

<b>Ightham</b>	<b>558435 153324</b>	<b>(A) 15 April 2008</b>	<b>(A) TM/08/00700/FL</b>
Ightham		<b>(B) 16 April 2008</b>	<b>(B) TM/08/00701/LB</b>

Proposal: (A) Change of use of part of old farmyard to a gardeners' compound including minor alterations, erection of glass house, forcing pits, replacement gates/fences plus foul sewer connection  
(B) Listed Building Application: Minor alterations to existing building including replacement "like for like" gates/fence

Location: Mote Farm Mote Road Ivy Hatch Sevenoaks Kent TN15 0NT  
Applicant: The National Trust

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## **1. Description (A & B):**

- 1.1 It is proposed to change the use of the old farmyard at Mote Farm from a predominantly agricultural use to a mixed use of gardeners' compound and agricultural. The physical characteristics of the farmyard are described in detail on paras 3.2 and 3.3 below. Approx 80sqm (861 sq ft) of the building will be retained for use by the tenant of Mote Farm but none of the courtyard. The gardeners' compound will be to serve Ightham Mote, being a relocation from its current site at the Mote. It is understood that it is to facilitate a revised scheme for improved visitor facilities at the Mote. There is no planning application for that scheme under determination at this date but there is a previous extant consent for Phase 2 visitor facilities on the site of the gardeners' compound.
- 1.2 The change of use will involve external and internal changes to the old farmyard building which require listed building consent as the farmyard is curtilage listed. All new doors will be match boarded ledged and braced, painted white; new partitions will be timber studwork; new floors will be suspended timber; new external walls will be dark stained weatherboarded blockwork.
- 1.3 The application also includes the creation of an oiled cedar framed glasshouse on a brick plinth. The glass house will measure 18.2m by 4.3m and will be 3m in ridge height and will be positioned along the southern common boundary with Mote Farmhouse. On its northern flank, a number of brick faced forcing pits (0.68m high and 1.83m deep) for a length of 18.2m, topped with oiled cedar frames.
- 1.4 Originally the application included changing the two sets of 5 bar gates to solid gates but this is no longer being proposed: replacement like-for-like gates will be inserted to the main vehicular access on the western side, the gates to Mote Farmhouse will be retained 'as existing'.
- 1.5 Internally, the most significant change is the creation of staff rooms which require roof insulation- the underside of the rafters will be lined in plasterboard, so the rafters will be hidden from view. Insulation will be installed behind the plasterboard

lining between the rafters with an air gap for ventilation. In the proposed mess room, the plasterboard lining will butt up against the hammer beam trusses, which will be left exposed. In addition some tile repairs will be carried out on the roof slopes over the mess room and the tiles on the roof slopes over the proposed toilets will be completely removed and re-laid to allow for the installation of felt.

1.6 The plans show a new foul drain from new toilet facilities to link to the main system at Ightham Mote, going under Mote Road.

1.7 The applicant has submitted supporting statements, summarised as follows:

- *The southern part of the eastern range will be retained by the farmer for use as garaging, storage and workshop. He will have access from the east and also from the southern end of the block but no access to the central courtyard. The remaining buildings within the farmyard will be used for the storage and maintenance of garden machinery, tools and equipment, for bagged compost and fertilizers, for the potting of plants, and for storage of fencing materials. The north east corner of the building will be used as a mess room with toilet / washing facilities. The glass house would be used for the growing on of plants and for over wintering tender species. There will be no composting in the Old Farmyard. The open area may at times be used for chopping logs (by hand, not machinery). The storage and maintenance of machinery and equipment are thus the same as for agricultural (farming) purposes. There will be plant cultivation and propagation (and the small area used for the mess). There are 3 gardeners at Ightham Mote plus some casual, part time labour and volunteers. The gardeners work Monday to Friday and whilst the compound may occasionally be used at weekends, these are not regular working days.*
- *There is adequate space in the adjacent modern farm buildings (which were built at the request of the farmer, and the expense of the National Trust) for storage of the remaining items of farm machinery for the tenant farmer. The National Trust has been aware of the level of use in the Old Farmyard for 20 years and would not have considered the Old Farmyard as a potential location for the gardeners' compound if it was in active or operational use or if it would adversely affect the viability of Mote Farm. The Trust policy on agriculture is that it will be a priority for the Trust to seek appropriate ways to ensure the viability of farms that make a positive contribution to the achievement of its objectives; The Trust recognises the importance of its tenants making a living in order to deliver sustainable environmental benefits.*
- *A Whole Farm Plan was prepared in 2005 and acknowledges that the buildings of the Old Farmyard are 'unsuitable for modern farming' and are 'little utilised'. The Plan also states that the farm is 'probably overstocked in terms of machinery'. The modern farm buildings to the west of the Old Farmyard were constructed to meet the requirements of the farm and remain adequate to meet modern farming needs. The Whole Farm Plan also confirmed that the tenant*

*farmer had no livestock of his own. The recent appearance of chickens, sheep and a pig in the Farmyard has no bearing on the viability of the farm. The National Trust can provide personal statements and photographic evidence that support our knowledge regarding the redundant farm buildings. The farmer will retain approximately one quarter of the farm yard, as agreed. The introduction of stock to the farmyard is very recent and is irrelevant to the existing or future business of the farm*

- *It should not normally be necessary to consider whether a building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purposes. Evidence that a building is not redundant in its present use is not by itself sufficient grounds for refusing permission for a proposed new use.*
- *The character of the farmyard is one of disuse and inactivity, closed gates and doors and haphazard storage of various sundry items. The Old Farmyard is not in any sense a model, Victorian, working farmyard.*
- *The most appropriate means of securing the future of historic buildings is to ensure that they are in **active** use. Additional investment by the National Trust in the Farmyard will ensure it remains properly maintained in accordance with its historic context and character. The most unusual architectural feature of the buildings is the hammer beam roof trusses within the north eastern range. These will be unaffected by the proposals.*
- *With regard to the proposed gate on the southern side of the farmyard, a boarded gate has been proposed to provide privacy for the residents of Mote Farm. The National Trust would however be happy to amend the proposal to a 5 bar gate should this be considered preferable.*
- *We wish to maximise plant production on site rather than import plant material. It is essential that the proposed glass house is located in the immediate vicinity of the gardeners' facilities and stores. It is simply not practical to have storage of bagged compost, pots, tools and equipment in one location and glass houses in another. The proposed glass house is not excessive in size and is appropriate for a garden the size of Ightham Mote. Its floorspace is slightly larger than the existing glasshouse and polytunnel which are inadequate to meet current needs.*
- *The proposed glass house will not affect the openness of the green belt or the landscape character and quality of the AONB. The building is located to minimise its visual impact from the Greensand Way. Its location echoes the former range in the centre of the farmyard which was demolished in the 1980s.*
- *The planning application was accompanied by a bat survey undertaken by professional ecologists.*

- *The impact of the proposals on the amenity of Mote Farmhouse will be minimal.*
- *Traffic generation will be minimal, not impinging on the access to the farmhouse in any way. There will typically be approximately 4 vehicle movements between the compound and the garden during a normal working day. There is adequate space for 2-3 vehicles to park immediately adjacent to the western range. Parking for gardeners' vehicles will be within Ightham Mote grounds. Traffic generated by the proposal will be minimal, particularly in the context of large grain lorries, tractors and combine harvesters currently using the access off Mote Road. The limited traffic movements from Ightham Mote to the Old Farmyard will be by National Trust garden vehicles. (Gator, Tractor and Mower).*
- *The activities carried on are not inherently noisy. For the majority of the day the gardeners will be working within the garden of Ightham Mote itself. Lighting within the courtyard will be kept to a minimum, will be low key and will not cause light pollution.*
- *The National Trust has considered a range of alternative sites for the gardeners' compound but has concluded that the Old Farmyard provides the only suitable location. The site's location on the periphery of the historic garden but within easy reach of all parts of the garden and good access off Mote Road make it ideal. Most importantly all other options suggested (except for the coach house) require the construction of new buildings which would be visually intrusive and would be contrary to green belt policy, the AONB and policies for the protection and enhancement of the garden. The current proposal uses existing, underutilised buildings.*
- *The builder's compound is in an important part of the garden from a historical perspective, lying close to the South Lake.*
- *The walled orchard is an integral part of the historic garden. This area is to be properly restored as a kitchen garden with enhanced visitor access. In operational terms the site lies in a key position within the garden and access to the site would conflict with visitor flow and circulation.*
- *Wrights Farm is extremely low lying and suffers from poor drainage. It is not a practical option for a gardener's compound. It has poor access from Mote Road and would also necessitate the removal of a number of trees.*
- *The coach house is currently used as the shop. The building is a two storey structure unsuited to the requirements of the gardeners with insufficient space. There is insufficient external space for the construction of a glass house. Its*

*location adjacent to the manor in a key part of the garden would conflict with visitor flows and visitor enjoyment. The Trust's long term plan for this building is for interpretation and education facilities.*

- *The 'hopper huts' were dismissed due to their inappropriate location, small size, lack of any services and the potential impact on the structures themselves.*
- *The National Trust does not normally pursue proposals where there is demonstrable local opposition. We believe that objections are largely based on false information, and are unsound. The Trust is not seeking commercial gain from this proposal. Ightham Mote is a major visitor attraction within the Borough and plays an important role in the local economy. Planning policies fully support the upgrading and enhancement of visitor attractions. The proposal will assist in the preservation and enhancement of the property as a whole and help to ensure the long term sustainability of the Ightham Mote Estate in its entirety.*

## **2. Reason for reporting to Committee (A & B):**

2.1 The proposal has generated a lot of local interest.

## **3. The Site (A & B):**

- 3.1 The site includes farm buildings which are curtilage listed by virtue of a relationship to the listed Mote Farmhouse. The site lies in a Conservation Area, MGB, AONB and is an Area of Archaeological Potential (AAP). To the south is the Grade II listed farmhouse of Mote Farm. To the NE is the main visitor attraction of Ightham Mote, with a designation of Historic Park and Garden and which is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument. A PROW (the Greensand Way) runs alongside the track on the NW boundary of the site and continues along Mote Road itself to the NE of the application site.
- 3.2 The application site is farmyard of a U-shaped traditional single-storey range comprised of 3 ranges with a central grass and concrete courtyard 35m x 30m. The site measures 0.27 ha. The ranges span a distance of approx 40m (130 ft) by 40m (130 ft) with a gross floor area of approx. 575 sq m (6190 sq ft).
- 3.3 The 3 ranges (all about 5-6 m deep) have tiled roofs over mainly brick or stone walls with various white-painted timber doors (some half split) and windows. The northern side is mainly open-fronted with five bays used for farm implement and trailer storage, plus a stable. Eastern side, use of which included 4 turkeys reared for last Christmas with adjoining loose box now houses a new gilt (maiden) pig, and an open-fronted store (about 5m wide) used for storing a plough. South of this central store, there are 3 stores and a garage, which are used for Mote Farm's domestic/garden storage and this would remain the case under the current proposals, although access to the 3 stores would be closed off from the yard side

and rearranged so as to be gained only from the east side, via the grassy bank that runs down to Mote Road. The Western side is split into 2 sections by the vehicular access to the yard: there are 4 stores of which one is used as Ightham Mote's head gardener's store

- 3.4 Access to the farmyard is gained from a track to the west (PROW MR429) and from the main farmhouse driveway of Mote Farm. There are also external openings to garage doors on the east and west facades.
- 3.5 The old farmyard is to the east of PROW MR429 and to the south of Mote Road and to the NE of Mote Farmhouse with which it shares its southern boundary.
- 3.6 Mote Farm also includes a selection of listed and modern farm buildings to the south-west of the application site, also accessed from Mote Road via MR429.

#### **4. Planning History:**

TM/48/10353/OLD      Grant with conditions      25 June 1948

Installation of a petrol pump.

TM/79/11249/FUL      Grant with conditions      4 June 1979

Erection of pre-cast concrete lean-to extension for use as covered yard.

TM/84/10246/LBC      Grant with conditions      27 July 1984

Demolition of a farm building & (ii) the roof of another farm building

#### **5. Consultees (A & B):**

- 5.1 Ightham PC: Query if planning permission is needed and the appropriateness of listed buildings having a partial change of use. Object to the size and location of the glass house, wonder if the original building in the yard, now demolished relevant to the new application.
- 5.2 Shipbourne PC: Object: the farm and the yard are inextricably linked, as one of the only remaining farmyards in the vicinity; it has a highly distinctive character. Local walkers enjoy seeing the unspoilt farmyard. It will also have an adverse effect on the wider landscape and on residential amenity. The compound should be sited elsewhere, we cannot see the need for the gardeners to be relocated as there is ample room on the main site- the area designated for disabled parking is large and distant from the house- the compound could be located there. The NT should be looking after and retaining buildings and heritage, not for commercial reasons.

- 5.3 Natural England: No concerns with regard to the SSSI. No objections with regard to impact on habitat for bats other than that a mitigation strategy will need to be submitted for approval and a separate bat licence from Natural England will be needed.
- 5.4 English Heritage: No comment although the placement and the direction of the foul sewer may affect the scheduled area at Ightham Mote.
- 5.5 Kent Downs AONB Unit: The application must accord with PPS7; Policy P6/14 of the TMBLP and the KDAONB Management Plan with regard to “Farming As A Custodian Of The Landscape” and “Conserving And Celebrating The Past”.
- 5.6 SWS: There is no public foul sewer in the vicinity, details will need to be submitted and the EA will need to be consulted in relation to private waste water treatment.
- 5.7 PROW: Public Bridleway MR429 runs over the access track to the site and may be affected by the proposed development. Should the surface of the bridleway deteriorate as a result of this vehicle use, the landowner and any other person with a private right to drive along the track would be asked to contribute towards the cost of repairs. A Public Right of Way must not be stopped up, diverted, obstructed or the surface disturbed and there must be no encroachment on the current width of the path at any time. This includes any building materials or waste generated during any of the construction phases. Please note that no furniture or fixtures may be erected on or across Public Rights of Way without the express consent of the Highways Authority.
- 5.8 KHS: Original comments: The submission shows proposals that seek to improve current facilities within the existing compound. This will include changing the use of some existing buildings to provide additional storage, plus ancillary mess room / toilet facilities for staff and a new glass house. In this instance, I raise no objections.
- 5.8.1 Following a request from a local resident to re-examine the highways implications of the application, a second KHS response has been received as follows: The submission shows proposals that seek to change the use of part of the existing farmyard to a gardeners’ compound to be used in connection with the gardens at Ightham Mote. Access to the compound will be by way of the existing established farm access. The gates are set suitably back such that vehicles can stand clear of the public highway, should they need to, prior to opening the gates. The submitted information states that there will be only limited daily movements between the compound and Ightham Mote in the order of a total of 4 movements, the normal working day being 08.00am – 4.00pm. Staff will continue to park at Ightham Mote. I am of the opinion that these limited number of vehicle movements are unlikely to result in demonstrable unacceptable additional hazards on the public highway. The geometry of the road in the vicinity is not ideal and is derestricted with speeds up to 60mph. However, it is likely that speeds will be well below this figure and with the distance between the entrances short, vehicles should not be on the

public highway for long. It is also likely that vehicle movements in general will not conflict with the usual peak times and be at a time when the road is comparatively quiet. It is customary for the types of vehicles to be used for the driver to wear high visibility clothing and the vehicle to have a flashing amber warning light. It has to be borne in mind that this is an established farm access and as stated in the supporting information is currently used by the customary large slow moving farm associated vehicles. The applicant is aware that all vehicles to be used are to be able to be legally used on the public highway. On balance, no objections.

- 5.9 Ramblers Association: Object: There should be no solid gates where 5 bar gates exist but from the average walker's perspective, farm animals would be more of an attraction and more educational than a glass house. This will increase traffic on the MR429 (Greensand Way) and MR430 (The London Country Way) and Mote Road, affecting safety of walkers, cyclists, horse riders and car drivers.
- 5.10 CRPE: The buildings are rare as a traditional working farm retaining their original appearance with high standard brickwork. The new glass house would spoil the integrity and be alien to its agricultural purpose, blocking outlook from Mote Farmhouse and conflict with the relationship between the yard and the farmhouse, contrary to EN3 of the KMSP. The glass house will be an intrusion within a working farmyard; conflicts with PPG15, as does not enhance or preserve the character and setting of a listed building. There are other sites suitable such as the walled orchard and builder's compound. This will encourage visitors to cross the road, while garden staff and their vehicles will pose a risk to human safety.
- 5.11 KCC Heritage: No response.
- 5.12 DHH: No objections.
- 5.13 Agricultural Consultant: (summarised): The cropping currently includes 111 ha in an arable rotation plus about 22ha of grassland managed under a Countryside Stewardship Scheme, which includes agistment of sheep from another holding (currently 25 ewes and 4 rams). Mr Patmore's own beef suckler herd was discontinued some years ago: he is now rearing about 12 calves a year for sale as store cattle, with 24 in total in-wintered last year. Hay and straw are grown both as a cash crop and for the cattle. The main farm buildings are a relatively modern range set around a yard situated about 100m south-west of the farmhouse. These comprise 6 round external grain silos; □□ two open-sided timber barns, used for hay and straw storage, for storing the combine harvester, and other general storage when space is available; □ an enclosed barn used as a tractor/telehandler/fertiliser store; □ an enclosed farm workshop; □ a cattle yard with central feed passage and covered yards either side. Just north-east of the tractor store there is a former oast range used for farm machinery storage; there is also an enclosed farm chemical store.



5.13.1 The old farmyard buildings are used for farm implement and trailer storage, plus a livestock of a new gilt (maiden) pig and poultry including about 6 laying hens, and 6 ducks for meat (I gather these poultry have been kept for many years, apart from a break in 2006 after losses from foxes and also due to the avian 'flu scare). There are 3 stores and a garage used for Mote Farm's domestic/garden storage, one is temporarily used for domestic storage by a friend of the tenant and 2 stores are used by the tenant for storing fencing materials. The poultry, and the pig (which is planned to be bred from) also range out into part of the open yard, and the open yard includes storage of several more items of farm equipment. The tenant advises that the yard has also been used for lambing the agisted sheep (albeit last in 2006) and has been used for shearing the sheep for the last 4 years. I understand sheep requiring veterinary attention have also been kept in the stables. The main stable previously provided a DIY livery income.

5.13.2 The tenant has indicated that as a means of seeking additional farm income it is proposed to breed from the gilt pig and rear the progeny for direct local meat sales. It is also possible that some of the calves (currently bought-in weaned at about 8 weeks age) may be bought in earlier as week-old calves and bucket reared in the north-east shed. Some general discussion has taken place with the Trust as to the possible provision, at the main yard, of a basic replacement building, to compensate for the loss of equipment storage at the traditional range, which I gather the Trust might consider subject to an adequate business case being made out.

5.13.3 Factors relating to agricultural economics have moved on significantly since 2005, particularly relating to a very steep rise in crop prices, and very steep rises as well in the costs of feed, fuel prices, and fertilisers, so that even if a 2005 Farm Plan had been agreed, it would need to be revised now. The traditional farm buildings/yard are well-maintained (by the Trust, with some costs recovered from the tenant) and are not redundant by virtue of dilapidation or neglect nor are they "redundant" under the terms of the tenancy agreement. I consider the need or otherwise for retention of these buildings should be based on a fairly broad view as to the likely, and typical, requirements of a farm of this type and size, and the need for any tenant to have some reasonable flexibility in management choices to try to ensure the farm remains viable over the coming years. The traditional farm buildings and yard still have quite a valuable potential role, given the size and nature of the farm:

- For purposes of storage of individual farm implements, bearing in mind this is effectively a one-man farm, ease of management for the tenant is assisted by keeping, and having convenient access to, a relatively broad range of farm machinery for diverse tasks.
- Alternative farm income from (for example) calf and pig rearing, and poultry keeping, where the proximity of the yard to the farmhouse would provide an important benefit particularly for the care and security of younger livestock.

Small levels of production of farm animals and poultry/eggs can nevertheless have quite a high net value when sold to local direct outlets. □ Convenience for lambing/ shearing agisted (or self-owned) sheep.

- □ Diversification income from livery stabling for at least one horse, or other future farm diversifications (subject to planning consent) that might benefit the farm business.
- The advantage of keeping smaller, easily moveable items of value in lock-up storage close to the farm dwelling.

5.13.4 The net annual potential benefit of the buildings to the farm might be limited to no more than a few thousand £s a year, yet that could still remain a significant consideration in terms of assisting the viability of a mixed arable/livestock unit such as this, run with family farm labour, where the prospect of securing an adequate livelihood appears fairly marginal. I consider the loss of the buildings/yard concerned to another use would adversely impact on the future viability of Mote Farm, and may be expected to generate a requirement for replacement building space.

5.14 Private Reps: (A) (250/114R/0X/104S) + CA/LB/PROW press and site notices; (B) (125/44R/0X/74S) + CA/LB press and site notices.

5.14.1 A petition of objection with 230 signatures has been received plus a total of 158 letters objecting to the 2 applications.

5.14.2 Objections are summarised as follows:

- It is not right to detach a farmyard from a farm unless the farmer agrees- the reduction in future farming options would be wrong. We can remember when cattle were kept at the farm and can understand the need for flexibility if there is to be a proper future in a viable farm.
- The Farm and the Manor House have historically always been separate entities.
- The farmer in fact occupies the whole of the space subject to the application under the terms of his tenancy. He uses the yard for the storage of agricultural machinery, equipment and other items. The farm has insufficient storage for this elsewhere and whilst the traditional buildings in the farm yard are not ideal for modern farming purposes they are all he has. To lose a significant amount of this storage space would have a negative impact on the farm business.
- It is stated that this development will not leave sufficient room to accommodate essential equipment. This could, therefore, result in further farm buildings being erected, contrary to policies.

- It is suggested that this development will create additional traffic. This seems likely and there could also be difficulties between this traffic and current users of the bridleway.
- The next development will be to sell plants etc.
- This is one of the very few agricultural farmyards still existing in Kent and as such should be preserved.
- The timeless beauty of the old farmyard is cherished by everyone that walks along the farm track.
- This is a farmyard of historic architectural character.
- It is a listed building in a conservation area and an AONB.
- We are not sure whether the current proposal retains the solid boarded gates of the original application. These would be totally alien to gates in this part of rural Kent and in particular would deny the current view of this historic yard to those passing on bridlepath MR429.
- We are concerned that siting the horticultural centre in this farmyard will create a demand for car parking at the lower end of the bridlepath that might create difficulties for existing users.
- We are aware that this proposal is linked to the Phase 2 development for Ightham Mote. We do recognise that this application requires a new location for the horticultural centre that will be displaced by the proposed new ticket entrance but we consider that there are suitable locations other than Mote Farm farmyard.
- I still firmly believe that the Listed Building application should be rejected until it can be debated along with the planning application for Phase 2, when it is submitted.
- The NT is changing its stance on the importance of the site of the builders' yard. The real reason for not siting the gardeners' compound in its place is because it is earmarked for car parking that is unnecessary and inconvenient.
- The coach house should be used for the gardeners in conjunction with the builders' compound.
- There is plenty of room for a glass house in the walled garden that will not harm visitor flows. There was such a building in that location in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Wrights Farm is a suitable option as it has footings of demolished buildings.

- Regarding “consultation” in the application, is not representative of the views of the Parish Council, the electorate of Ightham, or the many National Trust members that I have spoken to.
- Government planning policy guidance is that the best use for the building is the one for which it was originally built. In my opinion, the part of the old farm yard earmarked for this development would remain in agricultural use under the husbandry of the tenant farmer if he had not been kicked out of it by applicants, his landlords.
- The applicants state that the proposed change of use and development has been considered in terms of “impact” on the existing structures and setting and continues “it is essential therefore to preserve the structures and if this is not possible in situ, then to do so by record.
- Neither mitigation measures nor planning conditions are adequate to permit this development in this historic location in the AONB and Metropolitan Green Belt, and it should be refused.
- The Trust does not appear to appreciate the significance of these buildings. Model farms of this type were built in many parts of the country during the nineteenth century, as part of the keen interest in farm design that followed the widespread enclosure movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, Kent had been enclosed far earlier, during the middle ages, and so the prevalent type of farmstead is one of order and less planned.
- The proposed usage will generate far more traffic on this side of the lane, which will endanger riders, walkers and cyclists using the adjacent bridleway. At present, traffic on the track is limited to the farm tenant’s agricultural usage. Under the new proposals, all those working or assisting in the mote gardens will drive in and out, together with delivery vans for garden supplies, and this will create more traffic, not only on the bottom part of the bridleway but also on the narrow bend outside, by the cottages.
- The ride on mowers are small and slow moving and will be more vulnerable to road traffic on Mote Road than farm vehicles due to low seating position and 2 blind bends in the road and the narrow width of the asphalt and the gradients. There are possibly fatal consequences for the driver of the ride on mower.
- Mote Road is a 60mph road, regularly use by rat run traffic, local and long distance lorries as a short cut between the A25 and M25.

- The proposed change in use to the farmyard flies in the face of conservation of historical buildings for public viewing. They will destroy this most attractive feature of a beautiful unspoiled Victorian working farmyard and farmhouse as a group which has been readily visible from the Greensand Way for many generations.
- This change of use is not showing care and preservation of historical, beautiful sites and buildings.
- Concern at the effect the proposal would have on the sitting of the grade I listed Ightham Mote Manor House, the character of Mote Farm and the character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area.
- Harm to the open Green Belt and rural character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a typical example of a Kentish scene
- Harm to protected species, particularly bats. There is no guarantee that NE will grant a bat licence as there are clearly satisfactory alternative locations for the development, e.g. the Walled Orchard.
- Harm to the living conditions of the occupants of Mote Farmhouse by reason of loss of privacy and visual amenity, noise disturbance, light pollution and visual intrusion.
- Harm to the Greensand Way and Mote Road by reason of increased motorised traffic.
- A mini garden centre would not fit into the attractions of both the farmhouse and Ightham Mote itself.
- This historic location will be spoiled for ramblers, dog walkers, horse riders and cyclists by installing a large tall, modern greenhouse, toilet block, mess room and kitchen for up to 12 workers.
- I bring my sheep to the farm as the farmyard provided the facilities that I need for lambing and sheep shearing. The small barns are ideal as they are sheltered and cosy for lambing –important for me as well as the sheep as I have to sleep with them. The central courtyard area is perfect for shearing, as the sheep can be kept in the large barn until they are sheared and then can be set in this enclosed area when I finish. I have also used the stables for sick animals where it is convenient for a vet to visit.
- There are many other more practical and less intrusive sites available.
- The fine roof structure and previous restorations tie rods will be lost to view above the mess room. The subdivision to create the mess room will affect the roof void architecture and character of the listed building.

- There is no mention in the proposals as to where the waste and foul water will go. The distance from the outside wall to Mote Road is limited; there is an arrowed line showing flow under Mote Road into the main site wooded area
- This should be a matter between the landlord and tenant, not involving the planning system. The applicant is being condescending to objectors and is riding roughshod over the views of local people and other organisations.
- The Whole Farm Plan is out of date due to CAP reforms favouring livestock and changed world economic conditions require flexibility
- The 2005 Whole Farm Plan was unsigned by the tenant farmer. The old Farmyard was not discussed or visited in connection with the Plan.
- The parking of the gardeners' cars will inevitably be at the application site
- The farmyard will gain the character of a light industrial site
- The glass house will be a massive carbuncle in the farmyard and will impact on the openness of the Green Belt even though it is largely in an enclosed site- this is established planning law.
- The glass house will be better sited at the Manor House as that would be more convenient to the gardens and nearer the shop. Its proposed siting is too remote and also in shade.
- The applicant grossly underestimates the resultant level of traffic and activity in the farmyard, detrimental to amenity of Mote farmhouse especially as it will be used 7 days a week.
- Mote Farm was left to the NT to be run as a farm, it is distasteful to seek this development so shortly after the death of Mr Goodwin.
- The applicants need to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment and a report from the Director of the Kent Downs AONB and mitigation measures to counter the adverse impact on the AONB.

5.14.3 A Petition of support with 112 Signatures has been submitted; 178 Letters of support are summarised as follows

- The farmyard has been redundant for many years and is not part of the working farm. The National Trust created a new, more practical yard for the tenant farmer at his request.
- The minor adaptation put forward is wholly appropriate and sympathetic usage for these buildings.

- The Trust has done an excellent job of saving Ightham Mote by means of the major conservation work to the house and can be trusted to continue their balanced and careful approach, and that as the largest farming group in the country, supporting farming is a core strand of their work. This application can only benefit Ightham Mote.
- There is now a real need to continue with the development & enhancement of the Ightham Mote estate. This surely must include the farmyard area, which is looking decidedly neglected & under used.
- The National Trust has built up an excellent reputation developing such areas in a sound and sensitive way which can only benefit the entire area.
- It is about time this derelict yard was put to good use it has been standing there looking sorry for itself for many years.
- The gardeners do a fantastic job at the Mote and are working from a cramped and unsuitable yard without even a toilet or place to make a cup a tea!
- I have regularly walked past the farmyard under discussion and up until recently it has always appeared empty & rather derelict in appearance. I understand that its usage at present is of a very superficial nature.
- If we do not use them, the buildings will fall into disrepair and look even more unloved and depressing than they do now.

## **6. Determining Issues (A&B):**

6.1 There are a range of national, strategic and local planning policies relevant to these applications:

- The appropriateness of the development proposals in Green Belt terms is covered by PPG2 (Green Belts) and Policies SS2 of the KMSP and CP3 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy 2007.
- General policies on conversions are QL1 of the KMSP and policies CP1, CP14, CP24 of the TMBCS and saved policies P6/14 and P6/16 of the TMBLP.
- The main issue with the application for the listed building consent is the effect on the historic and architectural interest of the listed building. PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) and Policy QL8 of the KMSP provide the relevant policy background.
- These issues are also relevant to the consideration of the application for planning permission as is the impact of the glass house and the forcing pits on the setting of the listed building.

- Consideration of the application for planning permission also raises wider issues including the overall effect of the proposal built development and the change of use application on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area ( PPG15 “Planning and the Historic Environment” and Policy QL6 of the KMSP).
- The impact on the AONB and rural area in particular ( PPS7 “Sustainable Development In Rural Areas” and policies EN3 and EN4 of the KMSP and CP7 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy 2007).
- The impact on archaeological resources (Policy QL7 of the KMSP and PPG16 “Archaeology and Planning”)
- The impact on nature conservation (PPS9 “Biodiversity and Geological Conservation” and Policy EN8 of the KMSP).

6.1.2 In terms of the development proposals in Green Belt terms, the change of use is considered to be appropriate as it does not have a materially greater impact on the openness and amenities of the Green Belt than the existing use. Members will be aware that agricultural use includes horticulture and thus in terms of the glass house and forcing pits, these are structures which could normally be found on agricultural land. I therefore consider that they are acceptable in principle under the terms of PPG2, KMSP policy SS2 and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy 2007 Policy CP3.

6.2 Similarly, structures such as glass houses and forcing pits are often found in the curtilages of listed buildings or in Conservation Areas. Therefore I do not agree with objectors who state that the principle of these structures in the farm courtyard harms the setting of the listed building or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The design and materials of the glass house and forcing pits will need to be of high quality commensurate with the sensitivity of the setting – I consider this to be the case.

6.3 The external changes to the old farm buildings required by the conversion will be acceptable in listed building terms in my view. Internally, whilst the need for thermal insulation will mean some currently exposed rafters having to be covered, the main feature trusses are to remain exposed and I consider this to be an acceptable design solution. English Heritage does not object to the principle of the development.

6.4 The change of use will introduce activity, unrelated to the farm, to be brought into a site adjoining Mote Farm House. The overall relationship is acceptable in residential amenity terms in my view given the hours of use as proposed. There is nothing to indicate that the activity will be any noisier to the residents of the Farmhouse than farming activity provided that a prohibition is placed preventing



any sales taking place at the application site. Similarly, the overall impact on privacy is considered to be minimal as a large area, well away from the current application site, will remain as a private garden area for the occupants of Mote Farmhouse.

- 6.5 Subject to there being no visits to the site by the general public, there are no objections from KHS, in terms of traffic, bearing in mind the existing legal use rights of the track as a farm track based on typical, not actual, movements from a farm. The applicants have confirmed that the gardeners will continue to park their private cars at the Mote, the traffic to and from the application site being occasional movement of ride-on mowers etc along the track (that also accommodates a PROW) and also for a distance of 50m along Mote Road. Whilst I note the objectors' concerns with Mote Road being used by fast moving traffic and concern at the bends in the road, in the absence of a highway safety objection from KHS, refusal on those grounds cannot be justified. Similarly, the PROW office at KCC does not object to the principle of the development in relation to the continuing use of the PROW by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- 6.6 The applicants have confirmed that the glass house and forcing pits will be on slabs with minimal invasive impact on below ground archaeology. The introduction of a new foul sewer will potentially impact but this can be dealt with appropriately by a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief. This element of the work where it affects the Manor House site will in any event require separate Scheduled Ancient Monument consent which is a speared requirement which is entirely in the control of the Department of Culture media and Sport.
- 6.7 The change of use and associated built development will not materially harm the landscape character of the AONB in my opinion, bearing in mind that the activity and buildings could arise from a diversification into horticulture which is encompassed by the use of land for agriculture.
- 6.8 In terms of the acceptability of the conversion, the development proposal largely complies with Policy P6/14 of the TMBLP as the alterations are in character with the buildings. Whilst the new glass house is part and parcel of the conversion, as explained above, it is a building that is not out of place in an agricultural environment.
- 6.9 Impact on views and rural character are minimal, in my opinion, as the public views of the glass house and use of the courtyard will be limited to the main gateway to the site.
- 6.10 The only element of Policy P6/14 which is potentially contravened in my view is the requirement that the proposed use should not result in a fragmentation or severance of an agricultural land holding creating a non-viable agricultural unit. It is clear that part of the existing farm buildings is already used solely by the NT, and a proportion of floor-space is for domestic storage rather than farm based. The NT has also proposed that the tenant retains use of some of the building

closest to the Farmhouse. Nevertheless, the Council's retained agricultural consultant advises that he does consider that the reduction in opportunity for flexibility for the farmer plus the loss of convenience of using farm buildings and a farmyard close to the related farmhouse, will have some potential for impact on the viability of the farm.

- 6.11 Whilst the conclusion of the agricultural consultant is not agreed by the applicant, it is understood that the National Trust would be willing to agree to replacement buildings at the modern farm complex to mitigate to a degree the loss to the farmer of the old farmyard buildings and the open courtyard. I am satisfied that, in principle, this can be done without undue harm to the rural area and AONB and Members will be aware that agricultural buildings are considered in policy terms to be appropriate in the MGB by definition. Accordingly, if Members are minded to approve the applications, it is suggested that a condition be imposed requiring the submission of a revised Farm Plan to give a 5 year strategy for meeting the reasonable accommodation needs for ongoing viability of Mote Farm. Members are reminded that saved Policy P6/16 of the TMBLP states that where the conversion of an agricultural building could lead to a requirement for a replacement building, permitted development rights for such buildings will be removed. The Prior Notification procedures for new farm buildings allow the Council to exercise control over their appearance and siting.
- 6.12 Members will note a strong disagreement between the objectors and the supporters on the merits of the applications and particularly the weight to be given to the retention of all of the buildings and the courtyard for farming use by the tenant farmer. Whilst the objectors refer to the farm buildings as having a long standing use for active livestock farming, that is an important part of the rural scene in a popular area for recreation, the applicant and its supporters cast doubt on the importance of the livestock use of the site. It is certainly the case that not all of the old farmyard buildings are used for farming; some are used for domestic storage. However, on the basis of the agricultural consultant's report, the key issue for Members is that, notwithstanding the actual past degree of use of the old farmyard for livestock, the opportunities the buildings and yard currently offer for appropriate farm diversification are relevant and should be taken into account in the consideration of the development proposed.
- 6.13 Members will also note that some objectors wish for this application to be considered in conjunction with the revised proposal for Phase 2 visitor facilities of Ightham Mote which are expected to include a request for an alternative bridleway alignment which has been the subject to its own controversy. That application was withdrawn. It is relevant to note that the approved (more modest) scheme for phase 2 (TM/01/01170/FL) already shows the existing gardeners' compound to be the site of the improved visitor facilities in principle. Accordingly, I advise Members that the current applications should be considered on their own merits.

- 6.14 With regard to the dispute between the objectors and the applicants on the adequacy of alternative sites, it is the case that in Green Belt and rural policy terms, the conversion of existing buildings is normally to be favoured over the erection of new structures in such a sensitive location. Clearly, any “debate” between the objectors and supporters is complicated as the Trust has long term strategies for the visitor facilities which may not be in the public domain but which will inevitably influence their view as to the practicality of implementing the alternatives suggested by the objectors. The Trust is aware of the level of local opposition but remains of the view that the current applications represent the best option. I do not consider that alternative sites are **required** to be appraised in the determination of these applications but members will note that the Trust has responded to suggestions made by objectors, outlined in para 1.7 above. It will be for the National Trust to decide to pursue alternatives if it wishes to do so, which would be considered on their individual merits. It is the role of the Borough Council to determine applications as they are submitted, and on their own merits.
- 6.15 Members will be aware from the above that this scheme is controversial locally. One objector refers to the development as triggering the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). I can advise Members that under current statutory provisions, this development would not require EIA.
- 6.16 Having considered all the matters that have been raised, I believe that the applications are worthy of support subject to conditions including ones to prevent public use of the site (e.g. plant sales) and a Farm Plan to take account of any impact on the viability of Mote Farm.

**7. Recommendation:**

(A) TM/08/00700/FL:

- 7.1 **Grant Planning Permission** as detailed by Letter dated 15.04.2008, Design and Access Statement dated 29.02.2008, Survey dated 29.02.2008, Site Plan dated 29.02.2008, Location Plan dated 29.02.2008, Site Plan dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 20 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 21 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 22 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 23 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 24 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 25 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 26 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 27 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 28 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 29 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 30 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 31 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 26 A dated 15.04.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 27 A dated 15.04.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 28 A dated 15.04.2008, Proposed Plans

IMOC 29 A dated 15.04.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 30 A dated 15.04.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 33 A dated 15.04.2008, Drawing IMOC 170218 dated 29.02.2008, Drawing IMOC 170219 dated 29.02.2008, subject to:

**Conditions / Reasons**

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

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 No development shall take place until details of a 5 year Farm Plan with a strategy and timescale to ensure the viability of Mote Farm has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the approved strategy shall be carried out within the approved timescale.

Reason: To ensure the proposal does not adversely impact on the viability of an agricultural holding pursuant to saved Policy P6/14 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998.

- 3 Provision shall be made on the site, at all times for vehicles loading, off-loading and turning. (H016)

Reason: To ensure that vehicles can be parked or manoeuvred off the highway in order to maintain the safe and free flow of traffic.

- 4 The use shall not be carried on outside the hours of 0730 to 1800 Mondays to Saturdays with no working on Sundays or Public and Bank Holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No vehicles shall arrive, depart, be loaded or unloaded within the application site outside these working hours. (I003\*)

Reason: To avoid unreasonable disturbance outside normal working hours to nearby residential properties.

- 5 No materials, plant or other equipment of any description shall be kept or stored in the open other than in areas and to such heights as may be approved in writing beforehand by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the character and appearance of the locality is not significantly harmed.

- 6 There shall be no parking of private employee vehicles on the application site.

Reason: To accord with the terms of the application and in the interests of highway safety.

- 7 No development related to the construction of the new connection to the foul sewer shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

- 8 No development shall take place until details of the number, design, method of cowling and hours of operation of external illumination have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the work shall be carried out in strict accordance with those details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or amenity of the locality.

- 9 No development shall take place until details of a scheme for the handling, storage and disposal of all waste materials and refuse have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme, which shall show provision for the covered storage of such materials, shall be fully implemented before the use of the premises is commenced, and shall be retained and utilised at all times thereafter. (S002)

Reason: In the interests of pollution control in general and residential amenities in particular.

- 10 No development shall take place until details of driveways to serve the garages/stores for continued use by Mote Farm have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the work shall be carried out in strict accordance with those details. (D008)

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

- 11 The use of the building as a gardeners' compound hereby permitted shall remain ancillary and subservient to the upkeep and maintenance of the gardens of Ightham Mote and shall not become a separate use at any time.

Reason: To accord with the terms of the application and to allow the Local Planning Authority to assess the merits of an independent use.

- 12 The buildings shall not be open to the general public and no sales shall be transacted within the application site at any time.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and residential amenities.

- 13 No development shall take place until details of a bat mitigation strategy have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the work shall be carried out in strict accordance with those details.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the nature conservation interest of the building.

### **Informatives**

- 1 The County Council has a controlling interest in ensuring that the bridleway is maintained to a level suitable for pedestrians and equestrians only. Any maintenance to the higher level required for vehicular access would be the responsibility of the landowner. Should the surface of the bridleway deteriorate as a result of this vehicle use, the landowner and any other person with a private right to drive along the track would be asked to contribute towards the cost of repairs.
- 2 A Public Right of Way must not be stopped up, diverted, obstructed or the surface disturbed and there must be no encroachment on the current width of the path at any time. This includes any building materials or waste generated during any of the construction phases. Please note that no furniture or fixtures may be erected on or across Public Rights of Way without the express consent of the Highways Authority.
- 3 You are advised to contact English Heritage with regard to the foul sewer connection to Ightham Mote as that site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 4 You are advised to contact Southern Water Services and the Environment Agency with regard to the foul sewer connection.
- 5 You are advised that a licence will be required from Natural England for any development that impacts on any European Protected Species.

(B) TM/08/00701/LB:

- 7.2 **Grant Consent** as detailed by: Certificate B dated 29.02.2008, Notice dated 29.02.2008, Design and Access Statement dated 29.02.2008, Survey dated 29.02.2008, Location Plan dated 29.02.2008, Site Plan dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 20 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 21 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 22 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 23 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 24 dated 29.02.2008, Existing Plans IMOC 25 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 26 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 27 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 28 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 29 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 30 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 31 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed

Plans IMOC 32 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 33 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 34 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 35 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 36 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 37 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 38 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 39 dated 29.02.2008, Proposed Plans IMOC 40 dated 29.02.2008, subject to:

**Conditions / Reasons**

- 1 The development and works to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 2 All materials and joinery used externally shall accord with the approved plans, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

- 3 The standard of workmanship achieved in the carrying out of the development shall conform with the best building practice in accordance with the appropriate British Standard Code of Practice (or EU equivalent). (D009)

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

Contact: Marion Geary