

PLANNING AND DESIGN STATEMENT

New Timber Framed Outbuilding

**Dunsdale Farm Cottage, Brasted
Road, Westerham, TN16 1LJ**

INTRODUCTION

1. This statement is prepared in support of a householder planning application for the erection of a home office/gym outbuilding located at Dunsdale Farm Cottage, Brasted Road, Westerham, Kent, TN16 1LJ. The statement is intended to help provide information on the development in relation to the relevant policies and material considerations, in order to justify the development in planning terms.
2. We have provided a design to ensure that the proposed building is kept to the minimal sized needed to provide the necessary space required to allow the area to be fully functional and used for its intended purpose.
3. We believe the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in planning terms on the following merits:
 - (i) The proposed building will be constructed within the garden of the property; this is located within a small wooded area, with plenty of tree and bush coverage.
 - (ii) The proposed building will be located within the garden curtilage of the property and will be seen within a residential context and which is well screened from the wider landscape.
 - (iii) The building will accord with the relevant Green Belt guidance and will not exceed 40sqm. This has therefore taken account of the Green Belt location of the site; thus it will retain a proportionate footprint and a relatively low height of 4.0m at the ridge height.
 - (iv) The design and the positioning of the building has been carefully considered in order to have no visual impact to the landscape or surrounding area whatsoever. The proposed building will be well screened by trees and bushes, which will sufficiently minimise the visibility of the building from public views or the wider landscape. In this regard, the site is already set within the confines of the garden area of the property and is adequately screened from public view.
 - (v) The site will maintain the character of the AONB and will not affect any ecological interest or any existing trees on the site.
 - (vi) If requested to do so, the applicant is prepared to install bird boxes to the elevations of the building to support a gain in biodiversity.
4. On the basis of this statement meeting the requirements for sustainable development, the scheme is considered to comply with the development plan and would be supported by Paragraph 11 of the NPPF which supports the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

6. The site is made up of a traditional two-storey farmhouse which forms part of a former farmstead, which has since been converted into several properties. To the south and the western boundary of the former farmstead, there is substantial tree and hedgerow coverage which encloses the residential gardens to the property. The property's garden is laid out to the front of the property, with access maintained for residential properties beyond. The extent of these gardens are historic and were confirmed to be lawful against the recent LDC. The property has a small courtyard to the rear leading to an existing stone built outbuilding. The property is accessed via a shared roadway from the A25. The property is located to the left of the driveway, with the gardens found opposite.
7. The property lies within a number of other residential properties in a rural location located off Brasted Road, which runs to the north. The property is located within the parish of Westerham with the village able to be accessed via a short distance along Brasted Road to the west.

APPLICATION PROPOSALS

8. Planning Permission is sought for the erection of a timber framed building at 8m long x 4m wide x 4.0m high. The building will be located to the existing garden area to the property, within the residential area to the front of the property. The building will be well related to the existing property, within walking distance of the front elevation, and the site is well enclosed and screened by mature vegetation, including trees and bushes within the boundaries of the gardens.

9. The building will be single storey, with black timber cladding and black, high performance roof covering, to ensure that it sits sympathetically within the confines of the already well hidden area. The building will have a gabled roof form which will have ridge height of 4m. The internal floor space will be no more than 30sqm.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

10. The Development Plan consists of the following documents which are relevant to this proposal:

- (1) Sevenoaks Core Strategy: Local Development Framework
- (2) Allocations and Development Management Plan

11. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also relevant to this application due to its position as a material consideration decision making in terms of its policies and the presumption in favour of sustainable development and its influence in terms the weighting of existing policies. Paragraph 11 sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that, where development accords with the development plan, planning permission should be granted without delay. One of the main principles of the NPPF is to promote good design through its design policies which are set out in section 12 of the document including the need to reinforce local distinctiveness, maintain the amenities of occupiers and respond to the character and history of a place.

GREEN BELT

14. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is therefore subject to the relevant green belt policies of the NPPF and the Local Plan. The following purposes have been carefully considered and we believe that there will be no direct negative impacts on any of them:

- i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- ii) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- iii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- iv) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- v) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

15. The scheme can also be considered positively against the policies of the development plan as Policy GB3 supports the provision of residential outbuildings within the Green Belt. This states: "Outbuildings located more than 5m from the existing dwelling will be permitted where the building, including the cumulative impact of other outbuildings and extension within the curtilage of the dwelling, would be ancillary to the main dwelling in terms of function and design and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive bulk or visual intrusion".

16. In this regard, the proposal will be located more than 5m from the existing dwelling and thus would not be considered to be an extension to the dwelling. The property does not have any cumulative impact from any outbuildings due to the fact that there are no similar outbuildings in the locality of the building on the site. The proposed outbuilding will accord with the Green Belt SPD and Policy GB3 as it would not exceed an internal floor space of 30sqm and would remain single storey in line with this guidance and policy.

17. Thus, the scheme can be considered positively against the relevant green belt policies.

DESIGN

21. The proposed building will serve the house owner/applicant with a much needed home office and gym to work from. Covid-19 has meant the applicant now has to work from home on most week days and this is a much needed space. In order to provide enough natural light to the building, we have designed the building with a number of glazed areas, to three elevations, with not a single window, facing a single neighbour's direction. The glazed areas will have no impact on the neighbours view or privacy, whilst still allowing enough natural light to enter the internal space, offering the applicant the ability to work in a much needed, professional environment. This has been carefully considered by the positioning of the building. The building has been designed with a traditional appearance, but by using dark materials to ensure the outbuilding sits unnoticed, within the rural nature of the site and surrounding area. The building and site, specially the residential gardens, are considered to be sufficiently screened by various trees and hedgerows in order to ensure the building does not appear intrusive or overbearing on any of the nearby properties.

23. The design is considered to be appropriate in design terms and will preserve the character of the AONB and the surrounding built form. The building will not affect any existing trees or hedgerows and these will be maintained as part of the development. Additionally, the relatively low height, positioning and its siting at a lower level, reinforces its status as a secondary building to avoid an intrusive design and to avoid being overbearing on any neighbouring properties.

24. In summary, the development is considered to be well designed and appropriate to the site and its wider setting and will accord with the policies of Section 12 of the NPPF and SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.

LANDSCAPE

25. The site lies within the AONB and thus Paragraph 172 of the NPPF, Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy and EN5 of the Allocations Plan require development to conserve the special landscape character and dictates that great weight should be placed upon this in the decision-making process. This aspect of the scheme has been given careful consideration in this process and it is considered the scheme conserves the landscape character and will result in the enhancement of this character for the following reasons; the proposed development is considered to be a sustainable development which is a core component of the Kent Downs AONB SPD.

27. It will also comply with Policy SD3 of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan (2014- 2019) which states "New development or changes to land use will be opposed where they disregard or run counter to the primary purpose of the Kent Downs AONB". In this regard, the proposed development adheres to the current land use and is not considered to have any impact on the Kent Downs AONB and is a common type of development in such areas.

28. The traditional design of the building together with the sufficient screening of the building and site ensures that the proposed development will be appropriate in this context and will preserve the spacious and landscaped setting of the site. The well established trees and mature hedgerows surrounding the entire proposed outbuilding will be maintained and there are limited views of the site from public land and neighbouring properties.

29. For the reasons outlined, it is considered the scheme will ensure the preservation of the landscape character within the AONB and is therefore compliant with Policy SP1, SD3, EN5 and the NPPF.

30. Due to the location within the garden and the existing area there will be no harm to any ecological interests. This being that no trees, bush cover or hedgerows are required to be removed meaning the scheme will uphold any Arboricultural interests. The applicant is also happy to install bird boxes to one of the four elevations of the building, to achieve a net gain in biodiversity if asked to do so.

31. Due to the building being used as a home office/gym, it will not require any wet services/foul drainage whatsoever, so there will be no requirement to dig up/lay any unnecessary pipework/drainage. The surrounding ground cover will remain.

CONCLUSION

32. Paragraphs 11 of the NPPF dictates that this development should be considered in light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development which means that where development accords with the development plan development should be approved without delay. The above assessment demonstrates such a conclusion.

33. The proposals will meet the terms of the development plan by providing an ancillary building to this existing property in line with policies and guidance. As such it will preserve openness and will make efficient use of the land. The screened nature of the site and its location within a residential garden ensures no impact will be caused to the AONB.