

NOTES FOR TECH		
<b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL</b>		<b>Ref No 23/502387/REM</b>
Approval of Reserved Matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale being sought) for Phase 3 for creation of 8,597 sqm of industrial floorspace (Use Class B8), comprising of 3 units (A10, A11 and A12) pursuant to 21/506790/OUT.		
<b>ADDRESS</b> Land At Woodcut Farm Ashford Road Hollingbourne Kent ME17 1XG		
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b> - Application Permitted		
<b>WARD</b> North Downs	<b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> Hollingbourne	<b>APPLICANT</b> Adam James <b>AGENT</b> Savills
<b>DECISION DUE DATE</b> 08/09/23	<b>PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE</b> 06/07/23	

### Site Visit: July 2023

### RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including relevant history on adjoining site)

- 21/506792 Hybrid Planning Application for demolition of existing building (Use Class C3) and redevelopment for a mixed commercial scheme. Full planning application comprising of erection of 2 no. units (Unit E2 - light industry/B8 and Unit D1 - offices/coffee shop), HGV fast charge facility, bus stop, hard and soft landscaping, and associated infrastructure. Outline planning application comprising of erection of 1 no. unit (Unit E1 - offices) with appearance matter reserved – APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS
- 21/506791 Approval of Reserved Matters for Phase 2 (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale being sought) to create 7,916 sqm of flexible Use Class E(g)(iii)/B8 employment floorspace, comprising of 4 units (A1, A2, A3 and A13) on Plot A, pursuant of 21/506790/OUT – APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS
- 21/506790 Section 73 - Application for variation of condition 9 (office or research and development use floorspace) to require at least 7,500m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace pursuant to 20/505195/OUT (Outline application for a mixed commercial development comprising B1(a), B1(b), B1(c) and B8 units, with a maximum floor space of 45,295 square metres) – APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS
- 21/502637 Approval of Reserved Matters Phase 1 (Layout, Scale, Appearance and Landscaping) to create the development platforms across the entire site, and 23,270 sqm of flexible Use Class B1(c)/B8 employment floorspace, comprised of 7no. units on Plot A totalling 5,450 sqm (Units A3-A9) and 4no. units on Plot B totalling 17,820 sqm (Units B1-B4) pursuant of 20/505195/OUT – APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

- 20/505182 Approval of Reserved Matters (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale being sought) for Phase 1 being landscaping, infrastructure work required to create development platforms across the site, and 22,884sqm of flexible Use Class B1(c)/B8 employment floorspace comprising of 7no. units on Plot A totalling 5,444sqm (Units A3- A9) and 4no. units on Plot B totalling 17,440sqm (Units B1-B4) pursuant to 17/502331/OUT – APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS
- 20/505195 Section 73 - Application for Variation of Condition 3 to allow buildings on the eastern part of the site to have a footprint up to 10,000sqm, and variation of Condition 4 to allow buildings on the western part of the site to have a footprint up to 4,800sqm, a ridge height up to 10.5m, and to remove the requirement for buildings to be orientated end-on to the M20 motorway pursuant to application 17/502331/OUT – APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS
- 17/502331 Outline application for a mixed commercial development comprising B1(a), B1(b), B1(c) and B8 units, with a maximum floor space of 45,295 square metres (Access being sought) (Resubmission of 15/503288/OUT) – APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

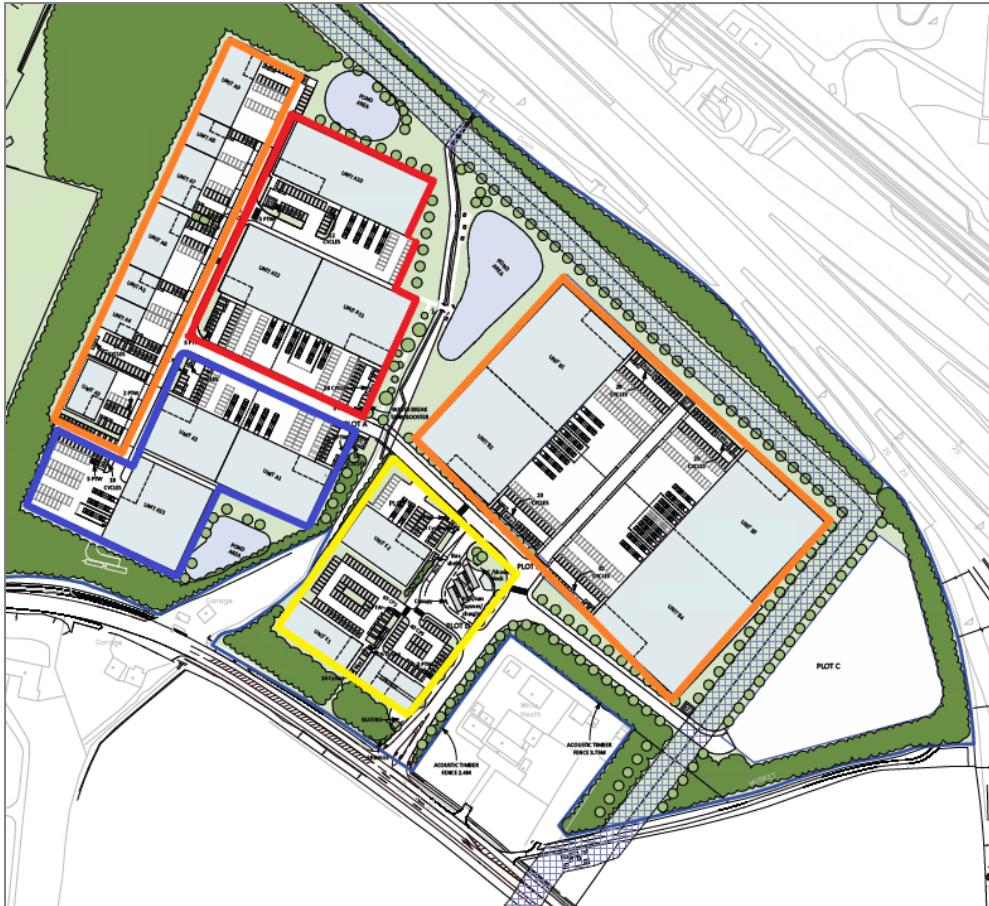
## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE & BACKGROUND**

The application relates to the Woodcut Farm employment allocation within the adopted Local Plan. Outline planning permission was originally granted under application 17/502331/OUT for a mix of B1 [now E(g)(i)(ii)(iii)] and B8 uses with a maximum floor space of 45,295m<sup>2</sup> with access to the site off the A20. Variations have since been approved allowing increases in the height and footprint of buildings.

Phase 1 (21/502637/REM) is largely complete with some occupations being two large warehouses within the centre, seven smaller units on the west part of the site, and the site access (outlined in orange below). This also approved the engineering works to create the ground levels across the entire site including that part where these reserved matters are proposed, all strategic landscaping around and through the main development areas, and site drainage which has been largely carried out.

Phase 2 (21/506791/REM) has been approved being two buildings in the southwest corner (outlined in blue). The area outlined in yellow was a stand-alone application involving demolition of a house and 3 buildings including a café (21/506792/HYBRID)

These reserved matters relate to Phase 3 which is the northern area on the western part of the wider site (outlined in red below) and are pursuant to 21/506790/OUT (which was a s73 variation of 17/502331)



There are no local landscape designations affecting the site. The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is north of the M20 and the Ashford to Maidstone railway line. At its closest point the AONB is within approximately 120m of the wider site and so it is considered the site falls within the setting of the AONB. The site allocation and planning permissions have been strongly influenced because of the intervisibility of the scarp slope of the AONB and the site. There is also a local nature reserve to the north of the railway line around 130m from the site boundary at its closest point.

The site does not contain any designated heritage assets but there are a number within the vicinity, the closest being the Grade II listed Woodcut Farmhouse 80m to the west. The Hollingbourne/Eyhorne Street Conservation Area, which features a number of listed buildings is around 710m to the east, and Leeds Castle (Grade I) and its Grade II\* listed grounds (which features other listed buildings) are around 2km and 1km to the southeast respectively.

## **PROPOSAL**

This application seeks permission for reserved matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 'Phase 3' of the development.

This includes the following:

- 2 buildings of 3,382sqm and 5,215sqm (both up to 10.5m high) split into three Units (A10, A11, and A12) including access and parking areas – Total of

8,597m<sup>2</sup> for B8 use, which includes mezzanine floors for ancillary offices within both buildings.

- 120 car parking spaces (of which 18 EV charging); 51 cycle spaces within bike stores; 10 HGV loading spaces.

## **POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2011-2031): SS1, SP17, SP18, SP21, SP23, EMP1, EMP1(4), ID1, DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM6, DM8, DM16, DM21, DM23, DM30, DM37

Kent Waste and Minerals Plan (amended 2020)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

MBC Air Quality Guidance

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan (2021-2026)

Maidstone Local Plan Review (Regulation 22)

## **LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS**

**Local Residents:** No representations received.

**Hollingbourne Parish Council:** Do not wish to comment/object.

**Kent Downs AONB Unit:** Raise objections - Summary paragraph:

*“The Kent Downs AONB Unit considers the proposal to fail to incorporate appropriate mitigation to manage impacts of the development on this sensitive location in the setting of the Kent Downs AONB, resulting in significant detrimental impacts that would fail to meet the key policy requirements of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB, in conflict with both the NPPF (paragraph 176) and Maidstone Local Plan policies SP17 and EMP1(4) as well as the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan, in particular Principle SD8 and as such we object.”*

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Natural England:** No comments to make.

**National Highways:** No objections.

**Environment Agency:** No comments to make.

**Active Travel England:** Provide their standing advice.

**KCC Highways:** No objections subject to conditions.

**KCC Drainage:** No objections.

**MBC Environmental Health:** No objections re. noise.

## APPRAISAL

The proposals are pursuant to the most recent outline permission and the site is allocated in the Local Plan for development under policy EMP1(4). The key issues to consider are the following:

- Layout, landscaping, scale and design and compliance with the site allocation policy and outline permission.
- Heritage
- Highways
- Other matters

### Layout & Landscaping

The site allocation policy and outline permission both have various requirements to guide the layout and landscaping but there are some differences that have been established through the planning consents. Relevant to the southwest corner, these can be summarised as follows:

- Substantial internal landscaping, including tracts of planting extending into the development to achieve clear visual separation between individual buildings and parking areas.

Note - This is different to the most recent outline permission where conditions state,

*“Substantial tracts of planting extending into the body of the development to achieve clear visual separation between development areas.”*

- Buildings not to cover more than 40% of the site.
- Landscape buffers around the outsides of the development (with minimum depths and planting typology specified in some cases).
- An open woodland area to the northwest and tree planting to the west of the development area.
- Dense woodland planting along the A20 frontage at the southwestern edge of the site in excess of 25m width including a planted bund.
- A 30m native woodland belt with understorey shrubs and grasses along the western edge of the site to help secure the setting of Woodcut Farmhouse.
- Planted landscape buffer zones to the west north and east of ‘Chestnuts’ and ‘White Heath’ adjacent to the site.
- Swales and balancing ponds including the provision of shallow areas, and deeper, cooler areas, as well as the planting regimes.

The proposals are within an area established for development under the previous outline permissions/reserved matters and this ensures the strategic landscaping on the outsides of the development is provided and also the drainage pond immediately to the east of this phase.

The layout complies with all the policy and permission requirements apart from a lack of ‘substantial tracts of landscaping to provide clear visual separation between individual buildings and parking areas’. This is because the recent outline permissions have accepted strategic landscaping ‘between the development parcels’ only. The conflict with the site policy was assessed and judged to be acceptable in terms of the impact upon the local landscape and setting of the AONB under these applications and the details are submitted pursuant to the most recent permissions.

Overall, the layout follows that established under the planning consents and ensures that all the strategic landscaping is provided and so is acceptable.

### Appearance, Scale & Site Levels

The site policy and original 2017 outline permission sets building size and design requirements but there are differences that have been established through subsequent permissions in terms of size and height as follows:

- Site policy - Buildings to the west of the stream to have unit footprints up to 2,500m<sup>2</sup> with ridge heights not exceeding 8m.

Note - This is different to most recent outline permission where conditions allow building footprints up to 4,800m<sup>2</sup> and up to 10.5m ridge height.

- Limit visual impact including through use of curved roofs, non-reflective materials, sensitive colouring, green roofs and walls on smaller footprint buildings (500m<sup>2</sup> and below), and sensitive lighting proposals.
- Buildings should include active frontage elements incorporating glazing, and address both the A20 and M20.
- The use of vernacular materials including ragstone on buildings and in boundary treatments.
- High quality surfacing materials.
- The use of PV panels incorporated into the design of roofs.

### *Building Designs*

The footprint sizes for both buildings do not comply with the site policy limitations of 2,500m<sup>2</sup> on the west part of the site (4,800m<sup>2</sup> and 3,081m<sup>2</sup> footprints are proposed) and building height limitation of 8m (10.5m is proposed for all buildings). This is because changes to allow for increases in both parameters have been approved under the recent outline permissions (i.e. up to 4,800m<sup>2</sup> and 10.5m height) where this conflict with the site policy was judged to be acceptable in terms of the impact upon the local landscape and setting of the AONB. The proposals therefore comply with outline permission 21/506790/OUT and are acceptable.

The units follow the same design approach as the approved Phase 1 and 2 buildings with varied shades of grey/dark grey colours on the metal cladding, timber cladding with glazing on the frontages and curved roofs. Additional ‘false’ glazing has been provided on the north elevation of Unit A10 which faces the M20 to match the other buildings and provide additional interest. The roof colour

would be as already approved (green/grey matt). The cycle stores will be finished with ragstone and green roofs as approved on Phases 1 and 2. This design approach is therefore acceptable.

### *Surfacing Materials, Boundary Treatments, and Levels*

Matching Phases 1 and 2, the main service road would be tarmac and service yards/lorry turning areas would be concrete as is necessary. Some areas of car parking would be block paved to provide a variation in materials and the footways around the site would be resin bound gravel which would provide a quality finish. The site levels are as approved under the outline permission and have been carried out with the development platform in place.

### Heritage

As previously approved, a 30m landscape buffer will be provided as a wooded area along the west boundary which increases towards the northwest corner in accordance with the site policy, which will minimise the impact upon the setting to Woodcut Farmhouse (GII). This will be in addition to the area of open woodland with groups of trees to the west of the site.

The assessment under the outline applications and Phases 1 and 2 acknowledged that development at the site would cause some minimal harm to the setting of Woodcut Farmhouse and this would be 'less than substantial' as it would not be possible to hide the entire development but the economic benefits were judged to outweigh this impact. The proposed buildings comply with the footprint and height restrictions of the outline permission and the strategic landscaping referred to above will minimise any impact in line with paragraph 190 of the NPPF and again the benefits outweigh the impact upon Woodcut Farmhouse (GII).

In terms of Leeds Castle (GI listed) and its associated Registered Park and Gardens (GII\*), under the original application Historic England considered that the development would have a negligible visible presence from the castle grounds and that once landscaping is established it would not be seen.

For these reasons, it is considered that the approved strategic landscaping will appropriately minimise the impact of the development on the setting of Woodcut Farmhouse and would not have any harmful impact on any other heritage assets.

### Highways & Parking

KCC Highways have raised no objections to the internal road arrangements or parking provision. Condition 7 requires vehicle and cycle parking to be in line the Council's adopted standards which are the Kent (maximum) standards from 2006.

120 car parking spaces are proposed which exceeds the standards for B8 use by 42 spaces but there should also be up to 28 goods vehicles parking spaces. Therefore, overall parking is exceeded by 14 spaces, which is not considered to be objectionable or grounds for refusal. It is also noted that the use of the

building is flexible under the outline permission so could also change to a more staff intensive light industry use. 51 cycle spaces within 2 secure cycle stores would be provided as per the rest of the site.

Electric charging points would be provided for 18 of the car parking spaces which is a suitable level of provision in the absence of a specific policy requirement, with 6 EV spaces for each new unit. Under previous phases two thirds of chargers were combinations of 3.6kW and 7.2kW speeds and the remaining third combinations of 11kW and 22kW speeds. Passive infrastructure would be installed to facilitate EV charging points at all the HGV parking spaces. Whilst EV charging is now dealt with under the building regulations, the above number and speeds (for those above 7kW) exceed the regulations. Therefore, EV charging will need to be secured in this RM consent as this will ensure the outline condition is discharged.

Active Travel England are now a statutory consultee and have provided their Standing Advice Note (June 2023) in response. The outline permission required footway widening along the A20 to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists and this has been carried out. Within the site approved footways are wide enough (3m) to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists with marked crossing points, and an adequate number of secure covered cycle storage is provided.

#### Other Matters

##### *Ecology*

Ecological impacts were assessed at the outline application stage and mitigation secured. The proposals are within an approved development area and so there would be no impact beyond that assessed under the outline.

##### *Residential Amenity*

The impact upon residential amenity was assessed at the outline stage with the Noise Assessment concluding that acoustic fencing/barriers would be required in certain places and this is secured under the outline. This Phase is near the middle of the site and is a suitable distance from any neighbouring properties to ensure there would be no unacceptable impact upon living conditions in terms of light, privacy or outlook.

##### *Surface Water Drainage*

The surface water drainage scheme has been approved under separate conditions on consultation with KCC (as Lead Local Flood Authority), and they have confirmed the proposed layout is acceptable to achieve suitable drainage at the site.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The proposed layout follows the approved masterplan in terms of the development areas and ensures that all the strategic landscaping around the outside of these areas is provided in accordance with the site policy EMP1(4).



The layout complies with all the policy and outline permission requirements apart from 'substantial tracts of landscaping to provide clear visual separation between individual buildings and parking areas' and size parameters discussed below. This is because changes to this requirement have been approved under the latest outline permissions where this conflict with the site policy was judged to be acceptable in terms of the impact upon the local landscape and setting of the AONB. This has also been accepted under Phases 1 and 2.

Two of the buildings do not comply with the site policy footprint limitations of 2,500m<sup>2</sup> on the west part of the site (4,800m<sup>2</sup> and 3,081m<sup>2</sup> footprints are proposed) and building ridge height limitation of 8m (10.5m proposed). This is because changes to allow for this have been approved under the latest outline permissions where this conflict with the site policy was judged to be acceptable in terms of the impact upon the local landscape and setting of the AONB. This has also been accepted under Phases 1 and 2.

The building designs follow the established appearance of Phases 1 and 2 and are of good quality with interest provided through the variation of materials and colours, and active frontages in accordance with policy DM1. Ragstone would be used on cycle stores and substation buildings and good quality hard surface materials would be used in key locations. The strategic landscaping and levels have been approved under the Phase 1 application.

The impacts on the setting of Woodcut Farmhouse (GII) would be minimised by the strategic landscaping and the development would not have any harmful impact on any other heritage assets.

The proposals would not result in any unacceptable impacts upon residential amenity in accordance with policy DM1.

Permission is therefore recommended subject to the following conditions.

Report checked by: Marion Geary Date: 07/09/23

**RECOMMENDATION** – Application Permitted subject to the following conditions/reasons:

(1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the most recent plan revision number listed on the 'Drawing Issue Sheet' document received on 07/09/23.

Reason: To clarify which plans have been approved and to ensure a high-quality development.

(2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with external building materials as shown on the approved plans and documents.

Reason: To ensure a high-quality development.

(3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with hard surface materials shown on drawing no. PL 102 RevD.

Reason: To ensure a high-quality development.

(4) No development above slab level for the cycle stores or substations shall take place until photographs of a sample panel of the Kentish ragstone constructed on site, and details of the mortar mix, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details as approved shall be fully implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure a high-quality appearance.

(5) No development above slab level shall take place until details of the number and location of PV panels to roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details as approved shall be fully implemented and thereafter retained.

Reason: To comply with the outline permission.

(6) The development shall not be occupied until passive infrastructure has been installed to facilitate EV charging points for all HGV spaces shown on drawing no. PL 101 RevD.

Reason: To reduce impacts upon air quality

(7) No building shall be occupied until the EV charging points as shown on the approved plans have been installed in connection with that building and made available for use. The charging points speeds shall be as follows:

Two thirds shall have combinations of 3.6kW and 7.2kW speeds and the remaining third combinations of 11kW and 22kW speeds.

The charging points shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To reduce impacts upon air quality.

(8) The approved details of the parking/turning areas shall be completed before the commencement of the use of the land or buildings to which they relate and shall thereafter be kept available for such use. No development, whether permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order, with or without modification) or not, shall be carried out on the areas indicated or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to them.

Reason: Development without adequate parking/turning provision is likely to lead to parking inconvenient to other road users and in the interests of road safety.

The Council's approach to this application

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021 the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service, where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful

outcome and as appropriate, updating applicants / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance:

The applicant/agent was advised of minor changes required to the application and these were agreed.

Delegated Authority to Sign:	Date:
<p><i>R. L. Jarman</i></p> <p>PRINT NAME: Rob Jarman</p>	<p>8/8/2023</p>