



# The Bearsted & Thurnham Society

The Residents Association for the Civil Parishes of Bearsted and Thurnham



## Local Plan Review 2019 - Call For Sites Appraisal

The Call For Sites included in this document are located in the parishes of Bearsted and Thurnham and in adjacent parishes if it were judged that they would have a direct impact on the residents of Bearsted and Thurnham.

The sites are listed in geographical order from west to east covering those sites on or near the A20 Ashford Road followed by those in the area of Bearsted Road, Ware Street and Roundwell.

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Site name & reference	240 - Banky Meadow
Location	Situated immediately to the north of the Ashford Road and to the west of Fauchons Lane.
Current use	Grazing and woodland
Proposal	70 houses on 3.39 ha.
Parish	Bearsted and Shepway North Ward
Promoter	BTF Partnership on behalf of L & G Felstead, landowners.
Local Plan status	White Land with Mineral Safeguarding
The site and its setting	<p>Banky Meadow is a streamed narrow valley separating Grove Green and Weaving Street from the western part of Bearsted.</p> <p>It is a key buffer of open countryside which is prominent in local public views.</p> <p>The stream that runs through the site, on its way to Mote Park Lake and the River Len, places the central section of the proposal within Flood Zone 3, where there is a high probability of flooding.</p> <p>The submission suggests that development would take place to the northwest and southeast of the stream, outside of the flood zone.</p> <p>However the valley is relatively steep and the elevational change from the northwest of the site to the stream location is some 12 metres, whereas that from the southeast is some 9 metres.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>1962</p> <p>Applications for housing development</p> <p>Refused</p> <p>Three appeals were dismissed.</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>This site falls within an attractive narrow open tract of countryside which separates Bearsted from the Grove Green/Weaving Street area. It is easily viewed by the public from the A20 and the local footpath system, as it is a prominent and visible site. It prevents, along with the remainder of Banky Meadow, the coalescence of two separate communities and this attractive valley is an important green buffer that prevents urban sprawl into the countryside. Frontage trees on the A20 Ashford Road would be lost. Development of this greenfield site would adversely affect the character of the locality contrary to policy SS1 of the current Local Plan (Spatial Strategy: "<i>In other locations, protection will be given to the rural character of the borough avoiding coalescence between settlements</i>")</p>
Access	<p>It is difficult to see how this site can be accessed off the busy A20 or Fauchons Lane, which is private. Topographical levels indicate steep land and the A20 junction at Lord Romney's Hill and Willington Street traffic signals is heavily overloaded at peak times with the consequent long queues and high levels of pollution.</p> <p>There is no indication in the proposal of how the two development areas would be linked to cross the course of the stream.</p>
Sustainability	<p>This is a non-sustainable site due to the loss of unspoilt countryside, which would mean a loss of an irreplaceable rural resource.</p>
Cumulative impact	<p>The road system cannot absorb additional traffic due to existing high levels of congestion and environmental harm.</p>
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	<p>The proposal would cause harm to the landscape and create a coalescence of settlements.</p> <p><b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b></p>



Site name & reference	088 - South of Ashford Road
Location	Situated to the south of the Ashford Road behind numbers 172, 174a and 174b.
Current use	Maintained grassland with specimen trees.
Proposal	7 bungalows on 0.4 ha.
Parish	Bearsted
Promoter	The Heath family, landowners.
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	<p>This triangular parcel of land is located within the Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and situated behind three existing properties. The proposed access would be from an existing trackway between numbers 174b and 176 Ashford Road.</p> <p>Whilst relatively level in an east to west direction there is an elevational change of some nine metres from north to south as the site drops towards the River Len.</p> <p>It is in open countryside adjoining a linear urban boundary.</p> <p>This important open site is on the side of the valley at the southern edge of a built up area where backland development would harm existing landscape setting.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>MA/82/0449 Single dwelling Refused</p> <p>MA/85/1333N Three dwellings Refused Appeal dismissed (Refer to the appeal decision at Appendix A)</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>The proposal would cause harm to the unspoilt landscape of the Len Valley and the setting of Bearsted.</p> <p>Traffic would have a harmful impact on 174b and 176 Ashford Road, as set out in a previous appeal decision, and on the amenity of the residents at those addresses.</p> <p>It is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan. (Development in the countryside)</p>
Access	<p>Access onto the busy A20 is unsustainable for development as safe technical standards cannot be met. Traffic would cause overriding harm to the residential amenity of adjacent houses.</p> <p>(Refer to Appendix B for a detailed highway consultant's analysis.)</p>
Sustainability	The site is non sustainable site since the loss of countryside would mean the loss of an irreplaceable countryside resource.
Cumulative impact	The proposal would have a negative impact on the local highway system and social infrastructure provision.
Other matters	N/A

Conclusion

The proposal would have a harmful impact on the setting of Bearsted especially the protected Len Valley which is a Local Landscape Value area.

Access is totally unsuitable to serve housing development.

Existing specimen trees should be protected by a tree preservation order.

**The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.**

## Appendix A – Appeal Decision for MA/85/1333N

1. As you know I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine your appeal. This is against the decision of the Maidstone Borough Council to refuse planning permission for the residential development of land to the rear of 172 Ashford Road, Bearsted, Kent. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council and also those made by other parties. I inspected the site on 24 July 1986.
2. From my inspection of the appeal site and surrounding area and consideration of the representations I am of the opinion that the principal issues in this case are firstly whether the proposed development would be contrary to and prejudice the adopted Structure Plan policies which seek to resist development outside built-up areas and secondly whether the proposal would affect the privacy and amenities currently enjoyed by the occupiers of adjoining houses.
3. On the first issue it is clear from the Council's grounds of refusal and the documents to which they draw my attention that the site lies within a rural area as defined in the approved Maidstone and Vicinity Town Map which was revised in 1961. The later Kent Structure Plan approved by the Secretary of State in 1980 and the subsequent first alteration to this Plan which become operative in 1981 give added weight to the strong presumption against development outside built-up areas. In the vicinity of the appeal site the boundary of the urban area stops far short of the site, embracing the eastern boundaries of Nos 152 and 157 Ashford Road. The ribbon of development fronting Ashford Road behind which the appeal site is situated is therefore clearly outside of the defined urban area. Within that excluded area there have been a number of recent small-scale developments including frontage development by way of infilling and in the case of land at the rear of 158 Ashford Road, the erection of 3 modern dwellings. On the north side of Ashford Road there has been no such backland development.
4. Whilst it is a fact that the development of these 3 dwellings is strictly in breach of the policies referred to above, their situation can be differentiated from the appeal site by virtue of their immediate proximity to the boundary of the actual and defined built-up area, by the fact that they are contained within a small enclave of existing pre-planning development in the form of Nos 156 and 158 Ashford Road and by the width and format of the access road which serves them. The proposals in that instance did not extend development into the rural area whereas the proposals the subject of this appeal would extend development south-wards from the ribbon of houses fronting Ashford Road into open countryside. The appeal site slopes quite noticeably to the south and is on high ground and whilst there are some existing hedges which would help to screen any new houses, they would nonetheless be open to view from the surrounding countryside. Furthermore in my opinion, to allow this appeal would make it very difficult for the Council to refuse further applications for similar development, in particular on these large areas of rear garden behind Nos 166a to 170 Ashford Road and also other peripheral areas close by. In my view therefore the proposals would conflict with the policies of the approved Kent Structure Plan. Whilst these policies do in very exceptional circumstances permit of some exceptions, the personal reasons which you cite in your grounds of appeal are more in the nature of sentimental reasons and as such are not sufficient to outweigh the strong policy objections to your proposals. You also draw my attention to the large-scale development at Orchard Spot which is currently under construction. This however is an estate which was no doubt approved by the Council as part of planned development to make land available for house building. The Structure Plan is not designed to prevent all development but to channel it into certain specific locations.
5. Turning to the second issue I accept that the provision of screen fences may well satisfactorily mitigate the impact of the development upon the occupiers of certain of the dwellings fronting Ashford Road. I am concerned however that the use of the narrow roadway leading between 174b and 176 Ashford Road would give rise to an unacceptable degree of disturbance because of the proximity of this roadway to these 2 dwellings. Whilst I accept that you currently sell produce from your farm shop, no evidence was adduced as to the amount of traffic using the track for this purpose and it is stated by you that such use only commenced just over a year ago. I do not accept your suggestions that the proposed development would only lead to 4 car movements per day which figure also fails to take into account use of the driveway by service vehicles. I have also had regard to your reference to DCPN2 which accepts the principle of backland development if the conditions are right. In my view however the roadway falls short of the standards implied in the Policy Note because of its restricted access and visibility at the junction with the busy Ashford Road

A20 and because of its length and narrow width. Furthermore it passes along the boundaries of the gardens of the 2 adjoining houses for some 60 m and the noise and loss of privacy brought about by vehicles and pedestrians using the access in such close proximity to these dwellings and their gardens would be likely to cause an unacceptable degree of disturbance to their occupiers.

6. I have had regard to all of the other matters raised in the representations but none is of sufficient strength to outweigh the considerations that have led to my decision.
7. For the above reasons and in exercise of the powers transferred to me I hereby dismiss your appeal.

## Appendix B - Prepared by G M Heard BEng, CEng, MICE. November 2019.

1. This appendix assesses the highway and traffic implications of the proposed allocation of land for 7 dwellings to the rear of 172-174B Ashford Road. This site is currently being promoted by the landowner in the Maidstone Borough Council Call for Sites 2019 Exercise. It is referenced as Site 88 and proposes a new housing estate off an existing long and narrow trackway between 176 and 174B Ashford Road.
2. The proposed development of land to the rear of 172-174A Ashford Road, Bearsted would, if allocated, comprise 7 open market two / three-bedroom bungalows/chalet bungalows with 14 parking spaces. Access would be via an existing narrow single track onto A20 Ashford Road Bearsted.
3. A planning application for 3 dwellings on the same land was refused planning permission at Appeal in 1986, Ref MA/85/133N. Two of the highway reasons for refusal given by the Inspector were the restricted visibility at the access onto A20 along with the length and narrow width of the existing access track. Technically nothing has changed in the intervening years to improve highway conditions, indeed 2019 traffic flows on A20 are almost certainly higher than in 1986.
4. A20 Ashford Road is the Primary Distributor from towns and villages into Maidstone from the east of Kent. It carries heavy traffic flows. KCC traffic count data from 2010 recorded 24 hour daily flows of around 12,500 vehicles each day, Ref Kent Travel Report 2010, published in April 2011. It is likely that traffic flows will have increased due to both increases in car ownership and housing developments in Maidstone. Traffic flows along Ashford Road must increase further due to committed housing and commercial development both in south east Maidstone and Lenham.
5. Traffic speeds at the proposed site access from observation, are well in excess of the 30 mph speed limit. The 85% speed for westbound traffic is probably in excess of 40 mph. This is not surprising as the 30 mph speed limit starts only some 150 east of the proposed access and this section of the Ashford Road is quite wide, around 10m, and is relatively straight. Kent Highways have installed a 30 mph active digital sign to advise motorists to reduce their speed. This is located around 50m west of the proposed site access This is a strong indication that Kent County Council, The Highway Authority, has concerns about high traffic speeds on this section of Ashford Road. Clearly it is essential that any new access onto Ashford Road must fully comply with Local and National design standards.
6. A new access for a small to medium sized housing development onto a major road such as A20 Ashford Road should have junction radii of 6m, an access width of ideally 5.5m, but with a minimum of 4.8m and visibility splays from a setback distance of 2.4m to both nearside kerblines, sufficient for a driver to see major road traffic, the lengths being dependant on traffic speeds.
7. The submitted plans do not show any details of the proposed access. However the access width at the back of footpath is only 6.2m and the width of the footway along Ashford Road is 1.53m in this location. Six metre junction radii are needed for traffic safety reasons to enable cars to manoeuvre in and out of the access at an appropriate speed and without having to swing out of their traffic lane. This is especially the case for vehicles travelling from the east. Adequate junction radii are also needed for pedestrian safety to enable pedestrians using the footways to see and be seen by access traffic. Clearly there is inadequate site frontage to provide safe junction radii. The best that could be achieved would be 1.5m radii. This would leave a 3.2m wide entrance which is not wide enough to allow two vehicles to pass each other at the entrance.
8. In respect of visibility splays national and local advice is set out in Manual for Streets. A setback (x) distance of 2.4m is required in most built up situations. This is a proposed access onto a major road and this is not a slow speed situation so a relaxation to 2m cannot be permitted, Ref paras 7.76 and 7.77. The (y) distance is determined by traffic speeds on Ashford Road and must be taken to the nearside kerblines in both directions. The visibility splay must only use highway land, footway/verge and land under the developer's control. This is because neighbouring landowners might park cars on their drives, put up fences and not necessarily keep hedges trimmed. In this instance from a 2.4m setback distance the visibility splays under the control of the developer are only around 15-20m which are totally inadequate and unsafe.
9. Advice on the length of visibility splays in urban areas is set out in Manual for Streets, table 7.1 and chapters 7.6 and 7.7. For 85% speeds of around 37 mph, 60 kph, a visibility splay of 56m is required. This would probably just be sufficient for eastbound traffic. Westbound traffic speeds are probably higher, around 40 mph from observation. Westbound drivers have only just entered the urban area and the 30 mph speed

limit. This is confirmed by the active 30 mph speed sign some 50m west of the site entrance. Traffic speeds in excess of 37 mph go beyond the criteria set out in Manual for Streets so a longer visibility splay than 56m is needed to the right. As visibility splays to both left and right under the developer's control are only around 15-20m clearly the visibility splays are totally inadequate.

10. The inadequate vision splays were noted by the Inspector in refusing planning permission in 1986 for 3 dwellings on the same land. The Inspector stated "In my view however the roadway falls short of the standards implied in the Policy Note because of its restricted access and visibility at the junction with the busy Ashford Road A20 and because of its length and narrow width. Furthermore it passes along the boundaries of the gardens of the 2 adjoining houses for some 60 m and the noise and loss of privacy brought about by vehicles and pedestrians using the access in such close proximity to these dwellings and their gardens would be likely to cause an unacceptable degree of disturbance to their occupiers.
11. The Inspector identified the narrow width of the access as a serious safety issue. Specifically for a development of 5 dwellings or more, it is essential that two vehicles can pass each other at the access. In addition whilst a single track access might be acceptable for a small number of houses, for safety reasons there also has to be a passing place within the development which is visible to and from the entrance to the site. A second inter-visible passing place within the development has not and cannot be provided without the acquisition of additional land. Given the volume and speed of traffic on A20 Ashford Road the risk of vehicles backing out of the access onto Ashford Road is unacceptable as it would be very hazardous.
12. A further safety concern is for pedestrians crossing Ashford Road in the vicinity of the proposed access, perhaps walking to and from the eastbound bus stop. Ashford Road is around 10m wide and is carrying very heavy traffic flows at speeds well above those which would normally be expected for an urban road. Although there is a pelican crossing near the shops it is a considerable distance to the west so it will not necessarily be used.
13. The proposed development of 7 dwellings would be expected to generate 6 - 8 trips in a 24 hour period and 0.96 peak hour trips for each house in peak periods, a total of some 42-56 trips each day. Eighty Fifth percentile Trip Rates from TRICS have been quoted above. Most of this traffic will travel to and from Maidstone which will add to the lengthy queues at the already overloaded A20 Ashford Road/ Willington Street traffic signal junction.
14. The proposed indicative layout shown on the Call for Sites Submission is also deficient in not showing a turning head capable of allowing a small delivery lorry or van to turn on site. It is also short of parking in not showing any parking spaces for visitors and there is no provision for bin storage near the access. Further there is no indication of cycle parking, the layout is too dense and cramped and does not meet technical standards.
15. In summary, housing development of this land for 3 dwellings was refused at appeal in 1986. The Inspector did not consider that a safe access could be provided onto A20 Ashford Road. Nothing has changed in highway/safety terms to suggest that the situation has changed for the better. Indeed traffic flows have increased and will continue to increase on A20 Ashford Road as a consequence of recent, committed and future Local Plan development. This land should not be allocated for housing development as a safe access onto A20 Ashford Road cannot be provided.



Site name & reference	129 - South of Ashford Road
Location	To the south of properties on the Ashford Road and to the east of Bodsham Crescent.
Current use	1.4 ha. formed the curtilage to 164 Ashford Road prior to its demolition. The remainder of the site is untended land.
Proposal	47 houses on 5.2 ha. cumulative
Parish	Bearsted
Promoter	DHA Planning Limited on behalf of the Best family.
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	<p>Situated in open countryside this is a prominent site within the unspoilt Len Valley. The site is viewed from the adjacent public right of way, KM77A, which runs along its northern boundary and from the public footway system adjacent to River Len to the west. From the location of the original dwelling at 164 Ashford Road the site falls by some twenty two metres to the south east, where The Lilk forms a site boundary. It also falls by some twenty three metres to its southern boundary, formed by the River Len.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>16/506795/FULL Demolition of 164 Ashford Road and its replacement with a single dwelling. Permitted</p> <p>18/502216/FULL Variation of conditions attached to 16/506795/FULL Permitted</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>The proposed layout shows a housing estate totally unrelated to the character and structure of the area, which is linear in form along the A20. There would be harmful impact on the landscape of the Len Valley and to adjacent houses in the vicinity of the access. Specimen trees would be lost. It is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside)</p>
Access	<p>Access onto the busy A20 is unsustainable for development as safe technical standards cannot be met. Traffic would cause overriding harm to the residential amenity of adjacent houses. The proposed access would be shared with public right of way KM77A. (Refer to Appendix A for a detailed highway consultant's analysis.)</p>
Sustainability	<p>This is a non sustainable site as the loss of unspoilt countryside would mean a loss of an irreplaceable rural resource, together with a loss of Grade III agricultural land.</p>
Cumulative impact	<p>There would be a negative impact on the local highway system and social infrastructure provision. This site could also be used to provide access to site 135, which would cause even more environmental harm and damage.</p>
Other matters	N/A

## Conclusion

The proposal would result in a harmful impact on the setting of Bearsted, especially to the protected Len Valley which is a Local Landscape Value area.

Specimen trees within the site and to the north of the site require additional Tree Preservation Order protection.

The access proposal harms adjacent properties and existing parking in Ashford Road would need to be relocated.

**The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.**

## Appendix A - Prepared by G M Heard BEng, CEng, MICE. November 2019.

1. This appendix assesses the highway and traffic implications of the proposed allocation of land for 45-55 dwellings to the rear of 162-166A Ashford Road. This site is currently being promoted by DHA Planning on behalf of the landowners, the Best family, in the Maidstone Borough Council Call for Sites 2019 Exercise. It is referenced as Site 129 and proposes a new housing estate off a proposed access road running between 162 and 166A Ashford Road.
2. The proposed development of land to the rear of 162-166a Ashford Road, Bearsted would, if allocated, comprise 45-55 dwellings, a mixture of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses, 40% of which would be affordable, with 81 parking spaces. Access would be via a new junction onto the A20 Ashford Road, Bearsted.
3. A planning application for a single dwelling on a small part of the same land was granted planning permission in 1986, Ref MA/16/506759/FULL. This consent, which has not yet been implemented, would have provided a new access onto the Ashford Road and the existing joint access to numbers 162 and 164A Ashford Road would be closed with replacement individual `accesses connected to the new shared access.
4. A20 Ashford Road is the Primary Distributor from towns and villages into Maidstone from the east of Kent. It carries heavy traffic flows. KCC traffic count data from 2010 recorded 24 hour daily flows of around 12,500 vehicles each day, Ref Kent Travel Report 2010, published in April 2011. It is likely that traffic flows will have increased due to both increases in car ownership and housing developments in Maidstone. Traffic flows along Ashford Road must increase further due to committed housing and commercial development both in south east Maidstone and Lenham. A20 Ashford Road is seriously congested both during traffic peak periods and for much of the working day at its traffic signalled junctions with Willington Street and New Cut. There are lengthy queues and long delays to traffic on the approaches to both junctions and along the section of Ashford Road between the two junctions.
5. Traffic speeds at the proposed site access from observation, are in excess of the 30 mph speed limit. The 85% speed for both west and eastbound traffic is probably around 35-37mph. This is not surprising as the 30 mph speed limit starts only some 350m east of the proposed access and this section of the Ashford Road is quite wide, around 11m, and is relatively straight. Kent Highways have installed a 30 mph active digital sign to advise westward travelling motorists to reduce their speed. This is located around 100m east of the proposed site access. This is a strong indication that Kent County Council, the Highway Authority, has concerns about high traffic speeds on this section of Ashford Road. Clearly it is essential that a high quality access onto Ashford Road must be provided which fully complies with Local and National design standards.
6. A new access for a large housing development serving around 50 dwellings onto a major road such as A20 Ashford Road should have junction radii of 6m and an access width of 5.5m with two 1.8m wide footways. Visibility splays from a setback distance of 2.4m to both nearside kerblines, sufficient for a driver to see major road traffic, the lengths being dependant on traffic speeds. Given the volume of traffic likely to be generated by the proposed housing allocation(s) it will be essential to extend the ghost island markings and provide a pedestrian refuge on Ashford Road to both protect right turners and assist pedestrians crossing Ashford Road.
7. DHA Planning are also proposing that this access could also serve a further 40 dwellings on site 135 in the call for sites 2019. This possibility reinforces the need for a right turn lane on A20 Ashford Road.
8. Surprisingly the submitted plans do not show any details of the proposed access. A Transport Technical Note has been prepared by DHA to support this proposed allocation Ref 129 in the Call for Sites 2019. This suggests a 5.5m access carriageway with 6.0m junction radii and a 1.8m wide footway at the site entrance with a dropped kerb at the site entrance, para1.3.4. It also states that minor alterations to the existing ghost island on Ashford Road "MAY" be required, para1.3.3. The plans in the DHA Technical Note are contradictory. They show two footways along the site access road, which I consider essential, but the plan showing the site location, plan DHA/13762/01, shows a very narrow land ownership at the entrance to Ashford Road. This would be inadequate to provide an acceptable junction without land acquisition from both adjoining landowners.
9. In respect of visibility splays national and local advice is set out in Manual for Streets. A setback (x) distance of 2.4m is required in most built up situations. This is a proposed access onto a major road and this is not a slow speed scenario so no relaxations to design standards should be contemplated, Ref paras 7.76 and 7.77. The (y) distance is determined by traffic speeds on Ashford Road and must be taken to the nearside

kerblines in both directions. The visibility splays must only use highway land, footway/verge and land under the developer's control.

10. Advice on the length of visibility splays in urban areas is set out in Manual for Streets, table 7.1 and chapters 7.6 and 7.7. For 85% speeds of around 37 mph, 60 kph, visibility splays of 56m are required. Whilst observations of traffic speeds on A20 Ashford Road suggest 85% speeds of 35-37mph it is believed that a traffic speed survey should be carried out on behalf of the potential developer in view of the history of high traffic speeds on this part of Ashford Road.
11. DHA Planning has submitted two reports in their Call for Sites Submission for this land. In the Planning, Transport, Design, Environment and Infrastructure submission, paras 4.1.2, 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, it is suggested that this 5.2 hectare site is likely to yield 45-55 new homes. This would comprise a mixture of 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom houses with 40% affordable dwellings. The suggested yield of only 45-55 dwellings is however surprisingly low for a 5.2 hectare site and such a low density would be more appropriate for 4/5 bedroom dwellings. The Transport Technical Note, prepared by DHA, however states that the proposed development will comprise only 47 units, para 1.1.2, not the 45-55 set out in the DHA Planning report. Therefore the density yield is unclear and confusing.
12. In assessing the traffic impact DHA have used 47 dwellings, not 55 dwellings, and have used average trip rates not 85% trip rates from TRICS. It is good practise in assessing the capacity of the access junction and the impact on the local highway network to also consider 85% trip rates in order to carry out a robust assessment. In this instance this land is at the eastern limit of housing development in Bearsted. Future residents would have a lengthy walk to schools in Madginford or The Landway and Bearsted railway station, 1.4 km away. Cars are therefore likely to be used, particularly in adverse weather by many residents. The car park at Bearsted station is quite small and on weekdays is full. Some commuters are therefore likely to be given a lift to and from the station, thus increasing trip rates. As Yeoman Lane, the direct pedestrian route to the station, lacks footways over half its length, future residents walking to and from the station are likely to use the footpath through the Woodland Trust, the Church Landway footpath, KM 77. This reinforces earlier advice, para 6, that a pedestrian refuge at the proposed access onto Ashford Road is essential for safety.
13. It should be noted that there is only an hourly bus service to and from the centre of Maidstone some 4.2 km distance away. The DHA Technical Note using average trip rates for 47 dwellings calculates peak hour traffic generations of 25/24 trips with 218 trips in a 12 hour day. These trip rates are around half those which would be expected using 85% trip rates for 55 dwellings, that is around 0.8 trips per dwelling in peak periods and 8 trips per dwelling for a 24 hour day. For 55 dwellings the proposed allocation could generate 44 trips in each peak period with around 440 over the full day.
14. The DHA Technical Note makes no predictions in respect of the routing of traffic to and from the site or the anticipated Modal Split. The traffic capacity of the proposed access onto Ashford Road has not been assessed in detail although the proposed junction will probably have sufficient capacity. This should however be carefully checked. There are no assessments of the existing heavily congested junctions at Ashford Road/ Willington Street or New Cut and no mitigation measures are proposed either to relieve the congested A20 junctions, to reduce speeds on A20 Ashford Road in the vicinity of the site or encourage usage of public transport. Given the location of the land it is considered that probably 90% of site traffic will travel to and from the west with the majority travelling to and from Maidstone or via New Cut to M20. This will add to the lengthy queues at the already overloaded A20 Ashford Road/ Willington Street and New Cut traffic signal junctions. Traffic flows have increased and will continue to increase on A20 Ashford Road as a consequence of recent, committed and future Local Plan developments. Whilst only limited weight might be given to overloading existing traffic signal junctions in respect of extra delays or traffic safety the reality is that there will be additional usage of residential roads as motorists divert and a spreading of peak hour queues and delays. Buses which cannot divert will also suffer increased delays.
15. In conclusion it is accepted that an access onto Ashford Road which meets national and local design standards could be provided for the proposed allocation of 45-55 dwellings PROVIDED that the developer has control of the land on both sides of the access. This access MUST provide for the extension of the ghost island markings and provide a pedestrian refuge on the Ashford Road. These works can be achieved at modest cost within the existing width of Ashford Road and are essential for pedestrian and vehicle safety. The existing parking along this section of Ashford Road which serves the Scout and Guide facilities, bowls

and tennis clubs and the popular Woodland Trust public park. This parking would however have to be prohibited by the introduction of a traffic order.

16. There are however significant disadvantages in respect of the overall transport impact of the allocation of this land for housing.
  - a. The additional traffic generated will add to existing queues and delays on Ashford Road and this must also cause an increase in motorists using local residential rat runs.
  - b. Traffic flows along A20 Ashford Road are expected to increase substantially due to committed large Local Plan developments in south east Maidstone and in Lenham.
  - c. Housing on this land will not be well related to existing schools or Bearsted railway station which will be at the limit of a reasonable walk distance.
  - d. There is only an infrequent hourly bus service to and from the centre of Maidstone which at 4.2km away is too far for residents to be likely to walk.
  - e. As a consequence future residents are likely to be highly dependent on using their cars for most trips.
  - f. No mitigation measures are proposed either in respect of traffic conditions or to encourage sustainable travel modes. As in practice measures to discourage car usage are unlikely to be effective this land cannot be considered to be in a sustainable location.
17. For the above reasons it is considered that this land should not be allocated for housing.



Site name & reference	135 - South of Ashford Road
Location	Situated behind properties fronting Lilk Hill, Ashford Road and with its eastern boundary hard against The Lilk.
Current use	Mature woodland
Proposal	20 to 40 houses on 2.11 ha.
Parish	Bearsted
Promoter	DHA Planning Limited on behalf of Mr. J Fuller
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	<p>This wooded site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order and is viewed from an adjacent footpath and from Otham Lane.</p> <p>The site falls by some seven metres to the east, where The Lilk forms a site boundary, and by some twelve metres to the south.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>80/0487 Seventeen detached houses Refused</p> <p>85/1591 Sixty five flats with two Warden's dwellings and a meeting room Refused</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>The site is attractive woodland which is a rare land use resource that must be conserved and not developed as it is of high importance in the local landscape.</p> <p>The proposal would be harmful to rural setting and adjacent housing.</p> <p>It is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside)</p>
Access	<p>This landlocked site is undevelopable unless the environmentally harmful site 129 to the west is included in a revised Local Plan.</p> <p>(Refer to Appendix A for a detailed highway consultant's analysis.)</p>
Sustainability	<p>This is a non sustainable site as the loss of unspoilt countryside would mean a loss of an irreplaceable rural resource which is subject to a TPO.</p>
Cumulative impact	<p>This site would, together with the adjacent site 129, increase local traffic movements.</p>
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	<p>The proposal would result in a harmful impact on the setting of Bearsted, especially to the protected Len Valley which is a Local Landscape Value area.</p> <p>There would be a loss of protected trees and harm to a valuable ecological resource.</p> <p><b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b></p>

## Appendix A - Prepared by G M Heard BEng, CEng, MICE. November 2019.

1. This appendix assesses the highway and traffic implications of the proposed allocation of land for 40 dwellings to the south of A20 Ashford Road. This site is currently being promoted by DHA Planning on behalf of the landowner, Mr J Fuller, in the Maidstone Borough Council Call for Sites 2019 Exercise. It is referenced as Site 135 and proposes a new housing estate served via another proposed allocation number 129, which would have access onto the A20 Ashford Road.
2. The proposed allocation of land for housing shares the same access onto Ashford Road as site 129 and is dependent on that site being allocated so the same objections also apply. Therefore the objections to site 129 should be read in conjunction to this submission.
3. There are however several additional transport concerns in respect of this land.
  - a. If allocated for housing an additional 320 vehicles each day will be added to the already congested traffic conditions on Ashford Road.
  - b. Walk distances for residents to local schools and Bearsted railway station will be around 100m longer than for residents from site 129. These distances are so long that future residents are likely to use their cars particularly in adverse weather conditions.
4. No details of layout or vehicular and pedestrian access have been submitted by DHA Planning. However it appears that the only vehicular and pedestrian access would be via site 129, if that site is allocated. This housing would be at the end of a long cul-de-sac and a safe and secure secondary access for emergency vehicle access should be provided. This is usually required for housing developments of around 100 dwellings and where a long cul-de-sac is proposed.
5. The summary objections to the allocation of site 129 are repeated below and these also apply to the allocation of site 135.
6. It is accepted that an access onto Ashford Road which meets national and local design standards could be provided for the proposed allocation of 45-55 dwellings PROVIDED that the developer has control of the land on both sides of the access. This access MUST provide for the extension of the ghost island markings and provide a pedestrian refuge on the Ashford Road. These works can be achieved at modest cost within the existing width of Ashford Road and are essential for pedestrian and vehicle safety. The existing parking along this section of Ashford Road which serves the Scout and Guide facilities, bowls and tennis clubs and the popular Woodland Trust public park. This parking would however have to be prohibited by the introduction of a traffic order.
7. There are however significant disadvantages in respect of the overall transport impact of the allocation of this land for housing.
  - a. The additional traffic generated will add to existing queues and delays on Ashford Road and this must also cause an increase in motorists using local residential rat runs.
  - b. Traffic flows along A20 Ashford Road are expected to increase substantially due to committed large Local Plan developments in south east Maidstone and in Lenham.
  - c. Housing on this land will not be well related to existing schools or Bearsted railway station which will be at the limit of a reasonable walk distance.
  - d. There is only an infrequent hourly bus service to and from the centre of Maidstone which at 4.2km away is too far for residents to be likely to walk.
  - e. As a consequence future residents are likely to be highly dependent on using their cars for most trips.
  - f. No mitigation measures are proposed either in respect of traffic conditions or to encourage sustainable travel modes. As in practice measures to discourage car usage are unlikely to be effective this land cannot be considered to be in a sustainable location.
8. For the above reasons this land should not be allocated.



Site name & reference	217 - Disused Poundstore, Crismill Lane
Location	Situated to the west of Crismill Lane some 70 metres from its junction with the A20 Ashford Road.
Current use	Vacant commercial
Proposal	5 houses on 0.2 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	DHA Planning Limited on behalf of J & J Wright (Wright Holdings Ltd.)
Local Plan status	White Land and Minerals Safeguarding
The site and its setting	The proposal seeks to use this brownfield site by demolishing the existing commercial building and erecting five dwellings.
Relevant planning history	16/506569 Four houses Refused Appeal dismissed 19/500130 Three houses Application withdrawn
Planning appraisal	The use of brownfield sites utilising previously developed land is encouraged in the NPPF (Section 11, Making effective use of land) It would be contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside) There are protected trees on the site Crismill Lane also forms public right of way KH134
Access	Access would be directly onto Crismill Lane using the existing site access point.
Sustainability	Although relatively remote this site is only some 70 metres from a bus stop on the A20 Ashford Road. Albeit that pedestrians would need to use Crismill Lane, which is unlit and has no footpath, the lane is of a reasonable width and a no through road. Therefore traffic movements would be expected to be minimal.
Cumulative impact	N/A
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	<b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society does not wish to comment on this Call For Sites submission.</b>



Site name & reference	014 - Puddledock, Caring Lane
Location	Situated to the west of Caring Lane approximately 200 metres from its junction with the Ashford Road.
Current use	Grazing land
Proposal	12 houses on 1.52 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	Peter Waite, landowner
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	The site is situated in a remote location set away from a village settlement albeit with a small group of houses close by.
Relevant planning history	88/2263 Single dwelling Refused
Planning appraisal	Although scope for frontage development might exist, similar to existing dwellings in Caring Lane, any development would be an expansion of a small isolated group of dwellings in the countryside where there are no local amenities or facilities. There would be the possible loss of Grade III land. It is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan. (Development in the countryside)
Access	Direct from Caring Lane
Sustainability	Not well related to local services in a remote location and therefore unsustainable.
Cumulative impact	Harmful to local highway system as this isolated development would promote the use of the motor car.
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	The proposal would result in harm to the rural setting and the promotion of car-based travel. It would harm the Local Landscape Value of designated open countryside. <b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b>



Site name & reference	206 - Summer Place, Caring Lane
Location	Situated on the western side of Caring Lane, adjacent to number 22.
Current use	Untended land, once part of a nursery.
Proposal	1 house on 0.1 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	Mr. L Friend, landowner.
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	A level site located in open countryside to the south of 22 Caring Lane.
Relevant planning history	18/505721/FULL Detached bungalow and garage Refused Appeal dismissed
Planning appraisal	The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the countryside. The proposal is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside)
Access	Directly onto Caring Lane.
Sustainability	Due to its isolated location, distant from any services, this site is unsustainable.
Cumulative impact	N/A
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	<b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b>



Site name & reference	063 - Rear of 10 to 15 Caring Lane
Location	Situated to the east of Caring Lane behind numbers 10 to 15 and approximately 350 metres from its junction with the Ashford Road.
Current use	Vacant equestrian
Proposal	5 houses on 0.4 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	Mr L Drinkwater, landowner.
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	The site is situated in a remote location set away from a village settlement and would constitute backland development behind properties fronting Caring Lane..
Relevant planning history	18/506482/FULL 5 dwellings Refused 19/502557/FULL Single dwelling Refused.
Planning appraisal	This proposed backland development is unrelated to an existing hamlet and is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside)
Access	The proposed access onto Caring Lane follows the line of an existing farm track adjacent to, and parallel with, an existing access to the property known as "Silverhill". There appears to be inadequate visibility to the right from the farm track within land under the control of the promoter.
Sustainability	This isolated location, where new residents would rely on the motor vehicle for transport, makes it unsustainable.
Cumulative impact	Additional traffic on the A20 Ashford Road and additional pressures on local services in and near Bearsted.
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	The proposal would result in harm to the rural setting and the promotion of car-based travel. It would harm the Local Landscape Value of designated open countryside. <b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b>



Site name & reference	232 - West of Firs Lane
Location	The site sits to the south of the A20 Ashford Road with the rear gardens of properties fronting Caring Lane to the west. The properties fronting Firs Lane are to the east.
Current use	Productive arable land
Proposal	50 houses on 2.0 ha.
Parish	Thurnham and Hollingbourne
Promoter	Go Planning Ltd. on behalf of W J and N E A Ashby.
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	Located in open countryside the site is in productive agricultural use and has specimen trees fronting the A20 Ashford Road. The site drops away by some 10 metres from north to south.
Relevant planning history	N/A
Planning appraisal	This site is open agricultural land which is classified as Grade II/III and which should be retained due to its soil quality. The area forms part of the larger open landscape which is a Local Landscape Value protected area and this must be respected for long term preservation. The proposal is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside)
Access	Technically there is scope to provide an access onto the A20 if some trees were felled, which in itself would be harmful to the countryside.
Sustainability	This site is unsustainable as it is relatively isolated and new residents would rely on vehicular transport as their main means of travel. Public transport provision in the area is poor.
Cumulative impact	This site would create additional pressure on A20 traffic flows and on existing local services in Bearsted.
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	This is a relatively remote site in the countryside and development would harm the Local Landscape Value area as open and attractive countryside would be lost. There is a need to protect frontage trees with a preservation order. <b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b>



Site name & reference	223 - South of Ashford Road
Location	Situated to the south of the A20 Ashford Road with firs Lane to the west and the Bearsted Caravan and Motorhome Club site to the east.
Current use	Productive arable land
Proposal	100 houses on 3.0 ha.
Parish	Hollingbourne
Promoter	Robinson Escott Planning on behalf of APPIN (Bearsted) Ltd.
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	<p>Located in open countryside the site is in productive agricultural use and has specimen trees fronting the A20 Ashford Road.</p> <p>The site drops away by some 9 metres from north to south and by some 11 metres west to east.</p>
Relevant planning history	N/A
Planning appraisal	<p>This site is open agricultural land which is classified as Grade II/III and which should be retained due to its soil quality.</p> <p>The area forms part of the larger open landscape which is a Local Landscape Value protected area and this must be respected for long term preservation.</p> <p>The proposal is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside)</p>
Access	Technically there is scope to provide an access onto the A20 if some trees were felled, which in itself would be harmful to the countryside. However any access would interact with that for Woodcut Farm on the northern side of Ashford Road.
Sustainability	This site is unsustainable as it is relatively isolated and new residents would rely on vehicular transport as their main means of travel. Public transport provision in the area is poor.
Cumulative impact	This site would create additional pressure on A20 traffic flows and on existing local services in Bearsted.
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	<p>This is a relatively remote site in the countryside and development would harm the Local Landscape Value area as open and attractive countryside would be lost.</p> <p>There is a need to protect frontage trees with a preservation order.</p> <p><b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b></p>



Site name & reference	176 - North and South of the Ashford Road
Location	<p>The triangle of land to the north is bounded by the A20, Ashford Road, the link road to Junction 8 of the M20 and Musket Lane.</p> <p>The parcel to the south fronts the A20 Ashford Road with Old Mill Lane to the east and its western boundary is formed by Union Wood.</p> <p>This site has two rivulets, one crossing the site and one following the line of Union Wood. These join at the southern end of Union Wood before flowing to the nearby River Len.</p> <p>Public footpath KH180 runs through the eastern side of the site.</p>
Current use	Arable land
Proposal	Commercial to the north and 500 houses to the south. Total area 23.9 ha.
Parish	Hollingbourne
Promoter	Strutt & Parker on behalf of Sir Adrian Baillie.
Local Plan status	<p>To the north - White Land and Mineral Safeguarding.</p> <p>To the south - Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.</p>
The site and its setting	<p>The site covers almost 23ha of arable land. Lying on both sides of Ashford Road, the two parts of the site form an eastern gateway to the county town. Whilst the setting of northern, triangular parcel may already be adversely affected by roads on two sides, and potential development on the other side, the southern parcel is entirely rural in nature presenting a view of undulating countryside from the A20.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>Only the northern parcel has any planning history.</p> <p>82/088</p> <p>Application for change of use to recreation</p> <p>Refused</p> <p>Included in site for proposed Kent International Gateway</p> <p>07/0682 &amp; 07/2092</p> <p>Refused</p> <p>Dismissed following a Public Inquiry in 2009.</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>The development of this site would be an isolated urban extension in a rural area in the setting of the Kent Downs AONB. It would increase pressure for more extensive development along the A20 corridor between Bearsted / Thurnham and Leeds / Hollingbourne.</p> <p>It is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside) and in particular SP17(5) <i>"The distinctive character of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting, the setting of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the extent and openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt will be rigorously conserved, maintained and enhanced where appropriate"</i></p>

Access	<p>The proposed access for the northern parcel of land relies on an existing field access directly onto the A20. That may be suitable for use by an occasional farm vehicle, but its location at the start of a slip road to the flyover renders it totally unsuitable for access to a commercial development. It is unlikely that a viable alternative could be provided along the frontage of this site without major alterations to the horizontal and vertical alignment of the A20.</p> <p>It appears to be accepted that the existing access to the southern parcel of land would be inadequate. Provision of a new access onto the A20 would probably need to be combined with that proposed for Woodcut Farm, also requiring major alterations to the horizontal and vertical alignment of the A20. This may need to be in the form of a large roundabout, or a significant traffic signal-controlled crossroads similar in form to that on the A20 at the Quarry Wood junction to the west of Maidstone. Pedestrian routes would need to be safeguarded to allow access to bus services for those who might choose to use public transport.</p>
Sustainability	<p>Any development would be too small to sustain the full range of local services required. Occupants would be totally dependent on private motor vehicle transport to access all facilities, which in turn would be subject to increasing stress as they would inevitably be overloaded.</p>
Cumulative impact	<p>Should this site and Site 195 be given further consideration, along with the permitted development at Woodcut Farm, this rural area would be transformed with HGV traffic throughout the day and increased pressure at peak times.</p>
Other matters	<p>Any increase in impermeable surface area as a result of widespread development in this location would risk expediting the flow of surface water into the River Len with consequent potential for increased flooding downstream.</p>
Conclusion	<p><b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b></p>



Site name & reference	195 - Waterside Park, Ashford Road
Location	The site is situated to the south of the A20 Ashford Road adjacent to the roundabout serving the link road to Junction 8 of the M20.
Current use	Arable land
Proposal	Commercial development on 16.91 ha.
Parish	Hollingbourne
Promoter	DHA Planning Limited on behalf of Gallagher Properties (Developer). The land is owned by Rochester Bridge Trust.
Local Plan status	Len Valley Landscape of Local Value and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	<p>The site fronts the A20 Ashford Road to the north and Old Mill Lane to the west. Its eastern boundary is formed by the Hollingbourne Brook and pond and its southern boundary sits tight against the River Len alongside the 340 metre length of the old mill-pond.</p> <p>From the Ashford Road the site drops by some 14 metres to the River Len. The elevation change from Old Mill lane to the Hollingbourne Brook is some 18 metres.</p> <p>Public right of way KH181 bisects the site.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>13/1549 Hybrid application for an industrial estate with ancillary facilities Refused</p> <p>14/501895/FULL Hybrid application for an industrial estate with ancillary facilities Refused</p> <p>Both refusals were appealed and the appeals were dismissed following a public inquiry. An application to the High Court to overturn the appeal decision was dismissed.</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>This proposed development of arable land is presented in the form of three options, one of which, for B1/B2/B8 employment, which it is suggested is "readily deliverable". The proposal only occupies part of the site put forward.</p> <p>The other options, potentially covering the whole of the site, represent larger commercial and / or mixed-use development leading to urban expansion in the countryside. They are "included", but without any specific details.</p> <p>It is contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside) and in particular SP17(5) "<i>The distinctive character of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting, the setting of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the extent and openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt will be rigorously conserved, maintained and enhanced where appropriate</i> "</p> <p>It would impact on the setting of the following local heritage assets: Leeds Castle and its Park. (Grade I and Grade II* with Grade II listings within the grounds) Old England Cottage to the north of the A20 (Grade II) Old Mill Farm (Non-designated Heritage Asset)</p>

Access	The proposed access would be in the form of a left in / left out junction with the westbound carriageway of the A20. Its use would require vehicles to undertake u-turns at the roundabouts with the M20 link road and Eyhorne Street. Most vehicles leaving the site would need to cross to the offside lane on the A20, either to join the M20, or to head eastbound on the A20. This will be particularly hazardous for HGVs, starting from stationary, with little more than 100m to complete the manoeuvre, in conflict with increasing volumes of main road traffic.
Sustainability	The workforce would be unlikely to be able to make use of the one bus route that runs an hourly service between Maidstone and Ashford, at times that are likely to match the start and end of shifts. The development would therefore give rise to increased and unsustainable vehicular traffic.
Cumulative impact	Should this site and Site 176 be given further consideration, and taking account of the permitted development at Woodcut Farm, this rural area would be transformed by heavy HGV traffic throughout the day and increased pressure at peak times.
Other matters	Any increase in impermeable surface area as a result of widespread development in this location would risk expediting the flow of surface water into the River Len with consequent potential for increased flooding downstream.
Conclusion	<b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b>



Site name & reference	183 - Kent Medical Campus and Shopping Village
Location	Situated to the north of Bearsted Road and to the west of Newnham Court Way.
Current use	Well tended open land.
Proposal	Commercial on 3.32 ha. (Retail and leisure)
Parish	Boxley
Promoter	DHA on behalf of Harvestore Systems (Holdings) Limited.
Local Plan status	Allocated for development in policy RMX1(1) of the current Local Plan (Retail and mixed use allocations)
The site and its setting	<p>The site is bounded by Bearsted Road to the south, Newnham Court Way to the east, the Kent Medical Campus to the north and the Shopping Village to the west.</p> <p>It rises gradually to the north but more steeply to the west, where there is an elevation change of some eight metres.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>The area has been the subject of numerous planning applications and the following is relevant.</p> <p>13/1931</p> <p>The demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide new retail development utilised the proposal site and adjoining land.</p> <p>Refused</p>
Planning appraisal	Any future proposal would need to be of an appropriate form and scale so as not to impact on the AONB and the immediate area.
Access	Via Newnham Court Way utilising the planned new road that will serve the Shopping Village.
Sustainability	N/A
Cumulative impact	Increased traffic movements onto Bearsted Road.
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	<b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society does not wish to comment on this Call For Sites submission.</b>



Site name & reference	030 - Bearsted Road and New Cut Road
Location	The site is at the junction of Bearsted Road and New Cut Road to the southeast of the KIMS roundabout
Current use	Vacant untended land
Proposal	Commercial on 0.33 ha. (Care home with 63+ beds)
Parish	Boxley
Promoter	Mohi Uddin, landowner
Local Plan status	White Land and Minerals Safeguarding
The site and its setting	<p>Located to the south of Bearsted Road the site is opposite the large area of development to Newnham Court to the north, with its backdrop of the North Downs AONB. It forms an essential component of an undeveloped "green lung" to the south of Bearsted Road, an area some 1.2 km long which serves as a buffer between commercial development to the north of the road and extensive housing further to the south. Backed by trees to the southeast it bounds Weaving Heath to the east and the land to the Vinters Park Crematorium to the west, on the opposite side of New Cut Road. The site is some two metres lower than the adjacent roads and substantially lower than the surrounding area to the southeast.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>14/502252/OUT Outline application for a development of 8 no. houses with access considered at this stage and all other matters reserved for future consideration. Refused Appeal dismissed 18/503492/OUT Outline application for erection of a care home (Use Class C2) with access to Bearsted Road including landscaping, parking and associated works. Matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved for future consideration. Refused Appeal decision pending</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>This greenfield site effectively links Weaving Heath and the grounds of Vinters Park Crematorium and any development would adversely affect the character of the locality contrary to policy SS1 of the current Local Plan (Spatial Strategy: "<i>In other locations, protection will be given to the rural character of the borough avoiding coalescence between settlement</i>")</p>
Access	<p>The promoter states that the site is bounded by Bearsted Road and New Cut Road but has not provided specific details for accessing the site. However the recently refused planning application shows access from Bearsted Road. The KCC scheme for improving the A249 would effectively only allow access to the site from New Cut Road and this would be close to the enlarged roundabout.</p>
Sustainability	N/A
Cumulative impact	Additional traffic movements on Bearsted Road and New Cut Road would be unacceptable and lead to further congestion.

Other matters

As the site sits well below the adjacent carriageways drainage to any buildings and car park would be problematic, despite the presence of a stream to the south that feeds the lake in the Vinters Park Nature Reserve. Any run-off to the stream from hard landscaping may have an adverse effect downstream and would need to be filtered to ensure that pollutants do not enter the watercourse.

Conclusion

The proposal would be harmful in terms of its impact on the landscape, and in particular because of any height, scale and mass.

Access to and from the proposal would be hazardous.

**The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.**



Site name & reference	221 - Rear of Apple Tree House, Ware Street
Location	Situated to the north of Apple Tree House and to the east of properties on Hockers Lane.
Current use	Garden backland.
Proposal	5 houses on 0.5 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	Consilium town Planning Services on behalf of Mrs. Callen.
Local Plan status	White Land and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	Abutting the southwest corner of Bearsted Golf Club this garden site is relatively level for some 50% of its depth. However it rises sharply towards its northern end, towards 127 Hockers Lane, with an elevational change of some seven metres. The site falls within the Bearsted Golf Course Landscape Area.
Relevant planning history	16/500159/FULL Erection of 10 detached dwellings Refused Appeal dismissed 16/506899/FULL Erection of 7 detached dwellings Refused Appeal dismissed 19/504734/FULL Erection of 5 no. detached dwellings with new access road Awaiting determination
Planning appraisal	The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the setting of the AONB and therefore contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside). It would be contrary to policy DM1(iv) as it fails to respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties, in particular 127 Hockers Lane. This sensitive location provides the setting to the Kent Downs AONB to the north and was identified as such in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012 (Section 4, 14-13, Bearsted Golf Course)
Access	The submission form indicates access from Ware Street however the indicative Site Layout Plan, and the current planning application for the site, show access from Hockers Lane. The latter would have a detrimental effect on the residents of Popes Wood and Hockers Lane. In response to earlier applications which proposed pedestrian and vehicular access to the site via Ware Street, it was noted that there is no footway provision on the northern side of Ware Street between the junction with Hockers Lane and the access to Birling House, so all pedestrians will have to cross to and from the southern footway at this point. The applicant had failed to demonstrate adequate visibility by, and to, pedestrians on both sides of the road.
Sustainability	Unsustainable as residents would rely on motor vehicles to access services.
Cumulative impact	N/A
Other matters	Refer to site 246 in the same location.

Conclusion

The proposal would be harmful in terms of its impact on the landscape, detrimental to the amenity of local residents and in an unsustainable location.

**The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.**



Site name & reference	246 - Rear of Apple Tree House, Ware Street
Location	Situated to the north of Apple Tree House and to the east of properties on Hockers Lane and Popes Wood.
Current use	Garden backland.
Proposal	20 houses on 1 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	Consilium town Planning Services on behalf of Mrs. Callen.
Local Plan status	and is subject to Minerals safeguarding.
The site and its setting	<p>Abutting the southwest corner of Bearsted Golf Club this garden site falls within the Bearsted Golf Course Landscape Area. It is relatively level for approximately one third of its depth, however it rises sharply towards 127 Hockers Lane, with an elevational change of some seven metres at that point and continues to rise resulting in an elevational change of some ten metres at its northern boundary.</p> <p>The northern half of the site would surround 127 Hockers Lane.</p>
Relevant planning history	<p>The following details apply to the southern half of the site</p> <p>16/500159/FULL Erection of 10 detached dwellings Refused Appeal dismissed</p> <p>16/506899/FULL Erection of 7 detached dwellings Refused Appeal dismissed</p> <p>19/504734/FULL Erection of 5 no. detached dwellings with new access road Awaiting determination</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the setting of the AONB and therefore contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside)</p> <p>It would be contrary to policy DM1(iv) as it fails to respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties, in particular 127 Hockers Lane and those in Pope's Wood.</p> <p>This sensitive location provides the setting to the Kent Downs AONB to the north and was identified as such in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012 (Section 4, 14-13, Bearsted Golf Course)</p>

Access	<p>This submission shows access from Ware Street with a secondary access from Hockers Lane, if required.</p> <p>However the current planning application for the site only shows access from Hockers Lane. In response to earlier applications which proposed pedestrian and vehicular access to the site via Ware Street, it was noted that there is no footway provision on the northern side of Ware Street between the junction with Hockers Lane and the access to Birling House, so all pedestrians will have to cross to and from the southern footway at this point. The applicant had failed to demonstrate adequate visibility by, and to, pedestrians on both sides of the road.</p>
Sustainability	Unsustainable as residents would rely on motor vehicles to access services.
Cumulative impact	N/A
Other matters	Refer to site 221 in the same location.
Conclusion	<p>The proposal would be harmful in terms of its impact on the landscape, detrimental to the amenity of local residents and in an unsustainable location.</p> <p><b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b></p>



Site name & reference	266 - North of Ware Street
Location	Situated to the north of Ware Street opposite Averanches Road and surrounding "Fairways".
Current use	Untended land
Proposal	Up to 100 houses on 4.25 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	Hume Planning Consultancy for Countryside Properties PLC
Local Plan status	White Land and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	<p>The site abuts Bearsted Golf Course to the north, Birling House to the west, Edelin Road to the east and would result in Fairways being surrounded on three sides. Relatively level it shares a similar elevation with the golf course to the north but is some seven metres above Ware Street to the south.</p> <p>It falls within the Bearsted Golf Course Landscape Area</p>
Relevant planning history	N/A
Planning appraisal	<p>The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the setting of the AONB and therefore contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside) and paragraph 15 of the NPPF. (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)</p> <p>It would be contrary to policy DM1(iv) as it fails to respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties, in particular Fairways and Birling house.</p> <p>This sensitive location provides the setting to the Kent Downs AONB to the north and was identified as such in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012 (Section 4, 14-13, Bearsted Golf Course)</p>
Access	<p>The proposed access would be onto Ware Street, slightly to the east of the opposing entrance to Averanches Road.</p> <p>Additional widening of Ware Street would be required to accommodate this staggered junction.</p>
Sustainability	<p>The average walking time from the centre of the site to Bearsted railway station, or to bus stops serving Maidstone or the Grove Green shopping area, would be fifteen minutes for a fit adult. Whilst it might be viewed that the walking time for commuters using the station would make the location sustainable the walking time for other trips, such as shopping, is unsustainable as the threshold is lower.</p>
Cumulative impact	<p>From ONS statistics for occupancy levels and trips made when based in rural village and hamlet locations the proposal would generate some 525 vehicle movements per day, although this figure could be higher when based on the local demographic. These movements would exacerbate the existing congestion on Ware Street, which is an undesignated road, as residents seek to gain access to A roads and the M20. Vehicle movements on this road are already set to increase substantially when the Barty Farm and Lilk Meadow developments are released and the two schools on Bearsted Road open in 2020.</p>
Other matters	N/A

## Conclusion

The proposal would be harmful in terms of its impact on the landscape and detrimental to the amenity of local residents, particularly the residents of “Fairways” and “Birling House”.

Increased vehicle movements on Ware Street and the surrounding roads would exacerbate traffic congestion in the area.

The location is not wholly sustainable.

**The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.**



Site name & reference	160 - Ware Street Allotments
Location	Situated to the north of Ware Street in the gardens of Church Cottages, 30 to 36 Ware Street, and in the allotments to the north of the railway.
Current use	Allotments and garden land.
Proposal	20 houses on 1.8 ha.
Parish	Bearsted and Thurnham
Promoter	John Bishop & Associates on behalf of the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance Limited.
Local Plan status	White Land and Minerals Safeguarding.
The site and its setting	<p>The Grade II listing details for Church Cottages states that they are late 18th or early 19th century and their attached gardens would have been in use since this time.</p> <p>The allotments to the north of the railway line have been in use since the mid 19th century. The rear gardens are elevated some two metres above Ware Street.</p> <p>The allotments are some seven metres above Ware Street and bounded to the east, north and west by Bearsted Golf Club and by the roadway and railway line to the south.</p> <p>The site falls within the Bearsted Golf Course Landscape Area.</p>
Relevant planning history	N/A
Planning appraisal	<p>It would be contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside).</p> <p>The proposal would impact on the setting of the Grade II listed properties forming Church Cottages and the slightly earlier and adjacent Grade II listed properties known as Rose Cottages.</p> <p>Increased traffic movements would result in a loss of amenity to the residents of Church Cottages and to those on the eastern side of Sharsted Way and therefore contrary to policy DM1(iv) as it fails to respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties.</p> <p>There are no suitable alternative allotment sites available in the area.</p>
Access	<p>The existing access roadway to the allotments and the Bearsted Golf Club car park runs for some 90 metres northwards before turning to the east.</p> <p>The northbound section is single track with no passing places and could not be widened without rebuilding the bridge spanning the railway line.</p> <p>There is no footpath or street lighting and pedestrians accessing or leaving the proposal would therefore be placed at severe risk. The roadway is elevated by some 2 to 3 metres above the rear gardens of Church Cottages.</p> <p>Public right of way KH129 follows this roadway.</p>
Sustainability	N/A
Cumulative impact	N/A
Other matters	The proposed alternative land use would result in a loss of income to St. Mary the Virgin Church, Thurnham.
Conclusion	<p>The proposal does not comply with the adopted local plan, it would impact on listed properties and the access is both unsuitable and potentially dangerous for pedestrians.</p> <p><b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b></p>



Site name & reference	297 - Bearsted Library (School House)
Location	Situated on the northern side of The Street, adjacent to The Parade, and facing Bearsted Green.
Current use	Empty. Constructed as a school and used as a library after the closure of the school..
Proposal	6 houses on 0.13 ha.
Parish	Bearsted
Promoter	DHA Planning Limited on behalf of KCC.
Local Plan status	Bearsted Conservation Area
The site and its setting	<p>Situated opposite the northwest corner of The Green the site has the elevated railway track as its northern boundary.</p> <p>It forms an integral part of the Bearsted Conservation Area and its impact on the setting of the area is listed as "critical".</p> <p>The proposal mentions a site area of 0.13 hectares but the available site, to the rear of the School House, is only about one third of this size.</p>
Relevant planning history	N/A
Planning appraisal	<p>Although it is stated that access would be "<i>Taken from existing access</i>" the current access is only for pedestrians. KCC's own parking standards give a minimum requirement of one parking space for a one or two bedroom flat.</p> <p>Although the type of properties has not been specified a minimum of six off-street spaces would be required and this could only be provided in front of the School House.</p> <p>The impact of this on an unlisted Heritage Asset would be unacceptable and the Conservation Area Appraisal for the building lists its value to the character of the area as "<i>essential</i>".</p> <p>On-street parking would have serious and unacceptable implications for the Conservation Area and local residents.</p> <p>The proposed development would impact on the setting of the adjacent property, Knowle Cottage, and on the amenity of its occupants.</p>
Access	<p>Vehicular access to the rear of the proposal site could not be provided as the original School House occupies the vast majority of the width of the site when viewed from The Street.</p> <p>Any proposal to create a vehicular access from The Street, and finishing in front of the School House, would be unacceptable because of its impact on an unlisted Heritage Asset, the Conservation Area and the setting of the historic green.</p>
Sustainability	Unsustainable on parking allocation.
Cumulative impact	N/A
Other matters	The KCC should find an alternative method of funding the maintenance of this unlisted Heritage Asset.
Conclusion	<p>The site is unsuitable for development as parking provision alone would have an unacceptable impact on the Conservation Area.</p> <p><b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site should not be included in a revised Local Plan.</b></p>



Site name & reference	290 - The Lodge, Water Lane
Location	Situated to the north of the railway line the site is located to the east of Bridge Farm and Water Lane.
Current use	Equestrian
Proposal	60 houses jointly with site 291 on 4.07 ha total. This site is 1.92 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	John Twycross on behalf of Horsecloud Limited.
Local Plan status	White Land and Minerals Safeguarding
The site and its setting	This site is located to the north of the Ashford to Maidstone railway line in open countryside at the foot of the North Downs. It is in a rural area beyond any built environment, the northern boundary of which is clearly delineated by the railway line.
Relevant planning history	<p>This land was included in the site for the proposed Kent International Gateway 07/2092</p> <p>Outline application for a freight interchange and warehousing Refused</p> <p>An appeal was dismissed following a Public Inquiry in 2009 The Secretary of State upheld the appeal decision in 2010</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>This site is located to the north of the Ashford to Maidstone railway line and its development would represent an urban extension into open countryside.</p> <p>Inclusion of this triangular site in the Local Plan would open the whole of the buffer between the railway line and the M20, and westwards to Thurnham Lane and Hockers Lane, to future development.</p> <p>It would be contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside) and paragraph 15 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment).</p> <p>It would have an adverse impact on the setting of the North Downs AONB.</p>
Access	Access would be gained through Bridge Farm, site 291, and its unsuitability is covered in the appraisal of that location.
Sustainability	<p>This is an unsustainable site as residents would be entirely dependent on the use of motor vehicles.</p> <p>These would need to use a narrow country lane susceptible to flooding, and there is a clear reason why Water Lane is so called.</p> <p>Bearsted Railway Station is some 1.25 km distant and there is a bus stop within 550 metres. However to access these facilities pedestrians would be required to use a 200 metre section of Water Lane which is effectively single track, unlit and has no footpaths. Additional housing in this location would place yet more stress on overloaded local infrastructure.</p>
Cumulative impact	N/A
Other matters	N/A
Conclusion	<b>The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site, together with site 291, should not be included in a revised Local Plan</b>



Site name & reference	291 - Bridge Farm, Water Lane
Location	Situated to the north of the railway line the site is located to the east of Water Lane.
Current use	Agricultural and equestrian
Proposal	60 houses jointly with site 290 on 4.07 ha total. This site is 2.15 ha.
Parish	Thurnham
Promoter	John Twycross on behalf of the Chapman family.
Local Plan status	White Land and Minerals Safeguarding
The site and its setting	This site is located to the north of the Ashford to Maidstone railway line in open countryside at the foot of the North Downs. It is in a rural area beyond any built environment, the northern boundary of which is clearly delineated by the railway line.
Relevant planning history	<p>This land was included in the site for the proposed Kent International Gateway 07/2092</p> <p>Outline application for a freight interchange and warehousing Refused</p> <p>An appeal was dismissed following a Public Inquiry in 2009</p> <p>The Secretary of State upheld the appeal decision in 2010</p>
Planning appraisal	<p>This site is located to the north of the Ashford to Maidstone railway line and its development would represent an urban extension into open countryside.</p> <p>Inclusion of this site in the Local Plan would open the whole of the buffer between the railway line and the M20, and westwards to Thurnham Lane and Hockers Lane, to future development.</p> <p>It would be contrary to policy SP17 of the current Local Plan (Development in the countryside) and paragraph 15 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment).</p> <p>It would have an adverse impact on the setting of the North Downs AONB.</p>
Access	<p>The only access is onto Water Lane and this would be shared jointly with Site 290. This lane is entirely unsuited to any increase in traffic by virtue of its narrow, often single track, width together with informal passing places.</p> <p>The promoter appears to emphasise the “importance” of Water Lane as a route between Bearsted and “Thurnham village”, and suggests its “constant use”. This is disingenuous as Thurnham is a disparate village with no discernible centre.</p>
Sustainability	<p>This is an unsustainable site as residents would be entirely dependent on the use of motor vehicles.</p> <p>These would need to use a narrow country lane susceptible to flooding, and there is a clear reason why Water Lane is so called.</p> <p>Bearsted Railway Station is some 1.2 km distant and there is a bus stop within 500 metres. However to access these facilities pedestrians would be required to use a 200 metre section of Water Lane which is effectively single track, unlit and has no footpaths.</p> <p>Additional housing in this location would place yet more stress on overloaded local infrastructure.</p>
Cumulative impact	N/A
Other matters	N/A

Conclusion

**The Bearsted and Thurnham Society strongly recommends that this Call For Site, together with site 290, should not be included in a revised Local Plan**