



Town & Country Planning Ltd

Newlands Barn

Delaware Farm

Hever Road, Edenbridge

TN8 7LD

Demolition of existing building and erection of a detached dwelling, with associated access
and landscaping

Planning Statement

December 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. We have been appointed by Ms K Dixon to prepare and submit a full planning application for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a single dwelling house with associated access and landscaping. This follows consent earlier this year for the conversion of the existing building to a single dwellinghouse, pursuant to SE/21/01300/FUL

1.2. This statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents and plans;

- Ecology Reports from PJC Ecology and Brindle Green
- Flood Risk Assessment from UNDA
- Contamination Report from Knapps Hick
- Design and Access Statement from Studio Hudson
- 20017a-E-100 LOCATION PLAN
- 20017a-E-200 EXISTING SITE PLAN
- 20017a-E-201 EXISTING ROOF PLAN
- 20017a-E-300 EXISTING FLOOR PLAN
- 20017a-E-700 EXISTING SECTION
- 20017a-E-800 EXISTING ELEVATIONS
- 20017a-E-801 EXISTING ELEVATIONS
- 20017a-P-200 PROPOSED SITE PLAN
- 20017a-P-201 PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
- 20017a-P-300 PROPOSED LAYOUTS
- 20017a-P-700 PROPOSED SECTIONS
- 20017a-P-800 PROPOSED ELEVATIONS AND SECTION

2. SITE APPRAISAL

- 2.1. The application site lies to the north of Hever Road and on the eastern side of a shared access track serving a number of private domestic properties. Wider agricultural land extends to the east and north, within the control of the applicant.
- 2.2. The junction with Hever Road is characterised by a collection of rural dwellings, this continues along the shared drive, with converted dwellings to the north (The Byre, The Forge, The Great Barn, The Granary) and beyond this The Threshing Barn and The Oast. The character of this private way is predominantly defined by the conversion and modernisation of agricultural buildings to residential uses, within a rural countryside setting.
- 2.3. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and Flood Zone 2.



Application site

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- SE/16/00639-Prior Approval conversion to residential- Refused
- SE/17/01023- Prior Approval conversion to residential- Approved
- SE/18/02174- Prior Approval conversion to residential- Approved
- PA/21/00076- Pre-application- Conversion to residential- Positive feedback, see Appendix B
- SE/21/01300/FUL- Conversion of existing building to a detached dwelling with associated access and landscaping. Approved

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1. The scheme proposes the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a detached dwelling house. The residential access, curtilage and wider landscaping remain unchanged from SE/21/01300/FUL.
- 4.2. The proposals have been designed to reduce the overall building footprint, whilst retaining an agricultural style to the building. There has been a very modest uplift in eave and ridge height with an asymmetrical roof profile, ensuring the sloping, sheet clad roof profile remains from Hever Road. This retains the single storey appearance of the building from the road.
- 4.3. The use of materials replicates those previously approved, albeit that some upper floor accommodation can now be accommodated to the field side (east) and fenestration detailing has been modified accordingly.
- 4.4. The property will be served off the existing vehicular access, with set back entrance gates. The property will be provided with a modest patio area to the west elevation and a wraparound patio to the north east corner.
- 4.5. The garden for the property will remain as approved, enclosed by post and rail fencing to the north, east and south. The western boundary to the road will be reinforced with a mixed nature hedgerow and inset willow fencing. New trees are proposed to the north west corner with the highway and within the parking area adjacent to the entrance.

5. POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF- 2021)

5.1. The National Planning Policy Framework ("The Framework") sets out the Government's approach to planning with the presumption in favour of sustainable development lying at the heart of the advice contained therein.

5.2. Paragraph 8 sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development which should be examined as if they are mutually dependent. These are;

- i) to build a "strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation";
- ii) "supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment";
- iii) "contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment".

5.3. The framework goes on to establish 12 core principles that underpin the planning system which includes;

- Seeking high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- Protecting the Green Belts, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting the thriving local communities within it.
- Support the transition to a low carbon future in changing climates and encouraging the re-use of existing resources including the conversion of existing buildings and encourage the use of renewable energy.

5.4. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, which includes applications involving housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites or where the Housing Delivery test indicates that the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75%) of the housing requirement over the previous three years, grant permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Housing

5.5. To support the Governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed. This includes small and medium sized sites which can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area. To promote the development of a good mix of sites, local planning authorities should;

- Support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions-giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes;

5.6. Planning decision should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes. Planning decisions should encourage multiple benefits;

- Give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes.
- Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings especially where available sites could be used more effectively.

Green Belt

5.7. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt.

5.8. There are a number of exceptions to this, including;

- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

5.9. This framework is reinforced by Core Strategy Policy L08 of the Local Plan and GB9 of the ADMP.

5.10. Local Plan Policy GB9 sets out that proposals to replace an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt which would meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- a) the existing building is lawful and permanent in nature;
- b) the design and volume of the proposed replacement building would not be materially larger than the 'original' building and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale, bulk or visual intrusion; and

- c) the replacement building would be within the same use as the building to be demolished.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

5.11. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystems;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity;
- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution.

5.12. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;
- opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;

Design

5.13. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate

amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Local Plan Policies

Core Strategy

LO1- Distribution of Development

LO8- Countryside and the Rural Economy

SP1- Design of New Development and Conservation

SP11- Biodiversity

Allocations and Development Management Plan

EN1- Design Principles

EN2- Amenity Protection

T3- Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points

GB9- Replacement of non-residential buildings in the Green Belt

6. REASONING

6.1. The principal issues relating to this submission are;

- Housing Supply
- Impact on the Green Belt
- Design and impact on character and appearance of the area
- Impact on neighbouring amenities
- Biodiversity
- Very special circumstances

Housing Supply

6.2. The NPPF sets out that to maintain the supply of housing, local planning authorities should monitor progress in building out sites which have permission. Where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery has fallen below 75% of the local authorities housing requirement over the previous three years the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies at paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

6.3. The Council's most recent Annual Monitoring Report (AMR-2018/19) sets out the number of annual completions at 254 dwellings, these fall significantly short of the objectively assessed need figure of 707dpa. As a consequence of the persistent under delivery of housing completions, the Housing Delivery Test 2020 Measurement (published 19 January 2021) confirmed, against a 3-year rolling delivery requirement of 1858 dwellings, SDC delivered 1302 dwellings across the period 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 (i.e. 70% of the requirement).

6.4. As a result of the above shortfall, the Council's policies for determining housing developments are considered out of date (NPPF paragraph 11, footnote 7). The presumption is in favour of granting permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

6.5. Paragraph 11 does not indicate that permission should be granted unless the balance is only a little against the grant of permission, it is part of a pro- development policy that has the effect of tilting the balance in favour of the grant of permission.

Impact on the Green Belt

6.6. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF is clear that the erection of new buildings in the Green Belt constitutes inappropriate development. Paragraph 149 sets out exceptions to this which include;

- the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

6.7. It is acknowledged that the existing building is in agricultural use, however there is extant consent for its conversion to residential use.

6.8. Local Plan Policy GB9 supports the replacement of an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt which would meet the following criteria:

- a) the existing building is lawful and permanent in nature;
- b) the design and volume of the proposed replacement building would not be materially larger than the 'original' building and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale, bulk or visual intrusion; and
- c) the replacement building would be within the same use as the building to be demolished

6.9. Whilst it is acknowledged that the replacement building would not remain in the existing agricultural use, which would conflict with the NPPF and policy GB9, it is considered useful to consider a comparison of the design and volume of both the existing/consented building and proposed structure in terms of assessing the impact on the openness of the Green Belt, regardless of any harm in principle.

6.10. At present the existing barn is a substantial structure of solid construction, deemed capable of conversion through the granting of SE/21/01300/FUL. The existing footprint, height and volume comparisons are outlined below and also presented on drawing P850B.

	<u>Existing Building/ Consented</u>	<u>Proposed Building</u>	<u>Percentage Change</u>
Footprint	290.94 sqm	228.96sqm	- 21.3%
Height			
Eave	3.6m	3.9m (front) 5.2m (back)	+300-1600mm
Ridge	5m	5.9m	+900mm
Volume	1292.2 cubic metres	1124.8 cubic metres	-13%

6.11. The proposed replacement building would see the overall rectangular plan form retained, but reduced by 21.3% to give a smaller footprint than the existing building and consented conversion scheme.

6.12. The design of the building has been devised to retain the appearance of a single storey, utilitarian, agricultural form to the street. The ridge line has been off set to create an

asymmetrical roof profile, achieving additional height between eave and ridge line to the rear, enabling a partial first floor to be provided. The more striking full height glazing is retained to the rear (east elevation) as previously consented.

6.13. The overall height of the building is only increasing by 900mm, the first floor accommodation is achieved through the raising of the eave line to the rear. Overall this would not result in a significant increase in bulk or massing, on the contrary, the overall volume of the building will be reduced by 13% compared with the existing structure and the consented scheme.

6.14. Whilst the proposals would still conflict with the NPPF and paragraph GB9(c) there would be meaningful and tangible gains to openness through the proposed structure. This will be considered further under the submitted case for very special circumstances.

Design and impact on the character of the area

6.15. Core Strategy Policy SP1 and ADMP Policy EN1 require that new development should;

- Create inclusive and attractive environments that meet the needs of users.
- Incorporate principles of sustainable development.
- All new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated.
- Designs should respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area. The layout of the development should respect the topography and character of the site, including sensitively incorporating natural features such as trees and hedges.
- The proposal should ensure satisfactory access for vehicles and adequate parking.
- The development should be inclusive and where appropriate make satisfactory provision for the safe and easy access of those with disabilities.

6.16. The proposals to not alter the size or scale of the existing building and as a result there will be no change in the quantum of built development on site.

Character and Appearance

6.17. In accordance with the design led policies identified in the NPPF, developments should add to the overall quality of an area, but remain sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

- 6.18. Being a more modern agricultural building in terms of its construction, and in order to retain the rural character of the existing building and the permitted scheme, the proposed dwelling retains the same design ethos, replicating the form, material palette and arrangement of openings as previously permitted.
- 6.19. The benefit of a new build construction enables enhanced energy efficiency and sustainable construction methods, compared with the conversion scheme in terms of higher levels of insulation both to the building fabric and floor slab, without impacting on internal areas or ceiling heights.
- 6.20. The proposed design also facilitates an improved internal layout, an enhanced outside soft landscaped garden setting and a more consolidated property.
- 6.21. As identified by Officers within their delegated report for SE/21/01300/FUL, the majority of buildings along this road are modified and extended buildings, from agricultural use. This is an established part of the character and appearance of the area which will be maintained through the proposed scheme.
- 6.22. The use of the building and site for residential purposes has been accepted in the granted of previous consents and it is not considered the proposed building would appear more visually intrusive or overly domesticated in its appearance than previous schemes. It retains true to the material palette, simplified agricultural form of earlier schemes,
- 6.23. The proposals would respond to the scale, height and materials of the surrounding area and provide a high-quality development which responds to the distinctive local character of the area. This complies with Local Plan Policies SP1 and EN1.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 6.24. Local Plan Policy EN2 sets out that proposals should provide adequate residential amenities for occupiers of nearby developments would not result in excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicle movements, overlooking or visual intrusion, loss of privacy or light.
- 6.25. The nearest neighbouring dwelling is Newlands, lying 65m to the south. The complex of converted farm building to the north lies over 80m away. Based on these separation distances, intervening agricultural buildings and vegetation it is not considered there would be any material impact upon neighbouring amenities from the proposed development.

Biodiversity

- 6.26. An assessment of the potential for protected species on the site is contained within the accompanying reports by PJC Ecology and Brindle Green.

6.27. In accordance with Circular 06/2005, the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted.

6.28. The site has been assessed for both bats and Great Crested Newts and no presence of these protected species were found.

6.29. Ecological enhancements can be conditioned in line with the previous consent, SE.21.01300/FUL.

Other Matters

Flooding & Contamination

6.30. The application is accompanied by relevant specialist reports identifying that there is low risk from contamination or flooding.

6.31. The proposed finished floor level lies above the identified 1:100 year flood event and lies outside the modelled 1:1000 event. Any necessary mitigation measures can be adequately controlled by condition.

CIL

6.32. The application is CIL liable but accompanied by the relevant forms and self-build exemption certificates.

Very Special Circumstances

6.33. It is acknowledged that the replacement of an existing building for a different end use, constitutes inappropriate development. As set out in the NPPF inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

6.34. It has been established that the harm to the Green Belt in this instance is;

- The harm in principal from inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

6.35. The site has extant consent for conversion to residential use which deemed the site and associated landscaping appropriate for the location and acceptable in terms of the

impact of a residential use on the wider openness of the Green Belt.

6.36. As set out in paragraph 6.10 of this statement, the proposed replacement building would sit only 900mm higher within the landscape than the existing barn, however, there will be a 21.3% reduction in footprint and a 13% reduction in overall built volume compared with the existing structure. Meaning the overall spread and quantum of development is reduced compared with the existing arrangement.

6.37. It is also relevant that the fallback position of a conversion scheme, would ensure that a larger building would be retained on site in the longer term. The reduction in footprint enables an increase in the amount of soft landscaping achievable to the northern side of the dwelling, to the field boundary, enhancing the openness and feeling of space around the building.

6.38. The proposals result in a far more consolidated and compact development to that current approved, this affords tangible enhancements to the openness of the Green Belt, reducing the encroachment of built form in the countryside.

6.39. In design terms, the building will retain its simple single storey form from the highway, with little reference to the upper floor accommodation, save for roof lights which were also previously approved.

6.40. The ecological enhancements previously secured can be brought forward as part of the scheme, alongside enhanced environmental sustainability of the building, through the use of modern construction and insulation, as opposed to retrofitting to the existing structures.

6.41. In considering the extent of harm from inappropriate development, it is concluded that there are significant benefits to the openness of the Green Belt through a material reduction in footprint, scale, massing and spread of development. When considered cumulatively, these would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt through inappropriate development.

6.42. This approach is consistent with other similar schemes for the re-development of rural sites as follows;

- 19/01219/FUL- The Chicken Farm, Knatts Valley
- 19/01405- Ridleys Farm, Ash
- 19/02905- New Barns Farm, Marsh Green

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. The proposal has been designed with a sympathetic and traditional palette of materials which would ensure the building is in keeping with the established rural character of the site and the surrounding built environment. The building would also respond to the previously consented conversion scheme in its materiality and design intent.
- 7.2. There would be no harm to the rural character of the area or neighbouring amenities.
- 7.3. Suitable biodiversity enhancements can be afforded to the building with the provision of dedicated bat boxes and landscape enhancements as set out in the supporting reports by Brindle Green.
- 7.4. The proposed reduction in overall built form and enhancement spaciousness within the plot is sufficient to constitute very special circumstances which clearly outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriate development.
- 7.5. The presumption in favour of granting permission set out at paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged and we respectfully request permission is granted.