



# PARISH COUNCIL OF SANDHURST, KENT

Please reply to Julie Horan, Parish Clerk, Old School, Back Road, Sandhurst, Kent TN18 5JS 01580-850273

## Approved Minutes Planning Committee Meeting 27 February 2024

### In Attendance:

Cllr M Phillipson (MP)	Cllr P Phillipson (PP)
Cllr D Rogers (DR)	Cllr K O'Neil (KO)
Mrs J Horan (Clerk & Proper Officer) (JH)	Members of Public: 14

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Apologies received from Cllr Griggs (Chairman) (MG), Cllr Kerry & Cllr Robinson
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Councillors were reminded that they must inform the Monitoring Officer of any changes to their Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. None
<b>3.</b>	<b>Application: 24/00326/LDCEX</b> Proposal: Lawful Development Certificate (Existing) - To confirm works authorised by planning permission 21/03534/FULL have lawfully commenced. Address: The Stockyard, Lomas Lane, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent This application was discussed, no comments were made.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Application: 24/00251/PNQCLA</b> Proposal: Prior Notification for the change of use of a building and land within its curtilage from an agricultural use to a use falling within Class C3 (1 no. Dwellinghouse) and building operations reasonably necessary to convert the building. Address: High Standings, Rye Road, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent This application was discussed, the Parish Council think this has been raised on an incorrect form, Councillors are aware that this building has not been agricultural for the last 30 years and has been used as a domestic garden.  Other recent applications such as 22/03083/Ful " <i>Crofton, Lomas Lane</i> " and 22/02768/Ful " <i>Cherry Tree Cottage, Bodiam Road</i> " were both similar applications and were dealt with appropriately. To be fair & reasonable we request that this application form is re-submitted.

	We have no concerns regarding the contents of the application but the new dwelling should be an annex of the original property.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Application: 24/00312/FULL</b>
	Proposal: Rear extension to conservatory, alterations to fenestration on all conservatory elevations. Address: 23 Poundfield, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent, TN18 5LA No comments were made in regard to this application.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Application: 24/00394/FULL</b>
	Proposal: Erection of single-storey commercial unit to provide MOT test centre. Address: Land At , Silverden Lane, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent, TN18 5LU This application was discussed and the following comments made:  We consider that the declaration made under Article 14 as to land ownership on the application form is incorrect. The site plan and block plans are correct in that the applicant does not own the ransom strip between the site and the highway.  There is no business plan submitted as part of the application this was required for 07/03473/Full -Egg Farm and 23/01395/Full – Charcoal Company  There is history on the planning portal that the site was previously filled ground, but no Contamination Report had been issued.  There is no indication of what Class of MOT tests will be taking place and a copy of Form VT01 – Application for agreement in principle from the DVSA has not been submitted. Also there are no details of who will be the Authorised Examiner for the above application.  The Parish Council are extremely concerned regarding the comments received from the Transport and Development Planner at KCC Highways and suggest that they undertake a site inspection to fully appreciate the location.  If the LPA is minded to approve this application, then details such as Foul & Surface drainage, Landscape Details, A watching brief for Archaeological finds due to the adjacent Roman Road and a Phase 1 Habitat Survey due to the adjacent pond should be made conditions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KO Proposed that the PC strongly oppose this application ; DR Seconded - all present agreed</li> </ul>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Application: 24/00417/FULL &amp; 24/00418/LBC</b>
	Proposal: Demolish existing store/garage extension. Replace and extend garage to include GF wc/shower room. Replace Crittall French windows. Adjust external SVP. Renew existing hard landscaping. Address: Oak View , Back Road, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent, TN18 5JS This application was discussed, no comments were made.
	Public Intervention

Members of the public had the following comments to make regarding application **24/00394/FULL:**

MOP 1: This is a substantial development of MOT testing centre which is totally out of keeping in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and will have harmful visual impact on the intrinsic character of the countryside and the many nearby (or overlooking) Listed Buildings.

This development will also be clearly visible from a nearby Roman Road, which forms part of the very popular 1066 walking route. In addition, this site is outside the Sandhurst Limits to Build development, and therefore must be protected from development. There are a number of houses whose windows and gardens directly face the development.

1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 176 states "*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.*"

This location is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and on a historic rural lane. Silverden Lane is among the top scoring rural lanes for "Landscape and Visual Amenity Value" in the area, in the TWBC "Supplemental Planning Guidance for Rural Lanes". This TWBC Planning document specifically mentions Sandhurst as having "rural lanes which are of great value" which should be protected from "unsympathetic development on individual rural lanes".

*"The fact that these lanes have scored highly overall suggests that they represent some of the best conserved and best used lanes within their landscape area. **Development proposals of any type should be carefully scrutinised** to assess whether they may degrade any of the factors contributing to the quality of these lanes either individually, or where they are part of a network of similar lanes."*

"Kent Structure Plan Policy ENV13 provides for the conservation of rural lanes which are of landscape and visual amenity, recreational amenity, nature conservation or historical/archaeological value"

Silverden Lane meets these requirements as both a rural lane of high visual amenity (stated above), and recreational amenity due to its inclusion in many cycle routes. Having a development mere metres from this lane, is highly detrimental to the character and beauty of both the lane and the surrounding area.

Location,

The proposed location is outside of the Limits to Build, and therefore contrary to LBD1 & EN25 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan.

Access,

Contrary to the planning statement, this property does not have "existing access onto Silverden Lane" a cursory glance of Google Streetview will clearly show that there is no entrance to this property. However, after the applicant purchased the site, they proceeded immediately to create an entrance to the site by destroying an ancient hedgerow. Which is against "Hedgerow Regulations, Statutory Instrument 1160" which (in the TWBC information) states :

*"With effect from June 1997, the new Hedgerows Regulations (Statutory Instrument 1997 No. 1 160) affords protection to important hedgerows in England and Wales. Notice*

*must be given before the removal of **any** hedgerow, and the Local Planning Authority may require its retention"*

Silverden Lane is a single-track rural lane, which is very narrow with only a couple of small passing points, definitely not suitable for the location of a commercial testing centre. The lane already under pressure from being overused. It cannot sustain the additional traffic this development would bring.

The site and adjacent field already suffer from flooding with excess water during heavy rainfall, due to the lack of road drainage, the additional hard standing in this development would only make the matter worse. The development includes two w/c and a staff room with kitchen, however there is no mention of sewerage or drainage. The location does not have access to mainline sewage. Due to this and the aforementioned hard standing and the fact that this is a commercial development dealing with the motor trade there is a very strong risk of contamination and overflow into the historic stream which goes on to form the curtilage boundary for the nearby Grade 2 Listed Building "Cherry Tree Cottage".

Policy H4(4) of the Local Plan states that proposals should not be located within an exposed position in the High Weald AONB, or elsewhere where they would have more than a minimal impact on the rural character of the locality.

A development of large scale, 175 sqm approx. 5m high, commercial building, in an open field would have more than "a minimal impact on the rural character of the locality"

Policy H4(5) of the Local Plan requires the location of proposed sites to be appropriate in terms of proximity to essential day-to-day services, such as: shops, schools, public transports, medical and social services.

This site is over km from the centre of the village, the single shop and village school. There are no footpaths along Silverden Lane, in fact Bodiam Road does not have footpaths along over 50% of its length.

Impact on Nearby Listed Buildings.

There are a number of Listed Buildings which either face the proposed location or would have clear unobstructed line of sight to the site.

TWBC Policy EN5 states "The setting, significance, and importance of historic buildings can be seriously harmed by inappropriate neighbouring developments and/or uses. Therefore, for any proposals that would have an impact on the setting of a listed building, applicants will be required to submit technical and illustrative information about the proposed development and its relationship to its setting as part of a heritage statement and/or design and access statement."

Business sustainability,

There is currently a MOT testing centre located in Sandhurst, less than 2km from the proposed development, which has been servicing the local area for decades. The application states that they will "maximum, only carry out 12-14 tests per day" with x3 full time staff. Based on the average MOT price fee locally and the national minimum wage, servicing only 12-14 tests per day does not appear to be a

	<p>long term sustainable business, without increasing the volume of vehicles being tested or diversifying, which would in turn increase the traffic volumes on a single track rural lane.</p> <p>Location, The proposed location is outside of the Limits to Build, and therefore contrary to LBD1 &amp; EN25 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan.</p> <p>Biodiversity, The location is between to number of ponds which have a very rich biodiversity, which include records Great Crested Newts. The proposed location would likely impact the migration paths of the GCN between these habitats. As such would be contrary to paragraph 4.93 &amp; 4.95 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan. The presence of GCN has previously been reported to Kent &amp; Medway Biological Record Centre. TWBC Planning Department was made aware also in August 2022.</p> <p>MOP2: We have at least three/four MOT Test centres with 2 miles of the village, do we really need another.</p> <p>MOP3: Of the four plots, only one plot had an original gateway the other three plots have cut into the hedgerow and nothing has been done about that. How do we go about getting the hedge reinstated and driveways filled in?</p> <p>MOP4: A lot of ground has been excavated to create the driveways and the ground filled in so that cars can drive over. The fence and hedgerow should be reinstated.</p>
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**Julie Horan**  
Clerk to Sandhurst Parish Council

**CC: For Information**  
County Cllr Seán Holden  
Borough Cllr Godfrey Bland  
Borough Cllr Ellen Neville