

4.3 21/02355/FUL

Date expired 30 September 2021

Proposal:

Conversion of two outbuildings to provide two residential units with parking and associated works.

Location:

Blueberry Farm, Blueberry Lane, Knockholt KENT TN14 7NH

Ward(s):

Halstead, Knockholt & Badgers Mount

Item for decision

The application has been referred to Committee by Councillor Williamson so that the impact of the proposals on the openness of the Green Belt can be considered by Members.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

In pursuance of section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with approved drawings and details: Site location plan to the scale of 1:2500 (drawing no. 4906-PD2-01); Existing plans, elevations and section of Building 1 (drawing no. 4906-PD2-03); Existing plans, elevations and section of Building 2 (drawing no. 4906-PD2-04); Existing site plan with approved scheme (drawing no. EX01 Rev A); Proposed site plan (drawing no. SP01 Rev D); Proposed ground floor and lower ground floor plan- Building 1 (drawing no. 02 B1 rev B); Proposed ground floor plan- Building 2 (drawing no. 02 B2 Rev D); Coloured elevation - Building 1 (drawing no. 04a B1); Coloured elevation - Building 2 (drawing no. 04a B2); Proposed elevations - Building 1 (drawing no. 04 B1 Rev D); Proposed elevations - Building 2 (drawing no. 04 B2 Rev F); Proposed outline sections - Building 1 (drawing no. 05 B1 Rev C); Proposed outline sections - Building 2 (drawing no. 05 B2 Rev B); Layout and elevations - Atcost building (drawing no. EX02); Proposed car port floor plans and elevations (drawing no. G01); Proposed floor plans and elevations - Building 1 (drawing no. X01 B1 Rev D); Proposed floor plans and elevations- Building 2 (drawing no. X02 B2 Rev G); Proposed elevations comparison - Building 1 (drawing no. X03 B1 Rev C); Proposed elevations comparison - Building 2 (drawing no. X04 B2 Rev C); Howard Sharp & Partners - Planning, Design and Access Statement. TSC Designs Ltd dated August 2019, an addendum report from TSC Designs Ltd dated April 2020. Supplemental structural engineers report from Structural Solutions Management Ltd dated 8th July 2021. Traffic Impact Statement Preliminary ecology assessment and bat survey from KB Ecology. Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment from Lustre Consulting. Photographs of the Atcost building.

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3) Before the commencement of the development hereby approved (including demolition), a Phase 2 contaminated land investigation, including a remediation methodology (if necessary) shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. If during any works contamination is encountered which has not previously been identified then the additional contamination shall be fully assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme agreed with the local planning authority. The details shall be implemented as approved. In the event that remedial work is required, none of the dwellings hereby approved shall be occupied until a verification report has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing to show the buildings are fit for habitation.

To protect the health of future occupiers of the site from any possible effects of contaminated land, in accordance with policy EN2 of the Council's Allocations and Development Management Plan.

4) Prior to the commencement of the development (including demolition work), a scheme for the control of noise, vibration and dust shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall comply with guidance found in BS5228-1:2009 (as amended) and BS5228-2:2009 (as amended) Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites; and the Control of Dust from Construction Sites (BRE DTi Feb 2003). Upon commencement of the development (including demolition), work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. To include working times of 08:00 - 18:00 (Monday Friday) and 08:00 - 13:00 (Saturday). With no working on Sundays or Public Holidays.

In the interests of protecting the amenity of adjoining/nearby residential properties as supported by policy EN2 of the Council's Allocations and Development Management Plan.

5) The proposals shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the materials specified on the plans and details contained within the Planning, Design and Access Statement hereby approved.

To ensure that the appearance of the development is in harmony with the existing character of the area as supported by Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

6) Prior to occupation of any of the approved dwellings full details of the hard and soft landscaping, means of enclosure and refuse enclosures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Those details shall include:-
- Details of all hardsurface materials;- Planting plans, (identifying existing planting, plants to be retained and new planting, including any replacement hedging adjacent to the visibility splays);- Written specifications, (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment);- Schedules of new plants, (noting species, size of stock at time of planting and proposed number/densities where appropriate), - all means of boundary treatment and other means of enclosure within the site, and;- A programme of implementation. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of construction as part of the programme of implementation, all planting, seeding and turfing comprising the approved details

of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following first occupation of any of the approved buildings. The means of enclosure and refuse storage shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of any of the approved buildings. If within a period of 5 years from first occupation of the dwellings any of the trees or plants that form part of the approved details of soft landscaping die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased then they shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species.

To safeguard the visual appearance of the area as supported by EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

7) The dwellings hereby approved shall not be occupied until the sightline improvements have been carried out as indicated on drawing SP01 Rev D and anything which obstructs visibility at any height greater than 0.5m above the surface of the adjoining carriageway has been removed. Thereafter the visibility splays shall be maintained free from obstruction at all times.

In the interest of highway safety as supported by EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

8) No external lighting shall be installed on the site or affixed to any buildings on the site other than in accordance with a lighting design plan for biodiversity shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The plan shall show where external lighting will be installed so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb bat activity. No external lighting shall be installed other than in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the plan and shall maintained thereafter in accordance with the plan.

In the interests of the impact on protected species as supported by Policy SP11 of the Council's Core Strategy.

9) From the commencement of works (including site clearance), all precautionary mitigation measures and/or works for reptiles will be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 4.4 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey (KB Ecology October 2019).

In the interests of the impact on protected species as supported by Policy SP11 of the Council's Core Strategy.

10) Within six months of works commencing, details of how the development will enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This will include recommendations in section 4.10 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey (KB Ecology October 2019). The approved details will be implemented prior to first occupation of the dwellings and thereafter retained.

In the interests of the ecology of the site as supported by Policy SP11 of the Council's Core Strategy.

11) The curtilage to each dwelling shall be as indicated on Proposed Site Plan

no.: SP01 Rev D hereby approved.

To prevent inappropriate development within the Green Belt and encroachment into the countryside as supported by policy GB7 of the Council's Allocations and Development Management Plan.

12) Prior to occupation of the dwelling, details for the provision of facilities for the safe charging of electric vehicles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The facilities shall be installed in accordance with the details so approved, within 3 months of the approval and be retained, maintained thereafter and be available for use at all times.

In the interests of sustainable development and reducing emissions as supported by policy T3 of the Council's Allocations and Development Management Plan.

13) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting or amending those Orders with or without modification), planning permission shall be required in respect of development falling within Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, AA, B, D, or E of that Order.

To prevent inappropriate development within the Green Belt as supported by Government advice in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework.

14) With regard to the buildings identified on the Proposed Site Plan SP01 Rev D numbered 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting those Orders with or without modification), planning permission shall be required in respect of development falling within Schedule 2, Part 3, Classes Q, R or S (change of use of agricultural buildings) of that Order.

So that the potential impact of any other use of the adjoining buildings in conjunction with the use hereby approved may be considered in terms of the cumulative impact on the Green Belt as supported by policy GB7 of the Council's Allocations and Development Management Plan.

15) Prior to occupation of any of the dwellings hereby approved the Atcost barn indicated for removal on drawing SP1 Rev D shall be demolished with all resultant materials removed from site.

To prevent inappropriate development within the Green Belt as supported by Government advice in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework.

National Planning Policy Framework

In dealing with this application we have implemented the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant/agent in a positive, proactive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service; as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible and if applicable suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome. We have considered the application in light of our statutory policies in our development plan as set out in the officer's

Description of site

- 1 The application site, originally formed part of a small complex of buildings comprising a 2-storey farmhouse, a number of former agricultural buildings and stables within a small complex. It is located some 300m to the south-west of Pound Lane Knockholt and approximately 550m northeast of the junction with Main Road, Knockholt. It is located approximately 1km by road to the west of Knockholt village centre.

Description of proposal

- 2 This application seeks the conversion of two, single storey buildings set to the rear of the original Farm House. Building 1 comprises a brick built former milking shed, just over 220m² in total area. It is proposed to convert this building into a 4 bed room dwelling. The structure of the building is to be retained, utilising existing openings, but inserting large new windows.
- 3 Building 2 is a former stables, largely constructed in timber but with a number of external block walls, with a floor area of approximately 240m². It is proposed to convert this building also into a 4 bed dwelling. Existing openings would largely be retained as existing, but adapted, for example some glazed/part-glazed doors in place of existing stable doors.
- 4 The existing vehicular access into the site is to be retained, but with improved sightlines. Parking for both dwellings would be provided within the existing courtyard between the buildings.
- 5 The supporting Design and Access Statement explains that the proposals do not affect the existing height or scale of the buildings. The necessary upgrades for Building Control would be achieved internally.
- 6 Planning permission has recently been granted for the conversion of these two buildings into two residential units.
- 7 The present proposals represent a variation on the approved scheme. The key differences are summarised as follows:
- 8 Building 1:
 - Introduction of partial lower ground level through internal excavation of the southwestern end of the building by approximately 1.5m. This would enable a mezzanine floor within the roof above. This would increase the internal floorspace by 52m².
 - The existing roof form/ridge height of the building would not change.
 - Changes to approved fenestration.
 - Introduction of a rendered finished above brickwork plinth (approved as existing brickwork).
 - Reduction in size of roof lights.

- Use of slate grey Sika Sarnafil membrane roof (approved as metal clad roof).
- 9 Building 2:
- Demolition of small element of north-eastern end of building (4m in depth) and addition of small, flat-roof, extension to southern elevation (resulting in a negligible increase to floor area).
 - Some modest fenestration changes including reduction in number and size of roof-lights.
 - Use of handmade clay tiles to roof (approved as metal clad roof).
 - Use of black coloured, horizontal eternity cladding with black shutter (approved as brickwork).
- 10 It is also proposed to demolish an existing Atcost barn (57m² floor area) within the approved site and provide a carport (22m² floor area) with materials to match Building 2.

Relevant planning history

- 11 98/01325/HIST: Proposed erection of a Granny Annex at Blueberry Farm, plus minor alterations to the elevational treatment of the farmhouse. REFUSED 02/12/1998
- 12 05/00568/FUL: Conversion of agricultural buildings to form 3 residential units & garages, demolition of three agricultural buildings including Atcost' building, (revised plans & description), received with letter dated 23.6.05, and as amended by further revised plans indicating demolition of agricultural building (at cost) & alterations to elevations of Unit 1 received with letter dated 2.08.05. REFUSED 16/09/2005.
- 13 05/02818/FUL: Barn conversions to 5 dwellings. REFUSED 18/01/2006.
- 14 07/02412/FUL: Change of use from barn conversion to 4 x B1 office units. REFUSE 19/09/2007.
- 15 08/03315/LDCPR: Erection of garage. REFUSE 30/01/2009.
- 16 09/00278/FUL: Erection of double garage to replace existing sheds. REFUSE 22/04/2009.
- 17 11/02222/CONVAR: Removal of conditions 5 and 6 of SE/09/02485 - (Condition 5)- No extension or external alterations shall be carried out to the dwellings and (Condition 6)- No building or enclosure other than shown on the approved plans, shall be erected within the curtilage of the dwelling. REFUSE 19/10/2011.
- 18 11/03304/LDCEX: Use of the land edged in red on the Site Plan as residential curtilage of the property at Number 2 Singles Cross Cottages, Blueberry Lane, Knockholt. REFUSED 14/02/2012.

- 19 14/01614/PAC: Prior notification for a change of use from an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (C3) and associated operational development. This application is made under Class MB of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014. REFUSED 16/07/2014.
- 20 14/01689/FUL: Demolition of three agricultural buildings, subdivision of the plot and erection of a new 4 bedroom detached dwelling incorporating rooflights and attached garage. Change of use from agricultural to residential dwelling. REFUSE 28/07/2014.
- 21 14/03562/PAC: (Barn to north of site, now known as Blueberry Lodge). Prior notification for a change of use from an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (C3) and associated operational development. This application is made under Class MB of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014. PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED 16/12/2014.
- 22 15/00511/LDCPR: (Blueberry Lodge) Conversion of agricultural barn to residential. GRANT 05/05/2015.
- 23 15/03098/PAC: (Blueberry Lodge) Prior notification for a change of use from agricultural use to a dwellinghouse (C3) and associated operational development. This application is made under Class QB of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. PRIOR APPROVAL GRANTED 26/11/2015.
- 24 20/00429/FUL: Conversion of two outbuildings to provide two residential units with parking and associated works. Granted 17.8.20.

Policies

- 25 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 26 Core Strategy
- SP1 Design of New Development
 - SP2 Sustainable Development
 - SP3 Affordable Housing
 - SP11 Ecology
 - L08 The Countryside and the Rural Economy
- 27 Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP)
- EN1 Design Principles
 - EN2 Amenity Protection
 - EN5 Landscape
 - GB7 Re-use of a Building within the Green Belt

28 Other

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Development in the Green Belt

Constraints

29 The following constraints apply:

- Green Belt.

Consultations

30 Knockholt Parish Council:

31 Object on the basis that close inspection of Building number 2 reveals that the latest design would imply that this is no longer a conversion (on which basis the application was granted) as there is now evidence of a partial demolition and re-construction.

32 We note the sympathetic treatments of the exterior, retention of shared driveway and sympathetic reduction in roof lights, however, the representation of the finished dwelling appears to minimise the actual window area as the shutters are partially closed in the elevations.

33 We note the addition of a 2-bay car port, combined with the changes to floor area, despite the exchange of the Atcost barn, still represent a significant increase.

34 Were this application to be granted, we would request removal of all permitted development rights for the entire site. Also if this is granted, we fully support conditions being imposed to ensure adequate protection/enhancement measures as per the Ecology report.

35 Highway Authority (in summary):

The development proposals does not meet the criteria to warrant involvement from the Highway Authority.

An informative is recommended.

36 Natural England: (in summary)

No comments on the application and advise that we may wish to consult our own ecological services.

37 KCC Ecology (in summary):

Are satisfied that sufficient ecological information has been submitted in support of the application.

38 It is noted that there is bat activity on site and a lighting condition is recommended. Reptile mitigation is also proposed and a condition is

recommended relating to this. It is noted that there may be breeding birds on site. An ecological enhancement condition is also recommended.

39 Environmental Protection (in summary):

Whilst the Phase 1 contaminated land assessment is out of date it does identify the need for intrusive investigation. This needs to be undertaken to allow for a remediation strategy to be devised. A verification report will be required prior to habitation of any dwelling.

Representations

40 Letters have been received from 2 local residents raising the following concerns:

- Appreciates sympathetic exterior treatment of buildings.
- Concerned with principle of “conversion” bearing in mind alterations proposed to buildings, including some increase in volume, and that proposals would effectively result in a new build.
- Aware of other sites where barns capable of conversion have collapsed.

Chief Planning Officer’s appraisal

41 The main planning consideration are:

- Green Belt implications
- Impact on Streetscene/landscape
- Impact on residential amenity
- Highway conditions
- Ecological impacts
- Affordable Housing
- Other issues

Green Belt implications:

42 Current Government advice, in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework, supports the protection of the Green Belts and seeks to restrict development.

43 The advice states that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances.

44 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that “The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”

45 Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and is different from visual impact. Openness is about freedom from built form. Even if

there is absence of harm to openness, there can be harm in principal to the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

46 However, paragraph 150 states that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate development in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes:

d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

47 Policy GB7 of the ADMP reflects the tenet of the NPPF as set out above. The policy explains, in summary, that subject to proposals not having a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt or harming the character of the area and the applicant demonstrating that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction that would detract from their original character, proposals for the re-use of a building will be permitted.

48 I would also note that the supporting text to this policy states that *“to avoid increasing impact, conversions that involve disproportionate extensions will not be considered acceptable”*.

49 As with the previous application, a Structural Assessment has been submitted in support of the application (dated August 2019 and an addendum dated April 2020). I have also visited the site and viewed the buildings, which remain in use, at close quarters and had no reason to doubt the voracity of the Structural Assessment. In the circumstances, it was previously concluded that the existing buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete re-construction that would detract from the original character of the building. Consequently, planning permission was granted for the conversion of these buildings to residential use in August 2020.

50 This permission is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

51 The key issue is whether the amendments now proposed still represent an acceptable form of development. I consider each Building separately below.

52 This application is supported by a method statement from a structural engineer, although I note that this appears to be based on information provided to them, rather than any independent assessment. However, this indicates how the works to Building 1 could be undertaken whilst retaining the existing structure in situ. This would essentially comprise carefully phased, systematic excavation of the lower level.

53 I note that the proposals would increase the floor area of Building 1. However, I accept this can be achieved whilst retaining the existing building in situ. Therefore the key test, in my view, is whether the proposals would preserve the openness of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. In this regard, whilst the floor area would be increased and the lowering of the

ground level immediately to the rear (southern end) of the building and introduction of glazing would increase the apparent height and bulk of this elevation as a matter of fact, the wider impact would be extremely limited with no ramifications for the perceived overall height, scale or massing of the existing building. There would be no wider visual impact viewed from anywhere, other than standing immediately to the rear of the Building 1. In the circumstances, I consider the proposals would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

- 54 Turning to Building 2, the key difference to the approved scheme is the demolition of a small portion of the north-eastern end of the building and erection of small flat roof extension. The extension is essentially a replacement of the floorspace removed in a slightly different format. I calculate an increase of approximately 2m² in area, but the impact would be balanced by the more compact footprint overall. Again, it is my conclusion that the proposals would preserve the openness of the Green Belt.
- 55 In conclusion, I do not consider the alterations to either Building 1 or 2 to be disproportionate and it is my conclusion that they would preserve the openness of the Green Belt
- 56 The form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings and respect local building styles and materials. The buildings are to be altered with a few additional openings created to enable the residential occupation of the main barn.
- 57 The buildings have been in situ for in excess of 10 years and given the siting of the proposal within an agricultural setting, it is considered appropriate to withdraw permitted development rights for outbuildings and extensions to the property so that their size and appearance could be managed. This would also enable control over the proportions of the building in accordance with the NPPF.
- 58 The curtilage would be limited to an area closely surrounding the buildings. I do not consider the curtilage to either building to extend unreasonably into the agricultural land beyond. The curtilage can be controlled by condition. It would also be appropriate to impose conditions to restrict outbuildings.
- 59 In light of the above, I consider the proposals discussed above would comply with both Government guidance and local plan policy and to therefore represent appropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 60 The proposals also seek the erection of a large single carport, with open front elevation. It is also proposed to demolish the Atcost barn to the rear (west) of Building 2, which the previous application sought to retain for ancillary residential purposes.
- 61 The NPPF allows for the replacement of a building in the Green Belt, however, this is provided it is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. Whilst I accept that the Atcost barn may last have been used for ancillary residential purposes, I am unclear as to whether this

comprises the lawful use of this barn. In the circumstances, I consider this element of the proposals to potentially represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt, with the size of the garage having a modest impact on openness. Inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances, in this instance presented as the demolition of the existing barn. The matter of very special circumstances will be discussed further below.

Impact on street scene/landscape:

- 62 Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy states that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated.
- 63 Core strategy L08 states that the extent of the Green Belt will be maintained. The countryside will be conserved and the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of its landscape and its biodiversity will be protected and enhanced where possible. The distinctive character of the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced.
- 64 Policy EN1 of the ADMP requires development to respond to the character of the area and provide adequate parking, amongst other things.
- 65 Whilst there would be some change in materials, the addition of render to Building 1 would reflect other buildings in the locality (eg. Blueberry Lodge to the north). Having reviewed details of the proposed Sika Sarnafil membrane roof, I consider the appearance would reflect that of the approved metal roof. Most importantly, I consider the slate grey colour would be suitably muted in appearance and acceptable within this rural landscape.
- 66 The use of black horizontal eternit boarding to Building 2 would reflect its current appearance. The use of a clay tile roof is considered acceptable.
- 67 As with the approved scheme, some new extensive glazing is proposed, but this would not be widely visible in my view. Views from the west would set the buildings in the context of the main farm house and recently converted former barn to the north of the site.
- 68 The conversion of the buildings would have only a very limited impact on the wider character of the area or the landscape appearance of the site. They are set back from the highway, set within the context of other buildings and are not prominently sited.
- 69 New soft landscaping could be controlled via conditions. The red line represents a reasonably modest and well contained curtilage. In the circumstances, I consider the proposal would be policy compliant in this regard.

Impact on residential amenity

- 70 Policy EN2 of the ADMP seeks to protect residential amenity.

71 The only neighbouring properties in close proximity are Blueberry Farm House and to the north the newly converted Blueberry Lodge. Both are under the applicant's ownership. Though the proposed residential use may result in some additional noise and disturbance, including from associated vehicular activity, this is unlikely to result in significant loss of amenity. Subject to landscaping and boundary treatments, there would be no loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers.

72 I therefore consider the proposals to be policy compliant in this regard.

Highway conditions:

73 Paragraph 109 explains 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.*"

74 Policy EN1 of the ADMP requires satisfactory access and parking. Policy T2 requires satisfactory parking in accordance with set standards.

75 It does not appear that the site has had an intensive agricultural use for some time. Building 1 is used for storage by the applicants. Building 2 is presently used for stabling horses, however there is capacity for this use to be intensified.

76 The site is located outside of any village settlement and occupies an isolated location. However, re-use of the site for any purpose would be likely to have some highway implication. I do not consider the traffic generation from the introduction of 2 residential units would be very different to the existing potential of the site to generate traffic. In the circumstances, I consider it unlikely that the proposals would represent a significant increase over the potential vehicle movements to the degree that would fail the test of paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

77 Vehicular sightlines at the road junction are to be improved, which would be beneficial.

78 There would be adequate parking on site and electric vehicle charge points could be provided by condition.

79 I therefore consider the proposals to be policy compliant in this regard.

Ecological Impacts:

80 In summary, there is legislation which requires the Local Planning Authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity and to consider the potential ecological impacts of a proposed development and provide enhancement where possible. Policy SP11 of the Core Strategy states that the biodiversity of the District will be conserved and opportunities sought for enhancement to ensure no net loss of biodiversity.

81 The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey. The report concludes that no roosting bats were present within the

buildings but are found in the immediate locality. However a precautionary mitigation strategy is proposed to minimise any potential impact on reptiles.

- 82 KCC ecology recommend this be subject to a condition along with a condition to control external lighting on the site. A condition is also recommended to secure biodiversity enhancements on site.
- 83 In light of the above, subject to suitable conditions, I consider the proposals to be policy compliant.

Other issues:

- 84 Because of the former agricultural use of the site further contamination investigation with possible remediation is recommended by Environmental Health. This can be satisfactorily dealt with by condition.
- 85 The site is not identified as within a Flood Risk Zone or an area at risk from surface water flooding.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 86 The proposals would be CIL liable and no exemption is sought.

Very Special Circumstances:

- 87 Whilst I have concluded above that the re-use of Buildings 1 and 2 represent appropriate development within the Green Belt, the new garage would not. The garage would be harmful to the maintenance of the Green Belt in principle and by virtue of its size and scale would have a modest adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. No other harm is identified from this element of the proposals.
- 88 The applicant has suggested that the removal of the Atcost barn would represent very special circumstances, which would not only outweigh any harm from the carport, but also any harm from any additional building works, were they also considered to represent inappropriate development. However, I have concluded above that the additional building works to Buildings 1 and 2 represent appropriate development within the Green Belt.
- 89 With regard to the garage, it is my view, the removal of the Atcost barn would represent a clear reduction in built footprint and volume (35m² and 135m³ respectively), which would be beneficial to the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, I consider the proposed siting of the carport to the north (side) of Building 2 would help to limit the spread of built form westwards into the open countryside beyond. I consider this also would be beneficial to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 90 In light of the above it is my conclusion that the very special circumstances would clearly outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion

- 91 The proposals is so far as they relate to Buildings 1 and 2 represent appropriate development within the Green Belt, which would retain the

scale and character of the buildings to the benefit of the character of the area and landscape generally. The proposals would have an acceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. Subject to suitable condition, I consider the impact on highway conditions and ecology would be acceptable. The very special circumstances advanced in the form of the removal of the Atcost barn would clearly outweigh the harm resulting from the proposed carport.

- 92 In light of the above and subject to conditions, I consider the proposals to be policy compliant.
- 93 As the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing supply at this time, the tilted balance of NPPF paragraph 11d) is engaged. In this instance, Government guidance does allow for the conversion of existing buildings within the Green Belt. In this instance, the proposals would make efficient use of the land and buildings through the provision of 2 additional residential units to add to the Council's housing stock, whilst preserving the character of the area. This would provide a modest economic and social benefit. I consider this adds weight in favour of these proposals.
- 94 It is therefore recommended that this application is **GRANTED**.

Background papers

Site and block plan

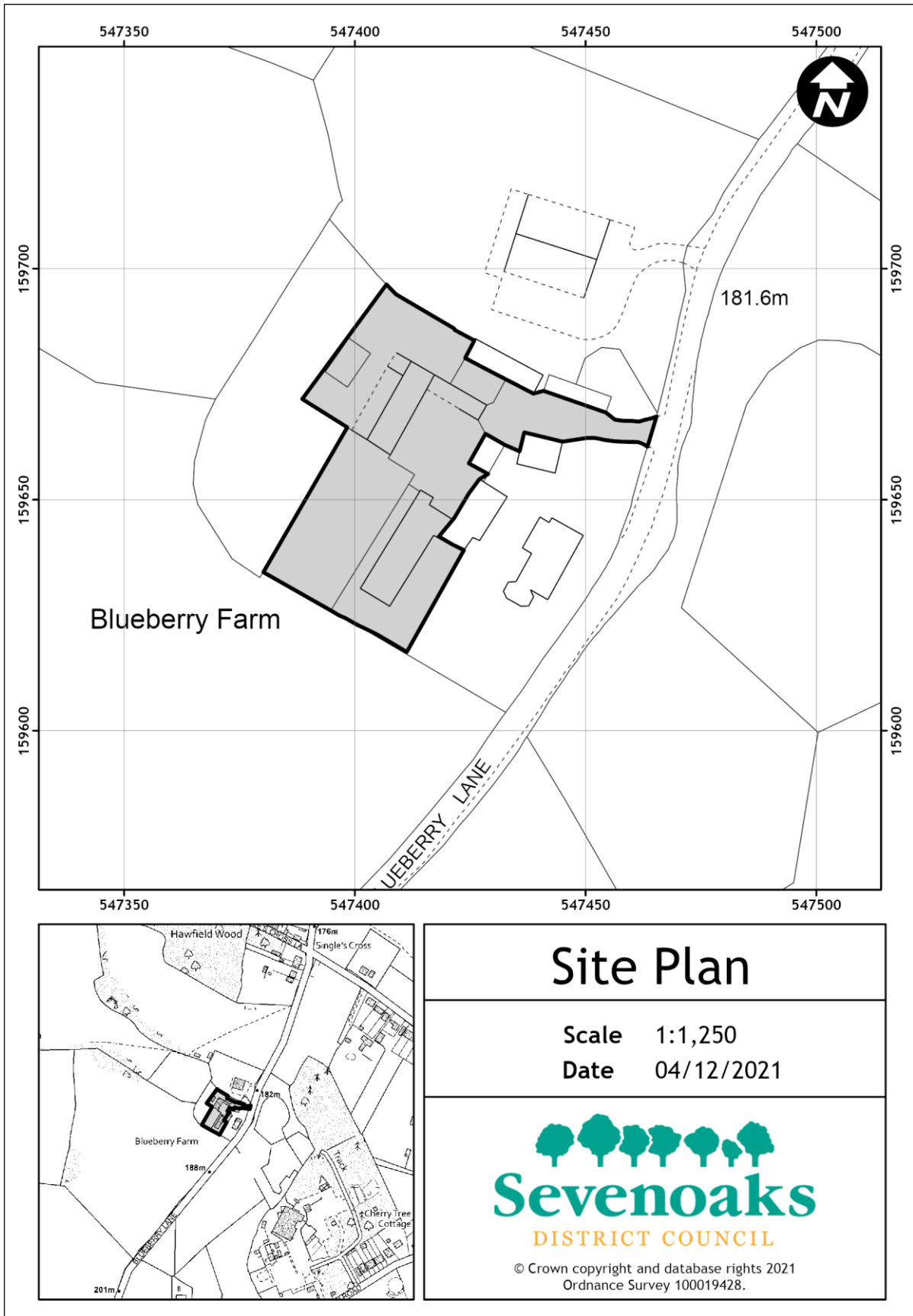
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Chief Planning Officer

[Link to application details:](#)

[Link to associated documents:](#)



BLOCK PLAN

