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## **BONNY LODGE, CULVERSTONE GREEN, DA13 0RF**

### **PROPOSED ERECTION OF A DETACHED CAR BARN AND RETENTION OF ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING DWELLING (RETROSPECTIVE)**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1** This statement has been prepared in support of an application for the erection of a detached 2 bay open fronted timber car barn. The application also seeks retrospective consent for minor alterations to the front (north facing) elevation of the dwelling comprising the removal of one of two up and over garage doors and its replacement with a window, the alteration of the entrance door design, and the addition of x5 small velux windows in the rear south facing roof slope. Minor alterations have also been made to the approved internal layout of the dwelling. The application seeks to regularise these changes retrospectively.
- 1.2** Planning permission was granted in August 2019 (ref 19/01296/FUL) for the change of use of an existing domestic outbuilding at the above site to form a one-bedroom separate dwelling house with garden parking and turning area. The building previously served 2 Bonnyacre Farm Cottages as an annex. The change of use has been implemented and the building is now in use and is known as Bonny Lodge.
- 1.3** The property is located off the A227 Wrotham Road on the outskirts of Culverstone. It is not situated within the settlement boundary and so is in the countryside and the Green Belt.
- 1.4** The existing property benefits from a front garden and a private rear garden, and access is obtained from Wrotham Road. The frontage provides a hard-surfaced parking and turning area in part and a landscaped garden immediately in front of the dwelling house, there have been some alterations to the layout of the front parking and turning area recently. There is a brick wall which encloses the landscaped rear garden. Photographs are attached at Appendix 1.

#### **2.0 The Proposal**

- 2.1** The main element of this planning application proposes the provision of a detached 2 bay open fronted timber car barn on the eastern side of the dwelling, it also as set out above includes minor alterations to the front north facing elevation of the dwelling. The alterations comprise the removal of one of the x2 up and over garage doors and its replacement with a window, alterations to the design of the entrance door and the insertion of x5 small velux windows in the rear south facing roof slope. These alterations have already been completed.
- 2.2** The car barn will be located where there are currently x2 parking spaces and will effectively enclose them. The building has been designed to be subservient and to sit against the east elevation of the existing building when viewed from the front of the site. Glimpse views will be screened by the existing hedgerow across the frontage and the large equestrian barns which sit adjacent to the boundary with Bonny Lodge, to the south. The proposed car barn will also clearly be subservient to these large

buildings on the adjacent site and will partly screen the current unattractive fibrous cement northern flank wall of the forwardmost barn. It will not be possible to gain a significant view of the proposed car barn from outside of the gardens serving Bonny Lodge and 2 Bonnyacre Cottages.

- 2.3 Materials will match the dwelling and will be of a suitable rural palette, comprising a plain tile roof and black painted timber boarding.
- 2.4 Cars will be able to enter and leave the site in a forward direction as at the present time. The proposed car barn will house x2 motor vehicles which would otherwise have been parked outside in the open.
- 2.5 The eastern bay of the existing internal garage will remain as a store and garage for a motorcycle with a small area for boilers/plant behind the second bay. The front part of the second bay is used as a small room for living accommodation as shown in the attached photographs. The alterations to the dwelling have not harmed its simple rural character or appearance. The replacement of the garage door with a window and the insertion of the velux windows has not been harmful to the street scene, the landscape or the openness of the Green Belt and has not led to overlooking or loss of privacy to a neighbouring property. The use of part of one of the garage bays as a small additional sitting room/guest room has similarly not substantively altered the character or appearance of the dwelling or affected the way in which it is used.

### **3.0 Planning Policy**

- 3.1 Planning policy is set out at the national level in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.2 Local Plan policy is set out in the Development Plan for Sevenoaks which comprises the Adopted Core Strategy, the ADMP, and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD's). Local Plan Policy follows the Governments guidance set out in the NPPF.
- 3.3 The Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and sets out strategic policy for the District. The site is not within a rural settlement and is therefore in the countryside where policy L08 (Countryside and the Rural Economy) applies.
- 3.4 Policy L08 states that the extent of the Green Belt will be maintained and the countryside will be conserved and distinctive features contributing to the landscape character and biodiversity will be protected and enhanced. It sets out that where possible development should conserve and enhance local landscape character with mitigation where damage cannot be avoided; that development which will support the rural economy and the vitality of local communities will be supported provided it is compatible with policy for protecting greenbelt and AONB and conserves and enhances value and character of woodland and rural areas and takes account of infrastructure requirements. This proposal will not erode the Green Belt or diminish its openness. Local landscape character will be preserved.

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- 3.5** Detailed development management policies are set out in the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) which was adopted in February 2015.
- 3.6** Policy EN1 (Design Principles) applies to all new development. Relevant criteria are that the form of the development must respond to context; layout must respect topography and character; there must be no loss of buildings, open spaces or green infrastructure which would harm character; there would be satisfactory means of access for vehicles and pedestrians and adequate parking and refuse facilities; there would be an increase in biodiversity where possible and avoidance or mitigation for potential harm for existing biodiversity; the development would be inclusive and make satisfactory provision for those with disabilities and the design would create a safe and secure environment deterring crime. Development should make efficient use of land.
- 3.7** The proposal complies with this policy. There will be no loss of any feature which will harm character, access is satisfactory, there will be no harm to biodiversity and the proposal will make efficient use of the land and buildings. The provision of enclosure and cover for the Applicants vehicles will add to security as they will not be able to be easily seen from the road.
- 3.8** NPPF policy for Green Belt is reflected in Policy GB1 of the ADMP and is also set out in the Council's Green Belt SPD, which was adopted in 2015. Initially it sets out the five purposes of Green Belt designation and it is clear that this proposal does not conflict with any of those five purposes.
- 3.9** The policy then identifies specific circumstances where the construction of a new building would not be classified as inappropriate development. One of these, as identified in the NPPF, is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The alterations comprising the addition of the velux windows in the roof and the change of the garage door to a window and door have not enlarged the envelope of the building and have not harmed openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.10** The Council's policy makes it clear that proposals for the provision of residential outbuildings within the curtilage of an existing dwelling are to be treated as proposals for the "extension" of an existing dwelling in circumstances where the proposed outbuilding will be located within 5 m of an existing dwelling. This means that the proposed car barn is to be treated as an extension to the existing dwelling under this policy provision.
- 3.11** Policy GB1, referred to above, relates to the provision of limited extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt. It sets out specific criteria which must be satisfied. These are as follows
- *The existing dwelling must be lawful and permanent in nature.* In this case planning permission was granted for the change of use of the existing building to a dwelling, the existing building is permanent in nature.
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- *The design must be in keeping the original form and appearance of the building and the proposed volume of the extension (including the outbuilding) must be proportional and subservient to the original dwelling and must not harm the openness of the Green Belt. In this case as set out above the design is in keeping and the car barn will be subservient to the dwelling and will not harm openness.*
- *The total floorspace of the proposed extension (outbuilding) together with any previous extensions alterations or outbuildings must not increase the floorspace of the original dwelling by more than 50%. In this case the proposed car barn will not increase the floorspace by more than 50%. The gross external floor area of the car barn will amount to 34m<sup>2</sup>, and the gross external floor area of the dwelling amounts to 131m<sup>2</sup>.*

**3.12** It is clear that the proposal complies with the provisions of policy GB1.

**3.13** The Green Belt SPD also sets a limit on the maximum footprint of a proposed new outbuilding which is 40 m<sup>2</sup>, measured externally. The proposal will comply with this limitation.

**3.14** The Green Belt SPD also requires a proposed outbuilding to avoid dominating the main dwelling or its setting. In this case proposed car barn will be subservient and will “sit against” the main building, tucked into the corner of the site where it will be well screened by an existing hedge on the site frontage and by large equestrian buildings to the south of the site. It could not be described as dominating the site.

**3.15** The SPD also requires the scale of the proposal not to exceed what might reasonably be expected for the function of the building. The proposed car barn is modest in size and of simple design clearly appropriate to its function. As it will be open fronted the purpose of the building will be clear and that purpose is plainly ancillary to the main residential use.

**3.16** The proposal which falls to be regarded in policy terms as an extension, will therefore comply with adopted policy.

#### **4.0 Other material considerations**

**4.1** It is noted that a planning permission was granted in November 2019 (ref 19/02588/house) for the erection of a rear conservatory at a property known as Shrublands Lodge, Gravesend Road. This property is located close to the application site.

**4.2** Shrublands Lodge was created from the subdivision of an original property known as Cader Idris in similar circumstances to the creation of Bonny Lodge. The planning officer’s assessment of the proposed conservatory set out in the officer’s report acknowledged that the subdivision of the original property by converting a residential outbuilding into a detached one-bedroom bungalow “established a new chapter in the

planning history of the site”. He assessed the percentage increase in floorspace of the proposed extension and found that this fell within the 50% policy allowance.

**4.3** He also found that there would be no harmful impact on the form or appearance of the dwelling and no harmful impact on neighbouring amenity. He found that the extension would not look out of character in the locality. He recommended that planning permission be granted and the application was approved.

**4.4** The Applicant considers that the same principles should apply in this case and that the council should take a similar approach to this proposal which, in policy terms, proposes a modest extension to Bonny Lodge.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

**5.1** The Council is therefore respectfully requested to grant permission in this case as there is no conflict with planning policy, no harm to the Green Belt or character of the area, no harm to amenity and local precedent in favour of approval.