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CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

**Lambert
& Foster**



SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

The Lodge, Little Cheveney Farm

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

In support of an application for the
**Alterations to covered residential storage area to provide habitable living space
and a single storey extension to an existing dwellinghouse**

at

**The Lodge
Little Cheveney Farm
Sheephurst Lane
Marden
Tonbridge
TN12 9NX**

On behalf of

Mrs Gillian Wallis-Hosken

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement has been prepared on behalf of Mrs Wallis-Hosken, in support of a planning application for the alteration of an existing covered residential storage area to form habitable living space and a single storey extension to the existing dwellinghouse, known as 'The Lodge', Little Cheveney Farm, Sheephurst Lane, Marden.
- 1.2. The main dwelling was permitted via Prior Notification application reference MA/PN/14/0043, for the change of use of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse in 2014. This original consent retained part of the building for covered storage, along with an ancillary store.
- 1.3. Planning permission is now being sought to convert the remainder of the building to additional residential accommodation, to make better use of it, along with an additional single storey element to the north western elevations. As the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) removes permitted development rights for buildings converted under the Prior Notification procedure, planning permission is required for these changes.
- 1.4. The proposal includes ecological and local landscape enhancements, through the provision of habitat improvements, detailed within subsequent sections of the report.
- 1.5. This statement considers the proposed development in relation to the context of the site, the relevant local and national planning policies and all other material planning considerations.
- 1.6. It demonstrates that the proposed scheme would constitute a sustainable form of development and is consistent with the objectives of the Development Plan. This statement also indicates that there are no adverse impacts which would *significantly* and *demonstrably* outweigh the benefits of the proposed development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the "NPPF") and National Planning Practice Guidance (the "NPPG").

Supporting documents

- 1.7. This application is supported by the following:
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, produced by KB Ecology, September 2023;

- Site location plan, drawing number 010.B;
- Existing block plan, drawing number 020.A;
- Proposed block plan, drawing number 030.B;
- Existing floor plan, drawing number 040.B;
- Existing elevations, drawing number 050.B;
- Proposed floor plan, drawing number 060.A;
- Proposed elevations, drawing number 070.A;
- Ecological enhancements plan, drawing number 080.B.

2. The site and its surroundings

- 2.1. The application site comprises a rectangular shaped, former agricultural building, which was converted to a dwellinghouse some nine years ago, following Prior Approval being obtained. It is understood that the building has been in situ since the 1950s.
- 2.2. Whilst the site is located outside of any defined settlement confines, within the open countryside, there are a number of other buildings within the immediate vicinity, many of which have also been converted to dwellinghouses. The Google Earth image below shows the application site within the context of its surroundings.



Google Earth image to show the application site (marked with a star) in respect of its surroundings

Source: Google Earth

- 2.3. There are a number of listed buildings within close proximity to the site, as shown on the extract map from Historic England overleaf.
- 2.4. Whilst the property to the south east of the application site, known as ‘Owl Oast’, is Grade II listed, ‘The lodge’ itself is not. These two properties are separated by the access road which leads to Willow Cottage to the north.



Extract from Historic England website showing the location of the application site (marked with a star) in respect of nearby listed buildings (marked with blue pins)

Source: Historic England website

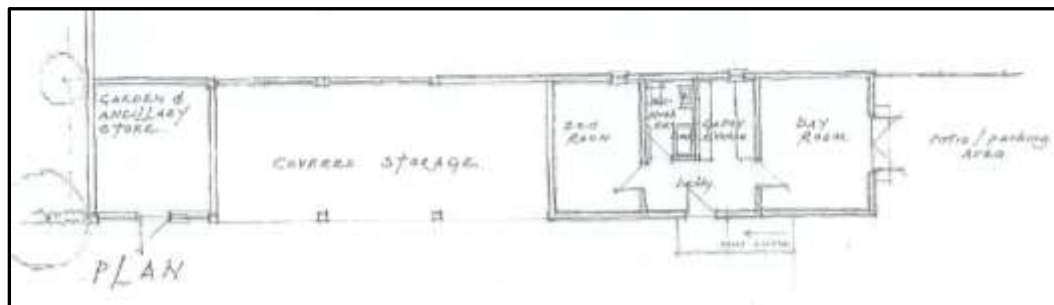
- 2.5. Access is gained to the application site, along with other properties within this small enclave of residential dwellings, via a private access track which leads from/onto Sheephurst Lane. The site is within a sustainable location, with ready access to neighbouring towns and villages.
- 2.6. There is a distance of some 1.27km between the site entrance and Maidstone Road (B2162) to the west, which provides access on to Yalding to the north and Horsmonden to the south. Between the site entrance and Goudhurst Road (B2079) there is approximately 1.92km in distance to the east, which leads to Marden to the north and Goudhurst to the south.
- 2.7. The application site is within Flood Zone 1.

3. Planning History

- 3.1. Since the building was converted to a dwellinghouse in 2014 there have been a couple of planning applications relevant to the site since it was converted, which are briefly outlined below:

MA/PN/14/0043 – Prior Notification for the change of use of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3)

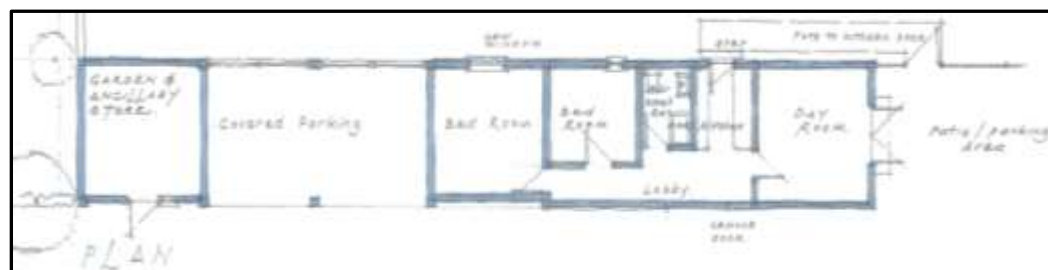
- 3.2. It was determined that Prior Approval was not required for the conversion of the building from agricultural use to a dwellinghouse in 2014, as detailed within the detailed submission.
- 3.3. This allowed for the conversion of the application building to a self-contained dwelling, as shown on the approved drawing extract below:



Floor plan approved under reference MA/PN/14/0043

17/506130/FULL – Enclosure of an area of covered storage to form an additional bedroom and relocation of entrance door

- 3.4. This application sought planning permission to enclose one section of the covered storage area to create an additional bedroom. The works include a new window in the rear elevation and the relocation of the front door, as shown below:



Floor plan approved under reference 17/506130/FULL

3.5. It was noted within the Council’s Delegated Report for this application that:

“A prior notification was granted in 2014 for the conversion of the existing building to residential. This scheme was approved as shown on the submitted existing plans and incorporates the entire building within the red outline, together with an identified curtilage to the west of the building. This consent has been implemented and as such the building now has lawful use as residential”.

3.6. Within this case it was noted that there would only be minor alterations. As such it was considered that the proposed works were acceptable.

3.7. It is understood that whilst the covered storage area that was approved for conversion has been enclosed that this is used as a utility room, rather than a bedroom. Additionally, the main doorway was retained.

18/503748/FULL – Proposed rearrangement of private vehicular access

3.8. The most recent planning permission at the site was the above, which granted planning permission in 2018 for the rearrangement of the driveway to serve the dwelling. This including rerouting the driveway so that it encircled the dwelling and provided a parking area to the west elevation. Additional landscaping was also proposed to the side and rear of The Lodge and Owl Oast, in place of the existing driveway.



Extract of plan approved under reference 18/503748/FULL

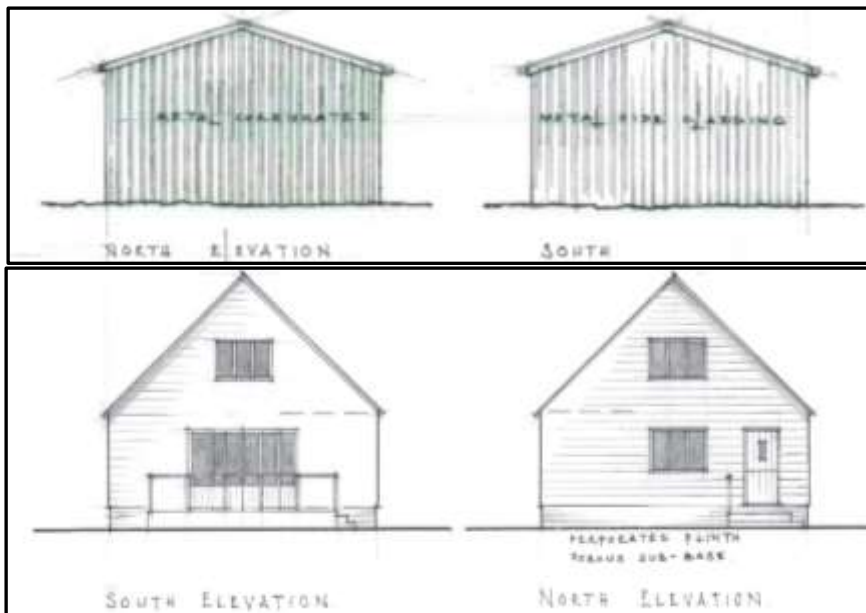
- 3.9. Within the determination of this application it was considered that the proposal was appropriate to this rural location and planning permission was granted.
- 3.10. It is understood that this permission was not implemented.

Other relevant planning applications

- 3.11. Within the immediate vicinity the neighbouring buildings have planning permission for conversion to dwellinghouses. Whilst the simple agricultural form of the buildings has been predominantly retained, this has resulted in an enclave of residential development and domestic nature of the site. The planning history for neighbouring sites is briefly outlined below:

Willow Barn

- 3.12. The property to the north of the application site, ‘Willow Barn’ was granted Prior Approval for conversion under reference 19/502338/PNQCLA.
- 3.13. There have been a number of further applications since Prior Approval was granted, including most recently planning permission reference 21/503656/FULL, which granted permission for the change of use and conversion of a Dutch barn to form a dwelling, including change of external materials, alterations to roof line, insertion of doors and windows, with associated garden area and outbuilding, as shown below:



Existing and proposed elevations approved under reference 21/503656/FULL

3.14. These proposals resulted in some significant changes to the external appearance of the building, including the replacement of the metal wall cladding and cement fibre profiled roof approved under the prior approval application with horizontal 'ebony' weatherboarding and slate roof tiles.

3.15. In this case the Council's Delegated Report acknowledged:

"There are a number of other farm buildings in the vicinity such as oast houses that have been converted into dwellings and as such whilst the area retains its 'agricultural fabric' this has been significantly domesticated and so it is the 'metal' agricultural building which now appears out of place in this location".

Bottom Oast House and Owl Oast

3.16. The property to the east of the application site, was granted planning permission for conversion of agricultural storage building to a dwelling under reference MA/05/1001. This property comprises two dwellings; Bottom Oast House and Owl Oast.

3.17. In 2021 planning permission was approved under reference 21/505192/FULL for the erection of a garage to the immediate south of the application site, where the garden area serving Owl Oast is located, as shown on the approved drawing extract below:



Plan approved for garage under reference 21/505192/FULL

3.18. This application was submitted pursuant to planning approval reference 15/501609/FULL, which was acknowledged as being for the same scheme, but unimplemented.

3.19. Within the Delegated Report for this application it was noted by the Council that:

“The proposal is considered modest in scale and would be unlikely to harm the setting of the nearby Grade 2 Listed Building. By reason of the scale and design of the development, it is considered that the proposal would be unlikely to harm the street scene or locality; and is acceptable”.

3.20. As shown on the approved block plan extract, the approved garage was in close proximity to the listed building and comprised new building work,

Top Oast

3.21. To the south of the site the property known as ‘Top Oast’ was granted planning permission for conversion of a redundant agricultural building to two dwellings under reference 89/1586. There have been subsequent applications to allow an extension of the time to commence development.

3.22. In conclusion, it is considered that these permissions show that whilst the conversion of this former farmstead has been carefully designed and considered, that the residential use of these buildings has undoubtedly changed the overarching character of the immediate vicinity to an enclave of residential properties.

4. Proposal

- 4.1. As detailed, the application building has established residential use, and was converted several years ago. This application seeks to enhance the use of the building, through the conversion of the remaining covered storage area, along with the provision of a modest single storey extension to the north-west elevation and the reconfiguration of the internal rooms. The proposal does not increase the number of bedrooms at the property from that previously approved under application reference 17/506130/FULL.
- 4.2. Whilst the proposed alterations are considered to be minor, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) removes permitted development rights for buildings converted under the Prior Notification procedure and, as such planning permission is required.

Use

- 4.3. This application seeks to make better use of the existing residential building, to provide a more useable residential living space for the occupants. As the application site is already within residential use there is no change of use proposed.
- 4.4. The proposed works include the conversion of a covered storage area with open sides to an enclosed part of the dwellinghouse and the provision of a modest, single storey extension to the north-west façade of the building.
- 4.5. These alterations will enable the majority of additional living space to be formed within the envelope of the existing building, with the small addition being set in from the end elevations of the building, with a flat roof, as a clearly subservient addition to this existing property.
- 4.6. Parking exists to the north-west side of the dwelling, within the existing driveway, thus will remain unaffected.

4.7. Amount

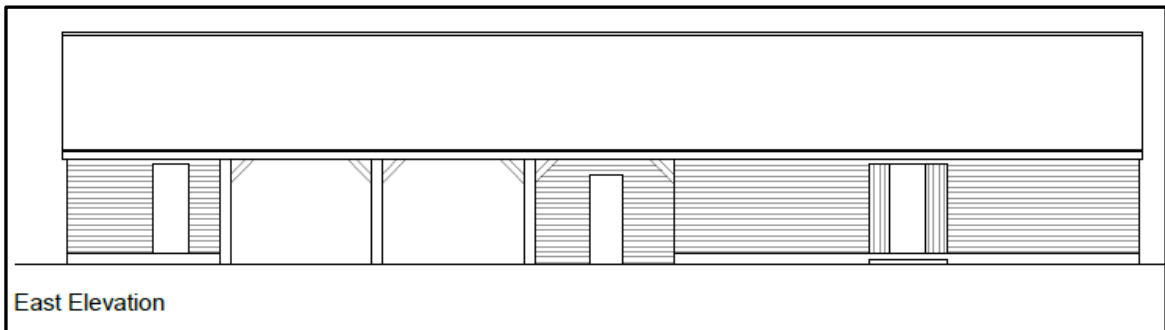
- 4.8. The established residential building has a footprint of some 127.27 sqm. The proposal will provide for the habitable living space to be increased, predominantly internally, with the modest extension providing an overall increase in built form of 14% to 145.27 sqm.

4.9. Within the existing building the usable residential floor space is relatively small at around 61 sqm, which is the minimum amount that a 2 bedroom, 3 person dwelling can be under Nationally Described Space Standards.

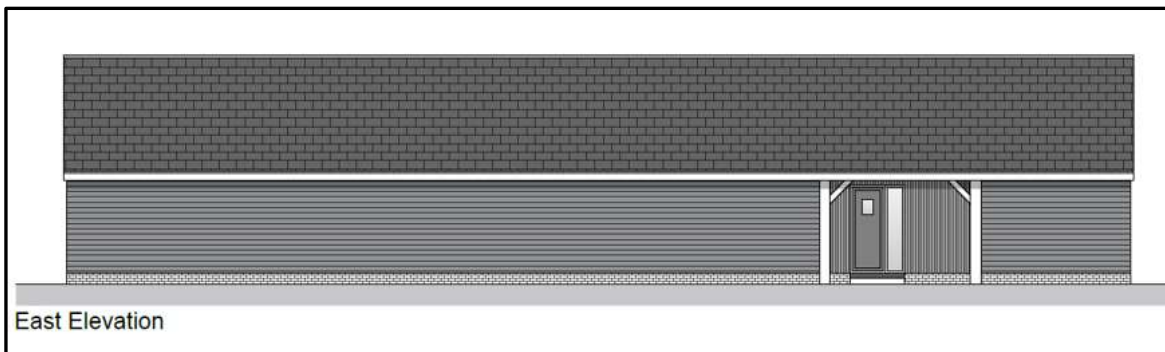
Appearance

4.10. The application building has been in existence since the 1950s, thus naturally forms part of the local environment which it forms part of.

4.11. It has a traditional, rectangular form, comprising horizontal weatherboarding and a pitched tiled roof. The proposed conversion seeks to enclose the east and west sides elevations with horizontal weatherboarding in keeping with the main building, along with the insertion of windows in the western (rear elevation) to provide light to these rooms. Existing openings within the eastern elevation are shown to be removed, enabling the traditional character of the building to be respected.

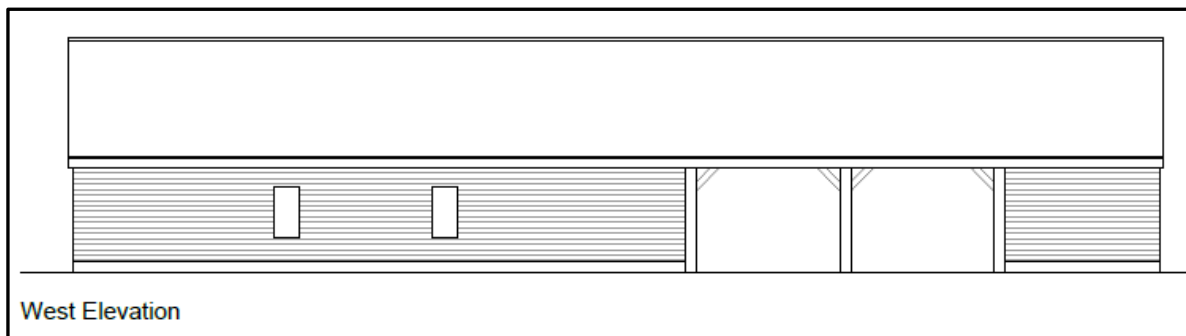


Extract of existing front elevation, drawing number 3085.050.B (not to scale)



Extract of proposed front elevation, drawing number 3085.070.A (not to scale)

- 4.12. In respect of the rear elevation, additional openings are shown to ensure that there is sufficient amounts of daylight and sunlight to habitable rooms, without influencing the principal elevation of the dwelling.
- 4.13. The proposed extension has been designed to ensure that it is subservient to the main building, set in from the end elevations and located to the rear, with a reduced height, to prevent any impact on the rural setting of the building.



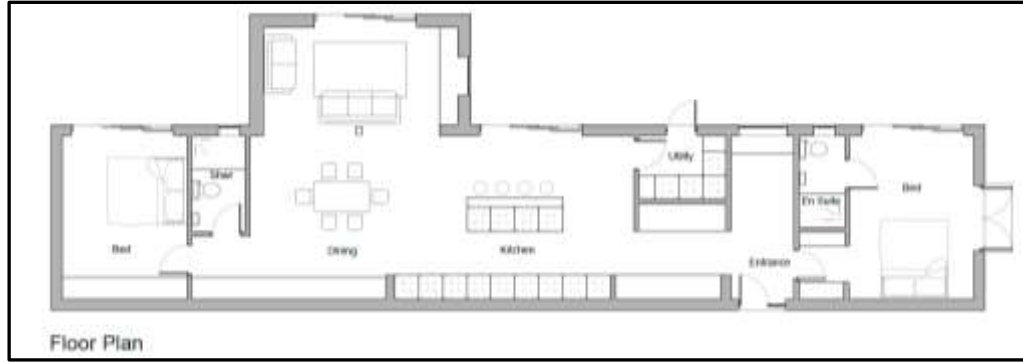
Extract of existing rear elevation, drawing number 3085.050.B (not to scale)



Extract of proposed rear elevation, drawing number 3085.070.A (not to scale)

Layout

- 4.14. As already detailed, the proposal seeks to make best use of the existing building, by reconfiguring the internal arrangement, along with providing a modest extension. The resultant property will comprise an entrance hall, utility room, open plan kitchen, dining and living room, 2x bedrooms (1 with ensuite) and a shower room, as shown on the proposed floor plan overleaf:



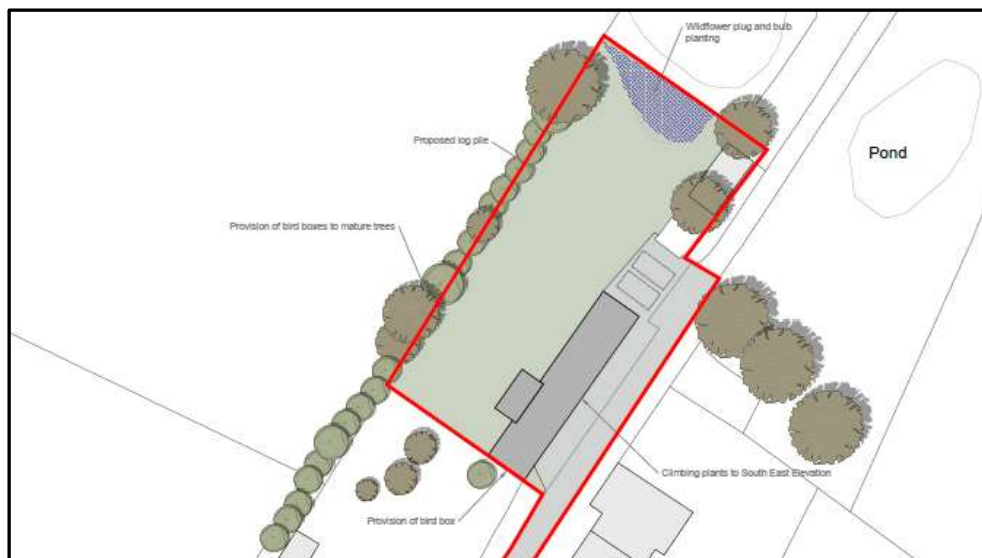
Extract of proposed floor plan, drawing number 3085.060.A (not to scale)

Access & parking

4.15. The Lodge benefits from existing parking for two cars to the north-west side, as approved under reference 18/503748/FULL, which granted planning permission for the rerouting of the driveway. There are no alterations to this parking, which meets the requirements for parking provision for a two bedroom property.

Landscaping and ecological enhancements

4.16. The garden area of the property is currently laid to lawn, with a mature row of trees along the north west boundary. This proposal seeks to incorporate enhancements to biodiversity and habitats in the form of wildflower planting, a log pile, bird boxes to mature trees and the building, and climbing plants, as shown on the proposed plan extract below:



Extract of proposed ecological enhancement plan, drawing number 3085.080.B (not to scale)

5. Planning Policy

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that for applications for planning permission that “*a determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise*”.

In addition to the development plan the Government published the updated National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) in September 2023. This Framework sets out the Government’s requirements and policies for planning in England and must be taken into account as a material planning consideration in the determination of any planning application, as detailed within paragraph 2. Of particular importance is Annex 1 of the NPPF, which sets out the weight to be afforded to existing development plan policies. Paragraph 219 states that “*existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)*”.

- 5.2. This section of the statement highlights the relevant parts of the NPPF and Council’s development plan in respect of this application, along with the weight that should be afforded to the existing adopted policies.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.3. Achieving sustainable development is the core objective for the planning system, with the premise that sustainable development should go ahead without delay, meaning that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would *significantly* and *demonstrably* outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies within the Framework as a whole.
- 5.4. In all respects, the NPPF seeks to maximise opportunities for the supply of housing in appropriate locations, that can contribute towards housing supply, along with maintaining and enhancing the vitality of existing communities. The key objective of sustainable development is summarised within paragraph 7 as “*...meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”.

5.5. Paragraph 8 refers to the three overarching objectives to sustainable development; as being economic, social and environment, which give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

a) an economic objective - *to help to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure”;*

b) a social objective - *to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being”;* and

c) an environmental objective - *to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

5.6. Paragraph 10 adds further that “*at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development*”, with Paragraph 11(b) reiterating that for plan-making this means that “*strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other land uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas*”, and with Paragraph 11 (c) and (d) stating that for decision-taking this means:

c) *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; or*

d) *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:*

i. *The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

ii. *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework when taken as a whole.*

5.7. At a strategic level, Paragraph 20 of the NPPF details that policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development. Footnote 13 clarifies this to be *“in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.

5.8. Paragraph 119 relates to making effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and securing safe and healthy living conditions.

In respect of under-utilised land and buildings Paragraph 120(d) is clear that planning policies and decisions should *“promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)”*

5.9. In this instance, this application seeks to make better use of part of the existing building, which is currently open and designated for storage use, by enclosing it and bringing it into additional living space. This space is currently significantly under-utilised by the owners and it is considered that its adaptation for residential use will improve the internal living accommodation for the residents, in line with national planning policy.

5.10. The Framework is clear that Local Planning Authorities should promote sustainable development in rural areas, with housing located where it will *“enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities”* (paragraph 79). It is also noted that *“planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services”*.

5.11. Paragraph 80 states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless various circumstances apply, including *“c) the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting”*.

- 5.12. As detailed throughout this statement, the application site contains an established dwelling, within an enclave of other residential properties, and this application purely seeks amendments to the existing building, but will not increase the number of dwellings on the site.
- 5.13. Section 15 of the NPPF requires that the natural environment is conserved and enhanced. The proposals seek to maintain the natural, rural setting of the site, with the existing natural boundary trees retained to maintain any existing habitats. Furthermore, enhancements to the immediate setting of the site are proposed, via the planting of a wild flower meadow, with log piles, the provision of bat and bird boxes and climbing plants on the south eastern elevation. This proposal would not result in any adverse impacts on the existing natural environment.
- 5.14. The NPPF identifies that good design is a key aspect to sustainable development (paragraph 126), with Paragraph 130 detailing that planning policies and decisions should ensure 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...;*
 - d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place;*
 - e) Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development...; 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...*

- 5.15. The application building has an attractive traditional form, reflective of its rural origins. Part of the proposed development seeks to enclose the open storage elements of the building on the front and rear elevations, utilising the same materials as the existing property. This will provide residents with the opportunity to make better use of under-utilised elements of the building, whilst maintaining the overarching rural character of the building.
- 5.16. In respect of the proposed modest extension to the north-west elevation, this has been designed to ensure subservience to the main dwelling, with the extension stepped in from the end elevations and with a flat roof, and vertical weather-boarding.
- 5.17. Section 16 requires that the historic environment is conserved and enhanced. To this end, Paragraph 195 of the NPPF is clear that:
- “Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal”.*
- 5.18. The application site forms part of a historic farm steading, which contains variety of buildings within it, some of which are listed, albeit the application building itself is not listed. To protect the setting of the nearby listed buildings the external works have been kept minimal, with the proposed extension set to the north-west elevation, to prevent any views of the listed building from being interrupted. This will be discussed further within following sections of this statement.
- 5.19. The NPPF requires Local Planning Authority’s to approach decision-taking in a positive way, encouraging decision-takers to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (paragraph 38).
- 5.20. Overall, it is submitted that the proposal would constitute sustainable development, having regard to the policies within the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 5.21. The NPPF sends out a very clear message that the Government considers planning to play a vital role in building our economy and encouraging growth in both urban and other areas and significant weight should be attached to the advice set out within it.

The Development Plan

- 5.22. For the purpose of this planning application, the Development Plan comprises the Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011-2031.

Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (2017)

- 5.23. The Local Plan aims to deliver sustainable growth and regeneration whilst protecting and enhancing the boroughs natural and built assets.
- 5.24. As detailed, the application site lies outside of any defined village settlement, within the open countryside, as such the most relevant local planning policies for consideration are SP17; SP18; DM1; DM4; DM30 and DM32, along with the Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.25. Policy SP17 is the strategic policy relevant to development within the countryside and seeks to ensure that development would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area and that the separation of individual settlements will be maintained.
- 5.26. In terms of the historic environment, Policy SP18 adds further that the characteristics, diversity and quality of heritage assets in the borough will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. With regard to development which impacts upon heritage assets and their setting, this is required to be designed sensitively.
- 5.27. With particular reference to design Local Policy DM1 details the principles of good design, which is considered to be a fundamental principle for underpinning good planning. To this end, it requires proposed development to create a high-quality design and to meet the following criteria:

i. Create designs and layouts that are accessible to all, and maintain and maximise opportunities for permeability and linkages to the surrounding area and local services;

ii. Respond positively to, and where possible enhance, the local, natural or historic character of the area. Particular regard will be paid to scale, height, materials, detailing, mass, bulk, articulation and site coverage – incorporating a high quality, modern design approach and making use of vernacular materials where appropriate;

iii. Create high quality public realm and, where opportunities permit, provide improvements...

iv. Respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses and provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development by ensuring that development does not result in, or is exposed to, excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movements, overlooking or visual intrusion, and that the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties;

v. Respect the topography and respond to the location of the site and sensitively incorporate natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds worthy of retention within the site. Particular attention should be paid in rural and semi-rural areas where the retention and addition of native vegetation appropriate to local landscape character around the site boundaries should be used as positive tool to help assimilate development in a manner which reflects and respects the local and natural character of the area;

vi. Provide a high quality design which responds to areas of heritage, townscape and landscape value or uplifts an area of poor environmental quality;

vii. Orientate development, where possible, in such a way as to maximise the opportunity for sustainable elements to be incorporated...;

viii. Protect and enhance any on site biodiversity and geodiversity features...;

ix. Safely accommodate the vehicular and pedestrian movement generated by the proposal on the local highway network and through the site access;

x. Create a safe and secure environment and incorporate adequate security measures and features to deter crime, fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour;

xi. Avoid inappropriate new development within areas at risk from flooding...;

xii. Incorporate measures for the adequate storage of waste...;

*xiii. Provide adequate vehicular and cycle parking to meet adopted council standards;
and*

xiv. Be flexible towards future adaptation in response to changing life needs.

- 5.28. Policy DM4 is relevant to development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and requires that new development incorporates measures to conserve and where possible enhance the significant of the heritage asset and its setting.
- 5.29. In respect of the countryside location Policy DM30 details the specific design principles for development outside of the settlement boundaries, and requires that:
- i. The type, siting, materials and design, mass and scale of development and the level of activity would maintain, or where possible, enhance local distinctiveness including landscape features;*
 - ii. Impacts on the appearance and character of the landscape would be appropriately mitigated...;*
 - iii. Proposals would not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads...;*
 - iv. Where built development is proposed, there would be no existing building or structure suitable for conversion or re-use to provide the require facilities....;*
 - v. Where an extension or alteration to an existing building is proposed, it would be of a scale which relates sympathetically to the existing building and rural area; respect local building styles and materials; have no significant adverse impact on the form, appearance or setting of the building, and would respect the architectural and historic integrity of any adjoining building or group of buildings or which it forms part.*
- 5.30. With Policy DM 32 relating specifically to extending dwellings in the countryside and requires that the proposal is well designed and sympathetic to the existing dwelling, without overwhelming or destroying its original form.

Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD')

- 5.31. The Residential Extensions SPD was adopted in May 2009 to provide further details in relation to extensions to properties within built up areas and the countryside.
- 5.32. As the SPD was adopted prior to the adoption of the NPPF it is out-of-date in places with some of the broad National policy objectives.

- 5.33. With regard to the countryside, extensions are required to respond to the positive features of the area, local distinctiveness and sense of place. To this end, Paragraph 5.7 of the supporting text is clear that *“Policies allow for modest or limited extensions to an original dwelling currently in residential use provided proposals do not adversely impact on the form and character of the original building or the character of the countryside”*.
- 5.34. In respect of dwellings which have been converted from buildings not originally in non-residential use; such as barns, Paragraph 5.14 advises that extensions would not usually be permitted if there would be an unacceptable impact on the original form or character of the building. It goes on to note that *“Many rural buildings have a simple form such as a rectilinear floor plan which fits well with their original function and the character of the countryside and other have a historic form and character which should be retained”*.
- 5.35. This restriction is considered to be out-of-date with central government’s wider agenda, where there is no such restriction on extending converted dwellings, provided the design is of a high-quality and in keeping with the area.
- 5.36. Notwithstanding, this proposal seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing covered element in the central section of the building, along with a modest extension to the north-west elevation. The increase in the buildings footprint is minimal, with the proposed extension designed to be subservient to the main dwelling, set away from the end elevations, resulting in the extension being within limited views from neighbouring properties. This will retain the main form and character of the building.

6. Analysis

- 6.1. As already detailed within section 5 of this statement Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that “*a determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise*”.
- 6.2. To this end Paragraph 11 is clear that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means for decision-taking:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. 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.

Development in the countryside

- 6.3. For the purpose of this application Policy SP17 is the strategic policy relevant to the proposal and seeks to ensure that the development would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. Policy DM32 allows for dwellings within the countryside and relates specifically to extending these and seeks to ensure that any alterations are well-designed and sympathetic to the existing dwelling, without destroying or overwhelming its original form.
- 6.4. The Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document is also relevant to extension within the countryside and acknowledges that “*policies allow for modest or limited extensions to an original dwelling currently in residential use provided proposals do not adversely impact on the form and character of the original building or the character of the countryside*”.

- 6.5. In this instance, the existing building is already within lawful residential use, as allowed by Prior Approval application reference MA/PN/14/0043 and this proposal seeks relatively minor changes to the existing dwelling to make better use of it for habitable purposes.
- 6.6. It is therefore submitted that the broad principle of development is acceptable.

Sustainable development

- 6.7. As already set out, the core national objective for the planning system is to achieve sustainable development, with the foundation of the NPPF being the presumption that sustainable development should go ahead without delay.
- 6.8. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas, with housing located where it will “*enhance or maintain the viability of rural communities*”. The application site already forms part of an existing residential enclave and is within established residential use.
- 6.9. It is also submitted that the proposal would undoubtedly constitute a sustainable form of development when compared against the three objectives to achieving sustainable development detailed within the NPPF, which will be addressed in turn, namely;
- An economic objective;
 - A social objective;
 - An environmental objective

Economic benefits

- 6.10. The ‘Plan for Growth’ published by HM Treasury in March 2011 recognises that a successful construction industry is vital for sustainable growth in the UK and sets out that this includes the construction and maintenance of homes.
- 6.11. Whilst this proposal is relatively small scale, comprising the conversion of the remaining part of this building to residential use and a small extension, such a project is still able to make a contribution to the economic aspect of sustainability. In this case, the conversion scheme would provide employment opportunities for trades-people and a need for building materials and supplies, with a number of economic benefits from the conversion process likely to be felt at the local level.

- 6.12. The completed property would provide 2x double bedrooms, enabling more residents to live there once complete. Residents are highly likely to utilise local services and facilities for their day-to-day needs, which will provide economic benefits in the mid to long term.
- 6.13. There are no known economic disadvantages which would be comparable to the positive impacts of the proposed development.

Social benefits

- 6.14. Paragraph 119 of the NPPF is clear that planning decisions should promote effective use of land, with Paragraph 118 d) specifically noting that planning policies and decisions should “*promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially where this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained*”.
- 6.15. Whilst the established dwelling has sufficient facilities for a two-bedroom, three person dwellinghouse it is very limited in size. This proposal provides social benefits in the form of an extension to this existing dwelling, predominantly within the envelope of the building, which will result in a family-sized dwelling, with a high level of space, facilities and storage. The proposal would contribute to local housing supply by bringing back into use the remaining element of this building, which is under-utilised in its current form, in line with Government’s objectives.
- 6.16. The extension of this residential dwelling, primarily into the remainder of the building, along with a modest extension will enable better use of this building and its occupation by a larger number of people and/or a family. There are no known social disadvantages which would be comparable to the positive impacts of the proposed development.

Environmental benefits

- 6.17. The main building readily forms part of the local landscape within which it is sited. The design of the conversion and proposed extension have been carefully considered to ensure that all works are sympathetic to the character of the original building and wider countryside.
- 6.18. To this end, the overarching, simplistic character of the building is to be maintained, with limited openings in the front facing wall, namely the existing front door. All other openings will be concentrated in the north-west elevation. This will ensure that the building remains integrated into its existing surroundings.

- 6.19. There is an existing row of trees along the site's rear boundary, which is to be retained, ensuring that the wider rural character of the area is protected.
- 6.20. Additional planting and biodiversity improvements are proposed within and around the application site, in the form of wildflower planting, the provision of log piles, climbing plants and the provision of bird boxes. This will enhance the rural amenities of the area and encourage and strengthen existing and new wildlife habitats. These enhancements will enhance the rural character of the site, without causing any impact on the adjacent site users.
- 6.21. In light of the above considerations, it is clear that the development would not have any adverse impacts when considering the economic, social and environmental merits of the proposal.

7. Heritage Assessment

- 7.1. 'The Lodge' is part of a cluster of traditional buildings within the Little Cheveney steading, which also includes Owl Oast and Bottom Oast, which are Grade II Listed Buildings. These three buildings are distinctly separate from other groups of buildings within the steading, with Owl Oast and Bottom Oast comprising a semi-detached pair of dwellings on the eastern side of the access, opposite The Lodge.
- 7.2. Section 16 of the NPPF details that heritage assets should be conserved, with Paragraph 195 stating that:
- "Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal".*
- 7.3. In terms of the historic environment, at a local level Policy SP18 adds further that the characteristics, diversity and quality of heritage assets in the borough will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. New development which impacts upon heritage assets and their setting, is required to be designed sensitively.
- 7.4. Policy DM4 relates specifically to development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and requires that new development incorporates measures to conserve and where possible enhance the significant of the heritage asset and its setting.
- 7.5. As detailed, the application site lies close to Grade II Listed Buildings Owl Oast and Bottom Oast but is not listed in its own right.
- 7.6. The listing details for Owl Oast and Bottom Oast is detailed on the Historic England website under "Oasthouse about 60 metres north east of Little Cheveney Farmhouse, Beech Road", with the National Grid Reference TQ 72604 44065, where it states:

“Oasthouse. C19 with C20 alterations. Ground floor of rear (east) wall of stowage coursed sandstone with brick dressings. Rest of stowage and kilns red and grey brick in Flemish bond. Plain tile roofs. Broad rectangular stowage with two square kilns to each gable end. Stowage formerly 2 storeys. Half-hipped roof to stowage, pyramidal roofs with cowls to kilns. Boarded first-floor door to left of centre of stowage, with paned three-light casement beside it. Boarded ground-floor door with segmental head towards right (south) end of ground floor”.

- 7.7. The application building is separated from the listed buildings by the access track which leads northwards from Sheephurst Lane, onto Willow Cottage and Willow Barn at the furthest northern point.
- 7.8. In design terms the changes to the front of the building, which face towards the application site, are minimal, incorporating horizontal weatherboarding, to match the rest of the building, where the front and back are currently open. There are no additional openings proposed facing towards the listed building, thus retaining the simplistic form and character of the building.
- 7.9. Whilst a modest extension is proposed to the rear elevation of the building, this will not be visible from the listed buildings and will not affect their setting or appreciation.
- 7.10. It is therefore considered that the proposed development, would comply with local and national policy considerations in respect of heritage matters.

8. Other Material Considerations

- 8.1. It is considered that, in relation to the following material considerations for this application, that there would not be any adverse impacts of the proposal which would *significantly* and *demonstrably* outweigh the benefits, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF;
- Design and appearance
 - Amenity, including existing neighbours and prospective occupiers;
 - Highways and parking;
 - Ecology and landscaping;
 - Flood risk; and
 - Contamination.

8.2. These matters are detailed below.

Design and appearance.

- 8.3. The application building undoubtedly forms part of the built fabric of the local area and dates back to around the 1950s. The building has a rural Kentish design, representative of the area within which it is located.
- 8.4. Paragraph 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework identifies that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that new development should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 8.5. At a local level Policy DM1 seeks to create layouts that are accessible for all, providing adequate residential amenities for future occupiers. Local policy also seeks local, natural and historic characteristics of the building and area are enhanced, with a high quality design being created. Policy DM30 concurs with this and requires local distinctiveness to be maintained.

- 8.6. The Residential Extensions SPD supports modest or limited extensions to a dwelling within a countryside location, although seeks to ensure that they “*do not adversely impact on the form and character of the original building or the character of the countryside*”. As the application building has been converted to residential use Paragraph 5.14 seeks to ensure that there would not be an unacceptable impact on the original form or character of the building.
- 8.7. The internal layout has been designed to be relatively open plan, providing good movement throughout, ensuring the improved dwelling is accessible and adaptable, as required, creating a high-quality living environment.
- 8.8. Externally the building makes use of weatherboarding, which is the main material within the existing building, to enclose the open storage areas, and there are no new openings proposed, ensuring that the simplistic design of the building is maintained, reflective of the rural character of the area.
- 8.9. The proposed extension has been set away from the end elevations, and has a flat roof. Externally it comprises vertical weatherboarding, ensuring sympathetic materials are used, whilst clearly presenting a subservient addition to the main dwelling. The location of the proposed extension prevents it from being visible from the principal elevation of the dwelling, thus it is considered that the original character of the building is retained.
- 8.10. It is considered that the proposal makes better use of this existing building and provides a modest extension to enhance the space for residents, whilst complying with national and local planning policies and requirements.

Amenity

- 8.11. The application building is separated from the closest neighbouring properties; Owl Oast and Bottom Oast, by the historic access that leads northwards to Willow Cottage and Willow Barn.
- 8.12. Whilst the conversion of the open storage elements of the building will bring some of the residential elements further south it is not considered that this would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. Indeed, it is considered that as the south east and north west elevations will be enclosed that this will provide greater privacy between the dwellings and prevent any inter-looking.

- 8.13. Due to the location of the proposed rear extension, it will not result in any overlooking or overshadowing to neighbouring properties.
- 8.14. In terms of the occupants of the dwelling, the proposed changes will enable them to have a more open living space, resulting in a high-quality environment, with good levels of natural daylight and sunlight, as well as amenity space.
- 8.15. Therefore the proposed conversion of this element of the building, to provide a family dwelling would not give rise to any significant impact upon the existing levels of privacy or amenity enjoyed by neighbouring occupants, and will provide a high-quality environment for residents.
- 8.16. There are no other properties within close enough proximity to be impacted by the proposal.
- 8.17. The proposed dwelling is shown to benefit from three bedrooms, a bathroom, cloakroom, kitchen/dining room, living room and study, over a floor area of 156.64 sqm. This will provide a high standard of accommodation for the occupants of the dwelling, along with space and movement within the building.
- 8.18. It is therefore submitted that the proposal satisfies the requirements of national and local planning policies and requirements.

Highways and parking

- 8.19. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF is clear that “*development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe*”.
- 8.20. There are no changes proposed to the existing access from the north side of Sheephurst Lane, which is currently utilised by the existing dwellinghouse. Whilst planning permission was granted in 2018, under reference 18/503748/FUL, for the rearrangement of the access and parking for the property this was not implemented. As such, vehicular parking to the serve the property is in the form of two spaces to the northern end of the dwelling, which has been the case since it was converted to residential use.
- 8.21. The vehicular access and parking is considered to provide good visibility when accessing the site, with clear access from the road, to prevent vehicles obstructing traffic.

- 8.22. It is not considered that the proposal to enlarge the habitable living space at this established dwellinghouse would generate a materially greater number of vehicle movements to the site than the established residential and historical agricultural use, nor have a detrimental impact on highway safety.
- 8.23. It is therefore not considered that there are any parking and highways impacts as a result of this proposal.

Ecology and landscaping

- 8.24. An ecological survey was instructed at the application site, with a survey carried out in August 2023. Internet-based resources were consulted to identify designated nature conservation sites within 1km of the site and habitats of potentially high ecological importance and sensitivity within 500m of the site; including ancient woodland and ponds.
- 8.25. The site is not part of, nor directly adjacent to, any statutory designated sites and none are located within 1km of the site.
- 8.26. It was noted that the site is surrounded by pasture and cultivated arable land with hedgerows, as well as some dwellings.

Amphibians

- 8.27. The data search carried out with KRAG (Enquiry No: CES/23/174) revealed that the closest recorded Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* site is located 1.43 km to the E (record id: 93767). It was noted that there are five ponds present within 100m of the site, and that the site consisted of heavily managed grassland. It was therefore not considered that there would be any impact from the proposal on Great Crested Newts.

Reptiles

- 8.28. The KRAG datasearch revealed that the closest recorded reptile is Viviparous Lizard, located 1.4 km to the E (record id: 27455). As the development site consists of grassland, which is species poor and heavily managed and kept short, the habitat is considered to be unsuitable for common reptile species. This is due to lack of cover from predators and foraging opportunities. It was therefore not considered that there would be any impact from the proposal on reptiles.

Birds

- 8.29. The site was considered to have high potential to support breeding birds within the trees and open areas of the application building. No signs of barn owl were found during the survey.
- 8.30. Although a breeding bird survey was not deemed to be necessary, considered for the timing of works to take place was detailed, as any effect on birds can be avoided by starting building works outside of the bird breeding season, which is from March to August inclusive, or after a survey has confirmed the absence of nesting birds.

Hazel dormouse

- 8.31. It was considered that the site has negligible potential to support the hazel dormouse due to lack of connection to suitable woodlands. No nests or signs of dormice were found during the site visit. As such it was not considered that there would be any impact on dormice.

Badger

- 8.32. No setts or signs of badgers were identified during the survey. As such it was not considered that the proposal would have any impact on badgers.

Bats

- 8.33. It was noted that the Lodge is already partially converted to a dwelling. No bats or signs of bats were found during the internal/external inspection of the building and it was acknowledged that the building offered negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 8.34. Furthermore, none of the trees on the site were considered to offer suitability for roosting bats, although the surrounding area had potential to be used for foraging and commuting bats. No impact was expected on bats, thus no further works was recommended.

Hedgehogs

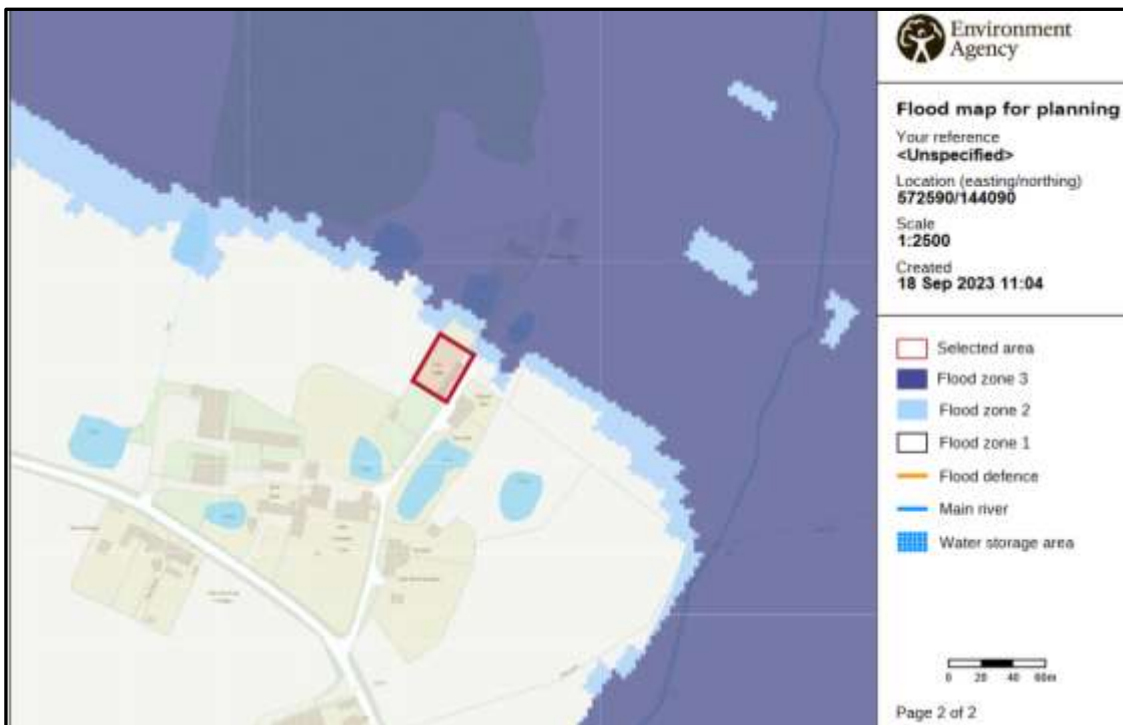
- 8.35. The surroundings were considered to have potential to support hedgehogs. As such, it was recommended that any areas where mammals could be sheltering should be hand searched prior to disturbance, with excavations being backfilled, covered overnight, or ramps placed into to allow any animals to escape.

Recommended enhancements

- 8.36. A number of ecological enhancements are proposed to provide improved biodiversity at the site; including the planting of climbing plants on the front elevation of the building, providing bird boxes on retained trees and establishing wildflower planting within the private garden.
- 8.37. In conclusion, whilst the site survey did not find any signs of protected species, there will be significant biodiversity enhancements as a result of the proposal, enabling improved habitat and foraging opportunities for local wildlife within the site.
- 8.38. This is in line with the requirements of Paragraph 179 of the NPPF which seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and will undoubtedly enhance the setting of the building, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.

Flood risk

- 8.39. A review of the Environment Agency's flood maps has been carried out and, as shown on the map extract below, the application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1. Therefore, the site is identified as being within an area with a low probability of flooding from rivers and seas.



Extract from KCC Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Seas)

- 8.40. As shown on the map extract below, the site is also recognised as being at very low risk from surface water flooding.



Extract from KCC Flood Map for Planning (surface water)

Contamination

- 8.41. The application building has been within residential use for a number of years, with the element to be converted most recently being within residential storage use, linked to the property. There have not previously been any concerns raised regarding contamination and it is not considered that there is any reason to depart from this previous conclusion.
- 8.42. It is therefore submitted that there would not be any unacceptable risks from pollution and the development would be appropriate to its location, in accordance with Paragraph 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. In summary, this application seeks to extend an established dwellinghouse, by making better use of the remainder of the building, which is currently within open residential storage use, and through a carefully considered, sympathetic extension to the rear.
- 9.2. The application building is situated within an enclave of existing residential uses and has been within residential use for almost ten years.
- 9.3. In design terms, the external alterations have been carefully considered, making use of existing materials that form the character of the building and restricting openings to the rear elevation of the building, retaining the buildings historic character and form.
- 9.4. The property's curtilage will remain unaltered, with parking being retained to the northern end of the building.
- 9.5. This proposal seeks to enhance biodiversity at the site, through the provision of wildflower planting and log piles, to provide foraging and habitat opportunities and the establishment of bird boxes within the mature trees to provide nesting opportunities. There are no close boarded fences within the site, enabling hedgehogs and other mammals connectivity within the local surroundings.
- 9.6. In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development is supported in principle by policy SP17 of Development Plan and by other local plan policies and those within the NPPF, as detailed within preceding sections of this Statement.
- 9.7. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan policies and the NPPF and there are no other material considerations that indicate the proposal should be restricted.