

Agenda Item 42.

Development Management Ref No	No weeks on day of committee	Parish	Ward	Listed by:
160251	26/8	Wargrave	Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe	Application listed by Cllr Halsall

Applicant Mr & Mrs Niaz & Olivia Faruki
Location The Old Pump House, Bath Road, Kiln Green. **Postcode** RG10 9UT
Proposal Full application for the erection of 1 no dwelling and the preservation and restoration of existing structures on site.
Type Full
PS Category 13
Officer Mark Croucher

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Planning Committee on 17 August 2016
REPORT PREPARED BY Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

This planning application is to be decided by the Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Halsall for the following reasons:

- Fulfils the requirements within Paragraph 55 of the NPPF.
- It is pertinent to this site only – a big consideration for a para 55 house in Green Belt.
- Sustainability credentials.
- Historical importance.
- Self-build.

The application comprises of the erection of 1 new 4 bedroom residential dwelling following the restoration of a sewage treatment plant thought to have been erected on the site during WWII. The applicant considers that the existing remains have historical significance and the optimum solution for their preservation is the creation of 1 new dwelling incorporating the existing features.

Having considered all of the relevant information, the existing site has limited historical significance. The restoration of the sewage treatment plant features and the erection of 1 large new residential dwelling in the countryside and Green Belt would result in several harmful impacts.

The proposal will result in an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt, which by definition is harmful to the Green Belt's permanence and openness. There are no overriding very special circumstances that would outweigh this harm.

The proposed development will be an unsustainable isolated new home in countryside for which there are no special circumstances, resulting in an urbanising encroachment to the detriment of the character and appearance on the countryside and the occupier's reliance on private motor vehicles.

The proposed development, by reason of its size and proximity to the neighbouring grade II listed building called Castlemans, would have a detrimental impact on the

setting of this designated heritage asset.

The proposed development, by reason of the large size of the dwelling; sizeable areas of associated garden & hard surfacing; siting back from the road frontage adjacent to the open countryside immediate to the east, south and west, would result in an urbanising encroachment into the rural landscape that will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

It has not been demonstrated that the impact of the development on an active Badger Setts would ensure the survival of the badgers in their existing range and at the same population status, with provision of adequate alternative habitats if setts and foraging areas are destroyed.

The application is accordingly recommended for refusal for the reasons set out in this report.

PLANNING STATUS

- Green Belt
- Countryside
- Badger Setts Consultation Zone
- Flood Zone 1
- Risk of Surface Water Flooding

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the REFUSAL of planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposal will result in an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt, which by definition is harmful to the Green Belt's permanence and openness. There are no overriding very special circumstances that would outweigh this harm and the proposal is contrary to Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP12, MDD Local Plan Policies CC01, CC02 and TB01 and the core planning principles and section 9 of the NPPF.
2. The proposed development will be an unsustainable isolated new home in countryside for which there are no special circumstances, resulting in an urbanising encroachment to the detriment of the character and appearance on the countryside and the occupier's reliance on private motor vehicles. The proposal is contrary to policies CP1, CP2, CP3 and CP6 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, CC01 and CC02 of the MDD Local Plan, the Borough Design Guide SPD and the core planning principles & section 6 of the NPPF.
3. The proposed development, by reason of its size and proximity to the neighbouring grade II listed building called Castlemans, would have a detrimental impact on the setting of this designated heritage asset. As such the proposal is contrary to policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy, CC01 and TB24 of the MDD Local Plan, The Borough Design Guide SPD and the core planning principles and section 7 & 12 of the NPPF.
4. The proposed development, by reason of the large size of the dwelling; sizeable areas of associated garden & hard surfacing; siting back from the road frontage

adjacent to the open countryside immediate to the east, south and west, would result in an urbanising encroachment into the rural landscape that will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. The development is contrary to policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, CC01, TB06 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, The Borough Design Guide SPD and the core planning principles and section 7 of the NPPF.

5. It has not been demonstrated that the impact of the development on an active Badger Settle would ensure the survival of the badgers in their existing range and at the same population status, with provision of adequate alternative habitats if setts and foraging areas are destroyed, contrary to policies CP1, CP3 and CP7 of the Core Strategy, CC01 and TB23 of the MDD Local Plan and section 11 of the NPPF.

PLANNING HISTORY

CLE/2014/0138- Application for a certificate of existing use for the continued use of land as residential garden incidental to Linden Place. Approved 10/03/2014.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	0.46 Hectare
Previous land use(s) and floorspace(s)	Agricultural / Nil Use & Residential Garden.
Number of jobs created/lost	None specified
Existing parking spaces	0
Proposed parking spaces	>4

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Environmental Health – No comment.

Highways – No objection subject to conditions.

Conservation Officer – Objection raised on grounds that the conversion of the remains into a residential dwelling is not the optimum solution for the site and the impact on the setting of a neighbouring Grade II Listed Building.

Ecologist – Objection: there is not a clear mitigation strategy within this report that demonstrates that there will be no net loss of biodiversity.

Archology – No objection subject to conditions.

Trees and Landscaping – Recommend approval with no conditions.

REPRESENTATIONS

4 letters of objection points raised (in summary):

- Approval will set a harmful and unwanted precedent to other homeowners which will totally undermine and devalue the importance of the Green Belt development in this area.
- There are already too many driveways in this part of the A4 which have been the

direct cause of a few accidents with people trying to join an already very busy and fast road. The junction of Scarletts Lane and the A4 are just a few yards away. The added traffic flow will make this fast stretch far more dangerous.

- The development will be visible from a neighbouring garden.
- The name, the Old Pump House, is misleading. It is clearly an attempt to pass off a temporary sewage treatment works from the 1940s as an important or historic well or water-pump for the Castlemans Estate.
- Until 2015, these remains were regularly used by the owners of Linden Place as a site for their bonfires.
- The submitted photos of high, well-defined brick structures are in my clients' view misleading, in that some parts have been substantially reconstructed in the past year as demonstrated by the clean lines of the rebuilt structures and the bricks used in the reconstruction. By carrying out this work the applicants have shown that the structures can easily be restored/maintained without further development being necessary.
- Planning approval would set a precedent for large-scale Green Belt development in Kiln Green.
- The proposed development will make the existing remains of the sewage treatment works significantly more visible in the landscape.
- There is no justification for a large 4 bedroom dwelling on the site.
- There are historical inaccuracies in the proposal.
- The period when the temporary sewage treatment works were operational represents only a tiny fraction of the documented 600-year history of Castlemans.
- There is no evidence of POWs working on the temporary sewage treatment works, although it is possible that their effluent may have passed through it.
- Even if the temporary sewage treatment works were assessed as having some meaningful historic value, this would be the entire reason for NOT building a brand-new four bedroom house on top of it.
- Adverse impact on the setting of the neighbouring Grade II listed building.
- The proposal will have an adverse impact on an active badger sett on the site.
- The additional traffic created would have highway safety implications.
- The existing structure was the sewage works built during the war by US and British soldiers and was not constructed to be lived in.
- This is Green Belt land and not for building on.
- The development would blight the outlook from the neighbouring listed building.
- The A4 is busy at peak times.
- The proposed creeping development in the green belt would impact the rural character of Kiln Green and promote urban sprawl.

1 letters of support points raised (in summary):

- The structures on the site have been standing for 70 years and cannot be considered as temporary.
- They are in need of restoration to preserve them as part of the WWII history of Kiln Green and Wargrave.
- None of the buildings have been reconstructed.
- The Old Pump House and the water treatment plant were built to service the Nissan Huts on site which ran across the land adjacent to Castlemans, now Linden Place and Copper Beeches and also in the middle of this land.
- The development will enhance the area.
- The restoration of the building will benefit the view from Linden Place.

- The proposal incorporates a landscape plan.
- The high structures of the brick buildings have never blended into the landscape and due to their height and build they have always been seen from our house.
- The site has had vagrants using it.
- The restoration and preservation of these buildings of historical importance by a residential dwelling is the acceptable option.
- There are no other uses for the buildings.
- Fulfils the requirements within Paragraph 55 of the NPPF.
- It is pertinent to this site only – a big consideration for a para 55 house in Green Belt.
- Sustainability credentials.
- Historical importance.
- Self-build.

Wargrave Parish Council – No objection:

It is accepted that very special circumstances exist in terms of the history and heritage of the site. If the application is approved, the parish council request that permitted development rights is removed.

APPLICANTS POINTS

- The development seeks a self-build family dwelling for the applicant and their children in familial and supporting local setting.
- To achieve Very Special Circumstances, the development proposal has excelled at fulfilling the aim to preserve and celebrate the onsite heritage asset, whilst also managing to respect the wider surrounding context and Green Belt designation. This has been achieved through a combination of:
 - An Integrated response to heritage preservation and celebration from the whole design team;
 - A responsive, honest, and exceptional approach to architectural design;
 - A landscape design which is site specific, uncontrived, and includes enhancements and mitigation based on thorough wider impact assessments;
 - Favourable baseline contextual circumstances, including existing on site buildings, surrounding land uses, visibility, and accessibility to local facilities and services;
 - High environmental specification through an integrated (and retrofitted) approach to resource management – including passive bio-climatic construction, power generation, and SUDS;
 - Social sustainability, including self-build and education programming; and
 - Framework paragraph 55 compliance on three special grounds – (heritage, reuse of buildings, and exceptional quality and innovative nature).

- All the harms identified are pro-actively addressed and mitigated against through design choices evidenced in the submitted development.
- It is considered that the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm caused is outweighed by the clear material benefits of the scheme to the degree that Very Special Circumstances exist. The development should therefore be approved.

PLANNING POLICY

NPPF	Chapter 4: Promoting sustainable transport Chapter 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes Chapter 7: Requiring good design Chapter 9: Protecting Green Belt land Chapter 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change Chapter 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment Chapter 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
Core Strategy	CP1 Sustainable Development CP2 Inclusive communities CP3 General Principles for Development CP6 Managing travel demand CP7 Biodiversity CP9 Scale and location of development proposals CP11 Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside) CP12 Green Belt
MDD Local Plan	CC01 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 Development Limits CC03 Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC06 Noise CC07 Parking CC09 Development and Flood Risk (from all sources) CC10 Sustainable Drainage TB01 Development within the Green Belt TB06 Development of Private Residential gardens TB07 Internal Space Standards TB21 Landscape Character TB23 Biodiversity and Development TB24 Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas). TB25 Archaeology

PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of development

Green Belt

1. The application site is outside of any defined settlement boundaries and is within the designated Countryside and the Green Belt. Policies CP12 of the Core

Strategy and TB01 of the MDD Local Plan seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development. Section 9 of the NPPF *'Protecting Green Belt land'* states that a Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate development within the Green Belt (apart from the exceptions stated in paragraphs 89 & 90) and that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (VSC). It is further emphasised in the NPPF that *'the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'*

2. One of the exceptions stated in paragraph 89 of the NPPF is *'the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development'*. Annex 2: Glossary (a) of the NPPF sets out the definition of previously developed land which excludes (a) *'land in built-up areas such as residential gardens'* and (b) *'land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time'*.
3. The applicant considers the site as falling within the definition of previously developed land and therefore falling with the Green Belt exception stated above. There is however certain factors which lead officers to consider that the site is not previously developed land in accordance with the NPPF definition. It is noted that the northern part of the site comprises of the undeveloped residential garden of the property known as Linden Place. The southern part of the site, where the building remains are located, is considered to have a use of either 'agricultural', as it was part of the traditional field boundary, or a 'nil' use, because the site has no distinguishable lawful use class due to the substantial period of time it has been inactive.
4. The area where the building remains are situated was, up until the last few years, covered by planting and mature trees and formed part of a natural field boundary. The Council's aerial photographs (set out below) depict how the site was part of the boundary around an agricultural field. When the golf course was built to the east, the site still retained the characteristics of the traditional field boundary, comprising of trees and mature planting. Aerial photographs as recent as 2010 show the buildings being covered by overgrown planting.



1981.



1996.



1999.



2010.



5. The area surrounding the building's remains has now been completely cleared of

vegetation. This would have only occurred by human intervention. The planting and trees would have not naturally disappeared in such a short space of time. Therefore whilst the application submission contends that the site is brownfield (previous developed land) and the permanent structures have not blended into the landscape, the exposure of these structures and the removal of vegetation is a manmade intervention that has reversed the natural erosion of the buildings into the landscape.

6. The aerial photographs also clearly depict the inactivity of the site over the years. Ordinance Survey maps annotate the site as '*disused*'. There is no indication that the buildings had ever been used in the intervening period from World War II to the present day. The mature trees and planting depicted in the aerial photographs would have taken a significant period of time to establish on the site and this clearly would have not occurred if the site was in some sort of active use. The existing 'structures' have significantly weathered and deteriorated: the Conservation Officer has described them as being in an advance state of decay. Even considering the removal of the substantial vegetation, the building remains are discrete within the overall landscape.
7. Taking the above into consideration, the application site is not 'previously developed land' in accordance with the NPPF definition.
8. The exception referred to above also states that the development should not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed dwelling would be substantially larger than the small low key remains on the site, resulting in a greater impact on the Green Belt. The proposed buildings would be twice as high and have a footprint 200% larger than the existing building remains. The incorporation of large areas of glazing and a sizeable residential garden will make the development more prominent in the Green Belt landscape. The application is also inappropriate development within the Green Belt for this reason. (The size of the proposed dwelling is explored in greater detail in later sections of this report).
9. The proposal does not fall within any of the exceptions set out in paragraph 89 or 90 of the NPPF and it is therefore considered as inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Inappropriate development within the Green Belt is only permissible in very special circumstances (VSC), where the harm to the openness to Green Belt, any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other factors. The applicant considers that the historical context of the site is the main very special circumstance in favour of the development. The applicant also refers to a submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and sustainability information.

Very Special Circumstances

10. The applicant's '*very special circumstances*' centres around the historical aspects of the site and the restoration proposed by the development. It is argued that the disused buildings on the site were used as a sewage treatment plant in connection with a WWII POW camp and when the US Army temporarily occupied the neighbouring grade II listed building Cattlemans. The proposed development would therefore preserve these artefacts.

11. With regard to the historical context of the application and the site, the Council's Conservation Officer has considered the proposal and advised the following:

This application relates to what is described as a 'Pump House', thought to be the remains of a water treatment facility built during the latter part of the Second World War as part of a satellite POW camp based at Castlemans (Grade II Listed)...

There are two main issues to consider from a heritage perspective: 1) The significance of the remains of the 'Pump House' and 2) Any impact of the proposed development on the significance of the adjoining C 18th house, Castlemans (Grade 2).

The Pump House – The physical remains of the structure are in an advanced state of decay, with some structures being reduced to ground level. As described at pre-app stage, the only building surviving in anything like its original form is the brick and concrete roofed 'hut', but few fixtures/fittings survive. As a result the remains providing limited evidential value. The function of the other above ground structures is difficult to discern and, without this understanding, the value of the structure is largely limited to the peripheral role it played as part of the general war effort (local historic value).

A good deal of attention has clearly been given to designing the proposed dwelling around the remains, but much is conjectural, for example the proposed 'water tank' [The water tank feature has now been removed from the application] and, in my view, does little to enhance the understanding of the installation. In fact, by imposing a domestic change of use and building upon it, the new fabric and use will inevitably obscure its historic function and identity. Whilst high quality visual representations of the converted structure aim to illustrate that its' setting will be largely unaltered, the long-term implications of a residential use need to be considered. It is highly likely that pressure for the site to be adapted for domestic use will result in the desire for alterations and the accumulation of domestic paraphernalia. It is questionable whether the rather idealised illustration in the application is not considered to be sustainable in the long-term.

Notwithstanding the other considerations as to the principle of development here, I had mentioned at pre-app stage that an objection to the removal of these remains as part of a scheme to redevelop the site is unlikely providing the facility was recorded at an appropriate level of detail. This remains my view given the limited local interest of the structure and poor visual relationship with the adjacent listed building.

Impact on the significance of Castlemans (Grade 2) – The impact on the setting of this listed country house is considered to have been underplayed in the application. Unlike the service end (including the former stables) which extends to the northeast, the main house has been designed to take in views from the south and southeast, with the principle rooms and bay windows addressing the gardens in this direction. It is understood that additions were made in the late C 19th and that these included a ground storey ball room and glazed structure to the southwest end of the main house. Between the 1899 and 1911 Ordnance Survey maps, a structure along the southwest boundary appears. This map evidence and character of the brickwork suggest this feature is likely to be the

brick retaining wall and ditch evident today. There is a likelihood this is a ha-ha, designed to enable more expansive views of the landscape beyond the formal gardens whilst excluding any grazing animals in fields to the southwest.

Although indicated as being open in 1911, this boundary is now lined with a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees which partially obscure the existing Pump House structures from within the grounds. However, more extensive views become possible from the upper storeys of the house, and the proposed development and use will noticeably increase the presence of this structure, even at ground level. Historic England guidance on the assessment of views and the setting of heritage assets describe how views from within, into, and out of a heritage asset can contribute to its setting and therefore significance. A buildings' setting need not necessarily be confined to its curtilage and can often extend well beyond. In this case, it is likely that longer views over and beyond the application site contribute to the significance of the house.

The existing remains would become very noticeable were they not screened by the boundary planting, and it should be noted that this installation is a relatively recent feature, considering the age of the listed building. Increasing the built form on the site, together with its domestic use, would add to the intrusion into views from the main house. Relying on planting to mitigate the harm to views in this case is not considered to be sustainable or appropriate. The harm to the significance is considered (in NPPF terms) to be less than substantial. The proposed development neither preserves nor enhances the setting of this listed building and would fail to satisfy the aims of MDD Local Plan policy TB24.'

As a result of the above the impact of the proposed development is not considered to be justified on conservation grounds and I am unable to support this application.

12. The water tank element of the proposed development has since been removed from the application but the Conservation Officer has confirmed that this would not alter their overall assessment of the development or their objections to it.
13. The remains on the site have not been Listed by Historic England and have no national or local designation as a 'heritage asset'. The applicant has previously been advised of the listed procedure and the Conservation Officer has further stated:

'Having considered the building remains against the EH Selection Guide for Military Structures I'm reasonably confident they are not of sufficient interest to merit listing. The guide stresses that, unlike WWI structures, WWII buildings survive in much greater numbers and the designation of POW camp structures is only likely in exceptional cases. The key considerations in discerning worthy buildings include rarity, survival of the fabric in anything like its original form, relationship with other building groups or listed buildings and the survival of fixtures/fittings/signage. In this case, there is some limited documentary evidence that Nissen Huts were present as part of the camp, and also that the pump house/hut was associated with the adjoining Castlemans House (Grade 2). Although the water treatment process is just about distinguishable, the fabric of the buildings is in a very poor condition, with one structure reduced to its foundations. The brick and cast concrete roofed hut is the only building to survive

in anything like its original form, although very few fixtures or details survive, the telephone/power connection being the notable exception.

My view at this stage therefore is that the buildings are of some local interest as the surviving physical remains of a former POW Camp that was associated with the adjoining house, Castlemans. I don't feel there would be a strong justification to insist on the retention of the pump house and hut.'

14. The Conservation Officer considers that the structures on the site have limited interest and the proposed development would harm the setting of a neighbouring grade II listed building. The remains have no historical designation and are unlikely to in the future. As such, the historical factors emphasised by the applicant do not amount to very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm to Green Belt, or the harm to the setting of the adjacent grade II listed building. If the application was being considered solely on its historical merits, it would be refused due to the harm to the setting of the neighbouring grade II listed building called 'Castlemans'. The historical aspects of the proposal amount to an overall negative impact and therefore cumulatively cannot be deemed to be VSC that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of being inappropriate development.
15. It is considered that the sewerage treatment plant was constructed as a temporary feature during WWII. The property Castlemans has been located on the site for approximately 600 years and the use of the site during WWII represents only a small proportion of the history of the adjacent grade II listed building. The significance of the site during WWII refers predominantly to Castlemans, rather than the temporary sewage treatment plant. Castlemans is a designated Heritage Asset and the history of the site during WWII will thus be preserved with this building. It is considered that the temporary sewage treatment plant has limited historic interest.
16. The application submission also refers to the sustainability credentials of the building as contributing to a very special circumstances case. However the submitted Design and Access sets out that *'a full Code for Sustainable Homes audit or water calculation, for the house has not been undertaken at this Planning Stage. Once the scheme reaches detail design stage, it is the client and the design team's ambition that the house will significantly exceed the sustainability targets set out within the Building Regulations.'* The sustainable credentials of the proposed dwelling are therefore only aspirational at this stage and as such this has little weight with regard to the applicant's very special circumstances argument. It is stated that the development will utilise a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs), solar panels and a biomass boiler. These feature are however not unusual or exemplar sustainable technologies and would have limited weight in outweighing the harm to the Green Belt.
17. The proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt and there are no very special circumstances that will outweigh that harm. The development, by definition, would have a harmful impact on the Green Belt. Furthermore there are no factors that will outweigh the other harm identified in this report, relating to the impact of the setting of the neighbouring grade II listed building; impact on the countryside landscape character of the area by reason of an urbanising encroachment; and the impact on biodiversity.

Countryside

18. The application site is also in the designated countryside. The policy considerations for development within the countryside and the Green Belt have similarities but also differences. The application must comply with the criteria set out in the countryside policies to be recommended for approval. This section of the report will consider the proposed development in relation to the countryside policies in the development plan and the NPPF.
19. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that *'local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances'*. First of all, one needs to consider whether the proposed dwelling will be situated in an isolated location. This section of Bath Road typical comprises of residential properties situated along the road frontage and this layout is typical of rural areas, where small coalesces of buildings are set side by side along a highway. The proposed dwelling would be situated significantly back from the road frontage (200 metres) and will encroach into the open countryside to the south & east. The development will result in changing the use of the site into residential. There would be no buildings next to the property and the aerial photographs and location plan show that the proposed dwelling would be uncharacteristically isolated from the ribbon of development along Bath Road. As such, the location of the building is considered to be isolated when considering its physical siting.
20. Secondly, the meaning of *isolated* could also refer to the proximity of the dwelling in relation to local facilities and services. This meaning of isolated is closely linked with concepts of sustainability, where new residential dwellings are more appropriate in areas where the occupants would be in a safe and convenient walking distance to local facilities and services and would not be reliant on the use of private motor vehicles for basic amenities.
21. The Borough Design Guide SPD states *'if places are to be sustainable then the aim should be to create: Walkable neighbourhoods, with a range of facilities within 10 minutes walking distance of residential areas, which encourage people to travel on foot or by bicycle.'* Walkable neighbourhoods are defined in Manual for Streets as those typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes walking distance from residential area. Manual for Streets clarifies that 10 minutes walking distance is roughly 800 metres. The Urban Design Compendium further advises:
- 'People should be able to walk in 2-3 minutes (250 metres) to the post box or telephone box: the newsagent's should be within 5 minutes (400 metres). There should be local shops, the bus stop, the health centre and perhaps a primary school within a walking distance of (say) 10 minutes (800 metres).'*
22. Located to the north east of the application site, along Bath Road, there is a petrol station with a small associated shop. The petrol station is approximately 950 metres walking distance from the application site and would fall outside of the definition of a convenient walking distance set out above. The associated shop sells a limited range of products. It is not a convenience store that is now commonly found in some larger petrol stations.

23. There is a private health clinic located along Linden Hill Lane but this would not be considered as a public facility or service given its private nature. Furthermore Linden Hill Lane has no footpath or street lighting and therefore is not considered as being accessible.

24. There are several pubs located around the area. These would be respectively 750m (The Bird in Hand), 1,100m (The Old Devil Inn) 1,950m (The Royal Oak) and 1,550m (Horse and Groom) walking distance from the application site. One of the pubs (The Bird in Hand) would be within 10 minutes walking distance (800m) from the site. However this facility alone would not result in a level of services and amenities that would warrant the location being considered as sustainable.

25. A garden centre is located to the west of the application site and this would be located 1120 metres walking distance from the application site. It is not considered that a garden centre would sell produce to meet the day to day needs of local residents. Knowl Hill C of E Primary School will be located approximately 1850 metres walking distance from the proposed dwelling.

26. As well as considering facilities and services within walking distance to the application site, one must consider such amenities that can be easily reached by good public transport links. There are bus stops in both directions within safe and convenient walking distance to the site. The 4 and 4A is the service that uses these bus stops and provides a route to Maidenhead. However these services are infrequent and do not meet definition of a 'good public transport service set out in policy CP6 of the Core Strategy. Policy CP6 states that good public transport services should meet the following requirements:

'(a) at least a thirty minute service frequency during peak times (7:00 to 9:00 and 16:00 to 19:00 Monday to Saturday); and b) At least an hourly service frequency during off-peak hours (9:00 to 16:00 and 19:00 to 22:00 Monday to Saturday and between 7:00 and 22:00 on Sundays'.

27. The 4 and 4a bus routes fall substantially below this frequency of service as there is only a maximum of 6 services each direction per day Monday to Friday. There would only be 2 services per day in each direction on Saturdays and no service on Sundays. Given the infrequent service of buses along Bath Road, it is considered that basic services and amenities would not be easily accessible by bus.

28. Taking the above into consideration, the site is considered to be in an isolated location as the occupants would be reliant on private motor vehicles to access basic services and amenities. The proposed development is therefore contrary to paragraph 55 of the NPPF as the development would result in an isolated new home within the countryside.

29. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF relates to countryside only and states that isolated new homes can be permissible if the proposal meets the following special circumstances:

- *'Where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure*

the future of heritage assets.'

- *'Where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.'*
- *'The exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling. Such a design should:*
 - be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;*
 - reflect the highest standards in architecture;*
 - significantly enhance its immediate setting; and*
 - be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.'*

30. The proposed site is not a locally or nationally designated Heritage Asset and it is not set out why a large 4 bedroom residential dwelling would be the optimum use of relatively low key utilitarian structures. Any historical significance the remains have would be eroded by the erection of a large 4 bedroom domestic property on the site. The development is not considered to comply with the first criterion set out above.

31. The proposed development could be considered as the re-use of redundant or disused buildings but the uplift in the development on the site and its visual impact and urbanising encroachment would not be considered as an enhancement to the immediate setting of the countryside.

32. It is acknowledge that the proposed dwelling has a bespoke design to respond to the context of the site. However this in itself would not substantiate as a high quality design and all buildings are required to respond to the context of the area. The proposal cannot be considered as being exceptional quality because the development would not meet the last two criterion set out above: It would have a negative impact on its immediate setting by reason of the impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the countryside. There will also be a detrimental impact on the setting of a neighbouring Grade II Listed Building. For these reasons the development would not be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the area and would not comply with the last criterion set out above.

33. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states *'in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted'* expect for the exceptions listed. The proposed development would not fall within any of the exceptions set out in policy CP11 and would fail to comply with this development plan policy.

34. The proposal would be considered as an isolated new dwelling within the countryside and it would not meet the special circumstances as set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF. Therefore the proposed development is unacceptable in principle.

Design and impact on character and appearance of the landscape

35. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that *'maintain or enhance the high quality of the*

environment'. Policy CP3 of the Core strategy 'General Principles for Good Development' states that planning permission will be granted providing that proposal *'have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.'*

36. The site is to the south of the rural village known as Kiln Green. The village is characterised by a coalesce of buildings fronting onto the main roads Bath Road, Linden Hill Lane and Scarlets Lane and this frontage development is typical in countryside locations. The Council's Character Landscape Assessment also observes this frontage development as a characteristic of the area:

'Development is typified by small settlements aligning rural roads or forming small clusters at junctions' and 'the mixed farming landscape is interspersed by small linear villages and hamlets aligning rural lanes, individual farmsteads, stud farms and manors.'

37. The proposed dwelling would be situated significantly back from the road frontage by approximately 200 metres and would encroach into the open countryside to the south and east, substantially beyond the linear built form along Bath Road. There would be no buildings next to the property and the aerial photographs and location plan show that the dwelling would be uncharacteristically isolated from the ribbon of development along Bath Road. Whilst the position of the remains dictate the location of the proposed dwelling, there is limited justification why the introduction of new large residential property and sizable garden onto the site is deemed as the optimum solution for a site which has had an agricultural use for the previous 70 years and prior to that, was a small piece of engineering infrastructure for a temporary prisoner of war camp. The introduction of a new permanent residential dwelling, where historically and currently there is none, would be contrary to the pattern of development that characterises the area.

38. The proposed dwelling will have a large garden and will result in the change of use of part of agricultural field into a domestic curtilage. As with all residential properties, there would domestic paraphernalia situated around the dwelling. Given the size of the house and proposed number of bedrooms, it would be extremely difficult for the local planning authority to reasonably prevent the occupants from having normal ancillary domestic outbuildings that would result in further built form in the countryside. The associated change of use of the agricultural field into a large residential dwelling will result in an urbanising domestic encroachment into the countryside landscape.

39. The small 'pump house' is the only building on site with a roof, the other features only have courses of bricks delineating the footprint. The footprint of the pump house, 'water tank' and 'reservoir' feature is approximately 86.89 square metres. The highest of these structures is approximately 2 metres in height. The proposed new buildings (not including the rebuilding of the old structures) will have an accumulative footprint of approximately 187.88 square metres. The proposed development will therefore result in an uplift in built form on the site by 200%. To put this in perspective, policy TB01 of the MDD local plan limits residential extension to a 35% increase above the original building in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt (see 'Principle of development section above'). The proposed development would more than triple the footprint of the

structures and remains of buildings on the site. This in combination with rebuilding the existing degraded features would result in a significant increase of the impact on the rural landscape.

40. The proposed building has a piecemeal design and it would have a total width of approximately 30 metres and a depth of 21 metres. The spread of the proposed building will be significant and larger than any other dwellings in the locality, including the neighbouring grade II listed building Castlemans. The height of the building will be 4 metres, twice as high as the existing features on the land.
41. The proposed development would have large banks of glazing and this reflective surface would make the development much more prominent in the landscape than the existing low key features.
42. Considering the size of the buildings remains on the site, the proposed dwelling would be significantly larger than these. The proposed development would not simply be reconstructed the existing features, it would result in the creation of the new buildings which would be substantially larger in scale than the existing low key features. There is no justification why a large residential dwelling is necessary to preserve the relatively small remains. The erection of a new residential dwelling with substantially large footprint, where only the low key remain of structures are situated, and the creation of a large residential garden would have a detrimental impact the rural landscape of the area.
43. The application site is located within a chalk landscape referred to as 'Farmed Chalk Slopes' in the Council's Character Landscape Assessment. The Landscape is described as moderate quality with moderate character and in moderate condition. The Character Landscape Assessment describes two of the key characteristics of the locality as:
- *A landscape of mixed land uses but with agriculture predominating (both pastoral and arable) and defined by an irregular pattern of small to medium sized field units largely bound by wooden post and rail fencing.*
 - *Large manor houses and farmsteads of architectural merit (many listed) make for interesting visual 'cues' in the landscape with Georgian buildings being particularly apparent. The formal parkland settings impart a designed character to the landscape.*
 - *Rural villages and hamlets located alongside roads/crossroads form the main settlements connected by a network of rural roads and tracks crossing the landscape.*
44. The Landscape Character Assessment states '*the overall strategy for Hare Hatch Farmed Chalk Slopes (G1) is to enhance the existing character notably the ancient woodlands, chalk grassland, field boundaries, parkland landscapes – the robustness of which has declined.*' The document sets out that in recent years there has been a loss of viability of small farms leading to neglect of agricultural land. It proposes the promotion of the active management of features of the agricultural landscape, facilitate reinstatement of lost or declining features and to conserve and protect pasture and encourage appropriate management of grassland by grazing.

45. The proposed dwelling and large garden would be situated next to open land to the east, south and west. The proposed dwelling will be visible from the rear of the neighbouring dwellings fronting onto Bath Road, the golf course to the east and the agricultural fields to the south. The site is also clearly visible from a public footpath off of Scarlets Lane. Castlemans is visible from wider views on Milley Bridge: the existing remains were not visible from this viewpoint due to the deciduous tree screening along intervening field boundaries. The proposed development would therefore be a visible feature within the landscape that would have a detrimental impact to the rural and open character and appearance of the area.
6. The proposed development, by reason of the large size of the dwelling; sizeable areas of associated garden & hard surfacing; siting back from the road frontage adjacent to the open countryside immediate to the east, south and west, would result in an urbanising encroachment into the rural landscape that will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. The development is contrary to policies CP1, CP3 and CP11 of the Core Strategy, CC01, TB06 and TB21 of the MDD Local Plan, The Borough Design Guide SPD and the core planning principles and section 7 of the NPPF.

Impact on heritage assets

46. MDD Local Plan Policy TB24 states that proposal affecting a setting of a listed building should retain '*original or historic garden or landscape features*' and '*pay special attention to the scale, proportions, design and materials of new proposals in relation to the existing heritage asset*'.
47. As set out in the '*principle of development*' section of this report, the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the setting of the neighbouring grade II listed building. The proposed sewage treatment buildings were likely intended as temporary or ancillary features and it is not considered that the creation of a large residential property, significantly greater in scale than the existing low key structures, would preserve the setting of the grade II listed building called Castlemans.

Impact on neighbours

48. The proposed development will be visible from the rear of the dwellings that front onto Bath Road. The proposed development will comply with the separation distances set out in the Borough Design Guide SPD. It is not considered that the proposal will have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the neighbouring residents.

Highways and parking

49. The Access to the site onto Bath Road will be shared with Linden Place how the driveway will split and each property will have its own access drive up until the section adjacent to bath road. The residential property will have a large curtilage and will be able to accommodate adequate onsite parking. The Highway Engineer has raised no objection regarding the highway safety and parking implications of the site.

Trees

50. The Tree and Landscape Officer has considered the proposed development and raises no objection to the tree protection details and arboricultural works proposed. The proposed development would have a satisfactory impact with regard to the trees on and close to the site.

Drainage and flooding

51. The site is in flood zone 1 where the risk of fluvial flooding is low. There are areas with a medium to high risk of surface water flooding on the highway and to the south west of the site. There are no areas at risk from groundwater flooding in the locality. MDD Local Plan policy CC10 states that all development proposals must ensure surface water arising from the proposed development including taking into account climate change is managed in a sustainable manner and this must be demonstrated through a Surface Water Drainage Strategy. The proposal should reproduce greenfield runoff characteristics and return run-off rates and volumes back to the original greenfield levels. It is considered that adequate drainage infrastructure can be incorporated on the site and this can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.

Biodiversity and ecology

52. There is an active Badger sett within close proximity to the application site. The applicant has submitted further evidence with the application in an attempt to mitigate the impact on the Badgers and the Council's ecologist has advised the following:

'I maintain a holding objection to this application as I am of the opinion that there is not a clear mitigation strategy within this report that demonstrates that there will be no net loss of biodiversity – specifically in relation to the badgers on and adjacent to this site.'

53. Taking the above into consideration, the proposal fails to demonstrate that the development would have a satisfactory on local biodiversity.

Archeology:

54. The heritage statement advises that an archaeological scheme of works is undertaken to record any surviving below ground evidence of the sites use during this period. The Archaeological Officer has considered the proposal and raised no objection subject to a suitable worded condition to secure an archaeological investigation.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be unacceptable for the reasons set out in this report. The proposal is unacceptable in principle as it will result in an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt for which there are no overriding very special circumstances that would outweigh this harm. The new dwelling will be in an

unsustainable isolated location within countryside for which there are no special circumstances.

The proposed development is also considered to have a harmful impact on the setting of the neighbouring grade II listed building called Castlemans and an urbanising encroachment into the rural landscape that will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

There is an active badger sett in close proximity to the site and it has not yet been demonstrated that the impact of the development would ensure the survival of the badgers in their existing range and at the same population status, with provision of adequate alternative habitats if setts and foraging areas are destroyed.

The application is accordingly recommended for refusal.

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