

SECTION D  
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background Documents: the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

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**Item D1**

**Erection of new build facility for provision of digital autopsy services to Kent County Council/Coroner's Service. Facility comprising: Main Building containing cold storage, staff amenities and administrative space; Ancillary building containing CT Scanner suite with covered link to the Main Building; external canopy & screening to loading area. Associated landscaping comprising: new hardstandings to parking and loading areas; secure compound fencing, gates; external refuse & plant enclosures; soft landscaping adjacent to parking & entrance; demarcation of access road on existing hardstandings. Relocation & upgrade to existing substation at County Transport Workshops, Forstal Road/Beddow Way, Aylesford, Kent – 21/501778/County (KCC/MA/0071/2021)**

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Application by Kent County Council for the erection of new build facility for provision of digital autopsy services to Kent County Council/Coroner's Service. Facility comprising: Main Building containing cold storage, staff amenities and administrative space; Ancillary building containing CT Scanner suite with covered link to the Main Building; external canopy & screening to loading area. Associated landscaping comprising: new hardstandings to parking and loading areas; secure compound fencing, gates; external refuse & plant enclosures; soft landscaping adjacent to parking & entrance; demarcation of access road on existing hardstandings. Relocation & upgrade to existing substation at County Transport Workshops, Forstal Road/Beddow Way, Aylesford, Kent – 21/501778/County (KCC/MA/0071/2021)

Recommendation: Permission be Granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Sir Paul Carter

Classification: Unrestricted

**Site**

1. The County Transport Workshop site is located within the Aylesford Industrial Estate which lies approximately 1km to the east of Aylesford Village and approximately 3.5km to the north of Maidstone Town Centre. The industrial estate lies on the northern side of Forstal Road, with the River Medway on the southern side of the road, Cobtree Manor Park to the east, open agricultural fields to the north, and a recreational field and woodland to the west. The administrative boundary between Maidstone Borough

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Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council dissects the industrial estate, such that half lies within each administration area, but the County Transport Workshops lie wholly within Maidstone Borough Council, towards the eastern edge of the industrial estate.

- The workshop site has been partially mothballed but was previously used for servicing of vehicles, repairs and MOT services together with vehicle workshops, parts storage and ancillary staff accommodation associated with KCC Landscape Services. The transport workshops themselves were, in the past, part of a redevelopment of the area following the closure of the Aylesford pottery and tile works. The application site (outlined in red) forms a small part of this wider workshop site (outlined in yellow) as shown below.



- Beddow Way runs in a roughly north/south direction, accessed from Forstal Road and the County Transport Workshop site lies to the east of Beddow Way, accessed via an unadopted industrial estate road off Beddow Way. The whole site is irregularly shaped and comprises 5 buildings, and a large area of open hardstanding. Two of the buildings on the site have been condemned and are in the process of being demolished. This includes the largest of the buildings along the northern edge of the site, part of the footprint of which forms the current application site boundary. The other three buildings are smaller and may or may not be reused or demolished in the future (see paragraph 13 below). An electricity substation is sited within the largest of the buildings, which will be retained and is being protected during the demolition process. The site has a gentle slope from north to south, but with some more significant level changes to the boundary edges to the west, north and adjacent to the KCC Highways Depot.
- Immediately to the north of the application site (and wider County workshop site) is the Goya Developments site (formerly the Waitrose distribution centre car park), which has recently been redeveloped for B1/B8 uses and associated parking/hardstanding, accessed from St Michaels Close to the north. To the immediate east of the whole

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workshop site is the operational KCC Highways maintenance depot, also accessed from St Michael's Close. To the south-east is an industrial site owned by Gallagher, who have planning permission for its redevelopment for B1c, B2 and B8<sup>1</sup> uses (approved in 2018) and to the south-west are further industrial buildings. Beyond this is a row of residential properties which front onto a road called Forstal Cottages. Forstal Cottages is in part a one way road running from Forstal Road to the unadopted access road for the County workshops (only northbound travel is allowed) when it becomes two way until it meets the workshop site. To the west are further industrial buildings.

5. The site is currently enclosed with hoarding due to the demolition process and access is controlled by security staff. From within the site the surrounding industrial buildings are visible, and the area is distinctly industrial in character. The relative proximity to the residential properties on Forstal Cottages is not apparent from the site itself.

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<sup>1</sup> B1c, B2 and B8 uses are as set out in the Use Class Order in England, which relate to buildings used for any industrial processes appropriate for a residential area (B1c), industrial uses (B2), and storage and distribution uses (B8).

# Erection of new build facility for provision of digital autopsy services to Kent County Council/Coroner's Service at County Transport Workshops, Forstal Road/Beddow Way, Aylesford, Kent – 21/501778/County (KCC/MA/0071/2021)

## General Location Plan



**PLEASE NOTE**  
FOR CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES USE ONLY FIGURED DIMENSIONS. THIS DRAWING MUST ALWAYS BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT PROJECT DETAILS. ALL DIMENSIONS MUST BE CHECKED ON SITE PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT. PLEASE REPORT ANY DISCREPANCY TO THE ARCHITECT OR CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR.  
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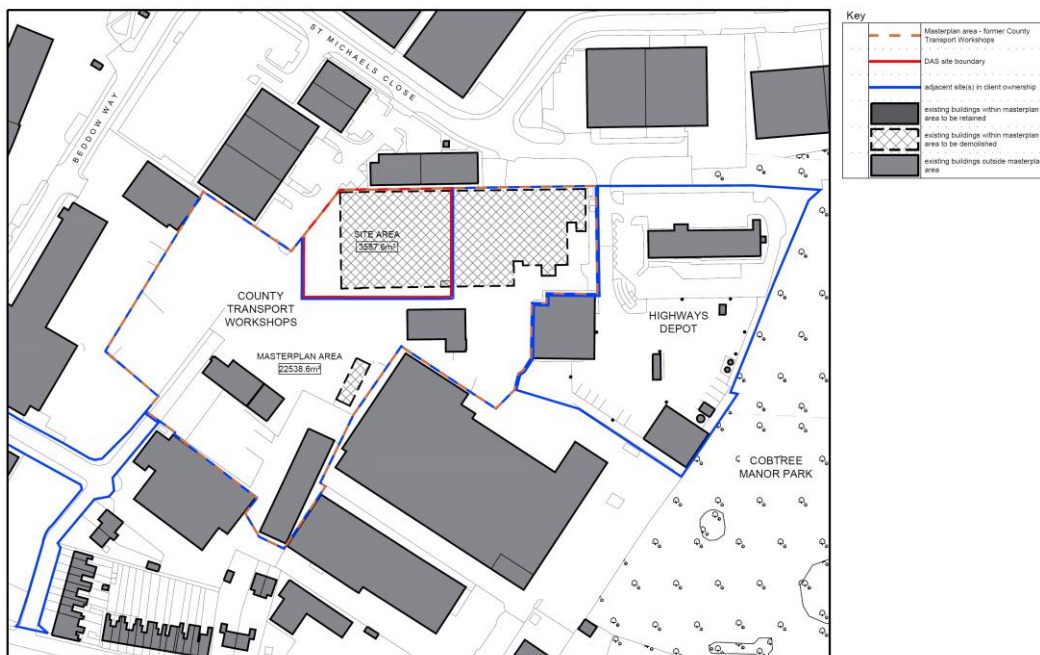
Revision	Date	By	Check	Issue
R1	24/11/2020	NDG	NDG	CONCEPT PLAN - Pre-app issue
R2	17/12/2020	NDG	NDG	FINAL ISSUE
R3	21/03/2021	NDG	NDG	FINAL ISSUE



FOR INFORMATION ONLY	
Project	08/2020
Context Plan	From 0/1
Client	1/2020
Digital Autopsy Service	
Kent County Council	
Information	
02420 1000	P4



## Site Location Plan



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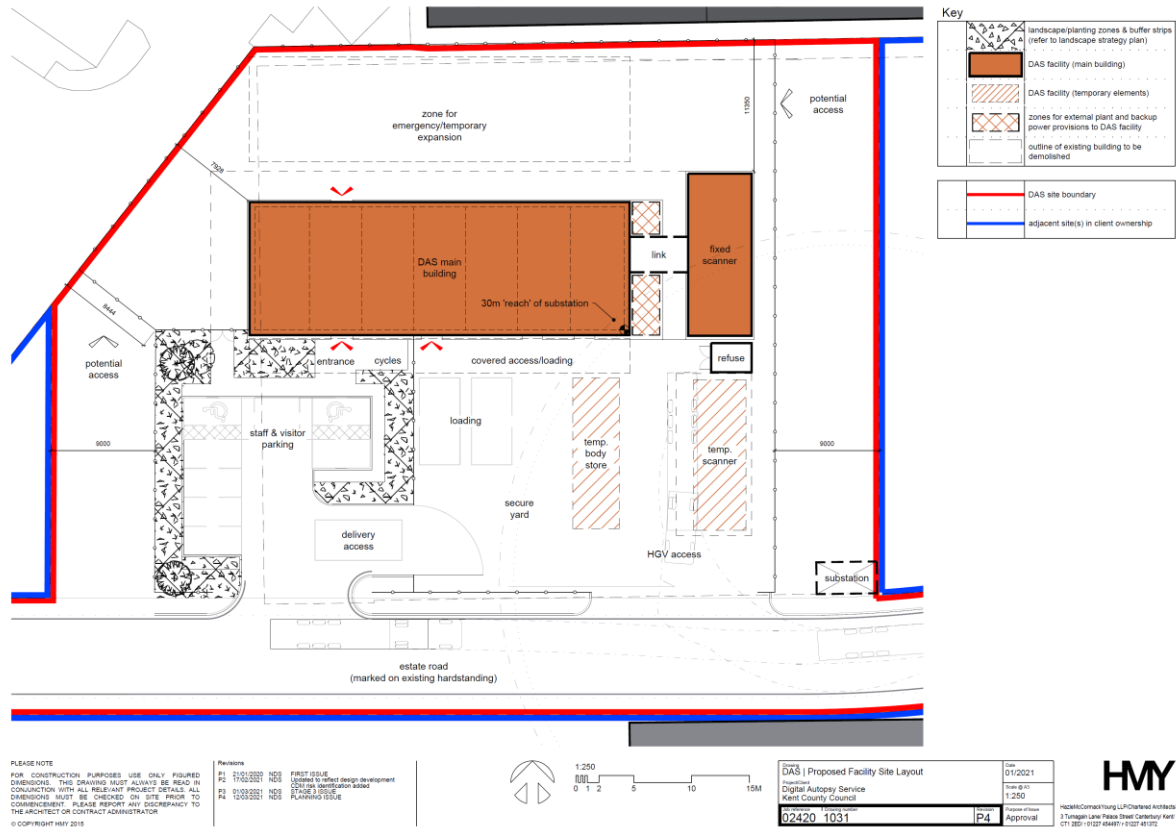
FOR INFORMATION ONLY	
Project	08/2020
Location Plan	From 0/1
Client	1/1250
Digital Autopsy Service	
Kent County Council	
Approval	
02420 1001	P4



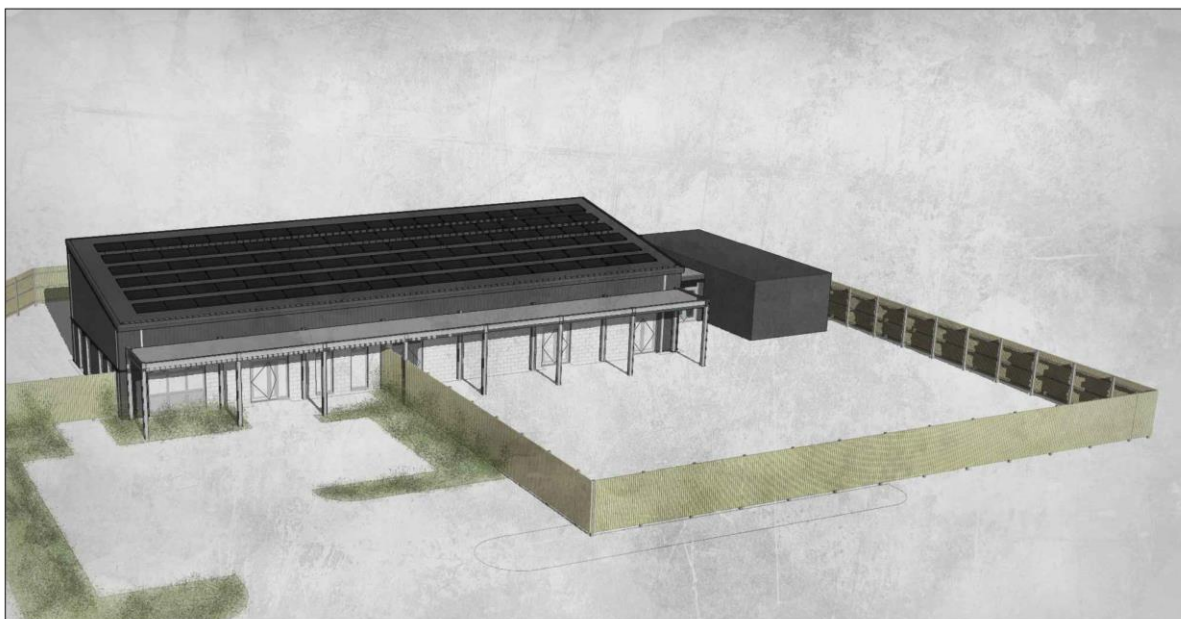
# Item D1

## Erection of new build facility for provision of digital autopsy services to Kent County Council/Coroner's Service at County Transport Workshops, Forstal Road/Beddow Way, Aylesford, Kent – 21/501778/County (KCC/MA/0071/2021)

### Proposed Site Layout



### 3D Visual Image



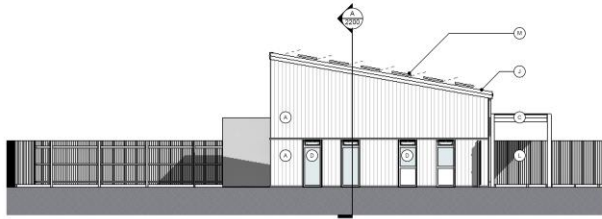


# Item D1

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### Proposed Elevations

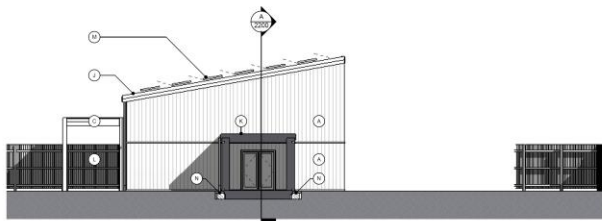
Key	
A	Self-cleaning, profile coated sheeting & trim
B	Interlock wall - hot dipped zinc
C	Interlock cladding - galvanneal steel
D	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
E	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, grey glass
F	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
G	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
H	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
I	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
J	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
K	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
L	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
M	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
N	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
O	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
P	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
Q	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
R	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
S	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
T	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
U	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
V	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
W	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
X	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
Y	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass
Z	Interlock cladding - PVC aluminium frame, clear glass



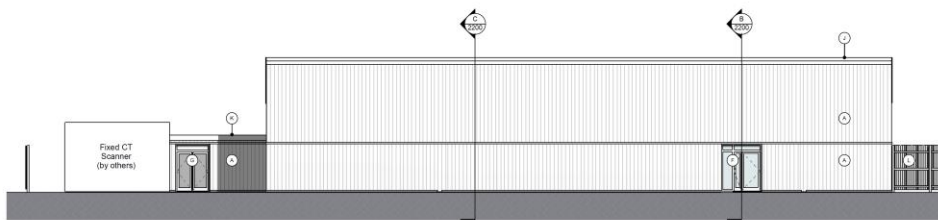
1 End Elevation (West)



2 Front Elevation (South)



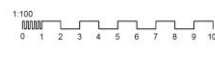
3 End Elevation (East)



4 Rear Elevation (North)

PLEASE NOTE:  
 BIDDING DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FROM 01/04/2024  
 TENDERS TO BE SUBMITTED BY 10/04/2024  
 FOR INFORMATION ONLY - NOT A CONTRACT DOCUMENT  
 FOR THE WORKSHEET OF DRAWINGS  
 FOR THE WORKSHEET OF DRAWINGS

Address:  
 Forstal Road, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 2JG  
 Forstal Road, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 2JG  
 Forstal Road, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 2JG  
 Forstal Road, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 2JG  
 Forstal Road, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 2JG



Project Information	
Project Name	DAS - Proposed Elevations
Project No.	02420 - 3200
Project Date	04/04/2024
Project Status	PO4



**Erection of new build facility for provision of digital autopsy services to Kent County Council/Coroner's Service at County Transport Workshops, Forstal Road/Beddow Way, Aylesford, Kent – 21/501778/County (KCC/MA/0071/2021)**

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**Background**

6. Autopsy services are currently carried out by the NHS at various locations throughout Kent. It is intended that the proposed development would provide a new centralised, digital autopsy facility which would be a more sensitive, high tech and cost-effective solution. A digital autopsy solution allows the cause of death to be determined using 3D imaging and computer software, rather than the traditional invasive dissection method. A CT scanner is used to map the body's organs and the data is then processed to create a 3D, whole body reconstruction, from where standard analysis can be carried out. As well as being a much more sensitive procedure affording greater dignity, the process is substantially quicker, and would address the decline in the number of trained pathologists in the region (and nationally) who are willing and trained to perform invasive post mortem examinations. Whilst a traditional autopsy can take up to 4 hours, digital scanning takes just over 3 minutes to complete.

**Planning Site History**

7. The most recent planning history for the County workshops site as a whole dates back to 2012 for additional rooms and toilet facilities within one of the existing buildings. Prior to this the planning history shows various approvals for modernisation and general upkeep of the buildings. However, it should also be noted that during periods of the pandemic in 2020 the western part of the wider workshop site (not the current application site) was used as a temporary mortuary facility under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Coronavirus) (England) (Amendment) Order 2020 (2020/412). This temporary use has now ceased.

**Proposal**

8. This application seeks approval for the construction of a new building for the autopsy facility; a separate CT Scanner, connected to the main building by a covered link; an open parking area for staff and visitors in front of the building; and two areas of secure compound, one to the front and one to the rear of the building.
9. The main building would have the scale and form of a typical single storey business park unit and has been designed so as not to stand out and draw attention to its function or purpose. It would have a floor area of just over 416 square metres and would have a monopitch roof design rising from front to rear, with an array of Photo Voltaic panels on it. A full length steel framed canopy would be provided along the front elevation of the building and the building would be constructed with a mixture of fair faced masonry to the front elevation and profiled sheet cladding to the remainder of the building. Windows and doors would be powder coated aluminium with matching louvres to remain in keeping with the general appearance of the building. A mixture of clear and obscure glass would be used to suit the function of the rooms behind.
10. In terms of internal layout, the building would provide a main body storage area, with a receiving bay and plant rooms; a staff room and staff facilities; main office; and a viewing room for visitors of the deceased. The building would be attached to the CT Scanner by a single storey link with a flat roof. The CT Scanner is provided as a prefabricated 'pod' element, craned into position and typically clad with powder coated

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steel similar to that proposed for the main building. The existing sub station would be upgraded/replaced within a new housing alongside the existing and would be retained to service the existing buildings on site. Its position is shown on the layout plan, at the very south-east corner of the site outside of the compound fencing.

11. A car park is proposed to the front of the building in front of the main entrance, providing parking for 7 cars including 2 accessible parking spaces, along with the provision of 2 electric car charging points. Covered cycle stands for up to 6 bikes would be provided adjacent to the main entrance under cover of the building canopy. The parking area would be landscaped with low level shrub, wildflower and bulb planting, as well as some climbing plants. There would be a delivery access from the parking area into a secure compound which would lie to the front of the remainder of the building, enclosed by 2.4m high timber fencing with anti-trespass detail along the top. This secure compound would provide access for loading and unloading by mortuary vehicles and also provide space for temporary chilled body storage units, and an additional CT scanner at short notice to cover maintenance or failure of the fixed installations, or any emergency demand for increased capacity at the facility. The area to the rear of the building would be left undeveloped but could be utilised for additional temporary chilled storage, if required, in extreme circumstances. This area would also be enclosed by 2.4m high timber fencing with anti-trespass detail along the top.
12. The majority of the facility would be closed to the public, but some viewing and identification of the deceased by next of kin may take place via the public facing entrance. The deceased would arrive and depart in mortuary transport or private ambulance to and from the screened compound. The main operation and visitor access to the facility would be during typical weekday opening hours (09:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday) but reception and release of the bodies would proceed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to ensure continuity of service. The routing of vehicles would be from Beddow Way, via the unadopted industrial estate road, which runs in a roughly east/west direction to the north of Forstal Cottages (see para 30 for a map of the route, which would not pass in front of the residential properties).
13. Whilst not forming part of the current proposal, the submitted documents also outline the intention for the proposed redevelopment of the wider site. The masterplan indicates that the site would be divided into 4 additional plots of land (in addition to the autopsy site) which could then be considered separately for redevelopment or re-use of the existing hardstandings and buildings. Development on these sites would be dependant upon separate planning permission(s).

**Planning Policy**

14. The following Guidance/Statements and Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to the consideration of the application:
  - (i) **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019** and the **National Planning Policy Guidance** (March 2014), sets out the Government's planning policy guidance for England, at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The guidance is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications but does not change the statutory status of the development plan



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which remains the starting point for decision making. However, the weight given to development plan policies will depend on their consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the development plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

In determining applications, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way, and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

In terms of delivering sustainable development in relation to this development proposal, the NPPF guidance and objectives covering the following matters are of particular relevance:

- significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (*paragraph 80*);
- to provide of the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decision should (a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities...and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments and (b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community (*paragraph 92*);
- whether impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity or congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road would be severe (para 109);
- substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land (para 118);
- achieving the requirement for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. Planning decisions should ensure that developments would function well and add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; establish or maintain a strong sense of place, creating a welcoming and distinctive place to live, work and visit; include an appropriate mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible (*paragraph 127*);
- planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate (*paragraph 170*);

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- planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including the setting) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal (*paragraph 190*).

**(ii) The adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan (adopted October 2017)**

- Policy SP1**      **Maidstone urban area.** Amongst other matters this policy refers to the Aylesford Industrial Estate as one of fourteen existing sites which are designated Economic Development Areas in order to maintain employment opportunities in the urban area (covered by Policy SP22).
- Policy SP21**      **Economic development.** The Council is committed to supporting and improving the economy of the borough and providing for the needs of businesses. Economic development will be achieved through the allocation of specific sites and through (i) the retention, intensification, regeneration of the existing industrial and business estates identified as Economic Development Areas as defined on the policies map; and (iv) supporting proposals that encourage highly skilled residents to work in the borough to reduce out-commuting.
- Policy SP22**      **Retention of employment sites.** Designated economic development areas are listed under part 1 of the policy, including Aylesford Industrial Estate, allocated for B1, B2 and B8 uses. Parts 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the Policy are also applicable, and these state that within the designated Economic Development Areas (3) change of use or redevelopment of the site to a non B class use will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for the designated uses in the medium term; (4) mixed use proposals incorporating an element of non B class uses may exceptionally be permitted where such development would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business and where the overall employment capacity of the site is maintained; (6) the redevelopment of premises and the infilling of vacant sites for business uses will be permitted; and (7) proposals should ensure high quality designs of an appropriate scale and materials are accompanied by significant landscaping within and at the edge of the development.
- Policy SP23**      **Sustainable transport.** Working in partnership with Kent County council (the local highway authority), Highways England, infrastructure providers and public transport operators, the Borough Council will manage any negotiations and agreements regarding schemes for mitigating the impact of development, where appropriate, on the local and strategic road networks and facilitate the delivery of transport improvements to support the growth proposed by the Local Plan.

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- Policy DM1** **Principles of good design.** Covers the principles of good design which proposed development should accord with, including reference to permeable layouts; responding to local natural or historic character and incorporating a high quality, modern design approach; high quality public realm; respecting the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties; respecting natural features such as trees and hedges; high quality design which responds to surrounding areas; maximising opportunities for sustainable development; protecting on-site biodiversity; safely accommodating vehicle and pedestrian movements; incorporating security measures to design out crime; avoiding areas at risk of flooding; incorporating adequate storage of waste and recycling; and providing adequate vehicle and cycle parking; and being flexible towards future adaptation in response to changing life needs.
- Policy DM2** **Sustainable design.** Where technically feasible and viable, non-residential developments should meet BREEAM very good standards addressing maximum water efficiencies under the mandatory water credits and energy credits.
- Policy DM3** **Natural environment.** To enable Maidstone borough to retain a high quality of living and to be able to respond to the effects of climate change, developers will ensure that new development protects and enhances the natural environment by incorporating measures where appropriate. Applicable to this application, part (iii) refers to the need to control pollution to protect ground and surface waters where necessary and mitigate against the deterioration of water bodies and adverse impacts on Groundwater Source Protection Zones, and or incorporate measures to improve the ecological status of water bodies as appropriate.
- Policy DM4** **Development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets.** Part 3 states that where development is proposed for a site which includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, applications must be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment and where necessary field evaluation.
- Policy DM5** **Development of brownfield land.** Proposals for development on previously developed land (brownfield land) in Maidstone urban area, rural service centres and larger villages that make effective and efficient use of land and which meet the following criteria will be permitted: (i) the site is not of high environmental value; (ii) if the proposal is for residential development, the density of new housing proposals reflects the character and appearance of individual localities, and is consistent with Policy DM12 unless there are justifiable planning reasons for a change in density.
- Policy DM8** **External lighting.** Proposals for external lighting which meet the following criteria will be permitted: (i) it is demonstrated that the minimum amount of lighting necessary to achieve its purpose is

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proposed; (ii) the design and specification of the lighting would minimise glare and light spillage and would not dazzle or distract drivers or pedestrians using nearby highways; and (iii) the lighting scheme would not be visually detrimental to its immediate or wider setting, particularly intrinsically dark landscapes.

**Policy DM21 Assessing the transport impacts of development.** Proposals must demonstrate that the impacts of trips generated to and from the development are accommodated, remedied or mitigated to prevent severe residual impacts; provide a satisfactory Transport Assessment and a satisfactory Travel Plan; and comply with the requirements for the policy for air quality.

**Policy DM23 Parking standards.** Vehicle parking for non-residential uses will need to take into account the accessibility of the development and the availability of public transport; the type, mix and use of the development proposed; whether development proposals exacerbate on street car parking to an unacceptable degree; and the appropriate design and provision of cycle parking facilities. Cycle parking facilities should be of an appropriate design and sited in a convenient, safe, secure and sheltered location; and new developments should ensure that proposals incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

(iii) **Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030 (adopted September 2020)** (as amended by Early Partial Review).

**Policy DM7 Safeguarding Mineral Resources.** Planning permission will only be granted for non-mineral development that is incompatible with minerals safeguarding, where it is demonstrated that either: (1) the mineral is not of economic value or does not exist; or (2) that extraction of the mineral would not be viable or practicable; or (3) the mineral can be extracted satisfactorily, having regard to Policy DM9, prior to the non-minerals development taking place without adversely affecting the viability of deliverability of the non-minerals development; or (4) the incompatible development is of a temporary nature that can be completed and the site returned to a condition that does not prevent mineral extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed; or (5) material considerations indicate that the need for the development overrides the presumption for mineral safeguarding such that sterilisation of the mineral can be permitted following the exploration of opportunities for prior extraction; or (6) it constitutes development that is exempt from mineral safeguarding policy, namely householder applications, infill development of a minor nature in existing built up areas, advertisement applications, reserved matters applications, minor extensions and changes of use of buildings, minor works, non-material amendments to current planning permissions; or (7) it constitutes development on a site allocated in the adopted development plan where consideration of the above factors (1-6) concluded that mineral resources will not be needlessly sterilised.

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**Consultations**

15. **Maidstone Borough Council** raise no objection to the application.

**Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council** raise no objection to the application.

**Boxley Parish Council** raise no objection to the application.

**Aylesford Parish Council** has no comments or observations to make regarding the application.

**KCC Biodiversity Officer** raises no objection subject to the imposition of a condition requiring details of ecological enhancements to be submitted within 6 months of the development commencing and an informative to ensure works do not affect breeding or nesting birds.

**KCC County Archaeological Officer** has raised no objection subject to the imposition of pre-commencement conditions which would require the applicants to secure the implementation of geo-archaeological and Palaeolithic field evaluation works in accordance with a specification to be approved by the County Planning Authority and following on from the evaluation any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important remains and/or any further investigation required; a condition to secure the implementation of archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a scheme to be approved by the County Planning Authority and following on from this any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains or further investigation as required; and a further condition to secure the completion of a programme of geo-archaeological post excavation and publication work, to be approved by the County Council prior to the building being brought into use.

**Environment Agency (Kent Area)** raise no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions to secure the implementation of a remediation strategy with regard to site contamination; a verification report to be submitted once the remediation works have been carried out; that if further contamination is found on site that hasn't previously been identified an additional remediation strategy be submitted for approval; that no drainage systems for the infiltration of water to the ground are permitted without consent from the County Planning Authority; that piling or the use of penetrative methods shall not be carried out without the consent of the County Planning Authority; that a groundwater monitoring plan be submitted and approved by the County Planning Authority prior to the use commencing; and that an informative be added to any consent regarding consent required for discharge of surface run-off to ground or surface waters.

**Minerals & Waste Planning Policy Team** raise no objection on mineral safeguarding grounds.

**KCC Flood and Water Management Officer** Raise no objection subject to the imposition of a condition to secure the submission of a detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme for the site prior to the commencement of development; and that the building shall not be occupied until a verification report pertaining to the surface

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water drainage system has been submitted and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority.

**KCC Highways and Transportation Officer** raises no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions requiring the submission of a Construction Management Plan prior to commencement of development; that the cycle and parking facilities are in place prior to use of the site and thereafter permanently retained; that the electric vehicle chargers are approved models from the UK Government model list; and an informative to ensure all necessary highway approvals and consents have been sought from the Highway Authority.

**UK Power Networks** have not commented on the application.

**Kent Police Headquarters** have not commented on the application.

**Local Member**

16. The local County Member for Maidstone Rural North, Sir Paul Carter was notified of the application on 31 March 2021. In addition, the (then) neighbouring County member for Malling North East, Mr Peter Homewood, was notified due to the proximity of the site to the shared boundary. Following the local elections held on 6<sup>th</sup> May, the local County Member for Malling North East changed to Mr Andrew Kennedy, who has therefore also been notified of the application. No views have been received.

**Publicity**

17. The application was publicised by the posting of four site notices; one at the entrance to the site hoardings, one at the rear of the site in St Michaels Close, one at the road junction of the unclassified road off Beddow Way and the access road by Forstal Cottages, and one at the turning towards the site on Beddow Way.

**Representations**

18. In response to the publicity, 4 letters objecting to the application have been received. The key points raised can be summarised as follows:

- Concern over the increase in traffic and its impact on residential properties;
- Proposal will lead to more large vehicles using Forstal Road by Forstal Cottages;
- Large vehicles frequently cause damage to parked cars for residential properties as access by Forstal Cottages is too narrow for industrial vehicles;
- Vehicles often ignore the no entry sign at the northern end of the road by Forstal Cottages as well as the signage at the southern end stating no access to the industrial estate;
- Concern over safety of residents due to large vehicles accessing the site;
- Access from St Michaels Close to the new development should be considered;
- If development goes ahead new 'No Entry' and 'Access for Residents Only' signs required to ensure vehicles use Beddow Way for access rather than using the road by Forstal Cottages as a cut through;



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- In addition, new road markings should be provided to ensure vehicles do not use the road by Forstal Cottages to access this site or the wider industrial site.

**Discussion**

19. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 14 above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.
20. The application is being reported for determination by the Planning Applications Committee due to the four letters of objections received from nearby residents. In addition, the application also needs to be reported as a result of Governance conflicts arising from the applicant, KCC Economic Development, falling within the same Division of KCC as the Planning Applications Group. In these circumstances legislation requires that the decision is taken by the Planning Applications Committee. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations are the principle of development; the siting and design of the new building; and any highway and transport implications resulting from the development; along with other matters such as contamination, flood risk, residential amenity, sustainability and archaeology.

**Principle of Development**

21. The application site is located within an established industrial estate, which is designated in the Local Plan as an economic development area. Policy SP21 of the Local Plan states that the Council is committed to supporting and improving the economy of the borough and providing for the needs of businesses – achieved by ensuring the retention, intensification and regeneration of the existing industrial and business estates identified on the policies map. The redevelopment of this partially mothballed site, within the industrial estate therefore meets the aims of Policy SP21 in principle.
22. The proposed autopsy use would be considered as sui generis under the Use Class Order, given that it does not fall within any specific use class. The Aylesford industrial estate is designated for use classes B1 (office use other than a use within Class A2, research and development and any industrial process appropriate for a residential area), B2 (industrial uses) and B8 (storage and distribution uses) under Policy SP22 of the Local Plan, and this policy states that a change of use or redevelopment of a site or premises to a non B class use will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of their take up or continued use for the designated use in the medium term. However, the policy goes on to state that mixed use proposals incorporating an element of non B class use may exceptionally be permitted where such development would facilitate the regeneration of the site to more effectively meet the needs of modern business and where the overall employment capacity of the site is maintained. Furthermore this policy allows for the redevelopment of premises and the infilling of vacant sites for business use.

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23. The existing (wider) site as a former transport workshops would have generated relatively low levels of employment for the amount of land taken, since much was used for the storage of vehicles, and the site has now been predominantly empty for several years. The proposed use would generate 5 full-time equivalent jobs, some of which would be highly skilled in accordance with Policy SP21 (iv). The proposed application would be the first phase of the redevelopment of the wider site, which would see the retention and regeneration of the site in accordance with the aims of Policy SP21 (i).
24. Under the new Use Classes Order published in 2020, what were previously B1 uses now fall under Class E – Commercial, Business and Service uses. Relevant to this proposal are subsections (e) and (g), as set out below:
- (e) provision of medical or health services, principally to visiting members of the public, except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner
  - (g) for:
    - (i) an office to carry out any operational or administrative functions,
    - (ii) the research and development of products or processes, or
    - (iii) any industrial process,being a use which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

The proposal, whilst sharing characteristics with each of these sections, does not wholly fall within either of them and hence would still be considered as sui generis. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the proposed use would be an appropriate use for this site on the industrial estate and would meet the main objective of Policy SP22 which is to ensure the continuation of business and employment generating uses on the site. In addition, section 4 of this policy does allow for an element of non B class uses as part of a wider scheme. Maidstone Borough Council have been consulted on the application and have raised no objection to the proposal, bearing in mind compliance with its own Local Plan Policies. In addition, the site was used on an emergency basis as a temporary resting place during the Covid 19 pandemic during 2020, occurring without any adverse impacts on the surrounding area. It is therefore considered that the principle of development is acceptable and would accord with the aims of Policies SP21 and SP22 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

25. The site comprises previously developed (brownfield) land; it is partially mothballed and several of the buildings are condemned for demolition. One of the core principles of the NPPF encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed. Policy DM5 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan reiterates this aim and states that proposals for development on brownfield land will be permitted. It is therefore considered that this proposal would also accord with Policy DM5.

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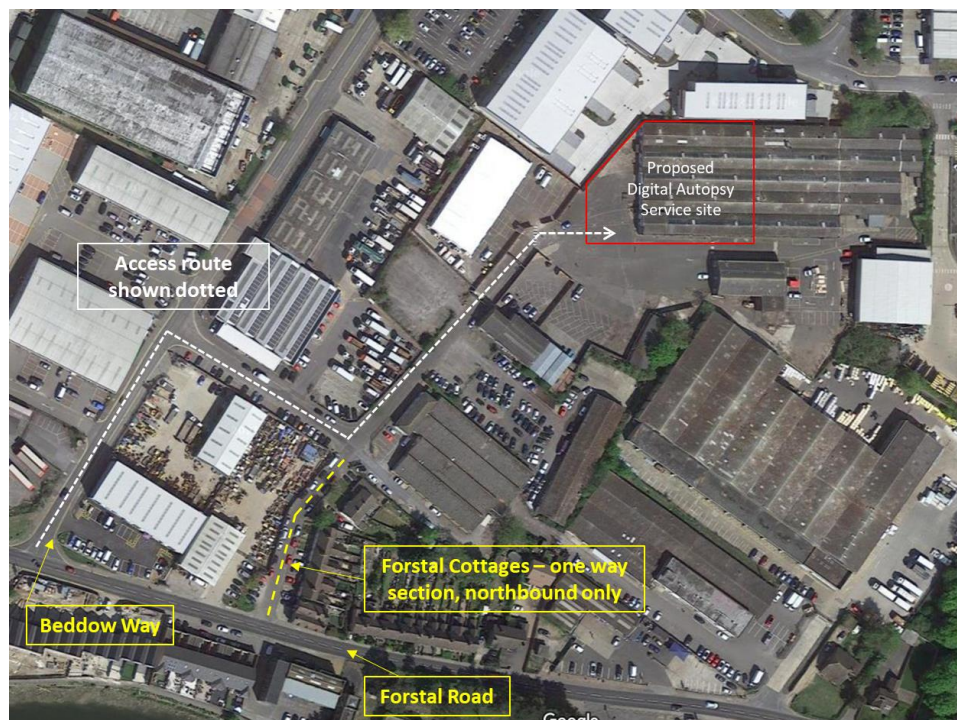
**Siting and Design of New Building**

26. The design of the building, as described in the proposal section would reflect a modern industrial unit and would be of a style which is considered in keeping with the newly built units to the north and north-east of the site on the former Waitrose car park, and those recently given permission on the Gallagher site to the south. Given this would be the first parcel of land on the wider site to be developed there would not be a 'street scene' as such for it to fit within but seen in the context of the surrounding buildings outside the site and the wider industrial estate, the design of the building is considered to be acceptable. The steel framed canopy would provide a feature to the front elevation, giving a portico or colonnade effect to the building, whilst providing shading to the south-facing glazing. As explained within the Design and Access Statement the building has been designed with long-term sustainability in mind and would easily allow for future conversion to B1(the new E class)/B2/B8 use should the need for the digital autopsy service change or be relocated.
27. The building would be set away from the boundaries of the site and the secure compounds would provide privacy for the use of the facility. Although 2.4m high fencing, which would enclose the compound, is considered high and would be out of place at the front of a site in a more prominently visual location, located amongst the large industrial units and existing fenced areas close to the site, it is considered that it would be acceptable.
28. The proposed open car park and low level landscaping would soften the appearance of the scheme. Climbing plants are proposed to the edges of the compound fencing which would, over time, help to soften the appearance of this as well. Given that the details for the proposed CT scanner pod are only indicative at this stage, a condition requiring exact details to be submitted to the County Planning Authority and approved in writing prior to its installation on site is proposed, to ensure it accords with the intended size and design suggested.
29. The design and siting of the proposed building and surrounding facilities is considered to be acceptable and in keeping with the locality and would accord with the aims of Policy DM1 of the Local Plan. A condition to secure details of the exact materials to be used in the development has been included in the recommendation below.

**Access, Parking and Highways**

30. The proposed Digital Autopsy Service would continue to use the existing access to the County Workshops site which is from Beddow Way via the unnamed road and northern section of Forstal Cottages, as shown dotted white on the diagram below for clarity.

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The applicant has advised that there could be approximately 3-4 members of staff on site at any one time, 11 deliveries per day and on average there may be 2-3 visitors per day. This would generate a total of 17 arrivals and 17 departures per day, a total of 34 vehicle movements. This would represent a significant reduction in trip generation compared to the previous use of the County Workshops site (as set out in the Transport Statement) and as such it is considered that the use would not result in any 'severe' impacts on the local highway network.

31. The service would be served by parking provision for 7 vehicles, 2 of which would be disabled bays and two electric vehicle charging points would be installed. In addition covered parking for 6 cycles would be provided. It is considered that this provision would be adequate to meet the demands of the service alongside access to both bus and railway services which are available nearby. Vehicle swept path analysis diagrams have been provided to show that adequate access can be made for all types of vehicles including large vans and HGV's which would need to access the site. Adequate visibility for all access points would be achieved with the layout proposed.
32. The County Highway and Transportation Officer has considered the application, the submitted plans and documents, including the Transport Statement, and has raised no objection to the application, subject to the imposition of a number of conditions. These would require that a Construction Management Plan be submitted prior to construction commencing to cover details such as the routing of construction vehicles to and from the site, parking and turning areas for delivery and construction vehicles, timing of deliveries, wheel washing facilities and temporary traffic management and signage. In addition, conditions ensuring the vehicle parking and cycle parking are laid out as shown and permanently retained, and also that the Electric Vehicle chargers provided must be from the approved models list. These conditions are covered in the recommendation section below. It is considered that the proposal would meet the aims of Policy DM21 of

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the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, which details how the transport impacts of development should be assessed, and Policy DM23 relating to parking standards.

33. As a result of the advertisement of the application, four letters of objection were received from residents of properties on Forstal Cottages. As set out in paragraph 18 their general concerns relate to traffic using Forstal Cottages as a route through from Forstal Road to the industrial estate, despite there being signage at the junction of Forstal Road and Forstal Cottages advising that there is no access to the industrial estate. In addition they have experienced vehicles travelling the wrong way down the one-way part of the road in front of the residential properties and damage to cars which are generally parked on both sides of the road here. The residents are concerned that this may continue to happen and be exacerbated by traffic entering or leaving the proposed Digital Autopsy Service site, given its proximity to Forstal Cottages.
34. It has been demonstrated above that the level of traffic utilising the site for the proposed autopsy service would be substantially less than the original traffic which would have travelled in and out of the site when it was run as the County workshops. In addition the applicants have advised that they would make it clear through operational management procedures that all vehicles would be informed of the access route via Beddow Way, but nevertheless this is clearly a concern for local residents and the application has the potential to exacerbate the situation. To try and improve the situation the applicant's have agreed to provide some replacement signage for both ends of the one way section of Forstal Cottages. At the southern end this would be to make it clearer to traffic that this road should not be used to access the Industrial Estate, and at the northern end clearer no-entry signage. Road markings would also be provided as an additional means of expressing this message. A condition has been included in the recommendation below which requires the submission of details of the road markings and signage to be submitted within 3 months of the date of any consent given, and that the details approved through that condition be in place prior to the Digital Autopsy Service becoming operational.

**Contamination**

35. The application was supported by the submission of a 'Report on Ground Investigation' which considered the most significant risks associated with historic and previous uses on the site and reported the findings of intrusive fieldwork carried out in October 2020. Historic risks are attributed to the use of the site as a brick and tile works, infilling of former pits and tanks with unknown fill materials, and storage and associated leaks and spills associated with vehicle related fluids as a result of the site being used as a vehicle repair depot. The report states that there is considered to be a moderate risk that a significant source of contamination exists below the site, or in the immediate vicinity. Further investigation and remediation is recommended in the report.
36. The Environment Agency were consulted on the application due to the potential for contamination on site, and they concur that the previous land uses on the site present a high risk that contamination could be mobilised during construction to pollute controlled waters. Controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location, they state, due to the site being located within a Source Protection Zone 1 and on a principal aquifer. They acknowledge that further detailed information would be required before built

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development is undertaken, but that this could be secured through the imposition of planning conditions. As such they have raised no objection subject to conditions being imposed which require a remediation strategy to be submitted to the County Planning Authority, and agreed in writing; that a verification report be submitted demonstrating that the remediation strategy has been implemented; that if any contamination is found on site that hasn't been previously identified that construction would stop until a remediation strategy for dealing with it has been agreed; that there be no infiltration of surface water to the ground without express written consent from the County Planning Authority; that piling should not be carried out without written consent from the County Planning Authority; and that a groundwater monitoring plan be submitted and agreed. Finally, an informative is also requested by them regarding the consent required for discharge of surface run-off to ground or surface waters.

37. In light of the fact no objection has been raised by the EA, and that the proposed conditions and informative are included in the recommendation below, it is considered that the scheme would be acceptable in relation to contamination and accord with the aims of Policy DM3 of the Local Plan and the advice in paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

**Flood Risk and Drainage**

38. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 as set out in the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, where the risk of flooding is generally considered to be low from all sources. A Flood Risk Assessment was submitted in support of the application (which covers the whole wider site not just the current red line application site boundary) which states there have been no incidences of flooding from any source of flooding at the site. The EA have raised no objection on grounds of flooding.
39. A drainage plan and Drainage Strategy Report have also been submitted and the County's Flood and Water Management Team have considered these details. They have advised that they are satisfied that the principles proposed, namely attenuation and a restricted discharge at 2l/s to the surface water sewer would not increase the risk of flooding at the site. They therefore raise no objection to the application subject to the imposition of a pre-commencement condition requiring a detailed sustainable surface water scheme for the site to be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority; and that the building shall not be brought into use until a verification report pertaining to this scheme has been submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority. The EA have also requested a condition which covers groundwater and an informative regarding surface waters, as set out above. Subject to the imposition of these it is considered that the application is acceptable in relation to flood risk and drainage.

**Archaeology**

40. The application was supported by the submission of a Geoarchaeological Desk-Based Assessment and an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment. The application site lies in an area of High Archaeological Potential – there being a high potential for the Prehistoric, Post Medieval and Modern period; moderate for the Iron Age and Roman period; and low for all other periods. The Palaeolithic potential for Aylesford is considered high given the number of finds and environmental remains found in the area,



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and the Post Medieval period is high as the northern and western parts of the (wider) site are likely to have remains relating to a mill head for the Forstal paper mill and pottery works buildings, which also continued into the Modern period. Due to the national significance attributed to any possible Palaeolithic remains and the requirement to increase knowledge and understanding of the River Terrace in the Maidstone area the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment recommends specialist evaluation at the site.

41. The County's Archaeological Officer has considered the details of the application and the documents submitted and highlights that there are potentially very important Palaeolithic remains in the area and the potential for substantial industrial structures of significance. In view of the archaeological potential a phased programme of geoarchaeological and Palaeolithic assessment and investigation and a phased programme of archaeological work is needed to inform and guide the proposed development. Further assessments, especially fieldwork, could then be used to guide the need for further archaeological mitigation. Three conditions are therefore included in the recommendation below, which require a specification for geo-archaeological and Palaeolithic field evaluation works to be submitted and approved in writing with the County Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development; archaeological field evaluation works to be submitted and approved in writing with the County Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development; and before the site can be brought into use, that a programme of geo-archaeological and archaeological post excavation and publication work be submitted and approved by the County Planning Authority. Subject to this it is considered that the scheme would be in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policy DM4 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

**Ecology**

42. The application was accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment which, as with some of the other technical documents, was based on the wider County Workshops site rather than just the red line of this application. A Bat Scoping Assessment was also submitted. The site is mainly occupied by buildings and hardstanding and is some distance from the ancient woodland to the north/east. In considering the application the County Council's Biodiversity Officer has noted that no bat roosting potential was observed on site, but the nearby non-designated woodland does provide bat foraging habitat, and therefore efforts must be made not to increase light pollution once the development is operational.
43. A condition requiring details of ecological enhancements, to include the provision of bird and bat boxes and native species only within the landscape scheme, has been requested by the Biodiversity Officer, to be submitted for approval within 6 months of works commencing, and this has been included in the recommendation below. Informatives are also recommended to ensure breeding birds are not disturbed during the construction period, and that the applicant adheres to the Bat Conservation Trusts Guidance Note: Bats and Artificial Lighting. These have been included in the recommendation below and the scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable in relation to ecological matters and would accord with the aims of Policy DM1 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan where it relates to biodiversity.

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**Sustainability**

44. The Design and Access Statement acknowledges that the Digital Autopsy Service would, by its nature, have a high energy demand and therefore the proposal includes a range of approaches to mitigate this through the design. Provision of daylight to the main staff spaces is achieved through full height windows and elevated ceilings, reducing the need for artificial lighting. A heat recovery ventilation system is proposed to minimise loss of energy, and space and water heating would be fully electric therefore avoiding the use of mains gas. The orientation of the building and its roof profile have been chosen to maximise the potential for solar panel provision, which is expected to produce up to 48,906kWh per annum. Low use water fittings are proposed and timber would be derived for a recognised sustainable source. Finally, two electric vehicle charging points would be provided in the car park, with the capacity to provide more in the future.
45. The proposed development would achieve a predicted Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'A' and BREEAM 'very good' and would therefore be in accordance with Policy DM2 of the Maidstone Local Plan.

**Residential Amenity**

46. The proposed development would be sited at least 160m away from the residential properties on Forstal Cottages and given this separation and the general wider industrial estate operation (including other existing uses and buildings between the properties and the site), it is considered that this facility would not raise amenity issues for residents. The concerns raised by residents on traffic grounds and the use of Forstal Cottages by inappropriate vehicles has been addressed above.

**Minerals Assessment**

47. Policy DM7 of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan seeks to control development where, as is the case with this site, an application falls within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. The site lies within an area safeguarded for silica sand/construction sand extraction. The archaeological report refers to the brick and tile works having been historically present on the wider site and suggests that any mineral resource here is likely to have already been extracted. Furthermore, the Report on Ground Investigations identified only a thin layer of sand in Trial Pit B (10cm) and no significant sand deposits within Trial Pits A, C or D. As such it would appear that the mineral is not of economic value and that extraction would not be viable or practical, in accordance with sections 1 and 2 of Policy DM7. Finally, the supporting documents note that given the wider use of the surrounding area for a range of industrial and commercial uses, and the fact it is a previously developed site, extraction would not be practical even if viable deposits existed.
48. The County Council's Minerals and Waste Planning Policy Team have considered the details submitted and raise no objection on mineral safeguarding grounds.

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**Conclusion**

49. In my view the key determining factors for this proposal are the principle of development in this location, the design and siting of the new building and the potential highway and transportation impacts. In my view the principle of the digital autopsy use would be acceptable given the established industrial estate location and would make good use of previously developed land. The design of the building would be in keeping with the surrounding development and other permitted schemes yet to be implemented and would be constructed to meet the requirements for BREEAM 'very good'. The proposed use would not result in any severe transport or highway implications and the applicant has agreed to improve signage at Forstal Cottages to address the existing problems experienced by residents.
50. The development can be accommodated without impact to ecology, flood risk, drainage, contamination, or archaeology, all of which can be suitably mitigated by the proposed conditions. In my view the development is sustainable, in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and the Development Plan policies, and there are no material planning considerations that indicate that the conclusion should be made otherwise. I therefore recommend that planning permission be granted.

**Recommendation**

51. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:
- The standard 3-year time limit;
  - The development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
  - The submission and approval of details of all construction materials to be used externally prior to the commencement of development;
  - Exact details of the CT Scanner to be submitted and approved in writing prior to its installation on site;
  - Details of the appearance of the relocated substation to be submitted and approved in writing prior to its installation on site;
  - No development to commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted and approved in writing;
  - Vehicle and cycle parking shall be laid out as shown and permanently retained;
  - The Electric Vehicle Chargers installed on site must be from the UK Government approved models list;
  - Details of the road markings and signage relating to Forstal Cottages shall be submitted within 3 months of the date of any consent given, and the details approved shall be implemented prior to the Digital Autopsy Service becoming operational;
  - Prior to the commencement of development a remediation strategy shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority, and approved in writing;
  - The submission of a verification report demonstrating that the remediation strategy has been implemented, to be approved in writing prior to the use commencing;
  - If any contamination is found on site that has not been previously identified that construction would stop until a remediation strategy for dealing with it has been agreed in writing;

## Item D1

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- That there be no infiltration of surface water to the ground without express written approval from the County Planning Authority;
- Piling should not be carried out without written approval from the County Planning Authority;
- The submission of a groundwater monitoring plan to be approved in writing by the County Planning Authority prior to the use commencing;
- Prior to the commencement of development the submission of a detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme (based on the submitted Drainage Strategy Report and drainage drawings) to be submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority;
- The building shall not be brought into use until a Verification Report pertaining to the surface water drainage system has been submitted to and approved in writing by the County Planning Authority;
- Prior to the commencement of development the implementation of geo-archaeological and Palaeolithic field evaluation works in accordance with a specification to be approved by the County Planning Authority and following on from the evaluation any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important remains and/or any further investigation required;
- Prior to the commencement of development the implementation of archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a scheme to be approved by the County Planning Authority and following on from this any safeguarding measures to ensure preservation in situ of important archaeological remains or further investigation as required;
- Prior to the building being brought into use the completion of a programme of geo-archaeological post excavation and publication work, to be approved by the County Council;
- Within 6 months of the commencement of development, details of ecological enhancements to include the provision of bird and bat boxes and native species only within the landscape scheme, shall be submitted to the County Planning Authority and approved in writing.

52. I FURTHER RECOMMEND that the following INFORMATIVES be added:

- That the applicant ensures that all necessary highway approvals and consents are obtained;
- The applicant is reminded that consent will be required from the Environment Agency for discharge of surface run-off to ground or surface waters;
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all works should be carried out outside of the breeding bird season (March 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> inclusive) and if this is not possible that a suitably qualified ecologist examine the site for breeding birds prior to work commencing;
- The applicant is reminded that the development should be carried out in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trusts Guidance Note: Bats and Artificial Lighting;

Case Officer: Mrs Helen Edwards
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Tel. no: 03000 413366
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Background Documents: see section heading
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