

MC/14/2734

Date Received: 16 September, 2014

Location: Garage Site to rear of 4 and 6, St Johns Road, Hoo, Rochester, ME3 9JT

Proposal: Demolition of garages and construction of 5 two-bedroomed houses including amenity space and car parking

Applicant: MHS Homes

Agent: D Croft Calfordseaden St Johns House 1A Knoll Rise Orpington Kent BR6 0JX

Ward Peninsula

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 5 November 2014.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawings 104 E received 16 September 2014, 103 E received 17 September 2014 and 100 F, 102 G & 105 B received 8 October 2014.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 No development shall take place until details and samples of all materials to be used externally have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 4 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and

soft landscaping (including surfacing materials to ensure permeability for surface water, plant species, size at time of planting and numbers/spacing/density) which includes features which would be beneficial for and provide roosting opportunities for bats, together with a timescale for implementation. All hard landscaping and planting comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timescale. The hard landscaping shall thereafter be retained as approved. Any trees or plants which within 5 years of planting are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species.

Reason: Pursuant to condition 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality, the wildlife quality of the site and the amenities of future occupants in accordance with Policies BNE1, BNE2 and BNE38 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 5 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected, such details to include the existing and proposed ground levels on each side of the boundaries in order to demonstrate that the privacy of neighbours to the site will be achieved as part of the development and a timescale for the completion of the works. The boundary treatment shall be completed in accordance with the approved timescale and shall thereafter be retained. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual and residential amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policies BNE1 and BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 6 No development shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include amongst other matters details of: hours of construction working; noise and vibration limitation and monitoring regimes; access points; screening/mitigation; wheel cleaning/chassis cleaning facilities; dust control measures; protection of surface and groundwater resources, including arrangements for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals; pollution incident control; site illumination including any cowls to be fitted to ensure that light spillage on sensitive areas is avoided and location of construction compounds/laydown areas and offices. The construction works shall thereafter be carried out at all times in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: To ensure that the development is undertaken in a manner which acknowledges interests of amenity and safety and with regard to Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 7 Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation must not commence until conditions 8 to 11 have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination to the extent specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority until condition 11 has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

Reason: To ensure that the development is undertaken in a manner which acknowledges interests of amenity and safety in accordance with Policy BNE23 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 8 An investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, including risks to groundwater, whether or not it originates on the site. The scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of the development. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The report of the findings must include:

(i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;

(ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:

- human health
- property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes.
- adjoining land,
- groundwaters and surface waters,
- ecological systems,
- archaeological sites and ancient monuments;

(iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'.

Reason: To ensure that the development is undertaken in a manner which acknowledges interests of amenity and safety in accordance with Policy BNE23 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 9 A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment must be prepared, and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of the development. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

Reason: To ensure that the development is undertaken in a manner which acknowledges interests of amenity and safety in accordance with Policy BNE23 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 10 The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of any development (other than development required to enable the remediation process to be implemented) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given not less than two weeks written notification prior to the commencement of the remediation scheme works.

Following completion of the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the development is undertaken in a manner which acknowledges interests of amenity and safety in accordance with Policy BNE23 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 11 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition 8, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 9, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Following completion of the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in condition 9 are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 10.

Reason: To ensure that the development is undertaken in a manner which acknowledges interests of amenity and safety in accordance with Policy BNE23 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 12 No development shall take place until full details of the existing and proposed ground levels across the site (clearly showing any areas which are to be reduced or increased in height together with details of the finished floor levels of the houses in relation to neighbouring existing houses) and of any retaining features have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained as such.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual and residential amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policies BNE1 and BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 13 Prior to the installation of any external lighting on the site details of such lighting including its height, position, external appearance, any shielding, light intensity, colour, spillage (such as light contour or lux level plans showing the existing and proposed levels) and hours of use together with a report to demonstrate its effect on nearby residential properties and explaining how any impact on bats has been minimised shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Only the external lighting approved pursuant to this condition shall be used on the site and it shall only be used within the hours approved pursuant to this condition.

Reason: In order to limit the impact of the lighting on the nearby residents and on wildlife, with regard to Policies BNE2, BNE5 and BNE39 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 14 No development shall take place until full details of the works to the access and main driveway including surfacing, any changes in levels, gradient, speed ramps, vision splays, a new crossover and parking restrictions (such as by the site entrance in order to ensure that access to the site is available at all times including for larger vehicles) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved works shall be completed prior to the first occupation of any of the dwellings hereby approved and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure that there is adequate vehicular access to the site with regard to Policies T1 and T2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 15 Prior to the first occupation of any of the houses hereby approved the area shown on the submitted layout as vehicle parking and turning space shall be provided (including marking out), surfaced and drained. Thereafter it shall be kept available for such use, available for use by occupants of the five houses (10 spaces) and for other local residents (15 spaces), and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending,

revoking or re-enacting that Order) shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved parking and turning space.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to hazardous on-street parking and a loss of amenity and in accordance with Policies BNE2 and T13 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 16 No development shall take place until a scheme detailing the disposal of surface water from the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the first occupation of any of the dwellings hereby approved and shall be maintained as such thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate drainage for the site and that the development does not overload the existing drainage system resulting in flooding.

Recommendation

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

It is proposed to demolish the 37 garages on this site and to construct a terrace of five, two-bedroomed houses which are stated to be affordable housing for shared ownership. Each of the houses would have a kitchen/diner, shower room and lounge on the ground floor with two bedrooms, a bathroom and a store cupboard on the first floor. They would also have a canopy over the front door attached to an integral enclosed bin store. The houses would be approximately 5.5m wide by approx. 8m deep. Externally they are shown to be finished in brick and tiles with coloured panels beneath the first floor windows and solar panels on the front roof slope. The terrace would step down to the southeast, with gables to either end of the roof.

The terrace of houses would be located parallel to the main part of the northeast site boundary, approx. 11.5m from the back of the rear gardens of houses beyond in Kingshill Drive other than at the far northern end where the line of the boundary alters and there would be a minimum gap of approx. 5.5m. There would be some small planting areas immediately in front of the terrace with a footpath and 9 parking spaces for future occupants in front of that. A larger landscaped area together with a disabled parking space is shown to the southeast end of the terrace. To the other side of the access road within the main part of the site would be a further 15 parking spaces, 5 behind the rear gardens of houses in St Johns Road to the southwest and 10 to the south behind rear gardens in Knights Road, these spaces being intended to accommodate cars displaced by the removal of the garages. The existing sole vehicular access to the site would be retained although it would be improved to provide a shared surface approx. 4.4m in width.

The application submissions include a parking survey information and a Phase 1 Desk Study (contamination).

Site Area/Density

Site area: 0.18 hectares (0.44 acres)
Site density: 27.78 dph (11.36 dpa)

Relevant Planning History

| | |
|------------|---|
| ME/97/0551 | Outline application for residential development with demolition of existing garages Refused 2 July 1998 Appeal dismissed 6 April 1999 |
|------------|---|

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties. Hoo St Werburgh Parish Council has also been consulted.

Hoo St Werburgh Parish Council has the following comments:

- Concern when the provision of a secure off-road parking is removed from those tenants wishing to or potentially wishing to rent garage space;
- 37 garages are to be demolished with only 15 spaces to be provided on the new development, there seems to be an anomaly as it states there is enough space on the highway to accept any downfall. The assumption that there is a reserve capacity on the streets to accommodate many further cars seems retrograde when there is a MC policy to encourage folk not to park on-street;
- There is concern that this application may fall foul of Policy H9: Backland Development of the MLP as there may be loss of privacy of adjacent properties whereby those properties are on three sides of the developing site as well as a significant increase in noise or disturbance to adjacent properties from traffic using the access. There is also a fear that the proposed sites access and egress is in fact quite narrow and may give cause for concern to emergency and service vehicles alike;
- Although they object to the application they acknowledge that there could be a positive side to this application whereby if the planning authority was mindful into approving this application for 5 dwellings a condition of approval should be that any potential tenants or shared-owners are listed as being locally resident to the Hoo Parish area.

A petition received in two parts with a total of 129 signatures together with 11 individual representations objecting to the proposals have been received, in summary raising the following concerns:

- Design is out of keeping;
- Too many properties for the area, too dense, loss of 'breathing space' for the estate, becoming a ghetto;
- Conservation/rainwater run-off issues, many residents have already paved their front gardens to park cars on;
- Immense impact on an established settled neighbourhood;
- Loss of light and overshadowing;
- Loss of outlook and visual amenity;
- Too close to neighbours;
- Loss of privacy;
- Noise and disturbance including dust from the proposed use and during the construction period;
- Increased pollution/lower air quality and more noise due to loss of garage parking;
- Inadequate parking, there are 40 garages on the site and local roads are already full of parked cars, even more cars will be parked on street but where, bus drivers will have a job getting through and what reports will be carried out to address this;
- The 25 spaces on site for 5 houses admits that there is insufficient parking on surrounding roads;
- The parking survey does not take into account weekends and holidays when an increase in traffic is normal;
- The access is too narrow/single track, issue for emergency vehicles, increased traffic levels and construction vehicles;
- Local roads are unsuitable for construction vehicles, road signs at the entrance to Bells Lane say they are prohibited from entry;
- Previous proposals were lost on road access, no change;
- The parking spaces will not afford the security of a garage;
- Neighbours' boundaries may be damaged by demolition;
- The adjacent substation will be highly hazardous during construction;
- What checks will be made regarding asbestos/removal?;
- Who will check there are no bats present?;
- Hoo village road infrastructure does not support the increase in cars as a result of recent housing development already built, there is already too high a volume of traffic for safety, congestion and increased accidents;
- Lack of other infrastructure (medical, schools, etc) already, added strain;
- Too much development in Hoo, everything is approved here, other areas available;
- The application is misleading as the site backs onto other roads, not just St Johns Road;
- An application to rent a garage was not granted almost a year ago as MHS were holding back due to development proposals;

- Not all neighbours have been consulted and signs have been removed before the closing date.

One comment has been received as the application site boundary appeared to include part of 176 Knight Road (*the plans have now been amended to exclude this small area*).

One letter asks for a garage nearby or an allocated space at the back of their garden if the garages are demolished,

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and are considered to conform.

Planning Appraisal

Principle

The site is located within a primarily residential area within the confines of Hoo St Werburgh. The addition of five dwellings is considered to be minor in scale in the context of this rural settlement and in these circumstances there is no overriding objection in principle to the proposed development including with regard to Policy H11 of the Local Plan or the advice given in the NPPF, paragraph 49 advising that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. However as the development would be located in a 'backland' position, which would not have a conventional road frontage, it also needs to be considered with regard to Policy H9 of the Local Plan. The proposed scheme would not constitute piecemeal development that would threaten the comprehensive development of a wider area, therefore in accordance with Policy H9 its acceptability will rest on matters of detail, to be examined below.

Street Scene and Design

At present the main part of the site is a large hardsurfaced area with garage blocks around the edges. It is functional but does not add merit to the character and appearance of the surrounding residential area which mainly consists of two storey houses with mansard style roofs. Although the site is in a backland position due to its substantial size it is considered that it can accommodate the proposed terrace of houses without creating a cramped form of development. The design of the houses is perhaps not outstanding and does differ from the detailing of the closest existing houses, however it is considered that it would sit satisfactorily within the area. The scheme is rather car parking dominant due to the high number of spaces proposed, although less so than the site is at present, with the landscaping details being key to helping soften these parking areas. In summary the visual impact and design of the development is considered acceptable including with regard to Policies BNE1 and H9 of the Local Plan and to the advice given in the NPPF (section 7).

Amenity Considerations

There are two main amenity considerations, the impact on neighbours and the standard of amenity which would be experienced by potential residents of the site itself.

With regard to the impact on neighbours the development would result in a significant change compared to the existing use of the site, it currently being a large hardstanding with garages around the edges. The site and its surroundings are sloping, such that land levels generally fall towards the site access, with the southern side of the main area of the site being lower than the northeast and northwest sides. The position of the proposed houses has been selected with regard to this, such that their rear elevations face towards the back of the higher houses in Kingshill Drive, with a greater separation distance from their frontages to the lower houses in St Johns Road. There would be approximately 27m between the rear of the proposed terrace and the rear of the two storey part of the houses in Kingshill Drive, the majority of the proposed terrace being set back approx. 11.5m from the boundary with these neighbours. The front of the terrace would be approx. 38m from the rear of the house at 6 St Johns Road. To the northwest side the terrace would be 25.5m from the rear of 180 Knights Road, approx. 18.6m from 178 Knights Road slightly to the front, set off the angled boundary by approx. 4.5m to 7m, and to the south it would be approx. 31m from 9 Walters Road, set off the boundary by a minimum of 13.7m.

Although neighbours are used to a very different outlook, bearing in mind the separation distances given above and also taking into account the land level differences across the area, it is not considered that the development would result in an unacceptable loss of light or privacy or an overbearing impact on adjacent residents. It is noted that the adopted Medway Housing Design Standards (MHDS) require a minimum of 20m between new and existing dwellings, this distance being exceeded.

Concern has also been raised regarding noise and disturbance from the site use. The proposed houses are likely to result in increased activities levels on the site, however being a residential use in a residential area it is not considered that this would cause unreasonable harm. The site is currently used for parking, albeit garaging rather than open spaces, with noise from vehicles accessing and manoeuvring within the site already occurring. This includes the use of the vehicular access between 4 and 6 St Johns Road, between the sides of these two dwellings. On balance in the current circumstances and bearing in mind the built up nature of the surroundings it is not considered that the level or form of development proposed would result in unreasonable harm to the amenities of neighbours. However it is noted that the boundary treatment with adjacent rear gardens would be important in protecting the amenities of neighbours, particularly with the demolition of the garages which adjoin the site boundaries, and full details of the boundary treatment would be required by planning condition.

As the site is closely related to neighbouring properties a condition requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan is recommended in order to help limit

the impact on the construction period on the amenities of local residents. Whilst any buildings works are likely to cause some degree of noise and disturbance this would help to limit the impact to an acceptable level.

In summary there is no objection to the development in respect of its impact on the living conditions of neighbours, including their light, privacy and outlook.

With regard to the amenities of future occupants of the development itself the proposed dwellings have been assessed with regard to the MHDS:

| Number of bedrooms /occupancy | Number of units | MHDS minimum Gross Internal Area | Gross Internal Area proposed |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 bedroom 4 person | 5 houses | 83m ² | 83m ² |

Although the shape of the second bedrooms is not conventional and the living room is 3 rather than ideally at least 3.2m wide, it is considered that the proposed houses would provide an acceptable living environment for future occupants. Externally the houses would have reasonable rear garden areas, the house at the northwest end having a significant area to the side to compensate for the limited length of part of its rear garden.

In summary the amenity implications of the development are considered to be acceptable including with regard to Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan and the fourth core planning principle in paragraph 17 of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking

There are two main issues, the impact of the loss of the existing garages and the impact of the proposed development.

The application submissions include a parking survey and associated information. This says that of the 37 garages on the site 8 are untenanted at present, 1 is used by MHS with 29 rented out. Of the garages that are rented out 6 tenants do not live in the local area (not in Hoo, the closest being in Strood), leaving 22 garages potentially housing the vehicles of local residents. A survey of the tenants resulted in 15 replies, these saying that 8 are used for vehicle parking and 7 for the storage of household items (6 of these are locals, with 1 respondent from Sittingbourne). Assuming that the 8 garages for which no replies were received are also used for vehicle parking the development would result in a displacement of 16 local residents vehicles.

A local parking survey was undertaken at 1am on a Thursday and Friday evening. In the survey area 141 unrestricted on-street parking spaces were identified and an average of 80 spaces (57%) were found to be in use, leaving 61 spaces free. The usage in the surveyed streets varied, for example in St Johns Road an average of 22% of spaces were in use, leaving 21 spaces, whereas in Knights Road an average of 72.5% were in use, leaving 6 spaces. In addition it is noted that the survey area is limited – it does not include Kingshill Drive to the northeast of the site (linked by a footpath), whereas a long section of Wylie Road much further away has been

included.

The proposed development includes 25 parking spaces. 9 of these would be in front of the proposed terrace of houses, with 1 to the side of the rear garden of the end of terrace. This level of provision, 10 spaces, would exceed the adopted minimum parking standards for a development of this size. The remaining 15 spaces are intended to accommodate cars displaced by the removal of the garages. As stated above it is anticipated that the removal of the garages would displace 16 local residents vehicles, such that in theory only 1 of these could not be accommodated in the proposed alternative open parking on the site. Whilst there are some queries regarding the area/extent of the local parking survey, in the light of the minimal overall loss of local used parking spaces resulting from the development it is not considered that refusal on this ground could be substantiated.

In reaching the above views consideration has been given to previous planning application ME/97/0551 which was an outline application for the residential development of the site including the demolition of the garages, the indicative scheme showing 6 dwellings and 15 parking spaces. Permission was refused due to the loss of off-street parking provision, prejudicial to conditions of highway safety and efficiency, and a subsequent appeal was dismissed. The Inspector found that the demolition of the garages without any sure replacements would have resulted in a significant increase in on-street parking in the roads around the site, unduly adding to congestion and hazards to road safety. However the current scheme includes replacement parking for the displaced local garage parking, such that the circumstances are now materially different.

In addition to the above it is relevant to note that the Local Planning Authority cannot require the existing garages to be made available for parking purposes – the owners can ‘mothball’ them without the need for planning permission, even though this could have an impact on parking and amenity in the local area.

With regard to the parking and highways impact of the new development as noted above, parking for the proposed houses would be provided in excess of the adopted standards. The sole vehicular access to the site is from St Johns Road although there are also pedestrian footpaths from Kingshill Drive and Knights Road, which would remain. The vehicular access is shown to be designed as a shared surface which would be approx. 4.4m in width. This would involve the creation of a level surface up to either side boundary and also the incorporation of small areas of the neighbouring front gardens at the access to St Johns Road in order to provide room for refuse vehicle manoeuvring. Although a wider access may be preferable it is considered that this would provide a satisfactory means of access to the site, including for emergency vehicles. Whilst vehicles may not be able to pass on the access, as at present, it is straight such that drivers at either end can see whether or not it is already in use by another vehicle before driving on to it. Rumble strips are shown to restrict speed on the access and the access at St Johns Road would be altered to a footway with a drop kerb (rather than the current bellmouth) in order to reinforce pedestrian priority.

In summary in the above circumstances, as the existing parking situation is unlikely to be made worse by the development, the proposals are considered acceptable with

regard to parking matters. In addition the proposed access arrangements are considered satisfactory and it is not considered that any change in the traffic levels generated by the site as a whole will cause a danger to highway safety. There are no objections with regard to Policies T1, T2 and T13 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

As the site is currently used for garages a desk top study to assess any potential contamination risks has been undertaken. The desk top study recommends that a site investigation is undertaken to support the conceptual site model and this would need to include testing of samples for a general suite of contaminants and hydrocarbons as well as asbestos, due to the previous use of the site as garages. This would be required by planning conditions with regard to Policy BNE23 of the Local Plan and paragraph 121 of the NPPF.

There is no vegetation of note on the site and whilst there are some trees in neighbouring gardens no vegetation of special merit would be affected by the development. A condition requiring landscaping details for the site is proposed, which would include the need for surfacing materials to ensure permeability for surface water due to address any potential run-off issues.

A query has been raised regarding checks for bats on the site. The Councils Ecological Advisor has confirmed that the site has low potential for bats due to the corrugated roofs on the garages – the temperature within the garages would reflect the temperature outside and as a result the fluctuating temperature makes it less suitable for roosting bats. However bats may forage or commute within those areas so any development should be designed to minimise lighting and create landscaping which will be beneficial for bats and provide roosting opportunities – this would be addressed in the proposed conditions. It is also suggested that any vegetation is removed in winter in order to minimise the very low potential for occasional bat roosting, also avoiding the bird breeding season.

The Parish Council has requested that if approval is granted it be a condition of this that any potential tenants or shared-owners are listed as being locally resident to the Hoo Parish area. Whilst this may be preferable there are no reasonable planning grounds for imposing such a condition in the application circumstances, therefore this suggestion has not be taken up.

Concern has been raised regarding the lack of sufficient infrastructure in the Hoo area, including in respect of health and education facilities. In accordance with the adopted Developers Contributions Guide contributions are sought for such matters (when relevant) for major developments (ten or more dwellings), but not for the smaller scale currently proposed. In these circumstances refusal on this ground could not be substantiated with regard to current Council policies.

Concern has also been raised regarding a lack of consultation and the address of the application site. It is recognised that the address only specifically refers to the properties either side of the vehicular entrance to the site but it does specify the garage site and all neighbours who immediately adjoin the site have been individually consulted.

Local Finance Considerations

None considered relevant to the current application.

Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

In summary there is no overriding objection in principle to the redevelopment of this garage site for residential purposes. It is considered that the development would complement its surroundings and would not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbours. The standard of accommodation would provide a suitable living environment for potential occupants and the parking and highway impacts are considered acceptable. There are no objections with regard to the advice in Policies BNE1, BNE2, BNE23, BNE38, H4, H9, T1, T2 and T13 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

This application would normally fall to be determined under officer's delegated powers but is being reported for Members' consideration due to the number of letters of representation and petition expressing a view contrary to the officers' recommendation.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here <http://publicaccess.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>