

Planning Statement for Car Spaces for The Coach House and Hay Loft at Bluebell FarmIntroduction

This document explains proposals for the parking and pedestrian access for two homes on the East Side of Bluebell Farm. This area of hardstanding has been subject to enforcement action since October 2019 due to the Developer's failure to complete the roadway, surfacing of the parking spaces and disabled access to Granary Lodge. Five of the fifteen homes on the site have been using this area for access and parking with its first use in the second half of 2016. Currently, three of these homes have parking spaces approved by Sevenoaks District Council.

The purpose of this application is to obtain approval for the two homes which do not have consent: The Coach House and Hay Loft. This application does not seek to modify the approved parking arrangements for Granary Lodge, The East Barn or The Pottery.

Current approvals

The most relevant planning approvals are 16/03847/FUL for parts of the Main Block, 23/01736/House for Granary Lodge, 22/033330/FUL for The Pottery and 17/02389/FUL for the East Barn and West Barn and 22/02151/FUL for the Roadway and other ancillary facilities.

- 16/03847/FUL approved in May 2017 increased the number of units in the Main Block to 12 requiring an increase in the total number of car spaces to 37, whilst being ambiguous over the provision of two disabled visitor spaces at the west side. This consent incorporated the parking layout from consent 16/03618/FUL approved in March 17 for an extended access roadway, three parking spaces and a wheelchair ramp to Granary Lodge.
- 23/01736/House approved in August 2023 is for minor changes to a car port first approved under 21/01201/House. That 2021 consent was necessary due to the Developer's failure to obtain consent for a car port and inadequate wheelchair provision. The new consent also repositions the parking to enable restoration of the pedestrian access to Hay Loft shown on the approved landscape plan from 16/03847. This also helped meet the objective to maintain the openness of the green belt for people living at Bluebell Farm and reduce the area of hardstanding allocated for vehicular use.
- 22/033330/House for an extension to The Pottery is the latest of three approvals for that home and includes one parking space as originally approved under 16/03618/FUL.
- 17/02389/FUL moved three spaces for The East Barn from the south east to the north side of its garden.
- 22/02151/FUL was intended to resolve the original Enforcement Action 19/00510/BCRN. Changes to the parking arrangements for both the west side and the east side were withdrawn because the property manager Bluebell Farm Management Limited was unable to obtain all its Members consent during the consultation period. However, it is relevant that the application intended to seek permission to increase the total number of spaces by 3 or 4 i.e. to 40 or 41. The approved plans also indicated omission of two spaces in the south west corner of the westernmost car park. This change reflect elements of the parking layout in the original consent 15/00789/FUL for the Development and is consistent with the Parking Plans included in all the Member's Purchase Agreements.

Existing Construction

Prior to the Development there was an 831 sqm hard tennis court to the east side of The Coach House. All of it was due to be removed under the original consent 15/00789/FUL but about half of it remains partly because of subsequent consents. The half removed lay underneath the garden of The Coach House which was landscaped largely to lawn in summer 2016 and to its current perimeter. Approvals 16/003618/FUL and 16/03847/FUL required new hardstanding circulation, parking and footpaths/ramps amounting to some 150 sqm and the landscape plan BBF/LH/3/4.5.15 has a footpath along the Coach House boundary of just over 30 sqm. It is unclear how 17/02389/FUL was intended to coexist with these two main block consents but required at least another 50 sqm of circulation and or footpaths. In total this suggests a minimum of circa 230 sqm of the hardstanding is approved.

In fact, the Developer completed the as-built car park in early May 2017 which is about 400 sqm net of allowances for the west and north side footways. In doing so the surface level was raised some 0.6m compared to the tennis court and, whilst still lower than the natural ground levels to its perimeter, it enabled omission of one of the ramps to Granary Lodge enabling its parking spaces to be moved about 7m westwards involving an increment net of footways of about 30 sqm as approved under 23/01736/House.

New proposal

The proposal is to:

- Surface a 1.2m wide footway alongside the Coach House's garden and west of these spaces involving ~12 sq m. This is a little narrower than seems to be indicated in the approved landscape plan from 16/03847. The footway is also further east to reflect the 2016 as-built garden perimeter. It has been in continuous use since 2016.
- Add consent for four extra spaces along the western perimeter of the east car park requiring ~50 sq m for the spaces and a small area for circulation to the east edge . Two have been in use since November 2016 with the other two (currently used with Exclusive Parking Rights) first used at the start of 2018 by a tenant of the Developer.

Tally of parking spaces

Location	Approval 16/03847/FUL	Approval 22/02151/FUL	Proposed now
West (by Penfield Cottage)	9	7	7 nc
Bramble Cottage	2	2 no change	2 nc
Central Car Park	17	17 nc	17 nc
The East Barn & West Barn	6	6 nc	6 nc
East side originally just for Granary Lodge	3	3 nc	7
Total	37	35	39

Notes

1. There is no provision of disabled visitor spaces on the site. The table in the approved plan for 16/03847/FUL tallied 39 spaces but the drawing only shows 37 and appears to double count 2 spaces next to The Lodge. We understand KCC parking standards recommend provision of 2 such spaces.
2. We understand a separate application is planned to move one space for Bramble Cottage to reflect its registered spaces as was originally included in 22/02151/FUL.
3. The parking spaces are shared by all 15 homes on the site not 14 as was assumed in 16/03847/FUL.
4. The developer did not provide 5 visitor spaces as indicated on the approved plans from 16/03847/FUL. If this proposal is approved then two of the allocated spaces in the central car park may be released for re-use as visitor spaces by all. This is subject to Bluebell Farm Management Limited agreeing reasonable contract amendments.

The proposal has been designed to fulfil the Kent County Council Design Guide Parking Standards V1.0 17092021 and in particular reflect the priorities set out in paragraph 112 of the NPPF:

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements;
- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; *especially avoiding forcing pedestrians or wheelchair users from having to traverse vehicle circulation space*

The proposals follow the Kent Design Guide for bay sizes, circulation aisles and turning heads other than bay widths have been set at 2.4m to match the approved designs from 2015 to 2017 and Land Registry and Purchase Agreement records. Consequently, we believe these proposals will meet the Kent Design Guide's parking principles almost completely and address various deficiencies in the 2017 approvals.

The surfacing proposed is consistent with the approved plan 024722A from consent 22/02151/FUL i.e. either bound or surface dressed gravel surfacing to the roadway and car parks (and footways) to match the appearance of the rest of the Development. We understand SDC had indicated this requirement to BFM in the early summer of 2022 and confirmed it in 2023. We also observe that positive drainage is needed as the existing hardstanding is not permeable nor is the site's geology is suited to permeable construction. Section 4.10 of the original planning statement under 15/00789/FUL states that: "*The site falls within the Gault Clay Vale Landscape Type and the Kemsing Clay Farmlands Character Area. Connecting to the existing drain in the north-east corner of the car park which discharges into the ponds on the site already meets KCC and SDC's Sustainable Drainage aims.*"

Visual Impact and Impact upon AONB

The new spaces will be on the same east-west alignment as the approved spaces and car port for Granary Lodge under 23/01736/House to mitigate any new incremental impact. This means that they are west of the existing building line between The Pottery and The East Barn. Neither house has any ground floor windows facing the bays. The East Barn has a much higher first-floor bedroom window centred over 10m metres to the west with an oblique view. A high laurel hedge is to the perimeter of The Coach House's garden. Consequently these spaces are only visible from the east and sit between the existing approved spaces to the north and south and have the backdrop of that hedge. The satellite photo below illustrates that there are over half a dozen trees nearby in the park land east of the car park and the two surrounding gardens which provide some screening from a variety of viewpoints. There are no direct views from the AONB surrounding the Development due to heavy boundary screening with trees and hedging around 100m east.

The approved parking spaces for both The Pottery and The East Barn are several metres to the east of these extra spaces and forward of the east facades of those homes. Hence it is cars parked in those approved spaces which are closer to and quite evident from the surrounding park land

