

APPENDIX C

530 20/505877/OUT Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Ospringe, ME13 8XU

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Planning Working Group**7 January 2025**

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chair), Ann Kavanagh (Substitute for Councillor Kieran Golding), Julien Speed, Terry Thompson and Karen Watson.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Ian Harrison, Kellie Mackenzie and Ben Oates.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Simon Clark, Kieran Golding, James Hunt and Elliott Jayes.

The Chair welcomed the Agent, the Applicants, a representative from Ospringe Parish Council, members of the public and Members to the meeting.

The Planning Consultant introduced the application which sought outline planning permission for a mixed-use development comprising a nursery school, up to five holiday lets and flexible industrial and research and development workshop floorspace with all matters reserved except access from Brogdale Road. The site adjoined a Grade II listed building, Brogdale Farmhouse.

The Applicant's Agent reported that the East Malling Trust had purchased the site in March 2024 and considered the proposal would support the wider site by providing employment, support the local community, tourism and improve the site which was currently overgrown.

A representative from Ospringe Parish Council spoke against the application and raised points which included:

- This was a finely balanced application, but considered the site was unsuitable for the proposal;
- concerned that the highway statistics used were out-of-date and did not take in consideration that the surrounding roads were ancient rural lanes or the housing developments in the area;
- agreed to forward the Speed Watch figures to planning officers which demonstrated that the proposed access would be dangerous;
- the proposed access from the public highway was not fit for purpose;
- the development would have an unacceptable impact on the adjacent listed building;
- needed to scrutinise the viability of the National Fruit Collection; and
- concerned that indicative uses on the site would not be 'managed' given that current uses were not enforced by Swale Borough Council (SBC).

Local residents raised points which included:

- The existing screening at the site should be protected;
- Brogdale Farmhouse had been on the site since circa 1383 and should be protected;
- the application proposed an 'unhappy' mix of uses;
- the application was over-intensively commercial;
- the proposed access would be dangerous and ground levels would make it difficult for suitable sightlines to be installed;
- had applied over a year ago to SBC for trees on the site to have Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) but still no response, would they be preserved?;
- the loss of trees on the site would result in increased traffic noise on the site;

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- the redundant reservoir was previously a beautiful site but the current owner had allowed it to go into disrepair;
- why was a nursery school being proposed in such a rural area when there were new estates further down the road which would be more appropriate locations?;
- considered there would be safeguarding risks allowing holiday lets so close to a nursery school;
- this was a 'highly unfortunate application', but SBC were charged with looking after the local landscape and ensuring that developments enhanced the area; and
- light industrial use was not acceptable in rural areas.

The Planning Consultant said that he was aware that SBC's Tree Consultant considered there was some merit in the trees being subject to TPOs and clarified that the trees would not be affected by the application. The Chair asked that officer's action the requested TPOs as soon as possible as a year was far too long to have to wait.

The Chair then invited all those in attendance to view the adjacent listed building from the site, the proposed location of: the holiday lets; workshops; nursery; and where the proposed access would be. Those present duly walked through the site and surrounding land, including the public highway, with intermittent stops where comments were made as set out below. The Agent provided the indicative layout drawing for those present.

The Applicant explained that the reservoir would be filled in and the land levels would be as the current levels were around the edges of the reservoir.

In response to points raised, the Planning Consultant reported that the existing tree line around the site would be retained to provide screening as per the Landscaping Assessment. The proposed access would be solely for the proposed mixed uses, and they would not be able to use the existing vehicular access. The Agent clarified that the light industrial use in the workshops would be for rural crafts and light machinery use. The Planning Consultant advised that the use class and hours of use were conditioned as set out in the report.

Local residents said that hours of use on the existing site were regularly flouted and not enforced by SBC. The Chair asked that officers investigated the concerns raised.