

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Residential conversion

of

Ramhurst Barn
Ramhurst Manor
Powder Mill Lane
Leigh
TN11 9AS

Planning Statement

on behalf of
Mr R & Mrs J Clay

Written by Mrs Tracey A Dixon BSc (hons) BTP MRTPI
April 2024

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Aerial photographs courtesy of Google Maps



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr R and Mrs J Clay to support a planning and listed building consent for alterations, extension and change of use of the existing barn to a single 5-bed dwelling house and 1-bed guest annex with associated curtilage, parking and access at Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 9AS.
- 1.2 The Planning, Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the application documentation. It provides a brief description of the application site and surrounding area, description of the development proposal and detailed assessment against the Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF).
- 1.3 It concludes that the proposal is acceptable and planning and listed building consent should be granted.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The application site forms part of Ramhurst Manor complex of former farm buildings located on the northern side of Powder Mill Lane, to the west of its junction with Leigh Road.
- 2.2 The application site is illustrated on the submitted site location plan. It comprises 0.3ha of previously developed land consistent with the definition of such at Annex 2 NPPF (Case Law refers).
- 2.3 The barn is detached and set back from the road, on a lower level. It is positioned in an established curtilage of simply, but attractively landscaped grounds.
- 2.4 The site has the benefit of the existing access driveway onto Powder Mill Lane.
- 2.5 Aerial photographs showing the site in context are set out below:

TaD Planning Limited

Registered in England & Wales No. 7777331.
Registered Office: 51 Bayham Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5HU
VAT Registration No. 241 7771 03



Images courtesy of Google Maps

2.6 Photographs of the subject barn are set out below:



Eastern and southern elevations



Eastern and southern elevations of small and principal barns



Eastern elevations of northerly outshot



Western elevation of small barn and access drive northern elevation of barn and lawned area

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 Relevant planning history on the Council's online records is set out below:

- **75/00793** – erection of new agricultural buildings to replace those destroyed by fire and erection of detached double garage – approved 17.9.75
- **90/01051 & 01052/LB** – change of use and conversion of redundant agricultural barn to residential unit as amended by letter dated 20 August 1991 – Refused 10.12.91

- **01/0150/LBCALT** – repair barn roof – approved 26.7.2001
- **10/03461 & 03462/LBCALT** – installation of photovoltaic solar panels on roof slope of outbuilding (as amended by plans received 24.1.2011) – Approved 23.3.2011
- **18/00942** – conversion of potting shed/outbuilding to residential annex – approved 8.5.2018

3.2 The barn as an independent, reconstructed structure following fire damage, was delisted in 1975 (Heritage Statement refers).

3.3 As the barn falls within the curtilage of Ramhurst Manor as a Grade II* listed building, it is deemed to be curtilage listed.

3.4 The planning history is a material planning consideration of limited weight in the consideration and determination of the current proposal, having regard to the age of the listed applications and change to the Planning Policy Framework since.

4.0 Planning Policy Framework

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that *'where regard is to be had to the Development Plan for any purpose under the planning acts, the determination shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'*.

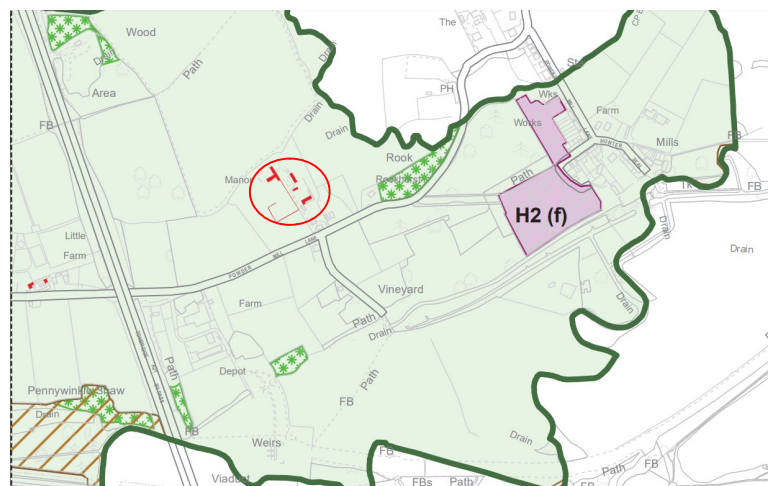
4.2 Paragraphs 2 and 47 NPPF reiterate this planning law.

The Development Plan

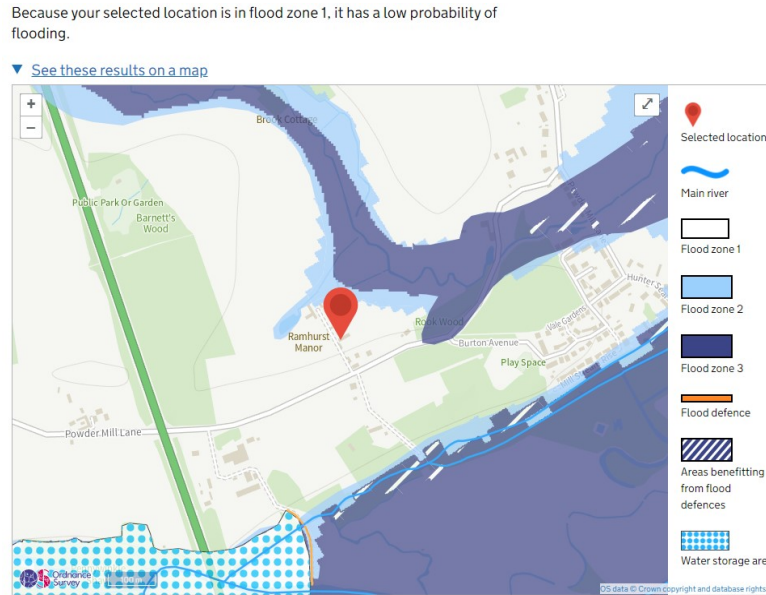
4.3 The Development Plan comprises:

- Sevenoaks Core Strategy DPD 2011
- Allocations and Development Management Plan 2015 (ADMP)

4.4 On the adopted Local Plan Policies Map, the application site is located within the Green Belt and within an Archaeological Notification Area.



- 4.5 The site is similarly located on the Core Strategy Key Diagram to the east of the settlement of Leigh a designated Service Village and west of Tonbridge.
- 4.6 The application site lies in Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps, with a low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea:



- 4.7 **Relevant Core Strategy policies** include:
- LO1 – distribution of development
 - LO8 – The Countryside and the Rural Economy
 - SP1 – design of new development and conservation
 - SP2 – sustainable development
 - SP5 – housing size and type
 - SP11 – biodiversity
- 4.8 **Relevant ADMP policies** include:
- SC1 – presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
 - EN1 – design principles
 - EN2 – amenity protection
 - EN4 – heritage assets
 - EN5 – landscape
 - GB7 – reuse of a building within the Green Belt
 - T1 – mitigating travel impact
 - T2 – vehicle parking
 - T3 – provision of electrical vehicle charging points

National Planning Policy Framework December 2023

- 4.9 The NPPF is a material planning consideration of great weight in the determination process. Relevant paragraphs and sections are set out in the Planning Appraisal.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.10 The proposed development has been informed by the following Supplementary Planning Documents and good practice guidance, which are material planning considerations in the planning process:

- National Planning Practice Guidance
- Kent Design
- Secured by Design New Homes 2019
- Green Belt SPD February 2015
- National Design Guide January 2021

New Local Plan

4.11 The Council is in the early stages of preparing a new Local Plan to replace the existing Development Plan and has carried out two Regulation 18 consultations on the Local Plan 2040. It is currently analysing responses and aims to publish a revised Local Plan in Summer 2024.

5.0 The Development Proposal

- 5.1 The application seeks planning and listed building consent for alterations, extension and change of use of the existing barn to a single 5-bed dwelling house and 1-bed guest annex with associated curtilage, parking and access.
- 5.2 The application comprises the following information:
- Application form and certificate A (planning portal)
 - Planning, Design and Access Statement (TaD Planning Ltd)
 - Bat Building Survey 10 September 2022 (Martin Newcombe Wildlife Management Consultancy)
 - Structural Appraisal 24 October 2023 (AJLocke Consulting Engineers Ltd)
 - Heritage Statement April 2023 (Alan Dickinson MRICS)
- 5.3 The development is illustrated on the architect's plans:
- 22009-P-001C – red lined site location plan
 - 22009-P-002 – existing site plan
 - 22009-P-003C – proposed site plan
 - 22009-P-004A – existing floor plans
 - 22009-P-005A – existing elevations
 - 22009-P-006A – existing elevations
 - 22009-P-007B – proposed floor plans
 - 22009-P-008C – proposed elevations
 - 22009-P-009A – proposed elevations
 - Ramhurst Barn precedent images
- 5.4 The proposal includes a small addition to the main roof which replicates the original roof structure prior to its fire damage.
- 5.5 The subject building is permanent and of substantial construction. It is redundant and disused.
- 5.6 The internal partitions, insulation and any new strengthening works necessary to convert the building to a residential use are illustrated on the architect's drawings. The internal alterations are works which affect the interior of the building only and are not therefore development requiring planning permission by virtue of Section 55(2)(i) of the Planning Act. The works require listed building consent.

- 5.7 The external changes, as illustrated on the architect's drawings will be sympathetic to the historical appearance of the vernacular building.
- 5.8 The proposed development is described in the Design and Access Statement at Section 6.0 of this Statement.
- 5.9 The applicants have discussed the proposed conversion with their neighbours and revisions have been made to the scheme to address some of their concerns. In particular, the extent of glazing has been reduced, cill heights raised and windows reduced in size to minimise potential for overlooking.
- 5.10 **PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL THE DRAWINGS CAN BE SCALED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES.**

6.0 Design and Access Statement

- 6.1 The Design and Access Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(England) Order 2015 and National Planning Practice Guidance (as revised) and demonstrates the commitment of the applicant and designers to achieving Good Design and meeting the requirements of planning policy and legislation.
- 6.2 The design principles and concepts have been informed by the client's brief, need to preserve the curtilage listed building and Planning Policy Framework.

Use & Amount

- 6.3 The proposal comprises conversion to a single 5-bed dwelling house and 1-bed guest annex.
- 6.4 The guest annex will remain ancillary to the main dwelling.

Layout

- 6.5 The existing and proposed site layouts are illustrated on the submitted drawings.
- 6.6 The existing garages are retained.
- 6.7 The existing site layout is little altered, with boundary planting and garden spaces retained. The underlying principle of the proposed layout is to enhance the immediate setting of the barn, neighbouring buildings and wider landscape, having regard to its characteristics.
- 6.8 The layout incorporates the following key concepts:
- Retention of the existing vehicular/pedestrian access onto Powder Mill Lane
 - Retain existing garden areas around the barn
 - Creation of a small, contained garden to the annex which is integral to the main dwelling
 - New boundary planting
 - Parking and access spaces with EVC point (a Building Regulations requirement and hence not a planning condition requisite)

Internal Layout

- 6.9 The internal layout of the proposed development is illustrated on the submitted drawings.
- 6.10 The aim of the conversion is to make efficient and effective use of the underutilised building to create accommodation over 2 floors: contemporary open plan living spaces with southerly/easterly aspect on the ground floor and bedrooms with ensembles on the new upper floor, which is contained within the existing and new roof spaces.
- 6.11 The works necessary to convert the building are illustrated on the submitted drawings and appraised in the Structural Survey, demonstrating that at least 75% of original structure is maintained.

Scale

- 6.12 The scale is illustrated on the existing and proposed floor plans and elevation drawings.
- 6.13 The scale is relatively unchanged, save for a small roof extension over the main barn, which is no larger than that which existed on the historic barn prior to it being destroyed by fire.
- 6.14 The GIA of the proposed dwelling is approximately 302.5sq.m.
- 6.15 The individual rooms comply with the governments National Internal Space Standards.

Landscaping

- 6.16 The existing landscape framework comprises simple grassed lawns and mature hedgerows growing around the site perimeters. This framework will be retained and supplemented with additional planting which can be conditioned.
- 6.17 Through these limited changes and additional planting, the immediate setting of the subject building will be enhanced.

Appearance

- 6.18 The appearance of the existing buildings and proposal are illustrated on the submitted drawings.
- 6.19 The underlying aim of the design is for a sensitive and sympathetic conversion of the existing structure, whilst making effective re-use of the underutilised building to create a new dwelling, within the adapted and extended new roof structure.
- 6.20 The design approach is traditional, with a limited palette of existing materials.
- 6.21 The proposed conversion utilises existing openings (which are minimal) and glazing or timber boarding to the open elevations. Metal conservation rooflights flush with the roof are limited but necessary to provide light to the new upper floor. The new roof extension will be constructed in machine made clay tiles to match those on the existing building.
- 6.22 The design respects the traditional vernacular of the existing structure and its context within the group of listed buildings and wider countryside setting.

Materials

- 6.23 The submitted drawings indicate a palette of traditional materials.
- 6.24 The need to provide a high degree of sustainable construction and energy conservation has informed the proposal, with the objective to make the new home energy efficient, compliant with the Building Regulations.
- 6.25 The Planning Statement sets out how the proposed development meets the three overarching objectives to Sustainable Development at Paragraph 8 NPPF; economic, social and environmental.
- 6.26 The need to provide a high degree of sustainable construction and energy conservation has influenced the design to some degree, with the objective to make the new development energy efficient.
- 6.27 The proposed design will meet sustainable methods of construction compliant with the Building Regulations in force at the time of construction.
- 6.28 This approach will result in a new residence that consumes reduced amounts of energy, resulting in benefits for the environment through reduced greenhouse gas emissions and better adaptation to climate change.
- 6.29 The project will demonstrate methods employed to achieve reduction in water consumption and will include:
- Dual flush toilets
 - Low water use spray or aerated taps
 - Water saving white goods
 - Installation of garden water butts.
- 6.30 Energy consumption / efficiency is a factor in sustainable developments. Measures adopted in order to achieve low energy use will include:-
- Maximising natural light through the new window openings and glazed panels and southerly/easterly orientation of living spaces
 - The use of mechanical and electrical equipment such as condensing boilers, air source heat pumps, low energy lighting lamps etc. to minimize energy use
 - Solar panels
 - External light fittings will be operated by a daylight sensor and passive infra-red movement detectors to limit light pollution and again minimize energy use.
 - The use of insulation with high thermal performance
- 6.31 Embodied energy has been considered when choosing materials to be used to create a healthy, comfortable building with a low impact upon the environment. Measures that will be encouraged will be:
- Use of materials of low embodied energy
 - Use of materials from sustainable sources including recycled materials
 - Use of non-oil based products
 - Ability to re-use and recycle materials at the end of the building life.
- 6.32 Renewable energy solutions are proposed for the project. Renewable energy flows involve natural phenomena, thus reducing the impact of the proposed development on the environment by consuming minimal amounts of energy.

Access

- 6.33 The proposed development will be served by the existing vehicular/pedestrian access onto Powder Mill Lane. The access has relatively good visibility in both directions and can acceptably accommodate the minimal increase in vehicle movements associated with the single new dwelling, without harm to highway safety.
- 6.34 Parking provision for the new dwelling is designed to meet current highway standards.
- 6.35 The site is moderately accessible and as sustainably located as the existing dwellings. Consideration has been given to government advice at paragraph 105 NPPF that '*opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making*'.
- 6.36 The new development will be constructed to provide access for persons with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations.
- 6.37 The proposed residential conversion is acceptable in Design and Access terms.

7.0 Planning Appraisal

- 7.1 The key material planning considerations in the determination of the proposed development include:
- Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - An appropriate development within the Green Belt
 - Case of Very Special Circumstances
 - Principle of development
 - A high-quality sustainable development
 - Design
 - Heritage Considerations
 - Highway and parking considerations
 - Residential amenity
 - Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

- 7.2 Paragraph 11(d) NPPF 2021 states that '*where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are now out-of-date (footnote 8 refers), planning permission should be granted unless:*
- i. The application of policies in this Framework (rather than those in the Development Plan) that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed;*
 - 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'*

- 7.3 The Council cannot demonstrate a 5 Year Housing Land Supply (3.9 years as at September 2023). As such relevant policies which are most important for determining the application are now out-of-date.
- 7.4 The Housing Delivery Test December 2023 (2022 figures) shows that Sevenoaks Council only provided 51% (a reduction of 11% compared to 2022 HDT) of the housing required by the Government and the presumption in favour therefore applies.
- 7.5 The development will deliver 1 new home, which is a small but nevertheless useful contribution to housing land supply as a windfall, and cumulatively in association with other windfalls, particularly where there is such an acute shortage. Windfall developments are a key component of housing land supply (Paragraph 71 NPPF refers). This is a significant benefit.
- 7.6 The shortfall in the supply of housing is a material consideration weighing heavily in favour of the development.
- 7.7 The tilted balance is tempered in this case by the location of the site within the Green Belt and involving designated and non-designated heritage assets; an asset of importance included in Footnote 7 paragraph 11(d). However, it will be demonstrated that these do not provide a clear reason for refusing the proposed development and furthermore that there are no adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 7.8 As such planning permission should be granted.

An appropriate development in the Green Belt

- 7.9 National Green Belt Policy is set out in Chapter 13 NPPF 2021.
- 7.10 Paragraph 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 their permanence'*. Paragraph 138 sets out the 5 purposes of Green Belts.
- 7.11 Paragraph 152 states that *'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances'*.
- 7.12 Paragraph 153 goes on to say that *'when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'*.
- 7.13 Paragraph 154 states that *'a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt'* but provides for stated exceptions, including *'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development'*.
- 7.14 Paragraph 155 includes other forms of development as exceptions, including *'the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction'*.
- 7.15 Core Strategy Policy LO8 applies National Green Belt Policy and states that the *'extent of the Green Belt will be maintained'*.

7.16 Allocations and Development Management Plan Policy GB7 is permissive in respect of the re-use of a building in the Green Belt where stated criteria are met:

- The residential re-use of the existing building and associated land will not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the present building and use and will not harm the character of the immediate or surrounding area.

The existing curtilage will be retained and contained by existing vegetation and boundaries, with no incursion into any adjoining land; criterion (a) is satisfied

- The proposed development will preserve the openness of the Green Belt having regard to the scale of development wholly within the existing structure, its locational context and its spatial and visual implications;
- The application has the support of a **Structural Appraisal** which demonstrates that the building is of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction.

The Report describes the 3 interconnected barns and notes specifically:

Four Bay timber frame building is in good order; its roof will be adequate to take the additional load of insulation and finishes limited structural improvement with reference to structural check calculations; the building will be subjected to very small increase in load and the existing foundations rear wall and posts are on foundations and are suitable for conversion

The central barn was fully rebuilt/replaced following a fire to the original structure; its timber works, though historic and charred in places, has been looked after and is in good order; the rear wall has limited foundation and some underpinning will be required to enable conversion of this section; the superstructure of the barn is structurally acceptable, with limited improvements, to be converted to a domestic property

Third barn is single storey, standing straight and vertical showing no signs of overall settlement/subsidence and the superstructure will be more than adequate for the conversion; it has adequate foundation for conversion

The Report concludes that the building is suitable to be converted to a domestic property without large scale structural improvement to the existing structural fabric, as confirmed by structural calculations

The proposed development will retain significantly more than 75% of the original lawful structure; criterion (b) is met

The existing structure was not constructed within the last 10 years and has been used for a significant period for ancillary storage and residential purposes in association with Ramhurst Manor

7.17 The reuse and change of use of Ramhurst Manor barn to create a single, attractive new dwelling is consistent with Paragraph 155 NPPF.

7.18 The proposal is quite clearly an appropriate development in the Green Belt consistent with the Development Plan and NPPF and is thus acceptable in principle.

Case of Very Special Circumstances

- 7.19 Paragraph 148 NPPF states that *'when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations'*.
- 7.20 Notwithstanding and without prejudice to the above, should the LPA not concur, a Case of Very Special Circumstances is set out below:
- Badly out-of-date Development Plan and progress with the emerging Plan has been abandoned, with the Council currently undertaking preliminary work towards a new Local Plan
 - Lack of a 5 Year Housing Land supply and acute shortage (HDT 2023 refers)
 - Previously developed land
 - proposal makes more efficient and effective use of the existing underutilised building to create a single new family home with ancillary guest annex
 - Visually contained site
 - High-quality architecture reflected in the sensitive and attractive proposals
 - No harm to the 5 National purposes of the Green Belt at Paragraph 138 NPPF
 - Preservation and efficient reuse of a curtilage listed building
- 7.21 The very special circumstances are unique to the application site and unlikely to be capable of being repeated elsewhere.
- 7.22 The very special circumstances outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness.

Principle of Development

- 7.23 It is a key government objective to *'boost significantly the supply of new homes'* (paragraph 60 NPPF refers).
- 7.24 Paragraph 83 NPPF states that *'to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlement, development in one village may support services in a village nearby'*.
- 7.25 Paragraph 84 seeks to avoid *'development of isolated homes in the countryside'*, unless in accordance with stated circumstances. The application site is not 'isolated' (Braintree DC V SSCLG & ors[2018] EWCA Case Law refers).
- 7.26 Paragraph 84 provides circumstances whereby even development of 'isolated' homes in the countryside may be acceptable. One of these is where the development would *'re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting'*.

- 7.27 The existing barn is disused and redundant.
- 7.28 The submitted drawings illustrate the enhancement to the immediate setting of the building and site, including new planting.
- 7.29 The landscaped context of the site will be retained and enhanced; it will not encroach into the surrounding landscape.
- 7.30 The site is previously developed land consistent with the definition of such at Annex 2 NPPF. The proposal will make effective and efficient use of the land and underutilised building, as a small site and contribute towards small site housing land supply consistent with the Government's objectives (paragraphs 60, 69, 119, 120(d) and 124 NPPF refer).
- 7.31 The principle of development, including the alterations and roof extension, is therefore acceptable.

A High-Quality Sustainable Development

- 7.32 *'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development including the provision of homes...'* (paragraph 7 NPPF).
- 7.33 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework (paragraphs 10 & 11).
- 7.34 Core Strategy Policy SP2 references Sustainable Development. Criterion 1 refers to the Code for Sustainable Homes which was withdrawn several years ago.
- 7.35 ADMP Policy SC1 reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.
- 7.36 The proposal is a sustainable development consistent with the 3 overarching and interdependent objectives of such at Paragraph 8 NPPF:

Economic objective: the proposed development creates employment at the planning and construction stages, in the wider construction industry with supporting services and products; it will create Council Tax receipts, Community Infrastructure Levy contributions, New Homes Bonus payments and generally contribute to local services, facilities and a strong local and national economy

the economic benefits are moderate and long-lived

Social objective: the scheme will make a modest and useful contribution to housing land supply and choice, whilst making efficient use of a disused and underutilised building;

the social benefits are moderate having regard to the single dwelling

Environmental objective: the development makes effective and efficient use of the existing building and site, without harm to the openness of the Green Belt, whilst enhancing their setting; the conversion will be carried out using sustainable methods of construction compliant with the Building Regulations (Design and access Statement refers); an electric charging point forms part of the proposals which is an environmental benefit;

the environmental benefits are thus significant

- 7.37 Sustainable methods of construction which will be employed in the conversion. The intention is to comply with the Building Regulations prevailing at the time of construction.
- 7.38 The sustainability of the development is a benefit of significant weight.
- 7.39 For all these reasons there is a presumption in favour of the development, consistent with the Development Plan and NPPF.

Design

- 7.40 Paragraph 131 NPPF states that *'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good Design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities..'*
- 7.41 Core Strategy Policy SP1 states that *'All new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area..'*
- 7.42 ADMP Policy EN1 is permissive in respect of proposals which create high quality design provided stated criteria are met.
- 7.43 The scheme has been designed creatively and sensitively by reputable architects and described in the Design and Access Statement. It aims to make more efficient use of the existing buildings, whilst preserving the historical and traditional vernacular appearance.
- 7.44 The design for the conversion element aims to create modern living spaces whilst preserving the form and essence of the existing utilitarian structure. Minimal alterations underpin the design but are necessary elements of the conversion to a new dwelling.
- 7.45 The proposal meets the design criteria of Policy EN1:
- The form and layout respect the characteristics of the building and site context (criteria a & b are met)
 - The proposal does not result in the loss of any buildings, open spaces or green infrastructure which would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area (criteria c is met)
 - A satisfactory vehicle/pedestrian access exists to serve the new dwelling and adequate parking and refuse facilities are provided (criterion d is met)
 - Biodiversity enhancements are proposed (reference to the Ecological Report) (criterion e is met) and can be conditioned
 - Criterion f is not relevant
 - Provision for disabilities is an intrinsic part of the Building Regulations which will be satisfied (criterion h is met)
- 7.46 The proposal makes efficient use of the underutilised building and associated land consistent with Policy EN1 and NPPF.
- 7.47 For all the above reasons the design of the proposed development is acceptable, a significant benefit and consistent with the Development Plan and NPPF.

Heritage Considerations

- 7.48 The building was delisted as an independent structure in 1975.
- 7.49 It is curtilage listed.
- 7.50 The proposed development has been informed by the setting of nearby listed buildings including Ramhurst Manor, a Grade II* listed building.
- 7.51 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that *'in considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building, or its setting, the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'*.
- 7.52 Paragraph 200 NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 7.53 Paragraph 203 NPPF requires a Local Planning Authority to take account of the following in determining planning applications:
- (a) *'the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'*
 - (b) *'the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality'*
 - (c) *'the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness'*
- 7.54 Paragraph 205 NPPF states that *'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'*.
- 7.55 Paragraph 206 states that *'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification'*.
- 7.56 Paragraph 208 states that *'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'*.
- 7.57 Paragraph 212 encourages Local planning authorities to *'look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance'*. The guidance goes on to say that *'proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the assets (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably'*.
- 7.58 Core Strategy Policy SP1 states that *'The District's heritage assets and their settings, including listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains, ancient monuments, historic parks*

and gardens, historic buildings, landscapes and outstanding views will be protected and enhanced.

- 7.59 ADMP Plan Policy EN4 is permissive where *'development conserves and enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset with reference to (a) the historic and/or architectural significance of the asset; (b) the prominence of its location and setting; and (c) the historic and/or architectural significance of any elements to be lost or replaced'*.
- 7.60 The significance of the designated heritage assets relevant to the proposed development, with reference to current Planning Policy, is appraised in the supporting Heritage Statement, with clear and convincing justification and the level of detail proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand its potential impact on the Conservation Area.
- 7.61 The Heritage Statement concludes:
- Site and its setting are considered to have high archaeological and historical significance, including listed buildings and unlisted farm buildings
 - Although built to a shallower roof pitch than the historic barns, the present main structure has traditional materials employed and is considered to form an asset to the setting of the other listed buildings at the site
 - As the site of a medieval farmstead and high status house with possible moated enclosure, the area is likely to have high potential for below ground archaeological remains
 - Impact of proposals on the setting of the heritage assets and on the significance of the farmstead group as a whole is minimal; in particular, the new proposal faces away from the listed structures to the north
 - Principle in design has been to minimise intrusion in the setting of the listed building
 - Alterations reflect Historic England Principles
- 7.62 The Heritage Statement recommends that listed building consent and planning permission should be given for the proposed works.
- 7.63 The proposal will breathe new life into the disused building as an attractive new home, which preserves its original historic character and includes the sympathetic conversion with some key features retained, including the timber frame and roof structure, traditional materials and existing openings.
- 7.64 Having regard to paragraph 208 NPPF the proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset (curtilage listed building) and setting of the Grade II* listed property is considered outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. The proposal is considered acceptable on heritage grounds, consistent with Policy EN4 of the ADMP and NPPF.
- 7.65 The application of policies in the NPPF that protect assets of particular importance in this case, do not provide a clear reason for refusing the development.

Highway and Parking Considerations

- 7.66 Section 9 NPPF promotes sustainable transport.

- 7.67 Paragraph 114 states that *'in assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:*
(a) Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be, or have been, taken up, given the type of development and its location;
(b) Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
(c) Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion) or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree'
- 7.68 Paragraph 115 states that *'development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.'*
- 7.69 Paragraph 109 recognises that *'opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.'*
- 7.70 ADMP Policy T1 requires new development *'to mitigate any adverse travel impacts, including their impact on congestion and safety, environmental impact, such as noise and tranquillity, pollution and impact on amenity and health.'*
- 7.71 The proposal may generate a modest increase in traffic movements; however, these are capable of being accommodated acceptably on the road network. The existing vehicular access onto Powder Mill Lane, which is very lightly trafficked, has moderately good visibility in both directions and capable of serving the new dwelling without harm to highway safety.
- 7.72 Parking provision is consistent with ADMP Policy T2 (and Appendix 2) and KCC Vehicle Parking Standards.
- 7.73 A vehicle charging point will be provided for the new dwelling in compliance with ADMP Policy T3.
- 7.74 The proposal is acceptable in highway terms, consistent with the Development Plan and NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 7.75 Paragraph 135(f) NPPF aims to create a *'high standard of amenity for existing and future users.'*
- 7.76 ADMP Policy EN2 is permissive where proposals provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers by protecting against noise, activity and vehicle movements, and overlooking, visual intrusion, loss of privacy or light.
- 7.77 The proposal has been designed to preserve the residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings, which are sited some distance away with buildings, fencing, walls and planting in the intervening spaces, as illustrated on the architects site plan. Careful positioning of habitable room windows in the conversion scheme will minimise the potential for adverse overlooking and loss of privacy.
- 7.78 The proposal has similarly been designed to create a high standard of amenity for future occupiers of the proposed new dwelling, with an acceptable provision of useable private amenity space, which together with an attractive rural outlook will create an attractive place in which to live. This location will promote health and well-being, creating a high standard of amenity for future residents.

7.79 The proposal is consistent with the Development Plan and NPPF in this regard.

Protecting and enhancing Biodiversity

7.80 Paragraph 185 NPPF requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, '*minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are resilient to current and future pressures*'.

7.81 Paragraph 186 aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, by avoiding significant harm from developments and providing adequate mitigation or biodiversity enhancements.

7.82 The principles of achieving these objectives are set out at Paragraph 180.

7.83 Core Strategy Policy SP11 states that the '*biodiversity of the District will be conserved and opportunities sought for enhancement to ensure no net loss of biodiversity*'.

7.84 The application has the support of a Bat Building Survey which concludes:

- No evidence of bats or their roosts was found anywhere in the buildings
- The absence of any evidence of bat roosting from the buildings was not surprising as the interior of all the buildings was draughty and lacked any suitable roosting places
- No bat habitat present in the buildings and no evidence that bats have ever used them

7.85 The report includes recommendations for positive ecological benefits as recommended by Gunnell, Murphy and Williams 2013, including bat boxes and a bat friendly lighting scheme. Both of these measures can be conditioned.

7.86 There are no ecological disbenefits or harm to any ecological matters. Conversely the proposed development offers the opportunity for modest benefits through the biodiversity enhancements.

7.87 The proposed development is consistent with the Development Plan and NPPF in this regard.

8.0 Summary and Conclusions

8.1 This Planning Statement provides planning support for a development at Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh comprising alterations and change of use of an existing disused and redundant barn to a single dwelling house and ancillary guest annex with associated curtilage, parking and access.

8.2 The proposal has been designed sensitively by reputable architects.

8.3 The proposal has much to commend it and is worthy of Planning Officer support.

8.4 The NPPF applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

8.5 The Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and '*policies which are most important for determining the application are now out-of-date*'. As such planning permission should be granted. The 'tilted balance' at Paragraph 11(d) NPPF is engaged but tempered by the location of the site within the Green Belt (asset of particular importance footnote 7 refers).

- 8.6 The proposal is an appropriate development in the Green Belt, which does not require very special circumstances to justify it.
- 8.7 Notwithstanding and without prejudice to this view, a Case of Very Special Circumstances is advanced in this Statement should the Council not concur. The circumstances are unique to the site and are unlikely to be repeated elsewhere.
- 8.8 It has been demonstrated that the residential conversion is consistent with national planning guidance in the NPPF which promotes the sustainable re-use of underutilised land and buildings in the countryside. The site is not isolated, and the building is disused and redundant. The proposal is acceptable in principle.
- 8.9 The proposal is a high-quality sustainable development, meeting the 3 objectives of such in the NPPF and making effective and efficient use of an underutilised parcel of land and building.
- 8.10 It has been demonstrated that there are no heritage reasons to withhold planning consent.
- 8.11 The proposal is acceptable in highway terms.
- 8.12 It has been demonstrated that the proposal will create a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, with no harm to any residential amenities.
- 8.13 There are no ecological constraints to development and the proposal will offer enhancements to the biodiversity value of the site, which can be secured by planning condition.
- 8.14 The significant benefits of the proposed development have been outlined and it has been demonstrated that there are no adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 8.15 It is therefore concluded that the proposed development is acceptable, and The Local Planning Authority is respectfully invited to grant planning consent.

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