

11. SE/05/00395/FUL Dated as valid 17.02.05

**APPLICANT:** Laing Homes Ltd. C/o Robinson Escott Planning, Warren Court, Knockholt Road, Halstead, Kent TN14 7ER.

**PROPOSAL:** Demolition of existing dwellings, construction of road, nine houses and garaging.

**LOCATION:** 64-66 Well Road Otford, Sevenoaks Kent

**WARD:** OTFORD

**ITEM FOR DECISION**

This application is reported to Committee given my recommendation conflicts with the Parish Council comments.

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

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission. (STA01)  
Reason: In pursuance of section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. (STAR01)
- (2) No development shall be carried out on the land until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the dwellings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall be carried out using the approved materials. (EXT01)  
Reason: 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 District Local Plan. (EXTR01)
- (3) Before the use or occupation of the development hereby permitted, the car parking and turning areas shown on the approved plan shall be provided and shall be kept available for the parking of cars at all times. (HI04)  
Reason: To ensure a permanent retention of vehicle parking for the property as supported by policies EN1 and VP1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (HIR08)
- (4) The building hereby permitted shall not be used or occupied until all roads, accessways and footways serving the building have been laid out and surfaced to basecoat tarmac level or to such other standard suitable for the passage of vehicles or pedestrians as may be approved in writing by the Council. (HI10)  
Reason: In the interests of road safety and convenient access as supported by policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (HIR12)

(5) No development shall be carried out on the land until the applicant, their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of:

A) archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council; and

B) following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains and/or further archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. (AR04)

Reason: To define the character and extent of any archaeological features, and to preserve the archaeology "in situ" and/or by record as supported by Policy EN25A of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (ARR04)

(6) No development shall take place until full details of the proposed foul and surface water drainage systems have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Any approved drainage scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, before first occupation of any dwelling.

Reason: To ensure the development site and other land does not suffer an unacceptable or increased risk of flooding and/or pollution and to ensure that sustainability and environmental objectives are met. (DRR02)

(7) No extension or external alterations shall be carried out to any elevation of the dwellings hereby approved, despite the provisions of any Development Order. (PD11)

Reason: To maintain the integrity and character of the buildings and to safeguard the appearance of the area. (PDR02)

(8) No development shall be carried out on the land until full details of soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Those details shall include:

- planting plans (identifying existing planting, plants to be retained and new planting);
- a schedule of new plants (noting species, size of stock at time of planting and proposed number/densities); and
- a programme of implementation. (LA01)

Reason: To enhance the visual appearance of the area as supported by policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (LAR01)

(9) Soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the programme of implementation agreed in writing with the Council. (LA08)

Reason: To enhance the visual appearance of the area as supported by policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (LAR01)

(10) If within a period of 10 years from the completion of the development, 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 similar size and species. (LA28)

Reason: To safeguard the visual appearance of the area as supported by EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (LAR01)

(11) Before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the land for the purposes of the development, the means of protection for any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the details submitted to and approved in writing by the

Council under condition 10 above. In this condition a "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the plan referred to in condition 10 above. Also:

A) The means of protection shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the land.

B) Within a retained tree protected area:

- Levels shall not be raised or lowered in relation to the existing ground level;
- No roots shall be cut, trenches cut, or soil removed
- No buildings, roads, or other engineering operations shall be constructed or carried out
- No fires shall be lit;
- No vehicles shall be driven or parked over the area;
- No materials or equipment shall be stored. (TR02)

Reason: To prevent damage to the trees during the construction period and secure their retention afterwards as supported by Policy EN12B of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (TRR01)

(12) Once development has begun to be carried out on the land no retained tree within the site shall be cut down, up-rooted, topped, lopped or destroyed, nor shall any hedge within the site be cut down or grubbed out, without the prior approval in writing of the Council. In this condition a "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the plan referred to in paragraph condition 10 of condition above. (TR03)

Reason: To secure the retention of the trees and to safeguard their long-term health as supported by Policy EN12B of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (TRR02)

(13) No boundary walls, fences or other means of enclosure shall be erected on any part of the land between any main wall fronting a highway and the highway boundary, despite the provisions of any Development Order. (PD05)

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenity of the area as supported by Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. (PDR01)

(14) Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas and hardstandings shall be passed through an oil separator designed and constructed to have a capacity and details compatible with the site being drained. Roof water shall not pass through the separator.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

(15) Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas and hardstandings shall be passed through trapped gullies to BS 5911:1982 with an overall capacity compatible with the site being drained.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

(16) The works hereby permitted shall be carried out only in precise accordance with the details, plans and particulars submitted and approved and to the satisfaction of the District Planning Authority; there shall be no deviation therefrom without the prior written permission of the District Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance to policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Local Plan.

## **Informative**

1. You are advised of the need to enter into an Agreement under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 with Kent County Council and for the approval of plans for the works to the highway before commencement of any works on the land. Please contact Kent Highways, West Kent Area Office, Block I, St. Michael's Close, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7TZ (Tel. 01622 605980).
2. According to current records there is a landfill site (Tudor Drive, SE32) within 70 metres of this property, at grid ref. 532 595. It should be noted that records for pre-1974 sites are from District and Archive records and some of these are incomplete. The site fill is thought to have included mainly inert material.

## **Justifications**

**In determining this application, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to the following Development Plan Policies:-**

Kent Structure Plan. Policies S1, S6, ENV3, ENV15, ENV18, T19, H7, RS1

Sevenoaks District Local Plan. Policies SD1, EN1, EN2, EN6, EN24,T9, VP1, H2A, H5

**The following is a summary of the main reasons for the decision.**

The development would respect the context of the site and would not have an unacceptable impact on the street scene.

The development would not have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of nearby dwellings.

The site is within the built confines of the settlement where there is no objection to the principle of the proposed development.

The scale, location and design of the development would respect the context of the site and preserve the visual amenities of the locality.

The scale, location and design of the development would preserve/enhance the landscape character of the locality.

The traffic movements generated by the development can be accommodated without detriment to highway safety.

Other environmental impacts have been assessed and there are not any which are potentially significant which cannot be satisfactorily controlled by way of the conditions imposed.

Other issues raised by consultees have been assessed and there are not any that would warrant refusal of the application.

1.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1.1 Kent Structure Plan. Policies S1 (Sustainable Development), S6 (Housing Provision), ENV3 (Protection of AONB), ENV15 (Character of Built Environment), ENV18 (Archaeological Sites), T19 (Access Details), H7 (Range of Housing Sizes), RS1& RS2 (Development in Villages). QL1 Emerging Kent & Medway Structure Plan.

1.2 Sevenoaks District Local Plan. Policies SD1 (Sustainable Development), EN1 (General Standards), EN2 (Landscaping to be Integral), EN6 (Development in AONB), T9 (Access Details), VP1 (Vehicle Parking Standards), H5 (Housing Principles), H10A (Development in Villages) EN24 (Ancient Monuments) EN12B

2.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Planning Policy Guidance 3 Housing Kent Design Guide (2003)

Planning History

2.1 SE/04/02676 Demolition of existing dwellings construction of new estate road and 17 dwellings plus garages and parking spaces (33 in total). REFUSED (see 3.11 below for reasons)

2.2 The above application was the first time the comprehensive redevelopment of this site has been considered. Planning history for the two individual properties on the site dates back to the 1950's

2.3 The immediately adjacent Station Field has been the subject of numerous applications for development, which have been refused in planning terms and on appeals the last being SE/87/2377.

Consultations

Kent Highways

2.4 Considers that a gate access to the site would be preferable.

Highway Authority

2.5 "I addressed the highway issues of residential development of this site in my comments on SE/04/02676. Please reproduce those comments as an appendix in your report to Committee on this current application.

2.6 As far as this current application for a reduction from 17 to 9 dwellings is concerned there is a reduced highway impact. The Transport Statement accompanying the current application is that submitted for the larger development and has not been

adjusted to reflect the current proposal for 9 dwellings.

- 2.7 The former application which was refused did not include highway reasons for refusal. The layout of the present scheme conforms with Kent Design and is acceptable. I therefore do not raise objection to this new application subject to conditions: HI06 (garages and vehicle parking spaces) for reason HIR08 (policies EN1 and VP1), HI10 for reason HIR12 (policy EN1),
- 2.8 The reason cited in my comments of 8th December for wheel washing, Informative INHI01 but change address to Highway Manager, Kent Highway Services, West Kent Divisional Offices, Joynes House, New Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0AT”

Community Safety Officer

- 2.9 Provided some useful issues that needs to be consider by applicant i.e regarding fly tipping and hedge claring and graffitti removal. This would be included as an informative for applicant.

Otford Parish Council

- 2.10 “This application follows the refused application SE/04/02676 for seventeen dwellings. Paragraph H10A of the Local Plan states that proposals for residential development must have regard to the existing visual character, spaciousness, architectural quality and rural setting of the area and achieve an appropriate standard of design and external appearance. The plot sizes proposed under this application do not appear to the Parish Council to accord with this policy, nor do they appear to comply with Policy RS1 of the Kent Structure Plan.
- 2.11 There are two major Local Plan constraints against this development. It is contained within an area designated under policy EN24 which specifically states that “the Local Planning Authority will not permit development on or near the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument or other nationally important remains which would have an adverse impact on the archaeological interest and will refuse any planning permission for development which would damage any part of the site or materially harm its setting.” This is similar in wording to Policy ENV15 of the Kent Structure Plan. This site is very near Becketts Well, a scheduled Ancient Monument. There is also understood to be a Roman Villa under the field and falls within the scope of Policy ENV18 of the Kent Structure Plan and policy EN24 of the SDLP.
- 2.12 The whole site is also contained within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy EN6 states that within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty development which would harm or detract from the landscape character of this area will not be permitted. PPS7 para 21 also supports this.

(Date: 28th April 2005)

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- 2.13 The traffic report prepared for the developer is identical to that for SE/04/02676. As stated by this Council in its comments on that application, all roads on the Bubblestone Estate must eventually access the A225 and there is often considerable waiting time to leave/enter Bubblestone Road leading to traffic queuing on both Bubblestone Road and the A225.
- 2.14 Paragraph 2.14 states that “on street parking takes place on the northern side of Bubblestone Road.... ..these parked cars do not hinder the two way operation of Bubblestone Road”. They often do, as traffic going up Bubblestone Road frequently has to wait for traffic coming down, again blocking the access/egress to A225 and the Parade.
- 2.15 We also note that in the supplied P-Print Crash report that the accident on 18.10.02 states that there are street lights at the junction of Bubblestone Road and A225. There are not. Otford is an unlit village. Outside the dates of these reports there have been two fatal accidents here.
- 2.16 Some of the comments in the ambient noise report are also open to interpretation. Homes alongside the railway line and further afield have been protesting vigorously at the recently increased volume of noise from train hooters, particularly during the night time, to such a degree that DEFRA is considering closing the foot crossing of the railway at SR49. It is noted that some new trains will have their hooter noise volume reduced but so far there is no apparent action on existing trains.
- 2.17 The immediately adjacent Station Field has been the subject of numerous applications for development which have been refused since the coming into place of the 1947 Act. Several have also been refused on appeal, the last being SE/87/2377.
- 2.18 Paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Inspector’s decision to dismiss that appeal are relevant to this application. Para 11 in particular refers to an earlier appeal decision on the same site which stated “the stretch of land including the appeal site, westward from the Station to Sevenoaks Road ... constituted a charming feature in the heart of the community, and one not lightly to be destroyed.” The Inspector on SE87/2377 shared his view. In dismissing the appeal against SE/89/1740 for demolition of 62 Well Road and erection of 3 no four bedroom houses the Inspector at para 8 of his decision notice pointed out that the proposal would not be in keeping with plots in the vicinity leading to a cramped development and would seriously affect the spacious character of the area. This proposal would be much more cramped than that dismissed on appeal. The Parish Council therefore seeks refusal of this application as being contrary to Kent Structure Plan policies ENV3, ENV15, ENV18 and RS1, also Local Plan Policies EN1, EN6, EN24. H5 and H10A.”

### Otford Society

- 2.19 The Otford Society, have objected and conducted their own traffic survey. See attached document.

## English Heritage

- 2.20 It might be appropriate to consider reinforcing the site boundary closest to the field that contains the monument with enhanced planting as part of the general landscaping of any new development.
- 2.21 I note the likelihood of Kent CC advising Sevenoaks DC that evaluation of the development site by trial trenching would be appropriate. I have discussed this briefly with Simon Mason and I would only expect to have a further involvement if something of national importance was to be revealed and this could not be satisfactorily resolved through the usual PPG 16 procedures.

## Thames Water

- 2.22 “Thames Water would advise that with regard to sewerage infrastructure we would not have any objection to the above planning application.  
Surface Water Drainage - With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding. Thames Water recognises the environmental and economic benefits of surface water source control and encourages its appropriate application where it is to the overall benefit of our customers. Hence, in the disposal of surface water, Thames Water will recommend that the Applicant a) Looks to ensure that new connections to the public sewerage system do not pose an unacceptable threat of surcharge, flooding or pollution b) check the proposals are in line with advice from the DETR which encourages, wherever practicable, disposal on site without recourse to the public sewerage system - for example in the form of soakaways or infiltration areas on free draining soils c) looks to ensure the separation of foul and surface water sewerage on all new developments.”

## Southern Water

- 2.23 Do not wish to comment.

## Environmental Health Officer

- 2.24 “Advise that the recommendations of the acoustic report be adopted.”

## Drainage Engineer

- 2.25 I refer to your memo of 23rd February 2005 regarding this application. I shall be pleased if you will consider the following comments when determining the application.
- 2.26 The planning application form indicates that both foul sewage and surface water will be disposed of via the main sewer.
- 2.27 There is a public foul sewer in Well Road and, unless Thames Water objects to the proposals, it should be feasible to connect the proposed dwellings to this sewer. The new foul sewers serving the site should be constructed to adoptable standards and



where practicable, offered for adoption by Thames Water as part of the public sewerage system.

- 2.28 There are, however, no public surface water sewers in the vicinity of the proposed development, and it is unlikely that Thames Water will permit surface water to be connected to the foul sewerage system. The geological map shows the area as being lower chalk and therefore soakaway drainage may be feasible, although this would be dependent on results of soakage tests on the site. If soakaways are used, it will be necessary to check the soakaway design calculations in due course, in order to ensure that any risk of flooding affecting the proposed dwellings and neighbouring property has been minimised.
- 2.29 Should soakaway drainage prove to be not effective on the site, there is a watercourse at the western end of Well Road into which a surface water sewer could discharge. If this option is pursued, storage of surface water on the site will be required together with attenuation controls. These restrictions will be necessary to ensure that there is no increase in the frequency of any downstream flooding from the receiving watercourse.
- 2.30 In view of the above comments, I suggest that any approval should include the following condition and informatives:  
No development shall take place until full details of the proposed foul and surface water drainage systems have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The surface water drainage system shall have sufficient capacity to prevent surface flooding in a 1 in 30 year storm event. In addition, the overall drainage system shall ensure that surface water flows from a 1 in 100 year storm event are controlled to the satisfaction of the Council. Any approved drainage scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, before the first occupation of any of the dwellings hereby permitted.
- 2.31 Reason: To ensure that the development site and other land do not suffer an unacceptable or increased risk of flooding and/or pollution and to ensure that sustainability and environmental objectives are met.

Informatives

- 2.32 There is no public surface water sewer in the vicinity of the proposed development and the applicant is to ensure that approval for the discharge of surface water to soakaways or watercourses has been obtained from the appropriate Authority.
- 2.33 Proposals to construct a drainage system to connect to a public sewer or to be adopted as part of the public sewer system require the prior consent of Thames Water.
- 2.34 The new foul sewers serving the site should be constructed to adoptable standards and where practicable, offered for adoption by Thames Water as part of the public sewerage system. With reference to the DEFRA publication ‘Protocol on Design, Construction and Adoption of Sewers in England and Wales’, the developer should consult with Thames Water before developing their proposals, so that the site layout

can be designed to avoid the building of sewers to a standard which may preclude their adoption.

## Kent Fire & Rescue Service

- 2.35 Access on site appears not to conform to current building regulations.

## KCC Archaeological Officer

- 2.36 “The site lies around 250m west of the Scheduled Ancient Mounment of Otdord Roman villa. The villa complex included a pottery kiln and it is possible that further archaeological remains related to Roman activity could be affected by the proposals.
- 2.37 The site also lies within 150m of the Schedule ancient Mounment of Otford Palace and a prehistoric arrowhead is recorded as being found 250m to the south. Investigation work at St Thomas a Becket’s Well, 100m west of the site also produced Roman pottery and recent excavations immediately north of the application site revealed prehistoric occupation evidence and a hitherto unknown length of medieval moat.
- 2.38 Ground works associated with the proposals are likely to affect further archaeology, therefore I recommend that in any forthcoming consent provision be made for programme of archaeological evaluation work followed by any necessary further work to mitigate the impact of the development. The following clause covers this:
- AR5 No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of L
- i) archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and
  - ii) following on from the evaluation, any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.  
Reason: To ensure appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of any development proposals and the subsequent mitigation of adverse impacts through preservation in situ or by record.”

## Arboricultural & Landscape

- 2.39 The above gardens appear to be planted out with typical ornamental type planting. From what I could see there is nothing within these gardens that stands out and warrants further investigation. There is no details of individual protection trees but considered that the Beech tree at the entrance to the site be protected.

## Representations

- 2.40 There are approximately 40 representations this time including from the occupier of No. 62A Well Road compared to over 60 representations including signed petitioned.

There are no signed petitions this time. Comments made are similar to previous comments including concerns about traffic and road safety, density, height and associated loss of privacy. There are concerns about the removal of a hedge and inadequate drainage capacity. Perhaps of major concern noted is the issue of increased vehicle volume and activity adding to the dangerous access point into the site and road conditions in the vicinity, where traffic flow is heavy and fast.

### 3.0 STRATEGIC SERVICES DIRECTOR'S APPRAISAL

#### Description of Site

- 3.1 The application relates to a 0.67 hectare (1.6 acre) site on the north side of Well Road at its junction with Evelyn Road. The site falls within the village confines and AONB, but outside the Conservation Area it also forms part of a wider area of archaeological interest.
- 3.2 There is a public footpath bounding the site on the east and running north and northwestward of the site. Also, immediately to the north east is a car park and short term waiting area associated with Otford Station, whilst to the west are residential properties and open space.
- 3.3 The site is fairly level and elongated incorporating various trees and hedge planting within and around the boundaries. The site is currently occupied by two residential dwellings laid out to residential gardens that contain a number of outbuildings and gazebo structures. There are predominantly residential dwellings of mainly two storey character.
- 3.4 In support of the proposal several surveys and evaluations have been carried out, as summarised below:
  - a) Traffic Statement - concludes that the site is ideally suited for residential use and the increase in vehicle trips is said to have a negligible impact on road safety. There will not be an adverse impact on the highway network.
  - b) Design Statement – development comprises nine two storey detached houses, five of which have separate garages, the remaining are attached single storey garages. On the western boundary, the single storey garages are set back. Each dwelling is provided with adequate amenity spaces.
- 3.5 Materials for the walls will be mixture of red stock brick, render and tile hanging and roofs will have plain tiles. The roofs are of variety design to incorporate dormers and dropped eaves features. Access is provided on the left hand side of the mature Beech tree which is offsite. The location of the access has been chosen to avoid damage to the root of the tree which spans across front of 64/66 Well Road. A substantial buffer planting to the neighbouring property left of the proposed access no.62a Well Road is included in the design to provide for adequate screening to the house.
- 3.6 62a Well Road benefits from an approximately 1.8m high hedge to the front of the property and a 2.4 high hedge to the rear which allow some screening from the proposed adjoining dwelling. Beyond the existing 1.8m high hedge is the single storey

garage of no.62a to the front an obscure window to the first floor of the house overlooks the proposed accessed area.

- 3.7 Acoustic Survey – concludes that the sample calculations of internal noise levels across the site, including those closest to the railway line indicate that good resting and sleeping conditions will be achieved with conventional facades and closed windows.
- 3.8 Access to the Public Footpath. – It is proposed that a lockable gate will be positioned in the location shown on the site plan to allow for access for new residents to the public footpath to the station.

### Description of Proposal

- 3.9 Planning permission is sought to demolish the two existing bungalow and erect 9 dwellings all with either associated detached garages or attached garages comprising of three separate style designed dwellings as follows:

4 H5.001 = Five bedroom with detached double garage  
4 H5.002 = Five bedroom with attached double garage  
1 H3.001 = Three bedroom with a single detached garage

- 3.10 The proposed layout now provides a convenient link to the adjacent footpath to the station via a secured gate for the residents.

### Determining Issues

- 3.11 The main issue are as follows:

Principle of residential development  
Density  
Layout and form  
Highway Considerations  
Drainage

### Considerations

Principle of residential development

- 3.12 The initial application for 17 units was refused in February for the following reason:  
“1. The proposal by reason of the layout, density, size and form of dwellings proposed would result in an undesirable and unsatisfactory form of development which would :-  
i) be harmful to the established character and spatial quality of the area)  
be detrimental to the visual amenities of the area inclusive in the significant loss of tree and shrub covering)  
be detrimental to the residential amenities presently enjoyed by the occupants of the neighbouring dwellings)  
not offered a satisfactory level of residential amenity for the prospective occupier of plots 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11  
The proposal would likely be contrary to policies ENV15, ENV18, ENV3, H7, RS1, RS2 of the Kent Structure Plan and policies EN1, EN6, EN12B, EN24, H5, H10A, SD1 of the Sevenoaks Local Plan and policy QL1 of the emerging Kent and Medway Structure Plan.

- 3.13 2. The proposed layout fails to provide a convenient link to the adjacent footpath to the station and village centre and would therefore not provide for a sustainability form of development contrary to SD1 of the SDLP, S1 of the KSP and policy TP10 of the Emerging Kent and Medway Structure Plan and in addition fails to demonstrate that the layout complies with required Highway standard in accordance with policy EN1 of the SDLP.”
- 3.14 There was no dispute on the principle of redeveloping the site for housing within the village envelope, bearing in mind the aims of PPG3 to make use of previously developed land within existing settlements. The nature and layout of the proposal has been carefully considered, having regard to the site characteristics, neighbouring uses and location of the greater part of the garden within the AONB. The main dispute regarding the principle was the issue of density. The proposed reduction from 17 to 9 dwellings makes the site acceptable in my view.
- 3.15 A precedent has already been established by the nearby when planning permission last year on Elida and the coal yard, Station Road, which is just north of the current proposed site for seven detached dwelling all with double garages plus construction of new access.
- 3.16 The majority of the site is in Kent Downs AONB where Council’s aim is to conserve and enhance the landscape setting of all historic buildings, features and settlements. The site is currently well screened all side, therefore, it is important that most trees are retained because of their importance as a landscape feature. It is noted that about 40 trees are to be removed to facilitate the development. To prevent any significant effect on the character of the area as the site forms an important landscape screen to the railway and the unlandscaped station car park, and to ensure some screening to the landscape setting of the historic core of the village and the ancient monument of Otford Palace and Becketts Well. A comprehensive landscaping condition would be attached which includes a scheme which positively enhances the screening and the general planting to overcome any adverse impact on the AONB.
- 3.17 There had been previous appeals as stated by the Parish Council regarding no. 62 Well Road reference SE/89/01740 (Refused) for the developemnt of 3 no. four bedroom houses in which the Inspector in his decision notice pointed out that the proposal would not be in keeping with plots in the vicinity leading to a cramped development and would seriously affect the spacious character of the area. However, this decision was prior to PPG3 (Housing) which seeks to maximise the potential of previously developed land.

Density, Layout and form

- 3.18 The previous application was refused for reasons including density, layout, house type and design. From the policy point of view the density was the principle objection. Also, the house were considered to be too high and as such out of character with the surrounding area. Not withstanding the provisions of PPG3 regarding density, it was considered that maintaining the high quality of the residential area was paramount.

- 3.19 The density has now been reduced with only 9 rather than 17 units and although of very large dwellings this reduction has overcome the fundamental policy objection.
- 3.20 The reduction in the number of units has allowed for changes in the design and layout of the scheme. The new proposal is supported by a vastly improved Design Statement, with less impression of urban appearance and less hardsurfacing. Section 2 of this statement addresses the objections made to the previous application and I consider that the amendments to the scheme overcome the the objections to the impact, design and layout of the scheme.
- 3.21 The scheme is now more in keeping with the area reflecting the lower density housing and the significant amount of trees and hedges along the frontages. The reduction in the amount of built form on the site has allowed physical and visual gaps between the properties and the design of the units themselves has been altered to reduce the impact by lowering and varying the ridge heights. New buildings are required to reflect local character in form, scale and texture and meet high environmental standards using locally derived materials. The new houses are in the executive vernacular style but with their wide span design will have ridge lines higher than much of the surrounding property. However, I do not consider this of such significance to warrant a refusal.

#### Highway Considerations

- 3.22 The Highway officer considers that because this application is for a reduced dwelling of nine dwellings, the likely traffic generated would therefore be commensurately less than in the Statement. It is his opinion as well that increase in traffic generation would not result in circumstances that would amount to demonstrable harm in highway conditions such as to substantiate a refusal of the proposals. The Transport Statement accompanying the current application is that submitted for the larger development and has not been adjusted to reflect the current proposal for 9 dwellings. Also, the former application which was refused did not include highway reasons for refusal, following the assessment of the Highway report, which was considered to be satisfactory. It is the Highway's Officer's view that the current layout of the present scheme conforms to Kent Design and is acceptable.

#### Drainage

- 3.23 The planning application form indicates that both foul sewage and surface water will be disposed of via the main sewer.
- 3.24 There is a public foul sewer in Well Road and, it will be for the Thames Water Authority, who have been consulted to advise upon the acceptability or otherwise of connecting the proposed dwellings to this sewer. Any new sections foul sewers serving the site will be required to constructed to adoptable standards and where practicable, offered for adoption by Thames Water as part of the public sewerage system.
- 3.25 There are, however, no public surface water sewers in the vicinity of the proposed development, and it is unlikely that Thames Water will permit surface water to be connected to the foul sewerage system. The geological map shows the area as being lower chalk and therefore soak away drainage may be feasible, subject to the satisfactory outcome of soakage tests on the site.

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3.26 In the event of the proposals being viewed favourably, the Council's Drainage Engineers are recommending the imposition a condition upon any planning

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 In conclusion, though the loss of some of the trees is regrettable, the site is clearly appropriate for development in principle, bearing in mind the guidance in PPG3 and the applicant effort to reduce the density and improvement on the design. There is a

persuasive case in favour of the proposal this time around. I consider that the proposal would not serious overlooking effect on no. 62 . Also, the provision of a secure link to the adjacent footpath to the station provide for a sustainable form of development.

4.2 On balance, bearing in mind the aims of PPGs 3 the reduced density and the more sympathetic designs of the dwellings are considered to be of overriding importance.

4.3 It is therefore recommended that the nine-unit scheme be supported subject to appropriate safeguarding conditions.

### Sources

- (a) Site plans
- (b) Appendix – 1
- (c) Location plan

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