

Design, Access and Planning Statement

The Lodge, Head Hill Road, Goodnestone,
Kent ME13 9BU

13 September 2021

INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support the application for the erection of 3 new poly-tunnels at The Lodge, Head Hill Road, Goodnestone, Kent ME13 9BU. It follows the successful application in 2013 for change of use of the residential property to wholesale agricultural use, erection of 2 tunnels, erection of a replacement building and the provision of additional hard standing.

The applicant is a market trader specialising in the sale of garden plants to the public at Faversham and Dartford markets where he has been trading for over 25 years.

During the last 18 months the applicant has found it increasingly difficult to source suitable plants at acceptable price points in order for his business to thrive. Currently, a large percentage of the applicant's plants are imported from Holland and Belgium however wholesale prices have risen in the region of 60% during this time. These difficulties that have been brought about by the combination of Brexit and Covid-19 now offer an opportunity to import less and grow more plants on site provided that the application for the erection of 3 new tunnels is successful.

SITE CONTEXT

The application site forms part of the grounds of a detached residential property extending in all to some 0.5 hectares. It is located on the east side of Head Hill Road just to the south of the hamlet Goodnestone. For location information please see drawing number 1.

The property consists of a 2-storey detached house set back from the road frontage with a vehicular access located at the northern end of the frontage of the property onto Head Hill Road.

To the south and west the property has mature gardens with well established boundary trees and hedges such that it is not generally visible from the road frontage.

The property is surrounded by open agricultural arable land. The nearest neighbouring residential property is Poplar Hall a distance of some 80m to the north and located on the west side of Head Hill Road.

In general terms, the site is well connected to the main road network being just 0.5km from the main junction with the A299 and is also close to the junction of the M2 / A2.

PLANNING HISTORY

SW/09/0302 – Planning Permission Granted on 21/05/09 for extensions to side and rear of existing dwelling with new windows and doors throughout and new entrance porch at front.

SW/12/0641 – Planning Permission Granted on 20/06/12 for renewal of SW/09/0302

SW/13/1028 - Planning Permission Granted on 15/10/13 Change of use of part of the residential property to wholesale horticultural use, erection of 2 tunnels, erection of a replacement building and the provision of additional hard-standing.

21/503776/PAPL – Pre-Application Advice was sort for the erection of 3 new poly tunnels and installation of a water tank (commercial development less than 1000 sqm) – response received 05/08/21

DESIGN

The proposal is to expand the garden plant growing capacity of the site in order to provide competitively priced stock for the applicant to sell at his market stalls in Faversham and Dartford.

In order to provide the necessary growing space, the proposal is to erect 3 new poly tunnels located in the eastern business orientated section of the applicant's land ownership. Currently, approximately 10m to the east of the applicant's residential property, a fence separates the area allocated for business activities with the house and formal gardens. There are no plans to change or alter this fence line with the footprint of both uses staying the same.

New poly tunnels are needed as the germination and growing on of garden plants requires protection and shading from the weather in a controlled environment. They will be of standard design consisting of a series of hoops secured by stanchions in the ground. Two will be covered with clear plastic to provide light and protection from low overnight temperatures and the third will be covered with green mesh, (Netlon) to provide shade and shelter from the wind for shrubs and more woody crops. For further information and tunnel dimensions, please drawing numbers 4 & 5.

Further information

- The ground in all three tunnels will be covered with a weed suppressing membrane to form a clean and tidy environment for growing.
- For ease of watering the additional nursery stock, a new water tank is proposed to be installed in the location shown on drawing number 3. The new water tank system details are as follows:
 - 5000 litre plastic tank 1900mm diameter x 2185mm high - Polythene Enduramaxx Tank, EWTX5000
 - ¾" ball float valve tank inlet
 - Flexible suction hose with fittings to connect to pump

- Lowara BG11 horizontal pump with Genyo Auto-Start, giving on-demand pump operation and dry run protection
 - 1" BSPF threaded outlet for connection to delivery pipework non potable
 - The water tank will require a concrete base, 2m x 2m square. The base will be constructed with a 150mm layer of sub-base with a 150mm thick layer of concrete on top
 - Further details can be found at <https://www.access-irrigation.co.uk/shop/water-tanks/plastic-water-tanks/polythene-enduramaxx-tank/> and are attached.
- There is an area of existing hard standing that provides space for overnight parking of the applicants own rigid axle van and there is space for it to turn around so that it can enter and leave in a forward gear.
 - The three new tunnels will all be sited next to and opposite the existing tunnels close to the eastern boundary. This will reduce the visual impact of these facilities as shown on drawing number 3.
 - The eastern part of the site is generally well screened from the surrounding area and there are well established boundaries to the west, south and along part of the northern boundary such that the tunnels are unlikely to be visible from any public vantage points. Further to the east there are long distance views across open countryside but there are no Public Rights of Way within this general area and the applicant has recently planted a laurel hedge which will provide further screening in the years to come.
 - There are no trees or scrub that need to be removed to facilitate the construction of the new tunnels as they will be constructed on areas that are currently laid to lawn. However to ensure that there is a net gain in biodiversity, it is proposed that a native hedge is planted on the fence line separating the business and residential sections of the applicants land ownership.
 - **Impact on traffic levels** – the proposals seek to import less stock and grow more plants onsite. To facilitate this, there would be the occasional additional delivery, (less than once a month), of potting compost, pots and trays etc for plant production. In addition, there would be approximately more 5 car journeys to the premises every week as extra labour would be needed for the production. However, this slight increase in traffic would be offset by a reduction in the weekly deliveries of plants to the premises meaning levels would stay roughly the same. In conclusion, there is no need for any adaptation to the existing vehicular access and there are no concerns with regards to highway safety.
 - The native hedge will be planted with approximately 80 bare-root native whips, the mixture comprising of *Acer campestre*, *Corylus avellana*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Prunus spinosa* and *Sambucus nigra*. They will be notch planted in a double staggered row at the rate of 4 plants per linear metre. The notches will be vertical and deep enough for the roots to hang freely so that the root collar is level with the ground surface and when closed, the soil will be firmed round the roots. To aid establishment, the hedge will be planted in the autumn and weeded in the spring and summer months for the first 3 seasons. The whips will be irrigated if required and will be protected from rabbit damage using approved 600mm spiral guards, supported with 0.9m canes.