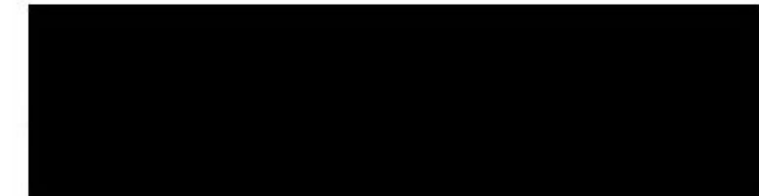


PLANNING STATEMENT

HIDDEN HOUSE MAIDSTONE ROAD NETTLESTEAD KENT, ME18 5HE

Gothicline Planning Consultant
8 Love Lane
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 1TZ



Contents

01 - Introduction

02 - Principles of good design

03 - Sustainable Development

04 – Natural Environment

05 – Development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets

06 – Green Belt

07 - Assessing the transport impacts of development

08- Parking standards

09 - Design principles in the countryside

10 – Residential Amenity

11 - Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 - This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for residential development on Land off Maidstone Road, Nettlestead Green, Kent, ME18 5HE.

1.2 - This Planning Statement Should be read in conjunction with the application forms, plans, Design and Access Statement and all other supporting material.

1.3 - Planning permission is sought for the erection of a single family dwelling house together with parking & landscaping.

2. Principles of good design

2.1 - The proposed dwelling is a three bedroom dwelling over two storeys with a 150m² footprint, occupying 3.8% of the site area. The building has a 'T' plan form with an 'upside-down' living arrangement. To minimise the buildings visibility the ground floor has been sunken into the existing site.

2.2 -Drawing on the influences of local modern agricultural buildings, the Hidden House has been designed to be in context with the landscape. This is achieved while providing interest through strong glazed forms and once inside the private courtyard modern interpretations of traditional working materials. The lower level of the building will be constructed in light coloured slim-line brickwork with pale mortar. This will create a surface with a more residential appearance when viewed up close, without the harshness associated with the concrete.

2.3 - The external walls above ground level will be finished in open timber cladding directly referencing the vernacular. The material will age naturally over time adding to the building's natural evolution to its final palette.

2.4 - The roof will be clad in zinc with an alternating width pattern to relate back to the steel and asbestos profile sheet roofing seen historically on agricultural buildings. The fine finish achievable with the selected palette of materials will give ever more depth to the façade of the building as you approach and enter.

3. Sustainable development

3.1 - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. Section 38 (6) requires that applications for development must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.

3.2 - Paragraph 7 confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 advises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: -

3.3 - Assessed against the three core roles that planning fulfils, namely social, economic, and environmental, the adverse impacts and benefits are summarised as follows:

- (i) With regards to the social role, the development would provide an additional dwelling which would, to a very modest degree, contribute towards the Borough's housing supply. A single dwelling would also make a very modest contribution to supporting local community activities, facilities and services, albeit the latter are relatively limited in number. The development would provide a short term economic benefit, by providing employment during the construction phase. It would also provide an opportunity for occupants of the dwelling to support local businesses in the settlement and/or nearby settlements including Yalding a 'larger village' which provides a nursery and primary school; a shop (including a post office); at least one place of worship, public house and community hall as well as open space provision. As such, the site is not in isolation (as per paragraph 79 of the NPPF) and I consider it reasonably accessible to some local services available for the existing residential population.
- (ii) In environmental terms, it is accepted that the sites relatively remote location and lack of local services could mean a high level of travel for day-to-day needs and activities. However, the application site has good accessibility to public transport with Yalding Train station being only 600m away by using the PROW KM188. Bus stops are easily accessed within 250m of the site accessed by pathway. The bus service operates at regular intervals 7 days a week, providing future occupants of the site access to Maidstone

centre, Tunbridge Wells where all services are readily available. Furthermore, the applicant is dedicated to applying sustainable construction techniques as part of the proposals and is exploring renewable and carbon-neutral technologies and materials within the proposed development. The building will be designed to exceed current Building Regulations. This will result in a new house constructed to surpass the latest regulations: with low water usage; high Energy Performance Certification; Minimal heat loss resulting in a sustainable home that is efficient to run.

- (iii) The proposed dwelling will deliver economic benefits through providing a contribution to the local housing market and through facilitation of short term construction and landscaping jobs throughout the period of construction. Additional residents would enhance the vitality of the rural settlement and financially support its local services and those in neighbouring areas in accordance with the wider aims of the Framework, including meeting the economic dimension of sustainability.

4. Natural Environment

4.1 - The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)¹² sets out the Government's view on how planners should balance nature conservation with development and helps ensure that Government meets its biodiversity commitments with regard to the operation of the planning system.

4.2 - Paragraph 179b, which states that council policies should "promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity." The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005, 2005). In accordance with the NPPF, it is important that developments should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- minimising impacts on existing biodiversity and habitats;
- providing net gains in biodiversity and habitats, wherever possible;
- establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

4.3 - The proposed development incorporates newly planted native trees and hedgerow on the site along all site boundaries to include Hazel, Blackthorn and Hawthorn. Flowering species, such as hawthorn, blackthorn, privet and rose would provide opportunities for nectar feeding invertebrates. Wildlife enhancements such as Bird boxes, Integrated bat boxes, Tree mounted bat boxes and Bee bricks. Proposed is also an orchard of fruit trees set in a wildflower meadow which is encouraged within the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Assessment.

4.4 - The applicants have commissioned both a tree survey and an ecology report for the site to identify where enhancements and improvements to the site can increase habitat and biodiversity.

4.5 - In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposed development design will incorporate other ecological enhancements to ensure that there is a net gain in biodiversity.

5. Development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets

5.1 - The grouping of listed buildings within this village have little visual interaction with each other, due to mature vegetation on the boundaries and the generous spaces around them.

5.2 - They all have a strong relationship to the road due to their open aspect. These listed buildings are generally experienced as individuals when travelling through the Village. Their relationship to each other historically is unknown however is most likely to be related to the surrounding agricultural land/countryside as part of their significance.

5.3 - The proposed development lies approximately 100m from the nearest heritage asset and therefore the form of development is considered to create no significant harm to the visual qualities of the Village or the listed buildings.

6. Green Belt

6.1 - Policy SS1 of the Local Plan sets out the special strategy for Maidstone Borough. Development is firstly directed as defined on the proposals map to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017). The application site falls outside of the any defined settlement hierarchy and Maidstone urban area and therefore in policy terms is considered countryside. Policy SP17

6.2 - The adopted Maidstone Local Plan (2017) identifies the application site as falling in the Metropolitan Green Belt. Policy SP17 (5) states that development within the Metropolitan Green Belt would be managed in accordance with national policy for the green belt.

6.3 - Government guidance for the management of development within the Metropolitan Green Belt is set out paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF. Para 145 "A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt". Exceptions to this are: (e) states: - "limited infilling in villages;"

6.4 - There is no dispute that Nettlestead Green is a village as set out in the Local Plan 2017 however, there is no defined settlement boundary for the village. The site between built development on two sides and would not extend beyond the existing defined built extent of the settlement which forms a ribbon on the west side of Maidstone Road.

6.5 - The proposal would infill a gap between existing development within an established ribbon of residential dwellings. As a result, the scheme would not materially conflict with any of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, including assisting with safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The Frameworks aim is to safeguard the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes for including land within it. The development as proposed would make full and effective use of a currently unused piece of land.

7. Assessing the transport impacts of development

7.1 - The application site has good accessibility to public transport with Yalding Train station being only 600m away by using the PROW KM188. Bus stops are easily accessed within 250m of the site accessed by pathway. The bus service operates at regular intervals 7 days a week, providing future occupants of the site access to Maidstone centre, Tunbridge Wells where all services are readily available.

8. Parking standards

8.1 - The local plan states “The council 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. It also seeks to encourage innovative designs that can sufficiently demonstrate that a provision lower than the minimum standard is feasible and would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding locality.”

8.2 - The proposed scheme provides parking for a single family dwelling and also provides an attractive layout whilst ensuring appropriate provision. The driveway areas are screened by the proposed vegetation on the northern side of the access road aiding permeability within the site and foraging opportunities for local wildlife. Identified parking spaces have gabion walls that provide foraging opportunities for bee’s, butterflies and birds, as well as year round interest.

9. Design principles in the countryside

9.1 - Planning policy and guidance aims to protect the character and appearance of the countryside.

9.2 - However, the impact of the new house will be mitigated by substantial structural landscape buffers around the site which in the medium and longer term will provide significant filtering of those views into the site.

9.3 - The proposal at this site aims to enhance the local distinctiveness of the area and adds benefit to the surrounding landscape and street scene. The reduced level of the ground floor has allowed soft landscaping to screen the site from Maidstone Road whilst softening the entrance from Maidstone Road along the permeable driveway set down amongst banks of mixed native shrubs natural planting at right-angles to the street.

9.4 - The site is currently open at its southern end, creating a natural break in the ribbon of development. The applicants are passionate about preserving this as part of the landscaping design. Proposed landscaping will reintroduce the historic view of this area by incorporating an

orchard of fruit trees set in a wildflower meadow which is encouraged within the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Assessment. This is complemented by the introduction of additional feature trees along the eastern boundary providing a new depth to the landscape and character of the site whilst enhancing the character of the street scene.

9.5 - This policy states “Where built development is proposed, there would be no existing building or structure suitable for conversion or re-use to provide the required facilities. Any new buildings should, where practicable, be located adjacent to existing buildings or be unobtrusively located and well screened by existing or proposed vegetation which reflect the landscape character of the area”

9.6 - A Cattle shed historically occupied the site however, this was recently removed from the site due to dilapidation and was witnessed by a MBC planning officer prior to its removal. A large concrete slab and regularly spaced pads are still present and visible on the site. The proposed building is located at the northern end of the site, close to the previous structure’s historic location. The siting provides natural visual and noise screening from the road and the neighbouring property, Cherry Hill, afforded by the mature tree-line, which will be reinforced as part of the proposed landscaping plan.

10. Residential amenity

10.1 - There is adequate separation distance between the proposed dwelling and the existing properties, such that there would be no loss of light, sense of enclosure or overshadowing resulting from the proposal.

10.2 - The majority of fenestration looks onto the applicant’s garden or overlooks the wider site to the south and open countryside to west. The distances between the proposed and fenestration of the neighbouring properties to the north ensures there is no harmful overshadowing or overlooking of private amenity areas. There would be no undue adverse impact on residential amenity.

10.3 - The proposal would stand comfortably within the plot with sufficient space around it to maintain adequate visual separation with adjacent buildings and safeguard the living conditions of adjacent occupiers.

11. Summary

11.1 - The resulting scheme is of relatively small scale for the village. It is located in a position where the visual impact and the presence of building on the land is limited.

11.2 - The planning issues in the proposal involve balancing, on the one hand, the policies which restrict development within rural settlements with those which aim to enhance the environment and overall benefit to the site.

11.3 – Although policies pull in different directions. A narrow interpretation of rural countryside policies would result in the conclusion that there is conflict with countryside protection and rural settlement policies. But we believe that there are considerable benefits from the proposal, such as good design of the building, landscape enhancements, bio-diversity improvements and the exceeding of current building regulations, including the incorporation of high efficiency technologies that provide a positive solution to the constraints of the site.

11.4 - We believe that this is a good example of sustainable development as espoused in the National Planning Policy Framework.