

# Planning, Design, Heritage & Access Statement



Land North of  
Chiddingstone Sports  
Ground  
The Village  
Chiddingstone  
TN8 7AG

On behalf of Mr & Mrs  
S Bridgland



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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. We have been instructed by Mr & Mrs S. Bridgland to prepare and submit a revised application for full planning permission for the conversion of an existing stable building on land to the west of 1 Eden View, Chiddingstone, Kent (Known as Land north of Chiddingstone Sports Ground) to enable a two-bedroom dwelling to be provided.
- 1.2. Prior to the preparation of the plans that accompany this submission provided by Crofton Design Services a site visit has been undertaken along with a review of relevant planning policy considerations. This statement is also accompanied by a structural assessment of the stables including a method Statement relating to the conversion works that is provided by TSC Designs Ltd.
- 1.3. The revised application follows the Councils advice that recent application SC/21/02204/FUL should be withdrawn. The Council advised for the application to be withdrawn in light of a query being raised by KCC Ecology in conjunction with holding objections of the application being submitted by both the Conservation officer and Chiddingstone Parish Council.
- 1.4. Although amended information was provided in order to address these concerns, the Council was unable to re-consult on the revised plans that were presented or the photographs that were provided for the attention of KCC Ecology. The application recommended to be withdrawn and resubmitted as a result.
- 1.5. Following the withdrawal of the application, advice has been received from KCC Ecology that it is satisfied with the level of information that was provided in association with application 21/02204/FUL. This revised submissions also makes amendments to the fenestration shown within the proposed conversion plans (predominantly on the buildings western and northern elevations) in order to address the concerns of the Conservation

Officer. The proposed parking area to serve the dwelling has been amended so that it is no longer positioned adjacent to the highway in light of concerns raised by the Parish Council in this regard.

2. **THE APPLICATION SITE**

- 2.1. The application site comprises land to the west of No. 1 Eden View which is known as 'land north of Chiddingstone Sports Ground, The Village, Chiddingstone, Kent'.
- 2.2. The site is home to an L shaped stable building that comprises two stables a tack room and three modest stables stores. The existing building is of shallow pitched roof design and is of timber clad construction.
- 2.3. The stables are located to the south of the highway and are surrounded by mature landscaping including between the stable building and the highway to the north.
- 2.4. A public footpath runs along the western boundary of the site and is within land owned by the applicant. No changes to the public footpath are proposed by this application and no objections were raised to the previous application by the Public Rights of Way Officer.
- 2.5. The site is located within the confines of the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is also positioned within the confines of the Chiddingstone Village Conservation Area.
- 2.6. In terms of relevant planning history, permission was originally granted for the stable building under Council reference 97/01476/HIST and this permission was for a temporary 5-year period.
- 2.7. A subsequent application was submitted under reference 02/02738/CONVAR to extend the temporary consent, and this was granted with permission then afforded to the stables for a further 20-year period.

- 2.8. In 2019, an application was submitted to remove Condition 1 (the 20-year temporary permission), and this was granted under reference 19/01112/CONVAR. This therefore confirms that the existing stables are lawful in their current form and that they now benefit from permanent planning consent.
- 2.9. As detailed in the introduction to this statement, application SE/21/02204/FUL which also sought permission for the conversion of the stable building to a dwelling was withdrawn at the request of the Council to enable outstanding issues to be resolved. This route was insisted upon by the Local Planning Authority with confirmation received that revised and updated plans could not be reconsulted upon, nor could a further consultation with KCC Ecology occur. The issues focused on the following:
- The need for KCC Ecology to be satisfied that no ecological surveys were required the provision of response and photographs of the site which have since been provided
  - Concerns in relation to the proposed insertion of windows on the northern elevation of the building and how this was judged to likely impact upon the character and setting of this part of the Chiddingstone Conservation Area and an error that was provided on the original plans which did not show existing windows on the western elevation of the current stables building
  - The concern of the Parish Council that the application proposed vehicle parking for the converted property to be provided on the road (on the applicants land) reducing the possible on street parking serving the village at present.

**3. HERITAGE**

- 3.1. The site is positioned within the confines of the Chiddingstone Conservation Area. In accordance with Paragraph 194 of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, it is therefore necessary for an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage asset that could be affected by development as part of the presentation of a planning application.
- 3.2. The Chiddingstone Conservation Area covers some 24 hectares and contains 16 Listed buildings with the Conservation Area focused around the compact parish of Chiddingstone itself.
- 3.3. The guidance recognises that the Conservation Area is very much concentrated on the vernacular buildings along the high street.
- 3.4. The Council's guidance acknowledges the existence of Eden View Cottages which describes being a pair of relatively modern brick semi-detached bungalows on the southern side of the road and that their relatively small design and scale sits comfortably within the landscape. The same conclusion could also be reached in terms of the modest stable building which is the subject of this application.
- 3.5. Whilst in relation to application SE/21/02204/FUL the Conservation Officer formed the view that the stables were visible from the highway and their conversion could impact upon the setting of the Conservation area and notably the Listed wall and 'Lych Gate' on the southern boundary of the church and cemetery, the stable buildings are screened from the highway by dense landscaping which exists. Photographs of this landscaping are provided below, and the Conservation Officer is welcome to visit the site to inspect this.



View taken from highway looking towards location of stables



View showing landscaping between western elevation of stables and site boundary



View of landscaping between stables and highway looking north



Dense landscaping along northern boundary between sand school/manege and highway

- 3.6. In light of dense landscaping that is to be retained, and the modest nature of the stable building, they are not visible from the highway. The stables do not therefore appear prominent or highly visible from vantage points within the Conservation Area.
- 3.7. It is acknowledged that the rectory associated with the Church is located to the west of the site, but this is not described as being a building of any historical significance.
- 3.8. In terms of the village recreation grounds (adjacent to the application site), these are described as being outside the Conservation Area, and screened from the road by hedgerows.
- 3.9. As the Supplementary Planning Document acknowledges that the playfields are screened from the road by hedgerows, the same conclusions should be applicable to the stables given these are also located behind the hedgerow and on the southern side of the highway and directly adjacent to the recreation grounds.
- 3.10. The Council guidance acknowledged that some outbuildings within the Conservation Area are in a state of neglect and would benefit from renovation and enhancement. Whilst the stable buildings are of functional appearance they would certainly benefit from renovation and enhancement such as that which is proposed by this application.
- 3.11. In terms of the nearest listed building to the site, these comprise the concentration of listed buildings around St Mary's Church in the village and the Post office. There are all located to the west of the site some way away from the stable building.

#### **4. THE REVISED APPLICATION**

- 4.1. The revised application once again seeks full planning permission to convert and modestly extend the existing stable building to enable a two-bedroom single storey dwelling to be provided.
- 4.2. The plans provided by Crofton Design Services illustrate that the proposed works would incorporate a hallway and cloakroom extension to form the entrance to the property and the addition would only increase the gross external floor area of the existing building by 6.6m<sup>2</sup> with the existing building having a current gross external area of some 73.7m<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.3. The conversion would retain the timber clad design of the existing stable building and the proposed internal accommodation would provide an open plan lounge and kitchen area, along with two bedrooms and a bathroom.
- 4.4. The dwelling has been designed in order to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards document. These require for a two-bedroom, four person dwelling to be 70m<sup>2</sup> in size. The dwelling would have a gross internal floor area of some 69.5m<sup>2</sup> and both double bedrooms would be at least 11.5m<sup>2</sup>. The minor 0.5m<sup>2</sup> discrepancy is not therefore material and the standard of accommodation that would be achieved is of a high quality.
- 4.5. Although the revised application reduces the number of new windows that are proposed compared to the previous application, all habitable rooms would be afforded an acceptable degree of outlook and the proposed dwelling would be served by a modest amenity area around the building to provide a courtyard garden.
- 4.6. In terms of windows and doors to be introduced, the Council will appreciate that the plans submitted in association with SE/21/02204/FUL contained an error. They failed to show existence of 3 windows located on the western elevation of the stable buildings which

exist at present. These windows are now shown on the existing elevation plans provided with this revised submission.

- 4.7. In raising the objection to the application, the Conservation Officer was concerned that the proposed northern elevation of the building was now shown to include three windows and the proposed western elevation was now shown to include a two-pane window. They formed the opinion that these changes to the building would result in an over domestic appearance that could be harmful to the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 4.8. The revised application now submitted does not therefore propose any windows to be introduced on the northern elevation of the building and it will continue to have the same appearance as it does at present in order to address the Conservations Officers concern.
- 4.9. In terms of the western elevation, the 3 windows that exist (now shown on corrected plans) would be removed and replaced with a single window only. The amount of fenestration on this elevation would therefore be reduced compared to the current appearance of the western elevation of the building.
- 4.10. In addition, the evidence provided with the revised application now includes the extra photographs which demonstrate that the building would not be visible from the Conservation Area to the north and this is supported by the Council's own supplementary guidance which acknowledges that the recreation ground is not visible from the north given the hedgerow that exists along the southern side of the road.
- 4.11. In terms of parking, the plans associated with application SE/21/02204 showed that parking would be provided to the stables directly adjacent to the highway on land that is owned by the applicant. The Parish Council strongly objected to this proposition, on the grounds that parking in Chiddingstone Village is at a premium.

- 4.12. This revised application therefore proposes for the existing access which serve the stables to be used and for parking provided directly in front of the stables themselves. The access would come across the existing sand school and would therefore not involve the need for any removal of trees or important landscaping. The access would also be set away from the sites northern boundary ensuring the landscaped nature of the northern boundary adjacent to the highway is adequately preserved. This change has been specifically made in order to address the concern expressed by the Parish Council.
- 4.13. As per the previous application, this revised submission is accompanied by a detailed structural report and methodology statement from TSC Designs. This confirms that the building is of sound and permanent construction and that the proposed conversion of the building will not involve the need for any major or substantial reconstruction to occur.
- 4.14. The report confirms that the building can remain standing as existing throughout the construction process and the plans are considered as a logical and sympathetic use of the building without involving any major or substantial construction works.
- 4.15. The plans from Crofton Design Services include the details of insect and bat boxes on the proposed elevations. These are provided in the interest of enhancing biodiversity, and in order to avoid a planning condition in this regard.
- 4.16. Furthermore, the plans would incorporate the provision of an electrical vehicle charging point adjacent to the two parking spaces.

**5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1. Relevant planning Policy to the determination of this application is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011), the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document concerning Development within the Green Belt (2015).

***National Planning Policy Framework (2019)***

- 5.2. With the site located within the confines of the Green Belt, the most relevant policy within the Framework comprises that contained within Section 13 which relates to the protection of Green Belt Land.
- 5.3. Paragraphs 149 & 150 of this document confirms that certain forms of development are not inappropriate within the Green Belt, and this includes the re-use of buildings provided they are of permanent and substantial construction.

***The Sevenoaks Core Strategy***

- 5.4. Policy L08 refers to the countryside and states that the extent of the Green Belt will be maintained along with the Districts Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

***Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015)***

- 5.5. Policy GB7 of the ADMP states the proposals for the reuse of a building within the Green Belt that meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- The new use, along with any associated use of land surrounding the building will not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt or harm the existing character of the area.
- The applicant can demonstrate through a detailed structural survey that the building is of permanent and substantial construction and is capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction.

5.6. Policy EN1 concerns the general design principles that would be used to assess all planning applications and states that the form of all new development must have regard to the character and appearance of its surroundings and achieve a satisfactory means of access.

5.7. Policy EN2 focuses on amenity protection and specifies that development will be resisted where it causes harm to the privacy and amenities of surrounding properties.

5.8. Policy EN4 refers to Heritage Assets that include Conservation Areas and specifies that all proposals must ensure the special character of the heritage asset is preserved and enhanced by new development.

5.9. Policy EN5 refers to the landscape and specifies that the highest level of protection will be given to the Districts Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

#### ***Sevenoaks Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document***

5.10. Pages 12 and 13 of this guidance reaffirm the thrust of policy GB7 of the ADMP which concerns the reuse of buildings within the Green Belt. This once again details the need to demonstrate that the existing buildings are of a sound and permanent construction and are capable of conversion without major or substantial reconstruction. Therefore, this statement is accompanied by a detailed Structural Report and Methodology Statement

provided by TSC Designs which confirms that the building is of permanent construction and is capable of being converted retaining the original structure.

5.11. Paragraph 4.6 of the guidance accepts that proportionate extensions to buildings proposed for conversion will be appropriate in principle.

**6. PLANNING MERITS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1. As per application SE/21/02204/FUL the conversion of the existing stables building to provide a dwelling represents an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt having regard to the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 149 & 150) and Policy GB7 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.
- 6.2. It is acknowledged that any application to convert an existing building within the Green Belt must be accompanied by a detailed Structural Report and Methodology Statement in order to demonstrate that the building is of permanent and substantial construction and is capable of being converted without major or complete reconstruction. Therefore, in accordance with policy the Structural Report and Methodology Statement is provided TSC Designs Ltd which accompanies this statement. This confirms that the building can be converted without major or substantial reconstruction and that the conversion could incorporate the retention of the existing structure in its entirety.
- 6.3. It is acknowledged that a modest extension to the building is proposed as part of this application. Once again, this element of the proposal complies with the terms of Policy GB7 with paragraph 4.6 of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to Development in the Green Belt accepting that proportionate extensions to buildings proposed for conversion will be appropriate in principle.
- 6.4. In relation to the residential curtilage that would serve the property, this would be modest in terms of its proportions and would use an area currently associated with the yard that serves the stables. There is no requirement of a vehicle access to be introduced with parking available directly adjacent to the highway involving land under the ownership of the applicant.

- 6.5. In relation to the sites position within the Chiddingstone Conservation Area, the evidence now provided demonstrates that the building is not highly visible from the highway to the north, given the substantial landscaping that exists. This substantial landscaping between the sports ground and the highway to the north is acknowledged within the Council’s own Supplementary Planning Guidance. The photographs provided within this statement confirm that this continues to be in existence and will be preserved.
- 6.6. The building is of single storey design only and sits in an unassuming location within the Conservation Area as a result. It is not highly visible from the Listed Wall or Lych Gate associated with the church.
- 6.7. In order to address the concerns of the Conservation Officer in relation to SE/21/02204, the plans have been amended so that no additional fenestration is shown on the northern elevation of the building. This would remain as “existing” in terms of its appearance. In terms of the western elevation, the Conservation Officer similarly raised concerns in relation to this. This revised submission confirms that 3 existing windows are positioned on this elevation at present and these are to be replaced with a single window only. The amount of fenestration would therefore be reduced. The revisions that are therefore made to the design respond to the comments of the Conservation Officer and ensure the sensitive conversion of the building would both enhance its current appearance, will not result in any material change or harm to the Conservation Area.
- 6.8. The building is set well away from any other nearby residential properties and no harm to the amenities or privacy of any existing dwelling would be caused.
- 6.9. In relation to biodiversity and ecology, photographs of the site were previously provided in association with application SE/21/02204/FUL along with a response from the applicant demonstrate that the work that had recently been undertaken in association with the maintenance of the building. Following the withdrawal of the application, KCC Ecology kindly reviewed the photographs and additional representations made by the applicant and have confirmed that it is satisfied that there is no requirement for an Ecological Survey

to be submitted as part of the planning application. A copy of the photographs, correspondence, and confirmation in this regard from KCC Ecology is attached in **APPENDIX 1** of this submission.

- 6.10. In relation to the standard of accommodation provided, this statement confirms that the design would provide a high-quality internal layout and the overall size of the dwelling and individual room sizes would accord with the terms of the Nationally Described Space Standards Document. Although some windows have been removed and the plans compared to application 21/02204/FUL, all habitable rooms would continue to be afforded an acceptable degree of outlook and natural light.
- 6.11. In terms of parking this is no longer shown to be adjacent to the highway to free up this space as it is required within the village associated with the school, church etc. The revised plans should now show parking to be provided directly adjacent to the stables building and for this to utilise an existing access onto the highway. Vehicles would be able to emerge onto the road in a forward gear. This arrangement would not involve the need to remove any important landscaping with the access towards the building being achieved across the current sand school. In addition, the plans detailed that the proposal would incorporate the provision of an electrical vehicle charging point and the provision of details in this regard negates the need for a planning condition to be imposed.
- 6.12. In order to ensure that all important landscaping is preserved adjacent to the sites northern boundary with the highway the applicant would accept a suitable landscaping condition.

Conclusion

- 6.13. This statement therefore confirms that a revised submission comprehensively responds to the previous concerns of KCC Ecology, the Conservation Officer, and the Parish Council.
- 6.14. The application complies with the terms of all relevant planning policy and is supported by other similar permissions within the district with the conversion of buildings of sound and permanent construction within the Green Belt. It is therefore requested for full planning permission to be granted.