

- a) **DOV/22/01090 - Change of use and conversion to a holiday let and estate worker's dwelling including creation of parking - Gliding Club Clubhouse, Sandwich Road, Waldershare**

Reason for report – Number of contrary views (61)

- b) **Summary of Recommendation**

Planning permission be granted.

- c) **Planning Policy and Guidance**

Core Strategy Policies (2010): CP1, DM1, DM2, DM4, DM15, DM16

Draft Dover District Local Plan to 2040

The Consultation Draft Dover District Local Plan is a material planning consideration in the determination of this planning application. At this stage in the plan making process (Regulation 19) the policies of the draft can be afforded some weight, but this depends on the nature of objections and consistency with the NPPF. Policies PM1, PM2 and H6

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021): Paragraphs 7, 8, 11, 60, 69, 78, 79, 80, 84, 85, 111, 130

National Design Guide & National Model Design Code (2021)

- d) **Relevant Planning History**

DOV/92/00168 – Use as an airfield for microlight aircraft for 3 days (July 24-26 1992) - Withdrawn.

DOV/86/01169 – Extension of gliding strip and erection of building to accommodate workshop, club room and ancillary facilities.

- e) **Consultee and Third-Party Representations**

Representations can be found on the online planning file. A summary is provided below:

Tilmanstone Parish Council – Neither objects or supports for the following reasons: The site is located adjacent to Waldershare Park, and its setting and amenity should be protected. The current screen of trees directly surrounding the current club building protects the parkland. On the basis that the tree screen will be maintained and conversion of the existing clubhouse is permitted, the Parish has no objection to this application.

Whitfield Parish Council – Objects to the application for the following reasons:

- Loss of local amenity and enjoyment for residents in the area
- Loss of an important Local and National sporting venue

- Loss of all the financial benefits it has for Dover District's tourism and the local economy.
- The change of use displaces the Gliding Club.
- For 40 years the Gliding Club has been an important asset for the local community for recreation and sport and for many local residents who value watching the gliders silently soar above their gardens.
- The value and importance of the Gliding Club and its contribution to Dover District is recognised by DDC who granted support totalling tens of thousands of pounds during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Southern Water – The Environment Agency should be consulted regarding the use of a cess pit. It is possible that a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site. Therefore, should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site.

The Gardens Trust – Although the site is within the Waldershare Park it is outside the Royal Park Gardens which is approximately 150m to the northwest. The setting of the park is protected by a screen of trees around the current glider club building which is proposed to convert to an estate worker's dwelling and a holiday let, which will reduce the overall size of the building. On the basis that this screen will be maintained the Gardens Trust and Kent Gardens Trust have no objection to this application.

Kent Fire & Rescue Service – The 'track' to the proposed development does not meet typical Fire and Rescue Service Vehicle access route specifications and would not be suitable for a fire appliance in the event of an emergency. Applicants should be aware that the Fire and Rescue Service would require emergency access, as required under the Building Regulations 2010, to be established.

Environment Agency – low environmental risk, therefore no comments.

Third party Representations: 61 representations of objection have been received within the statutory consultation period and are summarised:

- Loss of a sporting facility which is an asset to the local area in terms of sport, education and the economy
- The benefits of an active, successful and profitable Gliding Club outweighs that of a single private dwelling and a single holiday home
- The application has not been adequately consulted on under the Statement of Community Involvement Policy – no members of the functioning and successful club have been consulted on the application. No alternative arrangements for continuance of activity have been offered.
- Proposed holiday let is impractical – no electricity and poor access
- The importance of General Aviation and airfields are recognised in the NPPF and General Aviation Strategy. They provide leisure, tourism and employment opportunities to a wider demographic.
- There are many other hotels/B&B locations in and around the Dover area for tourists.
- Once lost, many airfields do not return

f) **1. The Site and the Proposal**

1.1 The application site comprises an existing single storey building which was used as the Clubhouse for the Channel Gliding Club. The building is finished in render

with white uPVC windows and a tiled roof. The Gliding Club is not a licenced airfield. The building is located outside and east of the boundary of the Historic Park and Garden designation and its use as a Clubhouse ceased its activities by the end of 2022. The building can be accessed via a track from Waldershare Park to the north, which links Waldershare Road and the A256 Sandwich Road.

- 1.2 The site lies outside the settlement confines of Waldershare. The principal elevation faces open fields to the east. The wider Waldershare Park contains several listed buildings, including Waldershare Park Grade I listed country house, however the nearest of these is located approximately 700m away from the application site. The site contains dense vegetation in the form of established woodlands to all boundaries which provides screening from surrounding views and therefore there are no public views from any bridleways or public footpaths.
- 1.3 The application is for the conversion of the existing Clubhouse into two residential properties. One of these would be used to relocate an Estate Employee from their existing accommodation on the Estate, which is being sold off along with a section of the larger estate, and the second would be used to provide holiday letting accommodation.
- 1.4 Within the existing building there are toilet facilities, a main Clubroom recreation area with bar, two storage rooms, an office and two further rooms. There is a single storey side addition to the southwestern end of the building which provides further storage accessed from outside the main building. There is a large car park to the western side of the building with a fenced off amenity area outside the south-eastern side of the building, accessed from the Clubhouse room and bar area.
- 1.5 The proposal would include the removal of the outside southwestern addition and the erection of two smaller matching extensions to the northeast and southwest of the buildings to provide ensuite facilities. The layout would include 3 bedrooms and an open plan living/kitchen/dining space. Gardens are proposed to the south-eastern side of the building, re-using the fenced off grassed area currently used as outside amenity area as two private garden areas in associated with the units. The additions to the northeast and southwest would have a depth of 3.2m, width 1.8m, eaves height of 2.3m and a ridge height of 3.5m. These extensions would be constructed of oak framework and finished in larch cladding. Both units would be provided with two off-street parking spaces.



Figure 1: Existing site location



Figure 2: Proposed site



Figure 3: Proposed elevations

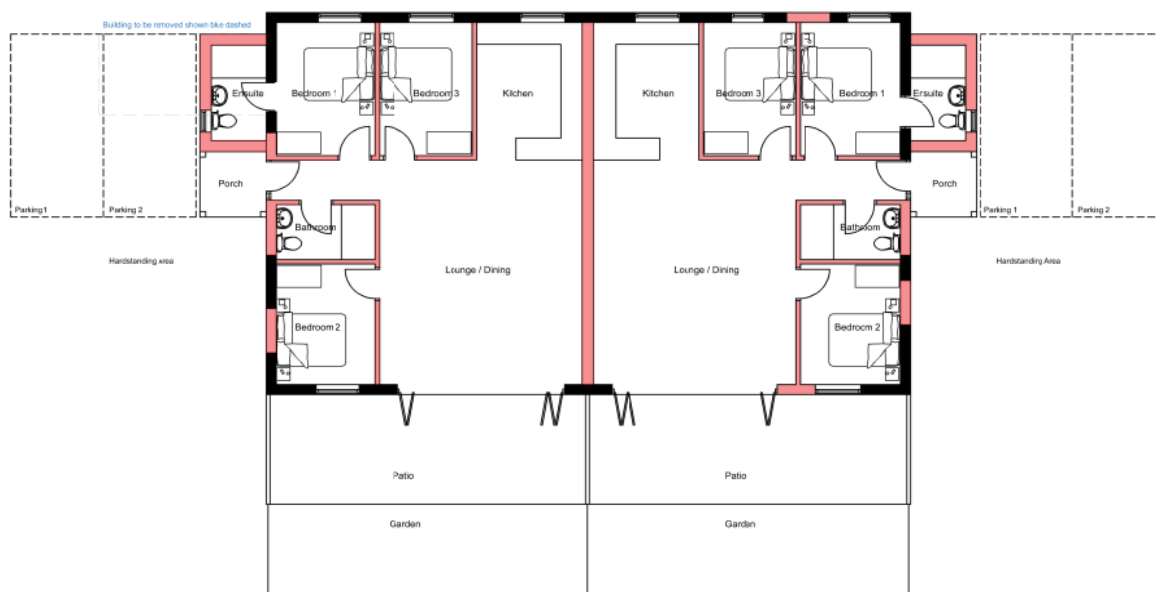


Figure 4: Proposed floor plan

2. Main Issues

2.1 The main issues for consideration are:

- Principle of development
- Impact on character and appearance
- Impact on residential amenity
- Highways impact

Assessment

Principle of Development

2.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if

regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 2.3 The proposed development is outside of the settlement boundary of Waldershare, however the proposal involves the minor extension and conversion of an existing building which is part of the wider Waldershare Park. As such the development accords with Policy DM1 and is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to its details and any material considerations.
- 2.4 Policy DM4 is for the conversion of rural buildings, as the site is situated outside of confines. However, the conversion of the existing building for private residential use is contained within the Waldershare Park area which is located adjacent to the settlement confines of Waldershare. The building would be used as a holiday let and agricultural workers dwelling and therefore it is considered that this conversion is appropriate in this instance.
- 2.5 As per paragraph 11 of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, in this case the proposal is for the conversion of an existing building which is no longer in use and therefore is at risk of becoming derelict. As per paragraph 80 of the NPPF the conversion of existing rural buildings to residential accommodation is appropriate.

Impact on Character and Appearance

- 2.6 The site is situated outside of the settlement confines identified in Policy DM1 and is therefore in the countryside. Policies DM15 and DM16 of the CS also focus on the protection of the character or appearance of the countryside and lists the reasons for acceptable development in these areas. Further to this, the NPPF identifies that “decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside” (paragraph 174).
- 2.7 The NPPF also states that planning decisions should ensure that developments ‘will function well and add to the overall quality of the area’, be ‘visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping’, be ‘sympathetic to local character and history’ and ‘establish or maintain a strong sense of place’ (paragraph 130).
- 2.8 The building, the subject of this application, is an existing building. The only changes to the appearance from the outside of the building would be the two small extensions to the northeast and southwest elevations to add ensembles to 2 bedrooms, following the removal of the existing extension on the southwest elevation. These extensions are considered to be minor in nature, visually have a limited impact and accord with draft policy H6. Further to this, they would be constructed of materials sympathetic to the existing building and surrounding area. The change of use would result in no further external changes to the building. The boundaries of the site consist of dense vegetation which largely obscure any views of the building from the surrounding public realm. The building is currently in a state of disrepair and the proposal would therefore improve the appearance of the building. For these reasons it is considered that the proposals would conserve the character and beauty of the countryside.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 2.9 There are no residential properties in close proximity to the application site the proposals would have no impact on existing residential amenity. Draft policy PM2 outlines the need for residential development to meet the government's latest Nationally Described Space Standards. Paragraph 130 (f) of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should ensure that development creates places with a high standard of amenity for future users.
- 2.10 Both the estate worker's dwelling and the holiday let would include 3 bedrooms (one ensuite), a bathroom and a living/kitchen/diner. Access to each would be on their respective sides, to the northwest and southeast. Each room is served by a window with the living/kitchen/diner served by a large set of bi-fold doors allowing plenty of natural light into the main living area. These bi-fold doors would lead to a patio and garden beyond. There would be a 1.8m high closed boarded fence for privacy along the patio and the garden, surrounded by a 1.1m post and rail fence, with a 1.1m high timber close boarded fence through the middle. Therefore the standard of accommodation proposed for future occupants would be adequate and complies with the aims and objectives of the NPPF.
- 2.11 Conditions are recommended to ensure that the development is occupied only for an estate worker and visitor accommodation and not for a permanent dwelling.

Highways Impact

- 2.12 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that "Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe". The site is currently used as an unrestricted Clubhouse in association with the Channel Gliding Club. It is considered that the proposed use of the building would lead to less traffic to the area than the existing use of the building. There is a large area of hardstanding to the southwest of the building which was used as the car park for the Gliding Club. The proposal would include the creation of two parking spaces to the northwest and southwest of the building.

Other Matters

- 2.13 Whilst it is regrettable that the Gliding Club would be lost from the site, this is a private commercial matter and there is no material planning reason for why the site should not be allowed a change of use of the existing building for a holiday let and an estate worker's dwelling.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The proposal, due to its siting and scale would be unlikely to negatively impact the wider landscape. The proposal for a change of use to holiday let and agricultural workers dwelling in a rural settling is considered acceptable and accords with planning policies identified above. Consequently, the proposal accords with the aims and objectives of the NPPF, Development Plan policies and is recommended for approval.

g) Recommendation

- I Planning permission is granted, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Standard time limit
- 2) Approved plans
- 3) Materials to match existing
- 4) Ancillary/agricultural use associated with Waldershare Park
- 5) Occupation as holiday let

II Powers to be delegated to the Head of Planning and Development to settle any necessary planning conditions in line with the issues set out in the recommendation and as resolved by the Planning Committee.

Case Officer

Alice Pitts