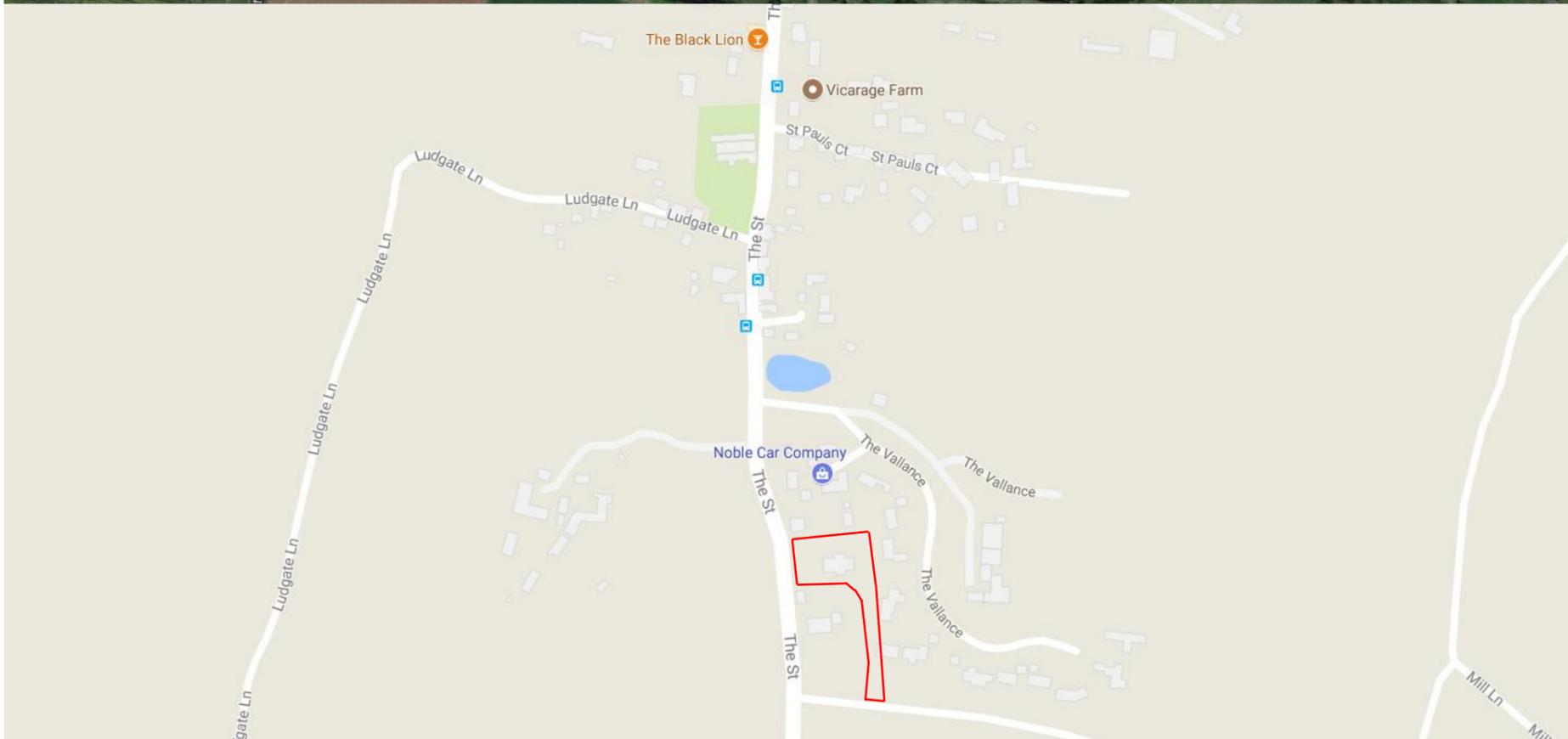




## Proposed Residential Development at Archirondal, Lynsted, Sittingbourne, ME9 0RH

Planning and Design & Access Statement



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning and Design & Access Statement accompanies the planning application for proposed residential development at Archirondal, Lynsted, Sittingbourne, ME9 0RH. It has been written to explain the scheme and to fulfil the requirements for such statements. The design aspects are written in accordance with the advisory document “Design and Access Statements: How to Write, Read and Use Them”, which was published by CABE.
- 1.2 The application site is occupied by a detached 3-bedroom house named Archirondal. The property is of bespoke design, and has a front garden and driveway. The western and northern part of the plot comprises a very large rear garden, laid to lawn, with access along the side of the existing house. This submission comprises a scheme for the delivery of three new dwellings with associated parking and a garden for each in sustainable locations, as reviewed in detail in subsequent chapters.
- 1.3 The site has an area of approximately 2,200 sq.m. (0.22 ha) the main part being some 50 wide and 32m deep, plus a long driveway. It is proposed that the site is developed for 3no. dwellings each having 4 bedrooms.

## 2 THE PROCESS

### The Applicant

- 2.1 The applicant is Mrs. Eileen Spittles, who has lived in the property for many years. The design team was approached in spring 2017 with a view to bringing forward a suitable proposal.

### 2.2 Planning History

In late December, planning application 17/505194 was put forward for 4no. houses. However, the planning application was refused when it went to the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018 Planning Committee. Although the Committee rejected the scheme on the grounds of ‘overdevelopment’, several members expressed that they would support the scheme if it was reduced to 3 houses. One member even enquired whether it could be approved on the proviso that it was for 3 houses, but this is not possible.

### The Design Team

- 2.3 The proposal has been designed by Designscape Consultancy Ltd, an urban design and architect practice based in Kent and headed by Kingsley Hughes RIBA. Designscape has designed over 300 development schemes in the 13 years since its formation, primarily residential, and is currently working on numerous projects throughout Kent and London, ranging from large rear extensions to one-off houses, to housing estates, and blocks of apartments. Kingsley has thirty years’ design experience and has designed a number of highly successful and commended residential developments, including the London Evening Standard Apartments of the Year, the Daily Mail Housing of the Year and the London Evening Standard Housing of the Year. Designscape also was commended in the Ashford Excellence Awards. Kingsley also was the Urban Design Advisor to the London Borough of Greenwich, a position he held for eleven years and gave up just in March of last year due to private sector workload, and a member of three Design Review Panels in London. He also acts as Expert Witness at appeals, including at Public Inquiries, in which design is the key consideration, acting on behalf of developers, Greenwich Council, Islington Council, and other councils.

### The Imperative to Deliver Housing

- 2.4 In recent years there has been a growing realisation that England has a desperate shortage of housing. Nowhere is this shortage more acute than in the south-east, including in Swale. The imperative for the delivery of housing is so strong that the Inspectorate very often is allowing appeals even where a Local Authority claims to have a 5-year housing land supply in place, as experience shows such claims often fail to materialise. The need for housing is addressed more fully later in this chapter.

- 2.5 It is important not to underestimate the imperative to deliver housing in the weight of balance of planning judgement. Even if the local authority had a number of relatively minor planning concerns against the proposal, the weight of balance afforded to the delivery of housing would be sufficient to outweigh those considerations. The appeal process demonstrated that many of the Local Authority’s previous concerns were exaggerated.

### Social Value

- 2.6 The proposal is of social value in providing much-needed housing for the Borough. It is now recognised that housing demand is one of the most pressing social needs facing

the nation, and this is certainly true of the south-east. The proposed mix of dwellings comprises family houses for which there is strong demand.

### **Economic Value**

- 2.7 The proposal would contribute to the local economy. This includes the economic benefit of the construction phase. Post completion, the proposal would be of permanent benefit including strengthening the council tax base and aiding viability of public transport, shops and services. This is an important consideration in this case. Once such facilities and services are lost it is very difficult if not impossible to get them back.

### **Planning Policy**

#### National Policy Guidance

- 2.8 National design policy guidance is included in the NPPF, specifically in Chapter 7 of that document. In common with the entire NPPF, Chapter 7 is succinct and is therefore included in full below. This states that;

#### “Requiring good design

56. The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

57. It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

58. Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;

- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;

- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;

- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and

- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

59. Local planning authorities should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes. However, design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.

60. Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

61. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

62. Local planning authorities should have local design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design. They should also when appropriate refer major projects for a national design review.<sup>13</sup> In general, early engagement on design produces the greatest benefits. In assessing applications,

local planning authorities should have regard to the recommendations from the design review panel.

63. In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.

64. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

65. Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits).

66. Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing the design of the new development should be looked on more favourably.

67. Poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

68. Where an area justifies a degree of special protection on the grounds of amenity, an Area of Special Control Order<sup>14</sup> may be approved. Before formally proposing an Area of Special Control, the local planning authority is expected to consult local trade and amenity organisations about the proposal. Before a direction to remove deemed planning consent is made for specific advertisements,<sup>15</sup> local planning authorities will be expected to demonstrate that the direction would improve visual amenity and there is no other way of effectively controlling the display of that particular class of advertisement. The comments of organisations, and individuals, whose interests would be

affected by the direction should be sought as part of the process.”

13 Currently provided by Design Council Caba.

14 Regulation 20, The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

15 Regulation 7, The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

2.9 The proposal is of high quality design and due design consideration, and is in accordance with the above guidance.

The Housing White Paper

2.10 On 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017, Government brought out its Housing White Paper, entitled “Fixing Our Broken Housing Market”. The key salient points relevant to this subject scheme are as follows;

2.11 The Prime Ministerial foreward of the housing white paper notes that;

“Our broken housing market is one of the greatest barriers to progress in Britain today.”

and;

2.12 “I want to fix this broken market so that housing is more affordable and people have the security they need to plan for the future. The starting point is to build more homes.”

and;

2.13 “we will diversify the housing market, opening it up to smaller builders and those who embrace innovative and efficient methods.”

This is highly pertinent. For far too long, LPA’s have depended upon allocations of 200 dwellings or so in field after field of greenfield land. The subject LPA is as guilty of this approach as any other borough. This approach is crude and is lazy. Those days of such a simplistic approach thankfully are now over, as indicated by the white paper. Smaller developments such as this, delivered by individuals using small building contractors, have an important role to play in delivering the housing of the future.

2.14 The foreward from the Secretary of State notes that;

“This country doesn’t have enough homes. That’s not a personal opinion or a political calculation. It’s a simple statement of fact.”

and;

2.15 “That has to change. We need radical, lasting reform that will get more homes built right now and for many years to come.”

2.16 The Executive Summary notes that;  
“make more land available for homes in the right places, by maximising the contribution from brownfield and surplus public land, regenerating estates, **releasing more small and medium sized sites, allowing rural communities to grow** and making it easier to build new settlements” (our emphasis)

2.17 Housing White Paper Para 1.29

“Policies in plans should allow **a good mix of sites** to come forward for development, so that there is choice for consumers, places can grow in ways that are sustainable, and there are opportunities for a diverse construction sector. **Small sites create particular opportunities for custom builders and smaller developers. They can also help to meet rural housing needs in ways that are sensitive to their setting while allowing villages to thrive.**” (our emphasis)

This re-iterates and further supports the points made above at 5.9.

2.18 Housing White Paper Para 1.30

“Reflecting proposals set out in the Government’s previous consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework,<sup>27</sup> we will:

- amend national policy to **expect local planning authorities to have policies that support the development of small ‘windfall’ sites** (those not allocated in plans, but which come forward on an ad hoc basis).

2.19 Housing White Paper Para 1.32

“There are opportunities to go further to support a good mix of sites, meet rural housing needs, and increase

the supply of land available to small and medium sized house builders.”

2.20 Housing White Paper Para 1.52

“... authorities and applicants need to be ambitious about what sites can offer, especially in areas where demand is high and land is scarce...”

2.21 Housing White Paper Para 3.2

“There is a lack of competition. We increasingly depend on the major house builders to build most housing. Smaller firms bore the brunt of the recession and their output still falls far short of pre-recession levels.”

2.22 Housing White Paper Paras 3.5 to 3.7

“3.5 Small builders have been declining and were hit hard by the recession. The number of homes registered by small builders is down from 44,000 in 2007 to 18,000 in 2015 demonstrating the potential for growth.

3.6 The Government will help this sector to grow and develop again. Small and medium-sized housebuilders regularly cite land, planning and finance as the major barriers to expansion.

3.7 We have already simplified planning processes, and changes such as the introduction of permission in principle will remove some of the uncertainty for smaller builders when considering land options.”

2.23 The Housing White Paper is not yet adopted policy. It does nonetheless clearly set out latest Government thinking and intent.

2.24 Furthermore, in July 2017, the Government Secretary of State Sajid Javid once again re-iterated the appalling shortage of housing in England and Wales, particularly in the south-east, and re-confirmed the Government’s commitment to addressing the shortfall of provision. In the first instance, he outlined his intent that boroughs in the south-east are to raise housing delivery over their plan periods by 20% over their previously assessed need.

2.25 Subsequently, on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017, the Government Secretary of State Sajid Javid re-confirmed the Government’s commitment to

addressing the shortfall of provision, and stated that boroughs in the south-east (which includes Swale) are to raise housing delivery over their plan periods by 40% over their previously assessed need. This means that even those boroughs that thought they had fulfilled their plan period commitment, and thought they had a 5-year housing land supply in place, no longer do so.

- 2.26 The above demonstrates the acknowledged shortage of housing and the acute need to deliver more housing.

### 3 USE

- 3.1 The proposal is for residential use. This use is entirely compatible with, and justified by, the land use policies and existing uses on the site and in the adjoining areas. The site is of a size and physical characteristics that mean it is well able to accommodate the proposed use and offer a high quality of life to future occupants.
- 3.2 In putting forward the proposal, the applicant has understood the access needs of various users. The site is well located regarding ease of access to services and public transportation.

### 4 AMOUNT

- 4.1 The proposal is for 3 dwellings. The amount of development takes into account what is suitable for the site and the context.
- 4.2 The site has an area of 0.22ha and the proposal at 3no. dwellings therefore equates to a density of 14 dwellings per hectare. This is considered appropriate at the application site, making good use of land while being sensitive to its context and neighbours. Residential densities more typically are 35 dwellings per hectare, demonstrating the sensitivity of the proposal.
- 4.3 The development put forward is entirely compatible with the wider area, given the use, layout, height, mass and bulk of other buildings in the vicinity of the site. The density is therefore also seen to be appropriate when adopting a design-led approach.

### 5 LAYOUT

- 5.1 The proposal is accessed off Toll Road to the south, off The Street. The site already benefits from vehicular access via a long driveway leading into the main part of the site, which is suitable as a shared access driveway.

This has the advantage of ensuring that there is easy access to the site and the proposed new dwellings.

- 5.2 The proposal has been conceived as a small rural cluster of buildings. Upon entering the site, it is intended each dwelling would present itself to the viewer, arranged around shared access courts. This also would help minimise traffic speeds within the site. There is ample car parking provided, but much of this is set away discreetly within high quality car barns of tile and oak, which help frame the barn court.
- 5.3 In recent years, there has been a significant change in thinking behind the design and use of streets, highways space, and public space generally. The proposal has been designed to provide an intrinsically traffic calmed environment. This quality can be seen in the Indicative Site Layout Plan and also is evident in the submitted Indicative Street Scene Elevations, extracts of which are included later in this report.
- 5.4 It also is important to note that the intended layout has arisen from due consideration of the context and surrounding pattern of development. The houses 1 and 2 are aligned north-south with reference to the house to the north of the site (Wrendale House), with the houses facing into the heart of the site. The remaining house 3 is located in the east and faces west which also is into the heart of the site. It also is important to note that house 3 is at great distance from neighbours such as Oaklea House (being much further than accepted norms), and is in fact further away from such neighbours than is the existing house and garage. This can all be seen in the plans and follows pre-application discussion with Swale Borough Council.
- 5.5 The proposal also has been designed with consideration of safety and security, in accordance with "Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention" published by the ODPM and Home Office. Consideration of crime and the fear of crime requires a careful balance between the desire for permeability (to encourage walking) balanced against a competing desire to minimise permeability to minimise potential escape routes for criminals. Being arranged as a clustered court, with excellent surveillance and a dead-end situation, is of great benefit. The intended site layout can be seen overleaf.

### 6 SCALE

- 6.1 The scale of development is in part defined by the site and scheme requirements. This means the proposal features buildings of two storeys as that is considered most

appropriate given the scale of other buildings in the vicinity and the wider rural context.

- 6.2 In terms of plan footprint, it is intended that the dwellings shall measure about 9m by 6m and that the dwellings all shall be compliant with relevant space standards.
- 6.3 The proposal would happily co-exist with the context. This would be a demonstrably high-quality development of character, and no harm would arise from the proposal.

### 7 LANDSCAPING

- 7.1 As noted in the Kent Design Guide, in rural areas "landscape is all around". This means there is less onus on providing unnecessary structural landscaping in such locations such as may be required in an urban situation. The site benefits from excellent screening by the high hedgerows, shrubs, and trees around the property. These would screen the proposal and thereby help maintain rural character. It also provides a mature landscaped setting for the dwellings.
- 7.2 In the Lynsted Parish Design Statement and Guidelines document, it mentions that "the primary objective of designation is to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape" and that "efforts should be made to retain and restore some of the traditional orchards in the Parish where feasible. The proposed scheme would not cause harm to any orchards in the surrounding area and the hedgerows and other shrubs on and around the edge of the site will be maintained. The proposal actually helps by delivering dwellings which otherwise likely would need to be located on greenfield sites.
- 7.3 The frontages of the houses would be laid to lawn and planted up with appropriate shrub species. The two parking spaces allocated for each house and the two visitor parking bays located around the site can be faced in buff colour bound gravel, providing an appropriate rural feel to the scheme. The proposed car barns would provide sheltered parking bays for vehicles, which offers an additional advantage to the site.
- 7.4 The main landscape amenity for occupants would be provided by means of their rear gardens, as is appropriate for detached family house.
- 7.5 The intended landscaping scheme is indicated in the site layout plan included overleaf.



**Extract of the Site Layout Plan**

The proposal has been conceived as a small cluster of houses arranged around a court, with all carefully located at distance from neighbours.

North is top. This extract not to scale: refer to the full-size formally submitted drawings.

## 8 APPEARANCE

8.1 As noted in the Lynsted Parish Design Statement and Guidelines document (Published September 2002), new developments in the area should consider the following;

- “Some of the current houses are of timber-frame construction with white-painted infill plaster. Others are of characteristic yellow or red brick.”
- “The elevated position of the Church dominated the prairie-style of farmland that surrounds it.”
- “Several houses benefit from shelter-belts, mature hedges and the remaining orchards.”

The application is submitted in Outline only. The appearance of the proposed dwellings will be mindful of the above guidance and the context, and it is intended they will incorporate red brick and include some of the same local materials that have been used on other buildings in the area. The site is also outlined by shelter-belts and hedgerows, meaning it will fit in well with the neighbouring properties and the rest of the Parish.

8.2 The design intent in this case is to create a scheme which is contemporary while being entirely appropriate for its context and of local vernacular materials.

8.3 It also is intended that the houses should each be slightly different in their appearance and layout, in order to add distinctiveness and visual interest and aid in fitting into the village/rural context.

8.4 The Lynsted Parish Design Statement and Guidelines document refers to the types of materials that should be used to build new developments in the area:

- “Wooden feather-edged weatherboarding”
- “Hung tiling”
- “White-painted structure”
- “Handmade red bricks”

It is intended the proposed dwellings will include the above materials in order to match the appearance of the surrounding houses and buildings and to fit in better with the community.

8.5 The above approach will enable the houses to provide a high quality of accommodation internally meeting modern aspirations, with large, sensibly proportioned rooms featuring space, light, and air. It would combine the best of contemporary and vernacular design, which also

matches the look of other houses in the area, and without question being of high quality design.

## 9 ACCESS

9.1 There are two important aspects to consider under access: firstly, the accessibility of the site to the wider area, and secondly access within the site itself.

9.2 The first aspect is very important. The site is very well placed in the village of Lynsted. It is very close to the heart of the village, which is located along The Street, and is contiguous with the built-up area, adjoining residential development.

9.3 It is very easy to walk to the heart of the village from the site within a few minutes. The site therefore is in a sustainable location.

9.4 The proximity to the village allows the proposal to benefit from, and contribute to, the villages’ services provision including the Black Lion Public House, Lynsted Pre-School and Primary School, the local church, and public transport including several bus stops within close walking distance from the site. This means the site also benefits from easy direct connection to the wider transport network.

9.5 Once within the development, the provision of the quiet residential shared driveway and parking courts is of benefit to all including able bodied as well as disabled and ambulant disabled people. The provision of car parking bays and car barns in close proximity to front doors is a significant benefit. The dwellings also would include a number of other features of benefit to the disabled, including the provision of low-level and full-height glazing to allow views outside for those restricted to a seating position.

## 10 TECHNICAL ASPECTS

10.1 There are no technical considerations that would prevent the proposal from being granted planning approval and being built as presented.

### Highways and Parking

10.2 The Lynsted Parish Design Statement and Guidelines document states:

- “Vehicle parking and movement should be addressed in all development proposals.”

- “Consideration should be given to the inclusion of convenient cycle storage space.”

10.3 The proposal has been provided with parking to the required ratios. This is at the required ratio of two spaces per dwelling plus further occasional visitor spaces, actually being slightly over the minima required for the avoidance of doubt.

10.4 Part of the car parking would be within a car barn, to help create the rural clustered design approach and help contain and minimise any noise and disturbance.

### Waste

10.5 The scheme also has been designed being mindful of the consideration of solid waste storage. The houses all have side access paths, allowing bins storage in rear gardens. The responsibility will fall upon residents to place their bins in an appropriate location at the back line of pavement on refuse collection day, at the end of the shared access drive. Collection already takes place as far as the site, to serve the dwellings adjoining and opposite. The scheme therefore has a thorough waste storage and collection strategy and ample space for any recycling and waste separation measures that might be required now or in the future.

### Sustainability

10.6 The Lynsted Parish Design Statement and Guidelines document states:

“Environmental sustainability should be central to all decisions.”

Proximity to the facilities of Lynsted ensures sustainability of the proposal at a wider level. The actual houses also will be sustainable and insulated to modern standards. The houses will be of highly sustainable design and will far surpass houses constructed even within recent years.

### No Other Adverse Considerations

10.7 There are no other considerations that could prevent development from proceeding as envisaged. For instance, the site is not subject to flooding, nor is it productive agricultural land. The site is instead suitable for much-needed housing.

## 11 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The scheme would deliver three dwellings, providing family housing that meets a clear demand and offering a high quality of life for occupants, in a development of high design quality.
- 11.2 The proposal is in accordance with Planning Guidance as set out in the NPPF and other guidance such as the Kent Design Guide and The Lynsted Parish Design Statement and Guidelines document. It would make far better use of the site than the current situation, with a proposal that is entirely suitable for the site and context. The proposal also meets the three-part criteria for being Deliverable, i.e. it is;
- i) available
  - ii) suitable, and
  - iii) achievable.
- 11.3 At planning committee, it was evident there was support in principle but that members considered 4no. houses to be too many. There was explicit support for 3no. houses from a number of members, with one of the members even enquiring whether 3no. could be approved at committee that evening.
- 11.4 The above chapters demonstrate that the proposal is the result of a thorough process of analysis and careful design consideration. It is believed the scheme makes the most of the opportunities presented by the site, is entirely right for the site and context, is sustainable, is of demonstrably high-quality design, and therefore is suitable for approval.

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