

Planning decisions January 2024

23/505386/FULL	Dickley Wood Ashford Road Harrietsham Kent ME17 1BJ	No Comment
19/504724/HYBRID	Land Off Old Ashford Road Lenham Maidstone Kent	This is site 1 of the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and as such we strongly recommend its approval subject to NE agreement regarding the arrangements for foul and surface water run-off.
23/505339/FULL	6 Old School Close Lenham Maidstone Kent ME17 2HD	We do not in principle object to this application. However we are very aware that the whole Old School Close scheme is quite dense with neighbours arguing amongst themselves about parking. We are therefore asking that a detailed management plan is first submitted prior to work starting. There should anyway be a planning condition requiring that apart from loading and unloading that no contractors' vehicles are parked anywhere within Old School Close. We are also aware of the comments from the owner of the Neighbour at No 5 – we would ask that the issues of land ownership are addressed prior to approval.
23/505535/FULL	Little Biggen Sandway Road Sandway Maidstone Kent ME17 2LU	No Comment.
23/505615/FULL	Downtown Victorias Leisure Ashford Road Harrietsham Kent ME17 1BL	See Appendix A January Planning decisions
23/505768/FULL	67 Robins Close Lenham Kent ME17 2LE	The parish council wishes to record the following comments on this application: The previously approved allocation for an extension to this property (23/504690/FULL Validated: Tue 24 Oct 2023 Status: Decided – approved) has yet to be built.

		<p>The block plan for this application is confusing and was clearly drawn up (by the same architects as 23/504690) to encompass both applications – the parish council wishes to note that if the sum total of both the previous application and this current application were submitted as one, that enlargement of the home would probably exceed the permitted development footprint. The parish council wished to record that it feels this is a blatant example of “salami slicing”.</p> <p>If approved this additional application would severely impact on the existing street scene by delivering a rather over dominant development in what is currently an impression of terracing of semi-detached dwellings</p> <p>The proximity of this application to the neighbouring property might preclude the owner of that property from undertaking an extension should that be required in the future</p>
23/505084/FULL	Linden Cottage Lenham Heath Road Sandway Kent ME17 2NB	No Comment

Appendix A

23/505615/FULL

Downtown Victorias Leisure

Ashford Road, Harrietsham, Maidstone, Kent ME27 1BL

Demolition of existing nightclub building and erection of 4 no. detached three bedroom chalet style dwellings with associated parking, access and landscaping.

Maidstone Borough Local Plan Adopted October 2017 (MBLP)

The application site lies in the countryside outside the Settlement Boundaries of both Lenham and Harrietsham as shown on the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, adopted 2017. This plan forms part of the development plan for Lenham Parish. Although it lies between the two villages the site lies wholly within the Parish of Lenham.

Policy SP17 (1) in MBLP states that development proposals within the countryside will not be permitted.

As there is no evidence that the current use is not, or cannot be made viable, there is, therefore, no policy justification for the loss of this important local facility in terms of MBLP policy DM17 (4).

Essential housing needs in Lenham and Harrietsham for the foreseeable future are met in full through the provisions of MBLP policies SP6 (242 new dwellings in Harrietsham) and SP8 (1,155 new dwellings in Lenham).

The loss of this local facility is also contrary to the provisions of development plan policies SP6 (4) and SP8 (5) which are aimed at retaining local facilities to meet the essential local needs of the expanding villages.

Lenham Parish Council does not wish to comment on either the current or past operators of this particular site. What the Parish Council regards as the most important material planning consideration in relation to the current application is the preservation of the use (or more broadly the use class) of this site which provides welcome economic variety and an important local facility.

Lenham Neighbourhood Plan, Made 14th July 2021 (LNP)

The application site lies outside the Settlement Boundary within the made Lenham Neighbourhood Plan. LNP also forms part of the development plan for Lenham Parish. The application site lies within the countryside as defined in LNP and as such the proposal is contrary to important policy provisions contained within Countryside Protection Policy CP1.

The application is for an intensive form of speculative, executive housing which would consolidate the pattern of sporadic development along the A20 arterial road. This would lead to both the apparent and real coalescence of Lenham with neighbouring Harrietsham. Such development is contrary to the provisions of MBLP SP8 (6). None of the criteria contained within LPN Countryside Protection Policy CP1 are accommodated by the proposal. The application involves severe negative impacts on rural amenity which cannot be mitigated.

Call for Sites

The development of this site for speculative, executive housing was not supported in the recent Call for Sites evaluation as part of the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review.

Conclusion

The application site lies within a sensitive location which forms part of the functional 'green wedge' between Lenham and Harrietsham. The prevention of coalescence between the two villages is an inherent part of clear development plan policies aimed at protecting rural amenity. Refusal of the application would be entirely consistent with those important development plan policies. Those policies serve to protect the countryside from sporadic and incremental encroachment.

Lenham Parish Council respectfully requests that this application be refused.