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**OUR REF: JB/3482**

**PLANNING STATEMENT**

**DEMOLISH EXISTING BUNGALOW AND REPLACE WITH TWO TWO-STOREY  
DETACHED HOUSES WITH INTEGRAL GARAGES.  
CREATION OF A NEW ACCESS FOR EACH DWELLING AND ASSOCIATED  
LANDSCAPING**

**Briar Cottage and land, Gorsewood Road, Hartley, Kent, DA3 7DF**

**January 2022**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** This Statement is prepared in support of a planning application to demolish an existing dwelling known as Briar Cottage and replace it with two (two storey) detached dwellings, each with its own access and associated landscaping.
- 1.2** Numerous similar developments have occurred on Gorsewood Road because some of the plots are substantial and occupied by aging bungalows. This includes the neighbouring site, where two dwelling replaced a previous bungalow (known as Kilndown).

## **2.0 SITE CONTEXT**

- 2.1** Gorsewood Road is a wide residential street within the built confines of Hartley. It is a predominantly residential area that is characterised by dwellings in a mix of sizes and architectural styles. It is mostly post-war development, and much of it was constructed in the 1960's and 1970's. There is a mixture of bungalows and two storey dwellings.
- 2.2** The boundary treatment for each property varies greatly and there is no obvious characteristic style or arrangement. Walls of different heights, hedges and fences all feature in the street resulting in a varied but essentially verdant character.
- 2.3** The site extends to some 0.21 ha. The existing dwelling is a single storey bungalow. It has a clay tile roof (with flat roof extensions) and white painted render to the walls. The garden is mature. There is an existing vehicle entrance at the southernmost part of the frontage of the site, opposite Gorse Way. The garden is substantial and there is a slight incline from Gorsewood Road up to the dwelling.
- 2.2** The existing dwelling is not listed and there are no particular constraints relevant to the site.

## **3.0 PROPOSAL**

- 3.1** The objective of this proposal is to demolish the existing dwelling and replace the dwelling with two new (two storey) dwellings, each with their own driveway, integral garage and garden.
- 3.2** The access to the site will be changed so that the accesses to the two new dwellings are arranged towards the centre of the frontage. Other than to allow for the access, the existing hedge to the front of the site will be retained and extended where necessary. Trees to the front of the site (and in the landscaped garden to the rear) will be retained and the driveway and paths will be paved in permeable block paving.
- 3.3** The dwellings are of a similar form, being two storey in height with a hipped roof and a projecting front gable. The materials are slightly different to give interest in the

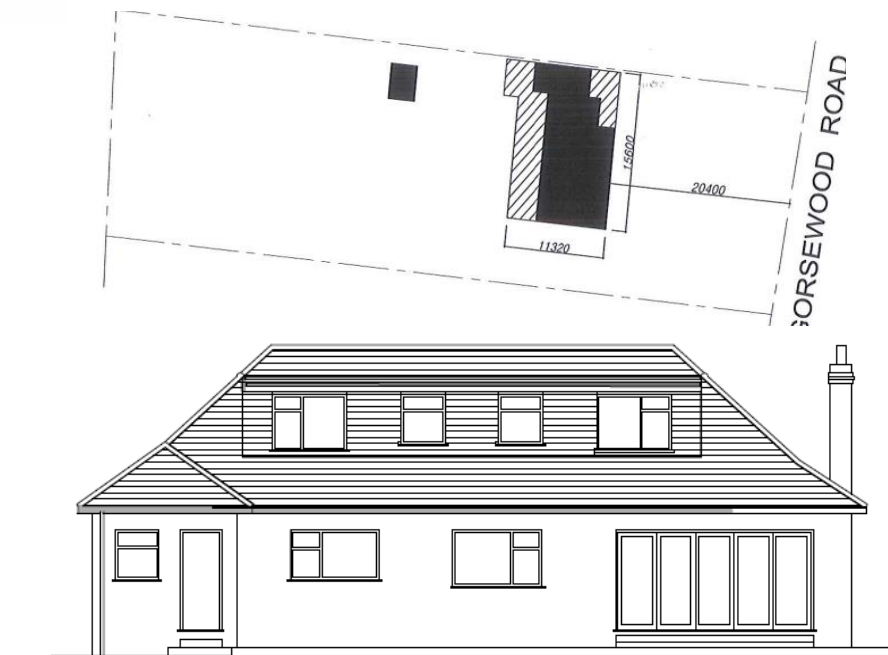
street scene, with the first-floor projecting gable clad with hanging tiles on one dwelling and finished with mock Tudor beams and render on the other. The stock facing brickwork (Wienerberger Hathaway Brindled) is proposed to be a red brick with variation. The proposed roof tiles are a grey concrete interlocking tile known as Marley Duo Modern.

## 4 PLANNING HISTORY AND THE 'FALLBACK' POSITION

### 4.1 Planning history relevant to the site includes the following:

- [Erection of four detached chalet bungalows with garages.](#)  
Ref. No: 03/00090/OUT | Status: Decision - Refused  
This related to land at the rear of Briar Cottage, Kilndown AND Sanctuary.
- [Proposed loft conversion, single storey rear extension, part single storey front extension, part conversion of garage, new porch, internal alterations and alterations to fenestration.](#)  
Ref. No: 20/03030/HOUSE | Status: Decision - Granted

This application demonstrated that footprint of the existing dwelling could be extended significantly. It also demonstrated that rear and front facing windows at first floor level are acceptable to the council in principle (see extracts below).



### Proposed Rear Elevation

- 4.2 Next door, planning permission (10/00080/FUL) was Granted for the demolition of the bungalow (Kilndown) and the erect of two chalet bungalows.

## 5.0 PLANNING POLICY AND PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. This approach is endorsed by the NPPF 2021 (paragraph 47). Consequently, the saved policies in the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011) and the Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) are relevant.

5.2 Key policies relevant to this proposal are:

Core Strategy (CS)

- LO1 Distribution of Development
- LO7 Development in rural settlements
- SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation
- SP7 Density of Housing Development
- SP11 Biodiversity

Allocations and Development Management (ADMP)

- SC1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- EN1 Design Principles
- EN2 Amenity Protection
- T2 Vehicle Parking
- T3 Provision of vehicle charging points

Other

- Harley Village Design Statement (2008)
- Kent Design Guide (Adopted 2007)

5.3 The main issues in this case relate to:

- Sustainability and the principle of development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on amenities enjoyed by neighbours
- Impact on biodiversity
- Impact on highways and parking

### Sustainability and Principle of development

5.4 **Policy LO1 of the Core Strategy** describes that development within the District will be focused within the built confines of existing settlements. The proposed development is located within the village envelope of the service village of Hartley where it is described that small scale development will be acceptable provided it is consistent with the requirements of **Policy LO7 (Development in Rural Settlements)**. The proposed development is in-keeping with this policy because the development of two dwellings is *'of a scale and nature appropriate to the village'* and *'responds to the distinctive characteristic of the area in which it is situated'*. The

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proposed dwellings are of a scale and design that responds closely to the character of Gorsewood Road. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

- 5.5 Policy SC1 (Presumption in Favour of Development)** describes that the council will take a positive approach to secure development that improves the sustainability of the area.
- 5.6 It is relevant that Sevenoaks District Council does not have an up-to-date 5 years supply of developable housing land. The provision of an additional housing unit to meet local needs must therefore weigh heavily in favour of sustainable development.** The redevelopment of the site to provide two dwellings instead of one is an efficient use of land. The NPPF 2021 also supports the development, with Paragraph 11 establishing the '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*', stating that planning permission should be Granted unless '*any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits*'.

#### Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 5.7 Policy EN1 (Design Principles)** expects a high-quality design which responds to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area. The policy also states that the design should be in harmony with adjoining buildings and incorporate materials and landscaping of a high standard.
- 5.8** It is the case that Gorsewood Road is characterised by the variety of sizes and design of dwelling, rather than a consistent character. Even road frontage treatment and height differs between houses. There is an overall 'green and leafy' character to Gorsewood Road, although many dwellings with primarily hard landscaping to the front gardens and boundary are not uncommon.
- 5.9** The proposal will result in the demolition of Briar Cottage which is of no particular merit. Although it does arguably contribute to the character of the street, it is barely visible from the road and is only one of a vast range of sizes, designs and styles. The loss of this building is not harmful to the character or appearance of the area.
- 5.10 Redevelopment of the adjacent site (Kilndown) has resulted in a development that is similar to the current proposal insofar as it replaced a simple bungalow with two larger dwellings. Although these new homes are in a chalet style, the design ensured that the first floor of those dwellings was substantial, such that the total height to the ridge of those dwellings is 7.1 m, compared to 7.8 m in the current proposal.**
- 5.11** The proposed development will maintain a substantial set back from the road and this is a critical layout feature in order to ensure the development is in-keeping with the character of the area.
- 5.12** Although proposal will result in a higher density and a more intensive use of the site, this simply amounts to a more efficient use of the land. There are many examples on Gorsewood Road of development filling the site by width, such that there is limited

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space between dwellings. The current proposal does maintain space to the side of dwellings to provide a generous path. **Policy SP7 (Density of Housing Development)** in the Core Strategy, is satisfied.

- 5.13** There is no consistent suite of materials that influence the character of Gorsewood Road, such that the proposed materials (red brick with variation and concrete tile) will not be out of keeping with the area. Contrasting materials are used at first floor on the projecting gables and this ensure that the dwelling are not identical, and make a positive design contribution to varied design of dwellings in the locality.
- 5.14** **Policy SP1 (Design of New Development and Conservation)** of the Core Strategy also seeks to ensure high quality development. As required by this policy the design has taken account of the Hartley Village Design Statement and the Kent Design Guide. The development makes a positive contribution to the quality of the environment. The retention and extension of much of the front boundary hedge and retention of trees in the front garden of the dwelling, means that the site continues to contribute to the overall verdant rural character of Gorsewood Road.

#### Impact on the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring dwelling

- 5.15** **Policy EN2** of the ADMP seeks to protect amenity. To the south of the site, the neighbouring dwelling is close to the boundary, with windows at first floor level. The proposal dwelling does not project to the rear of this dwelling, such that there is no overlooking of the area immediately to the rear of the neighbour's home. There may be some additional overlooking of the extended garden, but this is typically accepted in an urban environment. The same assessment can be made of the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of the dwelling to the north, although this is sited much further from the boundary.
- 5.16** Given the urban character of the locality it is not expected that two two-storey dwellings in place of a single bungalow would result in such intensification of activity and traffic movements that the amenity of neighbouring dwellings would be significantly harmed.
- 5.17** The dwelling at the south of the site has one window facing the site at first floor level (on the north facing elevation). Having studied the plans of the adjacent dwelling it appears that this first floor window serves bathrooms. Given the orientation of the buildings it is unlikely that this room will become significantly darker.
- 5.18** The amenities of existing and future occupiers has been protected by the development.

#### Impact on biodiversity

- 5.19** **Policy SP11 (biodiversity)** of the Core Strategy seek to ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity. National policy (NPPF 2021) seeks to achieve net gains.

- 5.20** It is proposed to retain existing trees on the site at the front and rear and a root protection plan has been submitted to illustrate how these will be protected.
- 5.21** A landscaping plan has been submitted with the application. The garden is very long indeed and the plan shows that much of the existing landscaping will be retained. It also indicates the inclusion of hedge and hedgehog boxes which will also support biodiversity enhancement.
- 5.22** There is currently a hedge to the front of the dwelling and much of this will be retained. Part of the hedge needs to be removed to create the access for each dwelling, but it will also be extended at the front of the site over the area occupied by the existing access. **It is proposed to use hornbeam and hawthorn to extend the hedgerow. Both of these species have benefits for sheltering insects and nesting birds.**
- 5.23** Overall, the proposals amount to a biodiversity enhancement.

#### Impact on Highways and Parking

- 5.24 Policy T2 (Vehicle Parking)** explains that parking provision should be in accordance with KCC parking vehicle parking standards. The existing standards for a 5 bedroom dwelling on the site (3 car parking spaces and 5 cycle parking spaces) are achieved on each plot and this policy is satisfied.
- 5.25** There is an existing access to the site at the southernmost part of the site frontage. This will be replaced by two new accesses (one to serve each dwelling) towards the centre of the road frontage. In the proposed arrangement, the relationship to Gorse Way is improved and visibility is also likely to be improved. There is no overall detrimental impact on highway safety as a result of the proposal.
- 5.26** Each dwelling will benefit from an electric vehicle charging point. As such **Policy T3 (Provision of Electrical Vehicle Charging Points)** is satisfied.

#### **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1** This application has sought to demonstrate that the proposal complies with national planning policy and the Development Plan. In particular, the application has sought to demonstrate that the proposed replacement of a bungalow with two two-storey dwelling can be achieved without harming the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.2** On balance this is a sensible proposal which makes efficient use of an urban site to provide an additional unit of residential accommodation in the Sevenoaks District. This is a significant benefit due to the unmet housing need in the local area which is substantial. It will be some time before the Council will be in a position to meet this need through allocations in a local plan.

- 6.3** The proposal will protect the amenities of the neighbouring dwellings, enhance biodiversity, and maintain or improve highway safety. The council is requested to Grant Planning Permission for the development.