

National Planning Policy Framework

In dealing with this application we have implemented the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant/agent in a positive, proactive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service; as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible and if applicable suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome. We have considered the application in light of our statutory policies in our development plan as set out in the officer's report.

Description of site

- 1 The site is situated along the north side of Bradbourne Vale Road, which is a busy arterial road (known as the A25) linking to the north of Sevenoaks. The site is located outside of the built confines of Sevenoaks, in the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 2 The site contains a semi-detached house, which is Locally Listed, and contains a modest parking and garden area to the west side of the house, fronting Bradbourne Vale Road. An existing vehicular gate provides the access to the house along Bradbourne Vale Road.
- 3 The site is bound by an access route serving Sevenoaks wildlife reserve to the north, which sits at a higher land level than the site, and by Bradbourne Vale Road to the south. An overgrown area of land lies to the west of the site, and the semidetached neighbouring house (no.2 Bottle Cottages) lies to the east.

Description of proposal

- 4 The proposal is for a single-storey detached garage to be positioned on the Westside of the house.
- 5 The proposal presents a revised scheme to address a previously refused scheme for a garage on the site (reference 21/01743/HOUSE).
- 6 The present scheme has been amended from the previous scheme in the following ways:
 - The height of the garage has been reduced by approximately 0.5m
 - The orientation of the garage roof has been altered so that the gable end faces the street scene
 - The internal configuration of the garage has been altered to provide space for parking two vehicles (the previous scheme included a study space/garden room and did not meet standard parking space dimensions)

Relevant planning history

- 7 85/00575/HIST - Proposed bungalow/garage. Refused.

- 8 85/00521/HIST - Proposed vehicle access/garage space. Granted.
- 9 93/01577/HIST - Detached garage and new access. Refused.
- 10 94/01393/HIST - Detached garage and new access. Granted.
- 11 03/00212/FUL - Proposed vehicular crossing. Granted.
- 12 21/01743/HOUSE - Erection of detached garage outbuilding. Refused.

Policies

- 13 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 14 Core Strategy (CS)
 - SP1 Design of New Development and Conservation
 - L08 The Countryside and Rural Economy
 - SP11 Biodiversity
- 15 Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP)
 - SC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - EN1 Design Principles
 - EN2 Amenity Protection
 - EN4 Heritage Assets
 - GB3 Residential Outbuildings in the Green Belt
 - T2 Vehicle Parking
- 16 Other:
 - Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
 - Residential Extensions SPD
 - Kent County Council Vehicle Crossing: - Guidance and Self-Assessment

Constraints

- 17 The following constraints apply:
 - Locally Listed Building
 - Metropolitan Green Belt
 - Area of Archaeological Potential
 - Sevenoaks wildlife reserve to the north of the site (part of Gravel Pits SSSI)
 - Article 4 Direction (preventing demolition of the house on site and not applicable to the current proposal).

Consultations

- 18 Sevenoaks Town Council recommend refusal due to the impact of the garage on the locally listed Bottle Cottages, unless the Conservation officer is satisfied that the amended application is acceptable in terms of both its

setting and impact on the locally listed Bottle cottages and that the materials are sympathetic to those of Bottle Cottages.

- 19 *The Conservation officer subsequently confirmed their support of the scheme in relation to the locally listed cottages (this is discussed in the report below).*
- 20 Conservation - support amended scheme
- 21 A dominant, visually intrusive garage building exists to the east of the pair of locally listed cottages and the intention to construct a similarly unsympathetic structure to the west of the cottages results in the heritage asset being overwhelmed by the presence of modern ancillary structures. From the conservation perspective, poor precedents are no justification for further unsympathetic works, as the cumulative effects diminish the distinctive qualities of heritage assets and thereby harm their significance.
- 22 However it is acknowledged that the site is spacious and a sensitively sited, modestly scaled ancillary structure of sympathetic design and materials would not appear unduly alien to the domestic context. In order to minimize the visually intrusive presence of the substantial new garage when viewed in conjunction with the cottage, the roof should be rotated so that a gable-end faces the front (south).
- 23 The apparent bulk of the new structure would thus be reduced and the cumulative impacts of new development within the setting of the locally listed building somewhat mitigated.
- 24 Support of the proposal in terms of Policy EN4 is conditional upon the above design amendment and revised drawings should be submitted for consideration.
- 25 Additional comments: 19 November 2021:
- 26 Drawing number 003 revision A confirms that the garage roof has been realigned as previously recommended. The materials palette is locally appropriate and references elements of the adjacent locally listed building. The simple materials and neutral design minimise the visual presence of the ancillary structure, while successfully avoiding historically misleading replication. There is no further objection in terms of Policy EN4.

Representations

- 27 One letter of objection from a local group (the Sevenoaks Society) has been received relating to the following issues:
- Potential use of the building as a habitable space
 - Impact of the design and scale of the building on the locally listed building
 - Impact of the design and scale of the building on the Green Belt
 - Impact of the materials on the locally listed building

Chief Planning Officer's appraisal

- 28 The main planning consideration are:
- Principle of the development
 - Impact on heritage assets
 - Impact on the Green Belt
 - Impact on the character of the area
 - Impact on residential amenity
 - Impact on parking and highways safety

Principle of the development

- 29 Policy SC1 of the ADMP takes a positive approach to development, to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, outlined in national policy (the NPPF).
- 30 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF advises that development which accords with a Council's up-to-date development plan should be granted. It further states, where policies are out of date, or not relevant to a proposal, permission should be granted unless policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.
- 31 The site is situated within two protected land designations: the Metropolitan Green Belt and an area of archaeological importance. The garage would also be sited within the setting of the main cottage on site, which is a Locally Listed heritage asset.
- 32 As such, the proposal may be supported, provided it remains compatible with these land designations and protected assets, and remains compatible with relevant policies outlined in the Council's local development plan.
- 33 An assessment against the Council's development plan policies is considered below.

Impact on heritage assets

- 34 Policy EN4 of the ADMP states proposals which affect a heritage asset, or its setting, will be permitted where the development conserves or enhances the character, appearance and setting of the asset.
- 35 This policy remains in accordance with the NPPF which requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets (paragraph 199) and which requires a balanced judgement on the affect of any non-designated heritage assets (paragraph 203).
- 36 The garage would be situated within the setting of a Locally Listed building which is a non-designated heritage asset. The site is also located within a wider area of archaeological importance, which is a designated heritage asset.
- 37 Impact on setting of the locally listed building:

- 38 The garage would be sited within the existing parking and garden area of the site, to the west of the main house on site, called number 1 Bottle Cottages.
- 39 Number 1 Bottle Cottages forms the western part of a pair of ornamental cottages (numbers 1 and 2 Bottle Cottages), which date from the 19th century and are designated as Locally Listed buildings. The buildings are significant in their retention of many original features since their construction, and in their attractive architectural appearance, presenting a distinctive pair of cottages which occupy a softly landscaped domestic setting. The pair of cottages are constructed in stone, with red quoins and front projecting gable features.
- 40 A previous scheme for a garage on site, in 2021, was considered to dominate the setting of the Locally Listed cottages and was not supported by the Conservation Officer.
- 41 Sevenoaks Town Council has objected to the current scheme unless the Conservation Officer is satisfied that the Locally Listed building would be conserved. The current scheme presents a revised garage design which is now supported by the Conservation Officer.
- 42 Revisions to design of the garage have been made to re-orientate the gable-end roof to face the street scene, as requested by the Conservation Officer, and reduce its ridge height by approximately 0.5 metres. These visibly reduce the form, bulk and massing of the roof when viewed from the public realm, so that the massing of the Locally Listed building remains the visually dominant feature on site, and the garage reads as a single-storey ancillary structure within the grounds of the locally listed building.
- 43 The simple rectangular form of the garage, and its simple neutral design features further ensure the garage maintains a visually ancillary appearance on site, with the more complex architectural detailing of the Locally Listed cottages taking visual precedence.
- 44 The visual subservience of the garage is further reinforced by its location and materials. With regards to its location, the garage would remain set-back from the principle building line of the cottage and is inset further to the rear of the site, than the neighbouring garage which occupies a more prominent position in the street scene. The siting of the garage would also benefit from sloping land levels so that the garage occupies a slightly sunken position in relation to the main cottage on site (drawing 003 Rev A). Drawings of the street scene confirm the garage would be situated at a lower land level than the Locally Listed cottages and neighbouring garage which front the street scene.
- 45 The separation distance of the garage from the cottage (over 8 metres) reinforces its ancillary relationship to the cottages, reading as a secondary building on the site, rather than part of the original house.
- 46 This ancillary appearance is further reinforced by the materials proposed. The garage would be constructed in brick to match the brick quoins utilised

on the main cottage, and plain tiles. The Conservation Officer has confirmed the materials proposed are locally appropriate.

- 47 Importantly, whilst third party representations have expressed concern that stone has not been proposed (to match the elevations of the cottage on site), the Conservation Officer has clarified that the materials proposed, whilst taking positive reference from the quoin detailing of the locally listed cottages, would remain visually distinct from the cottages themselves, to avoid historically misleading replication of the cottages. This ensures the new built form on site reads as a secondary addition to the site and the hierarchy of development remains clearly legible on the site, with the Locally Listed cottages taking visual precedence.
- 48 In summary, the scale, siting and design of the proposed garage would ensure new development on the site would remain clearly ancillary to the Locally Listed buildings (1 and 2 Bottle Cottages), conserving the architectural and historic significance of their setting.
- 49 Impact on area of archaeological potential:
- 50 The garage is single-storey and of a modest scale, which would not result in significant ground disturbance, particularly as the land has already been disturbed by the existing hardstanding parking area. As a result, the proposal is considered to conserve archaeological remains with potential to be found across the area.
- 51 Conclusion on impacts to heritage assets:
- 52 In summary, the proposal, by virtue of its design, scale and siting, would conserve the setting of nearby Locally Listed buildings and conserve the area of archaeological importance. The scheme is further supported by the Conservation Officer who has been consulted on the proposal. As a result, the proposal is considered to conserve heritage assets, in accordance with Policy EN4 of the ADMP.

Impact on the Green Belt

- 53 Paragraph 148 of the NPPF advises we should give substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. Paragraph 147 states that where a proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 54 Policy L08 of the Core Strategy seeks to protect the extent of the Green Belt, whilst policy GB3 of the ADMP allows for residential outbuildings in the Green Belt, provided the outbuildings are of an ancillary function and design to the main dwelling, and would not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive bulk or visual intrusion.
- 55 Policy GB3 also requires residential outbuildings to be located more than 5m from the existing dwelling on site, and considers the cumulative impact of other outbuildings and extensions within the curtilage of the dwelling, on Green Belt openness.

- 56 Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and is different from visual impact. Openness is about freedom from built form although it can have a visual element. Even if there is absence of harm to openness, there can be harm in principal to the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
- 57 Assessment of impact:
- 58 In interpreting this local Green Belt policy, the Development in the Green Belt SPD states the scale of an outbuilding should not exceed what might reasonably be expected for the function of the building. Garages and outbuildings for domestic purposes should not normally need to exceed a single storey in height or have excessive volume. Such buildings should be clearly ancillary to the main dwelling in their function and design, and should not exceed 40 square metres in footprint.
- 59 Within the previously refused scheme (21/01743/HOUSE), the internal parking of the outbuilding did not meet the standard width required for parking space sizes and was therefore not considered to operate functionally as a garage. The scheme was consequently considered to be of an excessive height and scale for its proposed function.
- 60 The current scheme has re-configured the internal space of the garage, for parking two vehicles. The internal width of the parking spaces, within the garage, would meet standard car parking dimensions. The garage would be of single-storey height, with a ridgeline that is set-down from the main dwelling on site, and with a re-oriented roof profile to reduce its bulk and massing. The footprint of the garage would be restricted to 39 square metres. As such, the proposed garage is not considered to be of an excessive scale for its function, and is considered to be of an ancillary function and design to the main house on site, in accordance with design guidance outlined within the Green Belt SPD.
- 61 The SPD further states that outbuildings should be sited to minimise visual intrusion.
- 62 As assessed in relation to the setting of the locally listed building, the outbuilding would benefit from a set-back position on the site, and maintain a visual separation (over 8 metres) from the main house on site, to reinforce its visually ancillary appearance. The garage would remain largely screened in long-range public vantage points of the site by the main house, which lies forward of the garage to its east, and by overgrown vegetation adjoining the garage to its west.
- 63 In addition, an access road to Sevenoaks wildlife reserve abuts the site to its north and this parcel of land sits at a higher land level than the site. As a result, the outbuilding would be read against the backdrop of higher land levels to the north of the site.
- 64 Consequently, the outbuilding is sited to minimise visual intrusion.
- 65 The SPD further states that outbuildings should not compete with the main house and simplicity of design can often reinforce the distinction between

the original building and secondary buildings on a site. As assessed above, the simple rectangular form of the garage and its simple architectural features and neutral material palette help to reinforce this distinction, so that the main house on site takes visual precedence.

- 66 Finally, the use of the proposed outbuilding as a garage would constitute ancillary function to the main dwelling on site. Third party representation has expressed concern that the garage could be used as internal living space. The SPD advises planning conditions can be utilised to ensure the function of the outbuilding remains ancillary to the main house on site and is not converted to a function which would not be ancillary (for example a new dwelling) without the written permission of the Local Planning Authority. A planning condition is therefore recommended to ensure the outbuilding remains of an ancillary function to the main house on site, to preserve Green Belt openness.
- 67 It would not be considered reasonable to specify the use of the outbuilding as a garage however. Policy GB3 allows for outbuildings which cater to a range of ancillary uses (garages being one of many ancillary uses), and the revised design of the current proposal, together with its siting is not considered to be harmful to Green Belt openness, provided the function remains ancillary to the main house on site, which can be secured via planning condition.
- 68 In summary, the proposal is considered to be of an ancillary design, footprint and function to the main dwelling on site, and is sited to minimise visual intrusion. As such, the proposal fulfils the requirements of policy GB3 and is considered appropriate within the Green Belt.

Impact on character of the area

- 69 Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy, and Policy EN1 of the ADMP require new development to be designed to a high quality and to respond to the form, scale, height, and distinctive local character of an area.
- 70 The residential extensions SPD states that garages and other outbuildings should be subservient in scale and position to the original dwelling and not impact detrimentally on the space surrounding buildings or the street scene by virtue of their scale, form or location. Garages or outbuildings set in front of the building line will not normally be allowed.
- 71 As assessed above, the design of the garage would be subservient to the original dwelling on site, being of a single-storey height with a ridgeline which is set-down from that of the main dwelling, and with a re-orientated roof profile to minimise its visual bulk and massing, when viewed from the street scene of Bradbourne Vale Road.
- 72 The set-back of the garage from the street scene, and from the principle building line of the house, as well as from the neighbouring garage, would further reinforce the subservience of the garage in public vantage points of the site. The visual separation of the garage from the house, its sunken position, and its simple design, reinforce the subservient and secondary

nature of the building, so that the original house on site remains visually dominant, and so that the garage would not dominate the street scene.

- 73 The gable-end roof design and simple rectangular form of the garage, respects the roof profile and rectangular form of the main house.
- 74 Finally, the residential extensions SPD echoes the design guidance for outbuildings in the Green Belt, stating that secondary buildings or extensions are traditionally erected in different materials which can help reinforce the subservience of the extension and maintain the visual primacy of the original house.
- 75 The materials proposed utilise plain roof tiles to match the existing house on site, and reference the material palette of the main house (brick quoins), whilst remaining visually distinct from the house, to reinforce its secondary appearance.
- 76 As a result the proposed design, scale and siting of the garage would remain responsive to the local character of the site and is considered a subservient addition to the site, compatible with the character of the local area, in accordance with local design policy.

Impact on residential amenity

- 77 Policy EN2 of the ADMP and the Residential Extensions SPD requires developments to safeguard satisfactory levels of amenity to occupants and neighbours of a development.
- 78 The proposed garage would be sited in the north west corner of the site, and would not be sited within the direct outlook of any habitable rooms of neighbouring properties. The garage would be over 8 metres from the main house on site and over 13 metres from the nearest neighbouring house (number 2 Bottle Cottages).
- 79 As a result, the siting of the garage would preserve the existing light levels, outlook and privacy afforded to the main house on site, and neighbouring houses. The proposal therefore complies with policy EN2.

Impact on parking and highways safety

- 80 Policy EN1 states that all new development should provide satisfactory means of access for vehicles and pedestrians, and provide adequate parking.
- 81 Policy T2 of the ADMP states that parking provision should be in accordance with local parking guidance, which requires two independently accessible parking spaces for dwellings in this location.
- 82 The site benefits from an existing driveway with parking for two independently accessible vehicles, and adequate space for turning of vehicles on the site, to ensure vehicles enter and exit the site in a forward position.

- 83 The existing parking will be preserved by the proposal, and the site will utilise the existing access onto Bradbourne Vale Road. As a result the scheme complies with local parking and highways safety requirements.

Other issues

- 84 The site is located to the south of Sevenoaks wildlife reserve, however the scale of the development is not considered to be of a magnitude to present harm to site, nor wildlife which may utilise the site and surrounding area. As such, the proposal would conserve the existing biodiversity of the local area, in accordance with policy SP11 of the Core Strategy.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 85 The proposal is not CIL liable.

Conclusion

- 86 In conclusion, the proposed garage would introduce an ancillary structure to the site, which has been designed and sited to minimise visual intrusion in the Green Belt,
- 87 The garage would responds to the scale, design and materiality of the Locally Listed cottage on site, and respect the appearance of built form across the wider area. The scheme is further supported by the Conservation Officer.
- 88 On-site parking provision, and the existing residential amenities of neighbours, would be preserved.
- 89 As a result the proposal accords with all relevant policies considered within the Sevenoaks Development Plan.
- 90 It is therefore recommended that this application is GRANTED.

Background papers

001 Location Plan

002 Existing Site Plan

003 Rev A Proposed Site Plan and Street Scene

004 Rev A Proposed Garage Plan and Elevations

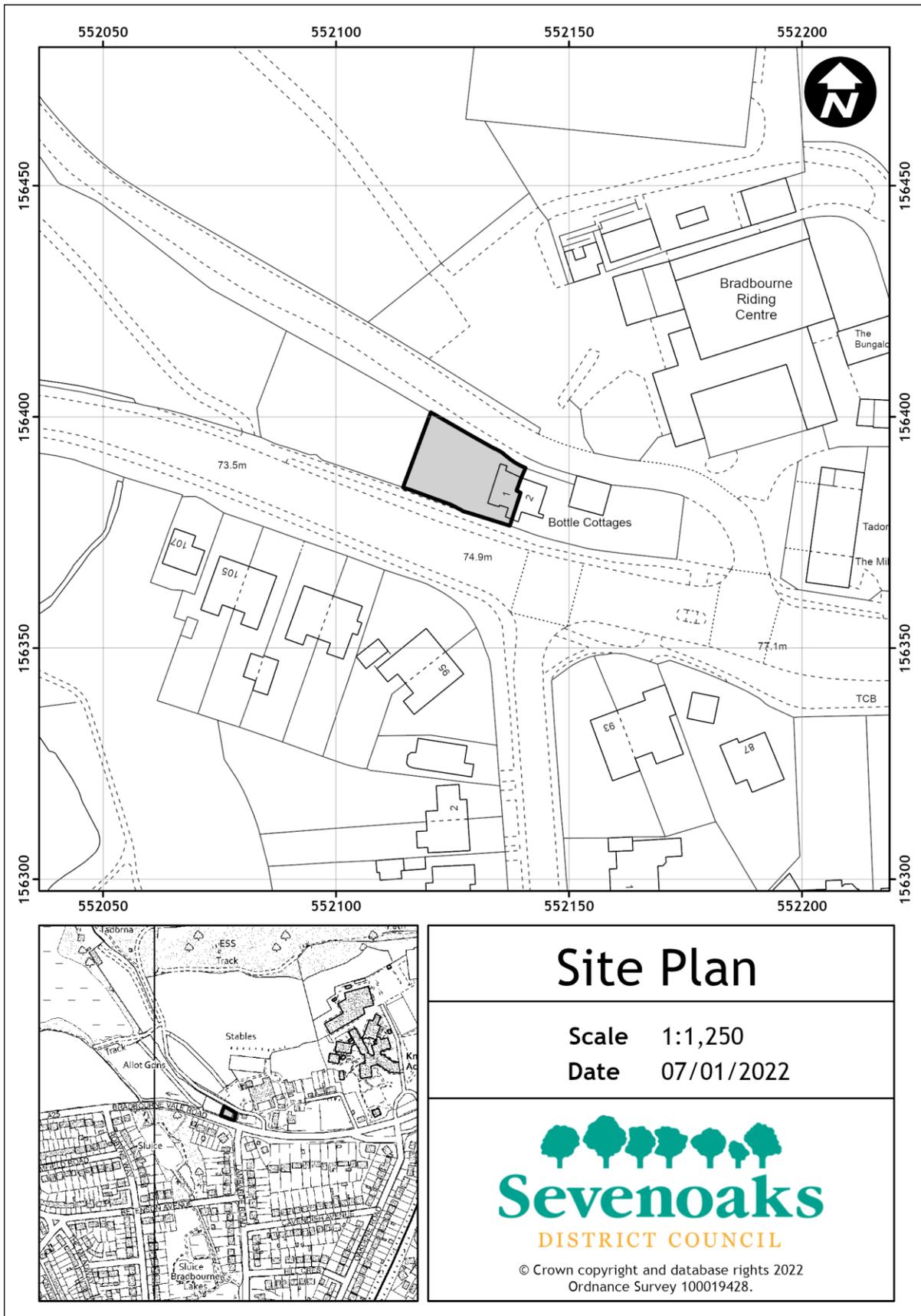
Application Form dated 15 September 2021

Contact Officer(s): Samantha Simmons 01732 227000

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[Link to application details:](#)

[Link to associated documents:](#)



Site Plan

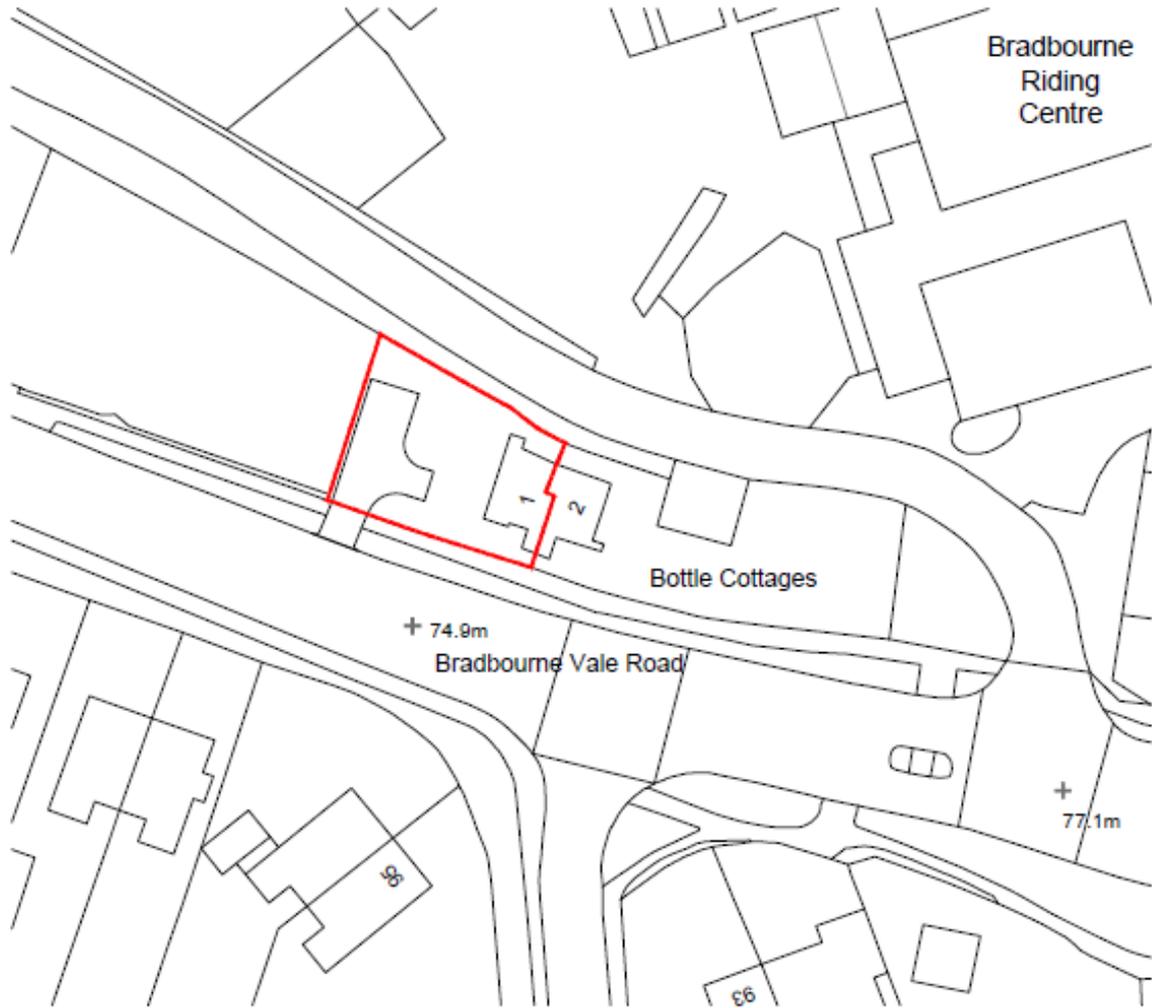
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BLOCK PLAN



Site Block Plan 1:500

