



**ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY
DWELLING FOLLOWING DEMOLITION
OF EXISTING COMMERCIAL
AND EQUESTRIAN BUILDINGS**

**FLANDERS FARM, THOMPSONS LANE,
CHOBHAM, SURREY GU24 8SU**

PLANNING STATEMENT

MARCH 2024

1.00 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 This Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of a single storey dwellinghouse following demolition of existing commercial and equestrian buildings at Flanders Farm, Thompson Lane, Chobham, Surrey GU24 8SU. The application is submitted on behalf of Mr and Mrs K Wright, the landowners and is a self-build project for their own occupation.
- 1.02 The Statement demonstrates how the proposals accord with relevant local plan policies and other material considerations including national planning policy. Specifically, it describes how the proposals are appropriate development in the Green Belt and as such accord with national Green Belt policy. It should be read in conjunction with the following application drawings and reports:

Application Drawings prepared by Halo Architects Ltd

HA24-269 P001 – Location Plan (1:1250@A1)

HA24-269 P002 – Block Plans (1:500@A1)

HA24-269 P003 – Proposed Site Plan (1:1250@A1)

HA24-269 P004 – Outbuildings to be demolished (1:100@A1)

HA24-269 P005 – Proposed Dwelling Floor Plans and Elevations (1:100@A1)

HA24-269 P006 – Barn Existing Floor Plans and Elevations (1:100@A1)

HA24-269 P007 – Barn Proposed Conversion to Stables (1:100@A1) (for information only)

Reports

Planning Statement prepared by Paul Dickinson and Associates, Town Planning & Development Consultants, March 2024

Phase 1 Bat Survey prepared by Dr Jonty Denton FRES FLS MCIEEM CECol, Chartered Ecologist, March 2024

2.00 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.01 The site (about 0.27 ha) comprises part of a property known as Flanders Farm which is situated at the south end of Thompsons Lane which lies to the south of Windlesham Road a short distance west of Chobham. It lies on the east side of Thompsons Lane at the end of a row of detached residential properties.
- 2.02 The site has been in mixed commercial and equestrian use for over 30 years. The Council granted a lawful development certificate 23/0819/CEU dated 29 November 2023 in respect of the use of land and part of building A for commercial purposes and for the remaining part of building A and the whole of building B for equestrian purposes.
- 2.03 The current application site includes this land and buildings A and B the subject of the lawful development certificate. The application site includes a third equestrian stables building (referred to as building C) which was granted planning permission 15/0542 on 21 September 2015. The stables building was constructed shortly thereafter and has been used for private equestrian purposes since as stipulated by condition (3) attached to the planning permission.
- 2.04 The application seeks permission to construct a single storey dwellinghouse following demolition of the 3 no. existing commercial and equestrian buildings A, B and C. The new dwelling would be served via the existing site access and driveway from Thompsons Lane in the same way as the existing buildings are accessed. This is a self-build project for Mr and Mrs Wright's own occupation.
- 2.05 Drawing HA24-269 P007 – Barn Proposed Conversion to Stables (1:100@A1) is submitted with the application for information only. This shows how part of the building constructed under planning permission 20/0217 will be arranged internally to provide stabling to replace the stables lost by the proposed demolition of the existing stable building C. This work does not require planning permission but is included for completeness.

3.00 NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework

3.01 National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF) maintains a pro-growth agenda for the planning system. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means that proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. NPPF paragraph 11 states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the proposals, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole.

3.02 National policy relevant to the appeal includes:

- **To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay (para. 60);**
- **Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly (para. 70);**
- **Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area; (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change, such as increased densities; (d)**

establish or maintain a strong sense of place; (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 (para. 135);

Surrey Heath Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2011-2028
adopted February 2012

3.03 Relevant policies include:

CP2 – Sustainable development and design

CP12 – Infrastructure delivery and implementation

CP14 – Biodiversity and nature conservation

DM9 – Design principles

DM10 – Development and flood risk

DM11 – Traffic management and highway safety

4.00 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Green Belt policy - redevelopment of previously developed land

4.01 The site lies within the Green Belt. NPPF para. 142 states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

4.02 NPPF para. 152 states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt. Paragraphs 152 and 153 set out the exceptions of categories that are appropriate development in the Green Belt. One exception at para. 152(g) is

“the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of ‘previously development land’ (brownfield land) (PDL), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not

have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development”.

- 4.03 The Core Strategy pre-dates current national Green Belt policy and therefore does not contain an equivalent policy dealing with PDL in the Green Belt.
- 4.04 The proposal is considered to comprise the redevelopment of PDL which accords with national Green Belt policy for the following reasons:
- (1) The application site has been used for mixed commercial and equestrian purposes for more than 30 years. This has recently been confirmed by the lawful development certificate 23/0819/CEU dated 29 November 2023 in respect of the use of land and part of building A for commercial purposes and for the remaining part of building A and the whole of building B for equestrian purposes. The stables building C was constructed in 2015 and has been used for private equestrian purposes in accordance with condition (3) attached to the planning permission.
 - (2) The application site is therefore considered to comprise PDL as defined by NPPF Annex 2: Glossary. Consequently redevelopment of the site would be appropriate development under NPPF para. 152(g) provided there is no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the purposes of including the land within the Green Belt. The land is occupied by buildings which are of permanent and substantial construction. They are not agricultural buildings and therefore are not excluded from the definition of PDL. The Court of Appeal in *Dartford Borough Council v The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Ors [2017] EWCA Civ 141 (14 March 2017)* has determined that development that is within the curtilage of land that was occupied by a permanent structure (e.g. private residential garden) and is not in the built-up area should be classed as PDL.
 - (3) The proposals would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. This is demonstrated by the following comparisons of existing and proposed building footprint, building volume, hardstanding areas and overall developed areas:

	Existing	Proposed	Change
Building Footprint (GEA)	151m2	142m2	-6%
Building Volume (GEA)	396m3	388m3	-2%
Built/Hardstanding Areas	2857m2	955m2	-67%

- (4) The proposal would therefore result in reductions in both building footprint and volume of around 6% and 2% respectively.
- (5) There would also be a significant reduction in hard surfaced areas. The existing commercial yard (about 800m²) confirmed by the lawful development certificate would be removed. The proposal includes a small area for 2 cars to the front of the dwelling (about 80m² or 90% reduction in hard surfaced areas) which would be a loose gravel area consistent with the rural character of the site.
- (6) The new dwelling would be single storey. The building has been designed to look like a series of interlinked smaller buildings (similar to the buildings being replaced) with varying roof heights and designs. Each element of the proposed dwelling consists of a simple dual pitched roof which limits the scale and massing of the building and otherwise avoids a crowned roof element.
- (7) The proposed building is between 2.7m and 3.1m height which is similar to the existing buildings being demolished (building C, the largest building to be demolished, has a maximum height of 2.9m and buildings A and B are 2.5m and 3.1m respectively. The eaves height of the proposed building is 2.3m compared to the eaves heights of buildings A, B and C of 2.5m, 2.45m and 2.3m respectively.
- (8) The proposed dwelling would provide a more concentrated form of development particularly compared to the spread across the application site of the 3 no. existing buildings A, B and C being replaced. This together with the removal of hardstanding and greening up of the site

are considered benefits in terms of improved openness of the site which weighs in favour of the proposals.

- (9) In conclusion, the proposal would result in an overall reduction in the amount and spread of buildings on the site and would include additional benefits of a more concentrated and high-quality design and articulated building form. Therefore in both quantitative and qualitative terms it would not have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development and would comply with national policy.
- (10) The proposal would not result in any additional actual visual harm to the Green Belt compared to the spread of the 3 no. existing buildings being demolished. The substantial hedging to the boundaries of the site effectively screens the new single storey building such that there would be no additional visual harm resulting from the development compared to the existing situation. The site is set back a considerable distance (more than 80 metres) from Thompsons Lane and as such the proposal would not be visible from the street.
- (11) The proposal accords with Government policy (NPPF para. 123) to make effective use of land and to make as much use as possible of previously developed or 'brownfield' land in meeting the need for homes and other uses provided this would not conflict with other policies in the Framework.
- (12) The proposal accords with Government policy (NPPF para. 124) which promotes and supports the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained.
- (13) The proposal accords with Government policy which supports housing development that reflects local needs in rural areas (NPPF para. 82).
- (14) For the reasons explained above, the scale, design and materials of the proposed dwelling would be appropriate to its Green Belt setting.

(15) The proposal would not conflict with Green Belt purposes as it involves the redevelopment of PDL that would not have any greater harm on the openness of the Green Belt. Given the site location the proposals would not result in unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up area or neighbouring towns merging into one another.

4.05 I conclude that the proposal to demolish the existing buildings and replace them with a well-designed and articulated dwelling which offers reductions in footprint and volume would constitute the redevelopment of PDL which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with Green Belt purposes compared to the existing development, and therefore is appropriate development in the Green Belt which accords with national policy.

Other considerations

4.06 Character of the surrounding area: The scale and massing of the proposed building reflects the existing buildings being demolished. As explained above, the proposed building comprises a number of connected elements which assist in limiting the scale and height and breaks down the building mass to avoid, for example, a single large roof potentially with a crown roof element. The building is considered of an appropriate scale for the plot size and will provide a suitable private garden area with the retention of boundary vegetation. The proposed development would not lead to an overdominant or incongruous addition to the rural character of the surrounding area, in compliance with the design requirements of Policy DM9 of the CSDMP and the Residential Design Guide SPD.

4.07 Amenity: Policy DM9 states that development will be acceptable where it respects the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses. It is necessary to take into account matters such as overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light and an overbearing or unneighbourly built form. Principle 8.1 of the Residential Design Guide SPD states that new residential development should be provided with a reasonable degree of privacy to habitable rooms and sensitive outdoor amenity spaces.

- 4.08 The proposal would provide very generous separation distances to neighbouring residential properties of Haleys about 70 metres to the north and Cherry Tree Cottage about 100 metres further north with intervening vegetation. As a single storey dwelling it would not result in any unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy. The proposal would provide generous private amenity space and have good sized living areas with good access to light. Full landscaping details can be secured by a condition. This would enhance the site compared to the existing situation and would result in visual improvement which weighs in favour of the proposals. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the amenity requirements of Policy DM9 of the CSDMP and the Residential Design Guide SPD.
- 4.09 Highways and access: Policy DM11 (Traffic management and highway safety) states that development which would adversely impact the safe and efficient flow of traffic movement on the highway network will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that measures to reduce and mitigate such impacts to acceptable levels can be implemented. The proposal will use the existing access onto Thompsons Lane. The proposal would not result in a material intensification in the level of activity to and from the site. Based on the TRICS database, the likely movements associated with a single dwellinghouse are likely to be between 5 and 6 daily two-way movements. On the other hand, the applicants currently travel to and from the site to their home in Chobham several times a day (often separately) whereas when they live on the site those movements will be removed. Overall it is considered there is likely to be a reduction in vehicle movements and this benefit weighs in favour of the proposals.
- 4.10 Parking: The Council's adopted parking standards require 2 spaces for a 2 bedroom dwelling. The proposed layout shows parking for 2 cars. There is ample space to provide storage for cycles to comply with the Council's standards and this can be secured by a planning condition. Accordingly the proposed development would not prejudice highway safety nor cause inconvenience to other highway users, in compliance with Policy DM11.

- 4.11 There is ample space for the storage of bins and cycles and these details can be secured by a planning condition. Bins would be moved to the entrance onto Thompsons Lane on collection days.
- 4.12 Ecology: A Phase 1 Bat Survey report prepared by Dr Jonty Denton is submitted with the application. This assesses the 3 no. buildings A, B and C proposed to be demolished. There was no evidence of bat activity to any of the 3 buildings, which have no enclosed voids or holes in timberwork etc. suitable for bats. Therefore no phase 2 emergence survey is considered necessary, and the proposals would not result in harm to protected species. The proposed dwelling is sited within the part of the site which has been used as a yard and storage area for commercial purposes (as confirmed by the recent lawful development certificate). The removal of this yard and landscaping proposals for the new dwelling (which can be secured by a planning condition) will offer visual and ecological benefits compared to the existing situation. The mandatory BNG requirement does not apply to this 'minor' application.
- 4.13 Thames Basin Heaths SPA: The application site lies within the 400m to 5km 'zone of influence' from the boundary to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. The adopted Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy SPD 2012 states that new residential development within this zone is required to either provide SANG on site (for larger proposals) or for smaller proposals such as this one, to make a financial contribution towards SANG provided there is sufficient SANG available. The site lies within the catchment area of Chobham Meadows SANG and it is understood that there is capacity available. Additionally, Policy CP14B requires that new residential development should contribute toward SAMM (Strategic Access Management and Monitoring) measures which requires a separate financial payment. The applicant confirms he is willing to make this payment.
- 4.14 Flood risk: The Environment Agency Flood Map shows the site lies within flood zone 1 (low probability 1 in 1000 (0.1%) of river flooding). The proposed development is a 'more vulnerable' use which is acceptable in flood zone 1. The proposal would not result in any increased flood risk on the site or elsewhere.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.01 The proposals involve the redevelopment of PDL which would not have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared to the existing development and therefore would constitute appropriate development in Green Belt policy terms.
- 5.02 The proposal would result in reductions in the amount of buildings and hardstanding areas on the site. The reductions in building footprint and volume would be around 6% and 2% respectively. There would also be a significant 90% reduction of hard surfaced areas following the removal of the commercial yard (about 800m²) confirmed by the lawful development certificate built and its replacement with a small gravelled parking area (about 80m²). The proposed dwelling would provide a more concentrated form of development particularly compared to the spread of the 3 no. existing buildings to be replaced. As a result of the compact form of development and reductions in the amount of buildings and hardstanding areas the proposal would not have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.03 The proposal would involve a modest scale of development on the site in the form of a single storey bungalow of some 120m². The dwelling would be sited on the part of the site that has historically been used as a yard and storage area for commercial purposes and adjacent to the large barn building recently constructed under planning permission 20/0217. The site is well contained by existing trees and hedges. Thus it would not have any unacceptable visual impact on harm the character of the area.
- 5.04 The proposals offer additional benefits including a reduction in traffic movements associated with the site, sustainable construction benefits and biodiversity enhancements which weigh in favour of the proposals. The proposals would be acceptable in terms of impact on trees, flood risk, neighbouring amenity, highway and access considerations.

- 5.05 The development offers the following benefits relating to the three overarching objectives and the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at NPPF para. 8 and these weigh in favour of the proposals:

Economic objective – Provides an additional dwellinghouse on a site which is immediately available for development to support economic growth. The proposals offer benefits to the local rural communities and their economy including creation of jobs and supply chain investment associated with the construction stage and increased demand for local goods and services over the long-term occupation of the dwelling.

Social objective – Makes a modest contribution to the supply of housing required to meet local needs. Contributes to the Government's policy to boost significantly the supply of housing and meeting objectively assessed housing need. This is a self-build project for the applicants' own occupation of the sort which is encouraged by Government policy.

Environmental objective – Provides development without harm to the natural, built or historic environment and specifically without harm to the openness of the Green Belt or conflicting with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Paul Dickinson
BA (Hons) MRTPI MRICS MCMI
22 March 2024