicles required to either reverse from, or out on to Ashford Road (A20).
- 6.42 The industry standards in Manual for Streets guidance state that where the normal turning space behind car parking is not available, an acceptable alternative is to increase the width of the individual car parking bays themselves. This increased width providing additional manoeuvring space within the bays themselves.
- 6.43 In accordance with Manual for Streets guidance the applicant has provided 'swept-path analysis' of the site layout. This analysis demonstrates that a 4.84 metre long vehicle can safely access both the car parking bays and manoeuvre to allow site entry and egress in a forward gear.

6.44 The revised site layout is in accordance with manual for streets guidance and the Kent Design Guide. KCC have assessed the revised layout and raise no objection to the current application. Driver visibility is assessed below.

- Evidence that proposal and the required visibility splays can be achieved within land in control of the applicant and/or the highway authority."

6.45 With Ashford Road covered by the national speed limit, visibility splays relating to speeds of 60mph have been calculated. The applicant has provided a plan that shows that visibility splays of 2.4m x 215m are provided on land controlled by the applicant and/or the highway authority.

'Swept-path analysis' of the site layout



Servicing

6.46 In line with standard practice the applicant has provided the likely number of service vehicle trips to the application site using information from a national database (TRICS database). It is found that a site of this nature is likely to generate less than one servicing trip each day and this level of activity will not have a negative impact on the function of the local highway network.

6.47 The minimal number of servicing trips to the site indicates that despite the lack of space for servicing vehicles within the site, servicing of the site will not have a negative impact on the function of the local highway network. Due to the minimal number of servicing trips, and the short period of time for which servicing vehicles would remain at the site, service vehicles visiting the site can pull over within the site's crossover without impacting on the function or safety of the local highway network.

6.48 The NPPF states "*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (Paragraph 111)*".

6.49 The access and is suitable for the proposed use and the trips associated with the use can be safely accommodated on the road network. There has been no objection raised by KCC Highways. It is concluded that the impact of the

application on highway safety will be acceptable and the impact on the road network will not be 'severe'. The impact of the proposal is found to be acceptable

Biodiversity

- 6.50 Local Plan 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 ...where appropriate development proposals will be expected to appraise the value of the borough's natural environment through the provision of...an ecological evaluation of development sites...to take full account of the biodiversity present, including the potential for the retention and provision of native plant species"*.
- 6.51 The proposal does not result in the need for ecological surveys, and there are no protected species which would be at risk. Policy DM1, DM3 and the NPPF do however all promote ecological enhancement. With the nature and extent of the proposals a condition is recommended seeking biodiversity enhancements.

Rural economy

- 6.52 Guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework is a material planning consideration. Under the heading *"Supporting a prosperous rural economy"* the NPPF states planning decisions *"...should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas...through conversion of existing buildings"*.
- 6.53 Although not directly relevant, Local Plan policies SP21 and DM37 are generally supportive of proposals for economic development in the countryside. With the nature of the use and the space required for dogs to be exercised, it would be difficult to find a suitable site for this use in a settlement.

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 6.54 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.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.01 The proposal is acceptable in relation to the minimal level of harm that will be caused to the character and appearance of this rural area. The proposal is acceptable in relation to heritage impacts, neighbour amenity, and biodiversity. The access and parking arrangements are acceptable
- 7.02 The application brings a vacant building back into beneficial use and supports the aims of NPPF and the Local Plan in achieving a prosperous rural economy.

8 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 approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:
- 001. P01 Site Location Plan
 - 002. P01 Existing Block Plan
 - 010. P01 Existing Ground Floor and Roof Plans
 - 020. P01 Existing Front and Side Elevations
 - 021. P01 Existing Rear and Side Elevations
 - 102. P01 Proposed Block Plan
 - 110. P01 Proposed Ground Floor and Roof Plans
 - 120. P01 Proposed Front and Side Elevations
 - 121. P01 Proposed Rear and Side Elevations
 - Supporting documents – Building Condition Survey and Summary Report
 - Supporting documents - Design and Access Statement
- Reason: in the interests of proper planning.
- 3) The external facing materials to be used in the development hereby approved shall be as indicated in the submitted Design and Access Statement. Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.
- 4) Prior to first occupation of the approved use the measures taken for the on site enhancement of biodiversity as shown in the submitted design and access statement shall be in place. All features shall be maintained permanently thereafter. Reason: To enhance ecology and biodiversity on the site in line with the requirement to achieve a net biodiversity gain from all development.
- 5) The extension hereby approved shall not commence above slab level until a hard and soft landscape scheme designed in accordance with the principles of the Council's landscape character guidance (Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment Supplement 2012) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall
- (a) show all existing trees, hedges and blocks of landscaping on, and immediately adjacent to, the site and indicate whether they are to be retained or removed,
 - (b) provide details of on-site planting in a planting specification including plant species, plant spacing, quantities, and maturity (non-plastic guards shall be used for the new trees and hedgerows, and no Sycamore trees shall be planted).
 - (c) provide landscape implementation details and timetable
 - (d) provide a [5] year landscape management plan
- Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.
- 6) All planting, seeding, and turfing specified in the approved landscape details shall be completed by the end of the first planting season (October to February) following first occupation of the extension hereby approved. Any seeding or turfing which fails to establish or any trees or plants which, within five years from the first occupation of a property, 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 as detailed in the approved landscape scheme. Reason: In the interests of landscape, visual impact, and amenity of the area and to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.
- 7) The building or land shall be used for office purposes only and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Classes of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 or permitted under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 or any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting those Orders

- with or without modification). Reason: Unrestricted use of the building or land could cause demonstrable harm to the character, appearance and functioning of the surrounding area and/or the enjoyment of their properties by adjoining residential occupiers.
- 8) Driver visibility splays of 2.4m x 215m with no obstruction over 1.0m above ground level shall be provided in accordance with Location Plan and shall be subsequently maintained for the lifetime of the development. Reason: In the interests of highway safety.
 - 9) The approved parking areas shall be retained and shall be kept available for such use. Reason: Development without adequate parking/turning provision is likely to lead to parking inconvenient to other road users and in the interests of road safety.
 - 10) Any external lighting installed on the site (whether permanent or temporary) shall be in accordance with details that have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall be in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Engineers Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting, GN01, dated 2011 (and any subsequent revisions) and follow the recommendations within Bat Conservation Trust's 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting', and shall include a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of light equipment proposed (luminaire type; mounting height; aiming angles and luminaire profiles) and an ISO lux plan showing light spill. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the subsequently approved details and maintained as such thereafter. Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the countryside and in the interests of residential amenity and wildlife.
 - 11) Prior to the commencement of the approved use secure bicycle storage shall be in place that is in accordance with details that have previously been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These details will be maintained as such thereafter. Reason: To promote sustainable travel choices and the reduction of CO2 emissions.
 - 12) No development shall take place until a Construction Management Plan for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Construction Management Plan shall include the following details-
 - (a) Routing of construction and delivery vehicles to / from site
 - (b) Parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and site personnel
 - (c) Timing of deliveries
 - (d) Provision of wheel washing facilities
 - (e) Temporary traffic management / signage
 - (f) Measures to control dust and potential use of asbestos in the existing building.The construction works shall proceed only in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan.
Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety