

**Change Of Use And Conversion Of Two Atcost Barns To Form  
A Single Dwelling And Detached Garage And Domestic  
Workshop (Replacing A Previously-Permitted Residential  
Dwelling).**



**Minnis Farm  
Minnis Way  
Worth  
Kent  
CT14 0DQ**

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## Introduction

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This supporting statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs M Dyer to support an application for the change of use and conversion of two atcost barns at Minnis Farm to form a single residential dwelling and a detached garage/workshop/domestic store building.

This application follows the grant of Prior Approval under application reference: DOV/22/00450 which enabled the change of use of a single agricultural building into a dwelling. This application seeks to replace the extant permission, instead enabling the conversion of a concrete frame 'Atcost' building to a residential dwelling and changing the use of the existing building with the benefit of prior approval to a garage and domestic store building.

This supporting planning statement provides a written description of the proposed development as well as an analysis of the relevant local and national planning policies. The application is also accompanied by the necessary plans indicating the site and showing the proposed development, as detailed below.

Report/Document	Consultant	Reference
Site Location Plan	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_01
Site Analysis	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_03
Proposed Site Plan	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_05
Proposed Parking and Refuse	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_06
Proposed lighting layout	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_07
Proposed Landscaping Plan	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_08
Ground Floor Plan	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_10
First Floor Plan	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_11
Proposed Front and Side Elevations	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_15
Proposed Rear And Side Elevations	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_16
Proposed Street elevations	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_17
Proposed Front and Side Elevations Barn 1	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_18
Proposed Rear and Side Elevations Barn 1	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_19
Proposed Artists Impression No01	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_31
Proposed Artists Impression No02	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_32
Proposed Artists Impression No03	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_33
Proposed Artists Impression No04	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_34
Design and Access Statement	Benjamin William Wood Architects	0029C_RevA
Structural Report	Alan Baxter Partnership	B2089
Structural Report - Photographs	Alan Baxter Partnership	-
Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy	RMB Consultants Ltd	-
Topographical Survey – Cross Sections	ANSurveys Ltd	A
Topographical Survey – Elevations 1	ANSurveys Ltd	A

Topographical Survey – Elevations 2	ANSurveys Ltd	A
Topographical Survey – Rev A Topographical	ANSurveys Ltd	A

# The Site

## Site Context

Minnis Farm is located to the southeast of the village of Worth and is accessed directly from Minnis Way. The application site extends to 0.47 hectares (1.16 acres) The application site adjoins Worth development boundary on the south east. The site is not adversely affected by any heritage or other statutory designations. The site is located within Worth Neighbourhood Area and is located partially within Flood Risk Zone 2.

Minnis Farm comprises a complex of 5 agricultural buildings consisting of utilitarian concrete/steel portal framed structures of modern construction, with some older structures to the north of the site, and smaller in scale. The buildings have been constructed over the course of the previous 60 – 70 years when the farm operated as a productive market gardening holding. The farm previously produced a range of brassicas, root vegetables and combinable crops, but has since been divided up and now no longer forms a standalone farming enterprise. Given the range of produce previously grown on the farm, the holding has an extensive range of buildings, each required for the storage of different crops and machinery, but following the cessation of the farming business, the buildings have become surplus to requirements. The two buildings referred to as Barns 1 & 2 are the buildings that form part of this application, with Barn 2 being the Atcost concrete frame building proposed to be converted to a residential dwelling, whilst Barn 1 is a steel frame portal building with extant permission for conversion to a residential dwelling. The application site extends to 0.47 hectares.

The buildings are substantial structures which have a significant impact on the visual and landscape quality of this part of the countryside in their current stead. The site is located in the countryside, just outside of the village of Worth, but is not in any protected landscape.

**Figure 1** (below) identifies an extract from the site location plan, which identifies each of the existing buildings for ease of reference.



As identified above, this proposal seeks to change the use of Barn 1 to a use as a detached garage/workshop and domestic store building whilst barn 2 is proposed to be converted into a single residential dwelling. Barn 1 benefits from an extant permission for prior approval for conversion to a residential dwelling under application reference DOV/22/00450. Barn 2 was subject to pre-application advice and feedback was received on 9 May 2023. The feedback was supportive of the principle of the proposal whilst recommended some alterations and enhancements. A copy of the pre-application feedback has been submitted alongside this application.

## Proposal

The proposed development seeks Change of use and conversion of two atcost barns to form a single dwelling and detached garage (previously permitted for residential use). Whilst the application site currently has a permitted residential dwelling, this application seeks to utilise the fallback position to enhance the site significantly by converting a building that is better located in terms of its relationship with the wider site and the Village of Worth, provides enhancements to the landscape, as well as increases significantly the sustainability credentials of Minnis Farm for residential use. The use of solar panels, increased insulation, and design changes outside of the scope of the General Permitted Development Order, allows for a more sustainable form of residential development, as well as enhance the setting and aesthetics of the site.

As mentioned above, Barn 1 is in receipt of prior approval for a residential use and this permission is extant (DOV/22/00450). However, the applicant wishes to utilise this as ancillary to the proposed dwelling and the building will be used for domestic storage, workshop and tractor store. Barn 2 is proposed to have a residential use and provide a high quality three bedroom dwelling over two storeys.

The proposal utilises the existing built form of the two Atcost buildings with no increase in built form. In doing so, the proposal seeks to provide considerable enhancements to the immediate setting from either its current appearance, or that achievable through the extant permission under Class Q.

## Relevant Planning History

A search of Dover District Council's Online planning portal revealed the following relevant planning history, as identified within **Table 2**.

Reference	Description	Date	Determination
22/00450	Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural building into dwelling	12 July 2022	Prior Approval Not Required
21/01875	Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural building into a dwelling	28 February 2022	Prior Approval Refused
HR/19/00001	Removal of Hedge	06 September 2019	No Decision Made
17/00168	Prior Notification for the erection of a livestock handling pen and associated access track	24 February 2017	Prior Approval Not Required
/96/01051/	Agricultural onion store	13 November 1996	Grant Planning Permission

## Planning Policy

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Applications should be determined in accordance with the up-to-date adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Dover District Council's relevant planning policy is contained within the following documents:

- Dover District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2010)
- Land Allocations Local Plan (2015)
- Draft Dover District Council Local Plan

The strategic policies of the Development Plan should no longer be considered up to date at this time, given that they pre-date the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and subsequent versions, resulting in the need to apply the 'tilted balance'. The NPPF is therefore considered to be an important material consideration in the determination of this application.

Although not yet adopted, the new District Local Plan (2020 to 2040) has been taken into consideration to reflect future planning policy. Under paragraph 48 of the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities can give weight to relevant policies in emerging Local Plans, meaning the draft plan is also a material consideration to this application, particularly now it has reached Regulation 19 Stage.

### **The Dover District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted 2010)**

The Dover District Core Strategy (DDCS) was adopted in February 2010 with a view to guiding development in the district up to 2026. The document pre-dates the NPPF and was prepared in the context of a different national planning context with the housing requirement based on the now revoked South East Plan.



Policy DM1 states the importance of development not being permitted on land outside the urban boundaries and rural settlement confines shown on the proposal map. In attaching weight to DM1, the tilted balance applies because the Council acknowledge that its' Core Strategy is out of date, specifically policies CP2 and CP3 concerning the supply of housing, in light of a revised housing need. Therefore, permission should be granted unless the impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The pre-application response confirmed it is considered that Policy DM1 is out of date and should be given limited weight. This is particularly pertinent given the need to meet a new higher housing requirement that has since been established. It is acknowledged that this requires a new development strategy which brings forward further land for development beyond the defined settlement boundaries.

Furthermore, A residential consent has already been established within the application site through the extant permission under reference 22/00450, providing a substantial amount of weight when considering the viable fallback position.

Policy DM4 states that permission will be given for the re-use or conversion of structurally sound, permanent buildings within Rural Service Centres, Local Centres and in Villages for commercial, community or private residential uses. The proposal seeks to re-use the existing buildings, the site has been previously developed and contains numerous built structures. The conversion of these two buildings within the proposed scheme will offer betterment to the site which is currently redundant whilst providing much needed homes.

Policy DM 11 seeks to ensure that new development is not permitted outside of urban boundaries where it creates a greater demand on private travel. The site creates an existing number of travel movements associated with its and historical use as a farm. Furthermore, there will be no increase in private travel demand beyond the previously consented residential use, which this application replaces.

The NPPF has recognised that access to sustainable modes of travel will differ between urban and rural locations, Nonetheless, the site is within close proximity to an existing regular bus service provided by Stagecoach with Worth Village and bus stops located on Jubilee Road. The site also benefits from public rights of way connections to the centre of the village and the wider area, particularly routes EE465 and EE243.

Policy DM 13 states provision for parking should be a design led process based upon the characteristics of the site, the locality, the nature of the proposed development and its design objectives. Sufficient parking provisions have been incorporated to fulfil the council's standards, whilst discretely placed within the existing built form.

Policy DM15 focuses on the protection of the countryside, particularly development which would result in the loss of, or adversely affect the character or appearance of the countryside. The policy goes on to state that measures should be incorporated to reduce, as far as practicable, any harmful effects on the countryside character. This proposal is outside any specific landscape designations such as areas of outstanding natural beauty and is restricted to utilising only the previously-developed land available at the site, thereby creating no greater impact on the countryside. The proposed residential dwelling is well-contained within the existing built form, thereby creating no additional landscape

impact, whilst the aesthetic revisions to Barn 1 and removal of its residential use will considerably lessen the existing landscape impact. We contend that this proposal helps maintain the character of the area and finds the balance between making efficient use of land whilst respecting the impact on the local vicinity. Extensive landscaping and planting, with tree and hedge borders will further mitigate the impact of the proposal on the wider landscape and soften the currently imposing impact of Barn 1 upon the wider views of the site. Existing hedgerows will be maintained and enhanced, whilst separated from residential gardens by fencing to ensure they are preserved.

Policy DM 16 requires that development which would harm the character of the landscape will only be permitted if it accords with a development plan allocation and incorporates any necessary avoidance or mitigation measures. The proposal is restricted solely to the previously developed built form to ensure there is minimal impact on the landscape. Existing hedgerows will be maintained and enhanced to provide a level of screening and softening any impact upon the wider landscape.

### **Land Allocations Local Plan Adopted 2015**

The LALP 2015 Considers Worth as a Village, being a tertiary focus for development in the rural area; suitable for a scale of development that would reinforce its role as a provider of services to essentially its home community. However, at the time of the LALP, Worth was producing a Neighbourhood Plan and as such did not seek to duplicate the assessment of the village when compiling the LALP. Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan has become outdated and not been renewed following the production of a Draft Dover District Council. Minnis Farm provides a previously-developed site, well-contained and benefitting from an extant planning permission for a residential use. It is therefore a logical opportunity for development to support and maintain Worth Village.

### **Draft Local Plan**

DDC are currently preparing a new District Local Plan (2020 to 2040) and once adopted, this will replace the current suite of Development Plan documents. The Council completed evidence gathering stages through 2019 and 2020 and a consultation on the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan (DLP) was completed on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Draft Policy SP4 – Residential Windfall Development permits new dwellings outside of Settlement boundaries within the following criteria:

iii) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting.

We contend that the Draft Local Plan policies would add significant weight to the re-use of the subject buildings which now sit redundant and disused, whilst the proposed changes from that permitted under permitted development rights will enable the enhancement of the immediate setting, softening landscape impact and providing an architectural enhancement in addition to increased sustainability credentials.



## **The National Planning Policy Framework**

In addition to Local Policy, the proposal is also considered to be compliant with national policy objectives, particularly by supporting a prosperous rural economy, making efficient use of land as well as the re-use of previously developed land.

### **Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development**

‘At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development, being: economic, social and environmental. It is our contention that the proposed development accords with the parameters of sustainable development as set out by the NPPF.

Paragraph 11 states that decision takers should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan or where there isn’t one, grant permission unless doing so would conflict with the Framework in protecting assets of importance, or the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The NPPF looks for LPAs to approach decisions on developments in a positive and creative way. The current site has now become surplus to requirements. As such we contend that the re-development and re-use of the buildings at Minnis Farm would make use of a previously-developed site for much needed housing within a contained and suitable location within close proximity of Worth village and its facilities.

In the context of determining applications with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as well as seek to approach decision in a positive and creative way, the government seeks to ‘significantly boost the supply of homes’ under paragraph 60, and identify ‘a sufficient amount and variety of land to come forward.’

### **Paragraphs 78 - 80 – Rural Housing**

Paragraph 79 supports the provision of rural housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Indeed, paragraph 79 goes on to state that development in one settlement may support services in a village nearby. Taken in the context of Minnis Farm, it is contended that the proposal fulfils the government objective of supporting sustainable development in rural areas, by supporting Worth and its services. Paragraph 80 seeks to avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless certain circumstances apply. The site is not isolated as it is situated among existing residential properties and benefits from easy access to local facilities (in a rural context) within the village (pub, village hall, primary school, church, and transport connections). The village also benefits from an excellent local road network including the A256 to the west, which connects Sandwich and Dover, and the A257 to the north which connects to Canterbury, along with bus services to Sandwich (with excellent shopping facilities), and subsequently Sandwich rail station which has services to London.

### **Paragraphs 119-125 – Making Effective Use of Land**

The topic 'Making Effective Use of Land' (paragraphs 117-124) places significant importance on making the most efficient use of sites. In particular paragraph 120c gives:

*'substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land'.*

The proposed development at Minnis Farm provides an opportunity whereby its redevelopment would result in improvements and benefits sought by the objectives of the NPPF and aim of making effective use of otherwise largely unproductive sites with design, massing and screening which respects the character of the area. Furthermore, the proposed changes to the extant permission enables further enhancements to be made, beyond those which already enable residential use.

## **Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places**

The NPPF places strong emphasis on the quality of design and ensuring high quality buildings that are visually attractive, function well and add to the overall quality of the area whilst being sympathetic to local character and history. The proposal is contended to convert two of the redundant and unproductive buildings in a sensitive location, the proposal offers a well designed dwelling which will provide the future occupiers with a dwelling that is capable of supporting modern day-to-day living with sustainability credentials, including air source heat pump, solar panels and rainwater harvesting.

## **Recent Planning Precedents**

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There have been several examples recently of similar sites to Minnis Farm, within the Dover District, which have received planning permission for development to residential use. Whilst it is acknowledged that each planning application must be decided upon its own merits and that ultimately no two applications are the same, nearby sites have provided some clear precedents.

19/01021 Conversion of agricultural barns into 2no. dwellings with associated parking at The Homestead Homestead Lane East Studdal CT15 5BN. This application is in a similar rural location within close proximity to East Studdal. The application was determined favourably and stated that no harm would arise in respect of the character and appearance of the area or wider countryside. Additionally, the officers report confirmed that Policies DM1 and DM11 are out of date.

23/00129 Conversion of barn to dwelling with associated external alterations, formation of residential curtilage and parking area, and erection of detached garage following demolition of existing single storey addition at Upton Court Farm Coldred Road Shepherdswell CT15 7LF. This application was determined favorably and confirmed that the

proposal was acceptable as the application building was structurally capable of being converted. The external works were also deemed appropriate despite its location adjacent to a listed building.

Both of the above referenced cases were deemed to be sustainably located, present no visual harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and both facilitated an effective re-use of a previously developed site.

As such, there are several local precedents that supports that the application site is sustainably located, has no impact on the landscape and in instances of existing built form, makes efficient use of previously-developed land.

## **Conclusion**

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The proposal represents a better designed proposal than the alternative fall-back position as showcased within the extant permission DOV/22/00450. It is considered that this proposal provides a scheme that is not constrained and can thus provide a better use of the site, improved design, and a more spacious development which will afford an improved level of amenity to future occupants, whilst still preserving the buildings character and heritage.

This proposal should be considered against the realistic fallback position of the extant permission. We consider the above proposal is in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Emerging Local Plan, Core Strategy as well as those set out in National Planning Policy Framework. We consider that the proposal provides an enhancement to the existing setting, whilst providing a family home in a sympathetic, quality design.

The applicant looks forward to the council taking a positive view on this application which offers a deliverable site which contributes to the much-needed housing stock of the local area and offers enhancements beyond the previously consented residential use.

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