

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.

Item D1

Proposed car park, access road and footpath, Tower View, Kings Hill, West Malling - TM/13/3677 (KCC/TM0378/2013)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 12 February 2014.

Application by Kent County Council Property Group for the construction of a new 52 space car park, access road and pedestrian footpath, to supplement existing parking at 30 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling (Ref: TM/13 3677 and KCC/TM/0378/2013).

Recommendation: Planning permission to be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr M Balfour

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The application site comprises 0.4 hectare of currently undeveloped land on the south side of Tower and adjacent to 11 Tower View, at Kings Hill. The land is partly used as a roadside landscaping area, with some earth bunding and some ornamental tree and shrub planting, but is otherwise vacant space.
2. The site is included within an area identified for employment uses as part of the Kings Hill Business Park in the Local Development Framework.

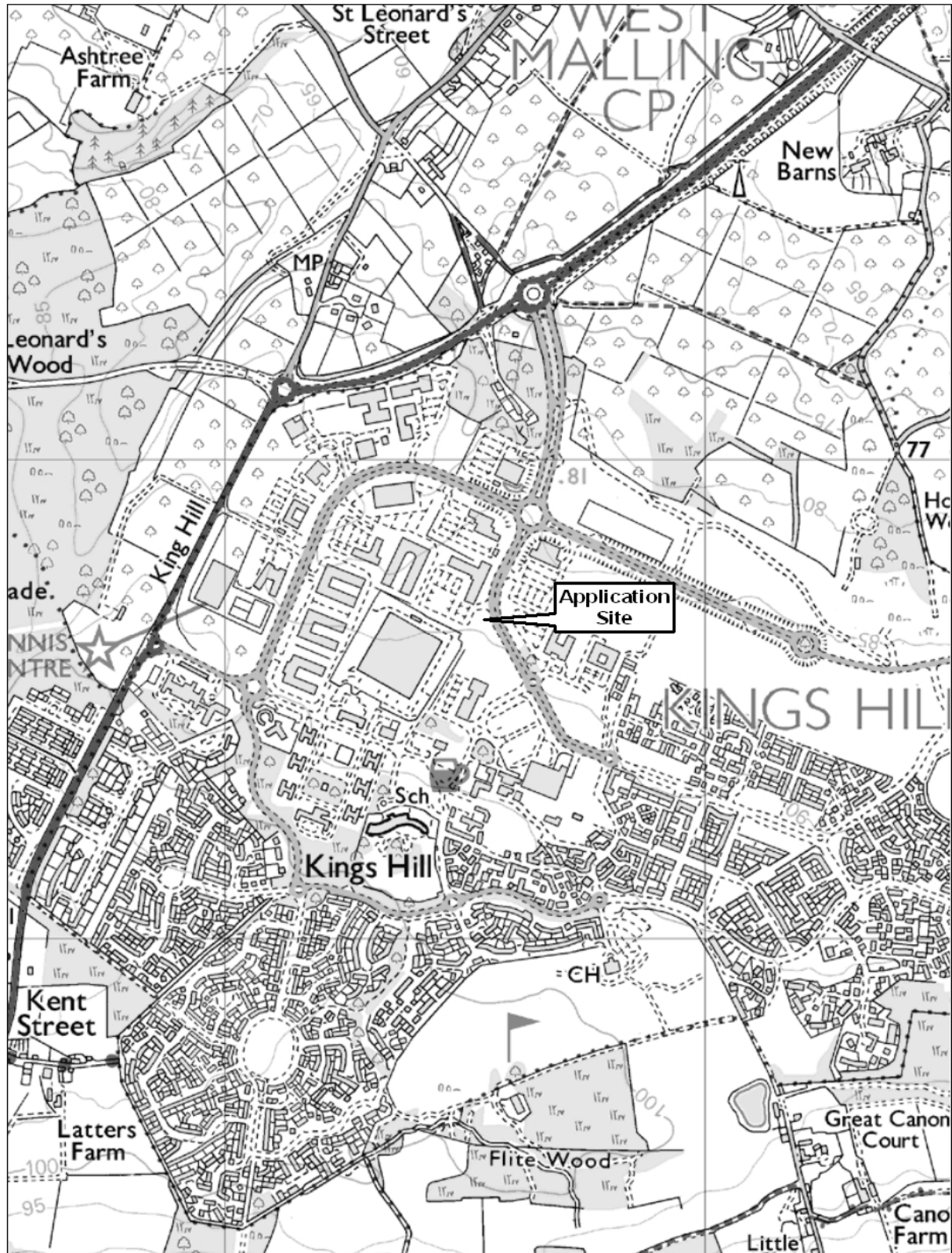
Background and Relevant Planning History

3. The redevelopment of West Malling Airfield (a former night fighter station in the Second World War and subsequently a US Airbase before being acquired by Kent County Council) as a mixed business and residential development was permitted initially in June 1990, with a series of further permissions since as the development has progressed over the last 20 years. Two substantial development phases have now been completed, with a mix of businesses, housing areas and a retail centre. Two primary schools have been built and a third one is currently being planned to cater for the above average demand for primary school places associated with this development. A third phase of development is currently been prepared for planning submission.
4. The development and management of the Kings Hill development is carried out by a private sector company (Liberty Property Trust UK Limited) in partnership with the County Council, and a wide range of private companies are represented in the business park element of the development, including some County Council services. The former County Supplies Depot has occupied a large plot within the development for several decades, but is now being vacated to make way for other development. However, the County Council continues to need to base some of its staff at Kings Hill and has acquired one of the new flexible office buildings at 30 Kings Hill Avenue, which this current proposal closely relates to.

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WIDER LOCATION PLAN

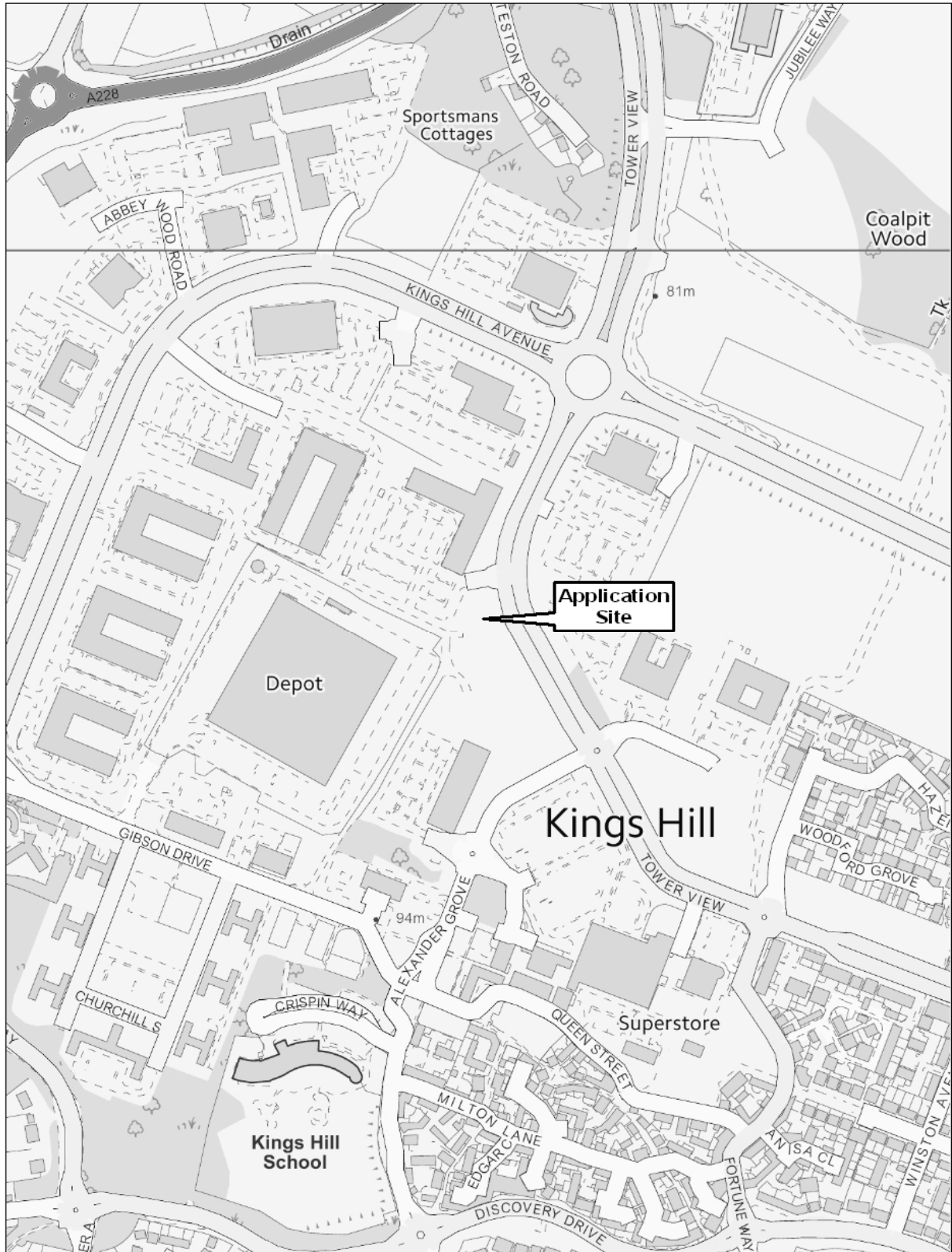


0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 Kilometres

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Ordnance Survey 100019238

Car park, access road and footpath, Tower View, Kings Hill, West Malling (TM/13/0378)

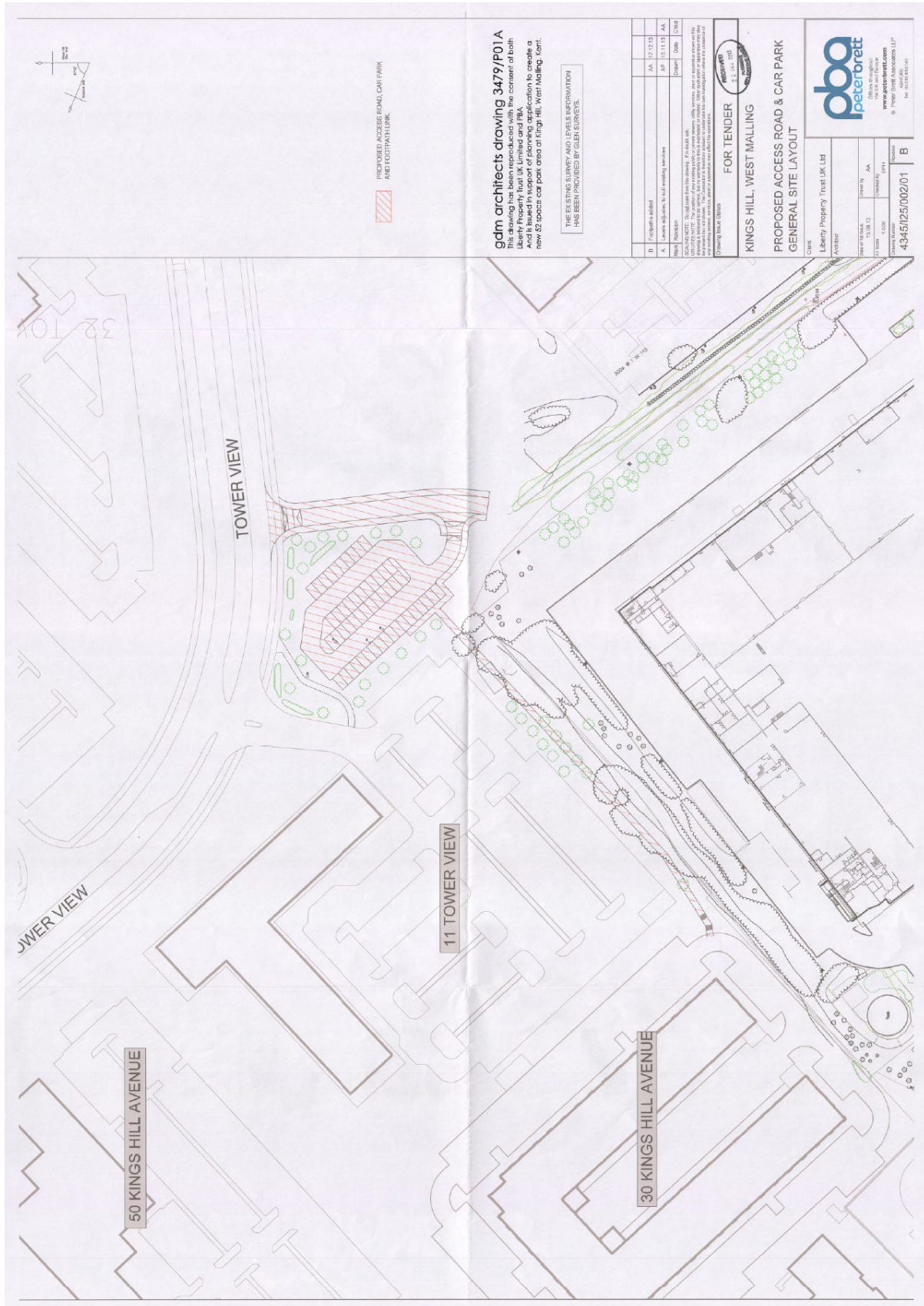
SITE LOCATION PLAN



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GENERAL SITE LAYOUT PLAN



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Proposed Development

5. The proposed development includes a new car parking area (comprising 52 vehicle parking spaces), a new access road off Tower View (with left in and left out access only), and a pedestrian walkway (140 metres long) to the rear of 11 Tower View to 30 Kings Hill Avenue. Both the car park and the walkway would be illuminated at night by new column mounted lamps. The access road is proposed to be designed to a standard to cater for other future development beyond the car park entrance, likely to include the proposed third primary school. However, none of that further development is the subject of this current application, which essentially relates to the County Council occupation of 30 Kings Hill Avenue.
6. As part of the County Council's current Transformation Strategy, it is intended to rationalise KCC's property portfolio, by vacating costly rented office premises around the County and making optimum use of other premises. A key element of this strategy is the use of office premises at 30 Kings Hill Avenue as a base for a substantial number of staff (between 500 and 600), many of who will work flexibly and/or prepatetically so that not all those staff will be present at any one time. In particular, many staff such as those in Adult Services work with clients across the county and, through enhanced use of Information Technology, no longer need to have a full-time office base on a day to day basis as well visiting clients. However, there remains a need for staff to visit and meet at KCC offices from time to time, rather than being constantly 'on the road', so there is still a need for an office base for such workers, even if they do not attend that everyday. Whilst 30 Kings Hill Avenue has been acquired to meet that need, the building is clearly designed for a lesser number of (office based) employees, and therefore has less on-site parking spaces (206) than KCC'S New Ways of Working initiative will require. Under the circumstances, the proposed 52 additional spaces, which cannot be accommodated within the current site of 30 Kings Hill Avenue, are proposed to be provided within a new parking area off Tower View, with a short pedestrian link to the office building.
7. The applicants explain that the new parking areas has been designed to sit within the landscape margin and setting of the Tower View area, and positioned so as to relate to the existing car park of 11 Tower View, rather than a divorced area. The levels of the car park would be similar to those existing and the landscape bunding and planting would be retained as far as practicable, with substantial replacements for that needing to be removed. The new car park, and its entrance, would be lit at night by eight 6 metre high lamp columns, and the pedestrian walkway by seven 2 metre high bollard lights. Because of level changes the walkway requires a short flight of steps at its south western end, but the car park is not intended to cater for disabled drivers, since there are 12 accessible parking spaces provided within the main parking area accessed off Kings Hill Avenue. Cycle parking will also be provided in the main site car park.
8. Details of the top surfacing of the car park, access road and footway, together with full details of the lighting equipment and drainage runs are included in the submitted application documents.

Planning Policy

9. The following Guidance/Statements and Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to the consideration of the application:

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- (i) **National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)**, 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 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 look for solutions rather than problems, 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:

- consideration of whether the opportunities for sustainable transport have been taken up and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people;
- achieving the requirement for high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

(ii) **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy (Adopted September 2007):**

Policy CP2 New development that is likely to generate a significant number of trips should:

- (a) be well located relative to public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes and with good access to local service centres;
- (b) minimise the need to travel through the implementation of Travel Plans and the provision or retention of local services and facilities;
- (c) either provide or make use of, and if necessary enhance, a choice of transport modes, including public transport, cycling and walking;
- (d) be compatible with the character and capacity of the highway network in terms of the volume and nature of traffic generated;
- (e) provide for any necessary enhancements to the safety of the highway network and capacity of transport infrastructure whilst avoiding road improvements that significantly harm the natural or historic environment or the character of the area; and,
- (f) ensure accessibility for all, including elderly people, people with disabilities and others with restricted mobility.

(iii) **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Development Framework – Development Land Allocations (Adopted April 2008):**

Policy E1 The areas listed below and shown on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded for employment purposes. Except where otherwise specified, proposals for non-employment uses, ie. uses other than General Industrial Use (B2), Business Use (B1) or Storage and Distribution Uses (B8), will not be permitted. Any new development or redevelopment (including change of use) within these areas for employment purposes must not result in unacceptable impact on

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residential or rural amenity by virtue of noise, dust, smell, vibration or other emissions, or by visual intrusion, or the nature and scale of traffic generation. This means that parts of these areas close to residential properties may be suitable only for Business Use (B1).

Mixed Use Sites:

- (r) Kings Hill - high quality, campus style Business Park suitable for offices, research and development and light industrial use (B1) including also hotel, conference, education and training and commercial leisure uses as part of the wider Kings Hill mixed-use development.

Policy E3 The following vacant sites within the areas identified for employment use under Policies E1 and E2 are allocated for employment development:

- (f) Alexander Grove, Kings Hill (1.4 ha)

(iv) Tonbridge and Malling Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document (Adopted April 2010):

Policy SQ8

1. Before proposals for development are permitted, they will need to demonstrate that any necessary transport infrastructure, the need for which arises wholly or substantially from the development is in place or is certain to be provided.
2. Development proposals will only be permitted where they would not significantly harm highway safety and where traffic generated by the development can adequately be served by the highway network.
3. Development will not be permitted which involves either the construction of a new access or the increased use of an existing access onto the primary or secondary road network (as defined by the Highway Authority) where a significantly increased risk of crashes or traffic delays would result. No new accesses onto the motorway or trunk road network will be permitted.
4. Development proposals should comply with parking standards which will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.
5. Where significant traffic effects on the highway network and/or the environment are identified, the development shall only be allowed with appropriate mitigation measures and these must be provided before the development is used or occupied.

Consultations

10. **Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council:** raises no objection, but makes the following comments:

“(i) In the light of Chapter 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, Policy CP2 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Core Strategy 2007 and Policy SQ8 of the Tonbridge and Malling Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document 2010, KCC need to consider the traffic and sustainability implications of the scheme, bearing in mind that the increase in parking provision serving offices at 30 Kings Hill Avenue may set an undesirable precedent for other employment sites to increase parking beyond adopted standards. This could increase private car journeys relative to public transport use which would

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reduce the environmental sustainability of Kings Hill and have a detrimental impact on the capacity of the surrounding highway network (and Junction 4 of the M20 in particular).

(ii) In the light of paragraph 125 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and Policy NE3 of the Tonbridge and Malling Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document 2010, KCC need to consider whether the proposed artificial lighting complies with guidance within found on the Bat Conservation Trust website referred to in Natural England's Standing Advice.

(iii) If dual use of the footpath link as a cycle link is intended, it is suggested that a cycle wheeling ramp adjacent the steps would be desirable.”

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation:

“According to the drawing 4345/125/002/08 Rev B provided, the road is proposed to be 5.5m wide with 2m footways. It is understood that the footways are also to be formally shared cycle ways. The 10m entry and exit radii at the bell mouth are considered to be appropriate to allow manoeuvring, maintain appropriate entry speeds and reasonable pedestrian crossing distances. The access is proposed to be a left turn in and left turn out arrangement, on the mid-point of a 350m section of the dual carriageway Tower View.

At the northern end of this section there is a four arm 50m diameter roundabout and at the southern end there is a 15m diameter four arm roundabout serving Asda and other commercial and residential areas. It is considered that a left turn in and left turn out arrangement on a 350m section of road with good standard roundabouts at each end is acceptable and appropriate to allow opportunity for continuity of traffic flows. It is considered that a right turn lane into this access could create tailbacks onto the southbound Tower View and introduce other road safety issues crossing the northbound Tower View.

Considering any potential future development here, I would not support the new proposed road being one-way. It is considered that a one-way road here could encourage unwanted traffic speeds, create enforcement difficulties and in my view offer no advantage. Should further developments occur to the east of Tower View, it is considered that the central reserve represents a barrier to encouraging sustainable movement within Kings Hill, and that a formal signal controlled crossing should be provided across Tower View between the new access road proposed and Alexander Grove. At peak times it would be anticipated that interruptions to traffic flow on Tower View caused by pedestrians using a formal crossing would also be advantageous to assist other traffic movements at the Alexander Grove (Asda) roundabout.

With regard to the adequacy of this car park in terms of car parking numbers, further information is required regarding expected staff numbers and car parking numbers as a whole for the occupation of 30 Kings Hill Avenue. I do not believe this information has been provided but is necessary in order to determine the likelihood of roadside overspill parking and the impacts this may have. I would be grateful if the applicant could provide this additional information in order to complete my response on this proposal.”

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Kings Hill Parish Council: objects to the application on the following grounds:

“Kings Hill Parish Council (KHPC) has reviewed the planning application and has significant concerns, as follows:

- The location of the entrance to the car park was located close to a busy roundabout on the junction of Tower View and Alexander Grove, a bus layover area and a pedestrian crossing;
- The turning into the site is tight and requires drivers to slow down and this will affect other traffic on Tower View;
- As there is no right turn into or out of the entrance this would require drivers to do a U-turn on the busy roundabout on the junction of Tower View and Alexander Grove. The Council believe that this will be dangerous as other drivers are not expecting cars to go the whole way around the roundabout;
- The plans show no provision for pedestrians using the road;
- Staff from 30 Kings Hill Avenue will use the walkway as a shortcut from their office to the central retail area;
- There appears to be no cycleway on the road;
- The entrance road is narrow and is half the width of the nearby entrance to the car park for 11 Tower View.

In addition, the road is intended to link to future development and therefore cannot be merely assessed as additional car parking for an office. Kings Hill Parish Council has significant further concerns about the impact of traffic arising from the third primary school and other future development planned as follows:

- The narrow road is insufficient for an access road to a primary school. Although some parents walk their children to school, in practice the majority drive and therefore must be accommodated to avoid the problems that are seen elsewhere;
- It is KHPCs understanding that the access road will be one way from Gibson Drive to Tower View. Having a small stretch of 2 way traffic to serve the car park for 30 Kings Hill Avenue will cause confusion and potentially lead to abuse of the one way system as is seen elsewhere on Kings Hill;
- Tower View is a busy road serving the commercial, retail and residential areas. It is also going to be affected by the Phase 3 planning application which is due to be submitted shortly. There appear to be no traffic assessments for the future development planned and KHPC consider this is vital to understand the effects of the increased traffic in this area.

KHPC would like the applicant to consider other options for the additional parking for 30 Kings Hill Avenue as follows:

- Use of the car park entrance from 11 Tower View to the new car park;

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- Moving the location of the car park closer to 30 Kings Hill Avenue either between the 2 buildings (30 Kings Hill Avenue and 11 Tower View) or within the existing commercial services site to be redeveloped shortly.

KHPC also has concerns about the numbers of employees using 30 Kings Hill Avenue which exceed the number for which it was designed. KHPC understand that alternative arrangements are being discussed to address the likely parking problems, however, it is likely that employees will make alternative parking arrangements on Kings Hill and thus detrimentally affect parking in an already overcrowded central area.”

Environment Agency: has no comment to make since the application is assessed as having a low environmental risk.

Local Members

11. The local County Member, Mr M. Balfour, was notified of the application on 15 January 2014.

Publicity

12. The planning application was publicised by the posting of a site notice. 11 neighbouring business premises were notified of the application, but there are no domestic properties in the immediate vicinity of the application site.

Representations

13. No letters of representation have been received on this planning application.

Discussion

14. In considering this proposal regard must be had to Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph 9 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 this proposal needs to be considered in the context of Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity. In summary, the relevant planning policies, as well as supporting provision of employment uses, promote sustainable transport and high quality design. This application has been reported for determination by the Planning Applications Committee following the receipt of an objection from Kings Hill Parish Council, and the main issues relating to the determination of this application are the impact on employment land provisions and other policy requirements, plus transport related issues.

Policy Context

15. The area of land affected by the development is included within a larger identified for development of employment uses, under Policies E1 and E3 above, but it is currently used for open landscaping purposes. The proposed development is directly related to business activity, and the provision of parking for employees is inevitably part and parcel of land allocations for economic activity. Under the circumstances, it would be

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difficult to sustain an objection to the use of the land in planning policy terms, when the use for parking is arguably more closely allied to employment use than its current use as open landscaping. Moreover, the bulk of this land allocation would still be available for built development for employment use.

16. The proposed site is well related to the road network, without directly impacting on the primary or secondary road network, as advocated by Policy SQ8, and is within part of Kings Hill that is relatively well provided with public transport routes, in accordance with Policy CP2. In addition, the proposed development has been designed to avoid harm to highway safety and to be compatible with the character and capacity of the highway network, as required by Policies SQ8 and CP2 respectively. Whilst the Borough Council highlights the need to avoid setting an undesirable precedent by over providing for private car use, compared to other employment sites, I consider that it is important to strike an appropriate balance between under-providing for car parking at this site, and thereby inadvertently causing indiscriminate parking in surrounding roads, and over-providing and encouraging more car journeys because of the availability of spaces. In this particular case, the intention is not to provide 100% provision but rather 50%, but even so some allowance has to be made for the nature of the proposed activity, in that many of the KCC workers will be reliant on individual vehicles to visit a multitude of sites in different locations during the working day, and the alternative reliance on public transport would be neither practicable nor efficient use of time and resources. Nevertheless, the County Council is investigating means to convey other workers to the site via more sustainable means, such as bus travel from off-site locations like West Malling Station.
17. The County Council's Director of Economic Development has provided the following additional comments on the proposals to assist with its consideration:

"KCC is currently undergoing some of the largest County wide office premise rationalisation that has taken place in its recent history. This is directly connected to introducing "New Ways of Working", where the Council has committed to major restructuring, both in terms of staff and the more effective use of its currently occupied and future new premises.

As part of its West Kent operations KCC has acquired 30 Kings Hill Avenue (30KHA) at Kings Hill. It has acquired the freehold of the building to provide a long term solution to accommodating a range of KCC services. The building is currently being substantially refurbished and internally reconfigured to facilitate its long term effective use. KCC has vacated the majority of the adjacent former Commercial Services Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, and as part of this land swap transaction the Commercial Services Site will be the subject of revised Phase 3 proposals which continue to identify a further primary school on the Commercial Services site.

KCC intends to make the most effective use of 30 KHA and there are serious concerns that by not extending the amount of car parking for use by KCC staff occupying the building, this will lead to an increase in off-site staff parking and which often leads to on-street, unauthorised and even illegal parking on either adjacent streets, verges and/or other private areas.

The car park proposals contained within this application effectively unlock early delivery and occupation of the 30 KHA building. The proposals would provide extra car parking spaces for KCC staff and also allow best use and potentially reconfiguration of the existing designated car parking regime within the 30KHA site, further ensuring adequate requisite spaces for visitors and disabled parking. The proposals will also serve to alleviate pressure on contractor's parking relating to operations/works during the phased conversion stages of the development.

The proposed access/road is designed to serve the car park, and is the first phase of a future distributor road which ultimately will be extended and upgraded to serve further developments, yet

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to be submitted/determined. Accordingly, the layout and access arrangements have been carefully designed by KCC's development partners Liberty and their highway consultants Peter Brett Associates.

The car park proposals provide good permeability and also provide suitable designated pedestrian access for KCC staff between the car park and 30KHA. The footpath would not be available for general use by members of the public and simple site security measures would discourage/prevent trespass.

The proposed car park hard standing area utilises part of Kings Hill land which is technically undevelopable for any buildings or structures, other than for the purposes of a surface car park, and there is unlikely to be a better/viable alternative use of the site. The car park would be carefully managed and controlled by KCC Property in estate management terms, ensuring that all persons using the new parking facility are KCC staff. This would be achieved in the form of a barrier control or similar system.

Furthermore, without this solution there are major concerns that the potential accumulative negative impact of unauthorised car parking on and around the 30KHA site and more generally at Kings Hill, will exacerbate the perceived and actual parking issues elsewhere on Kings Hill, creating reputational risks for KCC and its development partners Liberty, at its flagship development.

In conclusion, the granting of planning permission for this proposal is of great importance to KCC as it will directly and indirectly greatly enhance KCC staff operations at its new freehold West Kent office complex at 30KHA."

Transport Issues

18. As explained above, the proposed development relates to the occupation of office premises by the County Council, but it needs to be borne in mind that under the KCC's New Ways of Working initiative the occupation of 30 Kings Hill Avenue will not be of the conventional pattern where all the allocated office staff are based there all day long, since many will be working away from that office base and only visiting on an occasional basis. So whilst there is a need for some extra car parking spaces to cater for the notionally increased occupation of the offices, that extra provision is not needed for every employee based there since there will be doubling up of spaces used by different people at different times. Accordingly, the intention is to provide a ratio of 0.5 spaces per employee, ie. a total of 258 spaces (206 existing and 52 new spaces), which actually is a substantially higher provision than is provided on other KCC premises, such as at County Hall. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to sustain an objection to the level of parking being provided, especially when the current planning application is seeking to extend the provision anyway. The occupation of the office building is not a matter that requires planning consent, since the building is already there, and so it is not strictly relevant to this current application. However, the applicants have commented as follows on the concept for occupation of the office building:

"We have considered the traffic implications of the car park and a high proportion of our employees are mobile workers and working flexibly, there are also many part time staff, who will not necessarily be travelling at 'regular' rush hour times. Most of our mobile workers' work is appointment based, and is out in the community with clients, and therefore this will stagger the traffic coming through junction 4 of the M20 and surrounding area and will not increase capacity of cars travelling through at rush hour times, but their travel into the office will be throughout the day.

With regard to sustainability implications, we have prepared a Travel Plan which encourages (where appropriate) cycling, walking, public transport (bus and train - detailed information has

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been provided), car sharing, car pooling and tele/video conferencing. We will be providing 4 electric charging points for cars and 20 cycle racks plus support (showers, storage for cycling kit) for cycling in the central area at 30 Kings Hill Avenue.”

19. The new car park scheme and its access road has been designed by transport consultants who have been involved with the development of Kings Hill since its inception, and in association with the landowners (Liberty Property), and have been independently assessed by Kent Highways and Transportation. The engineering design details for the car park and the access road, whilst attracting objections from the Parish Council have not met with objection from Kent Highways and Transportation as our the technical advisor on such aspects. I have attended a Parish Council Meeting to listen to the concerns, explain the background to the proposals and discuss the reasoning behind the design details, although an objection has been maintained on largely transport aspects. For clarity, I would comment on their points one by one as follows:

- The location of the entrance to the car park close to a busy roundabout, a bus layover area and a pedestrian crossing - *The location of the entrance is 110 metres from the Tower View / Alexander Grove roundabout, and the forward safe stopping distance for this category of road (Tower View) in the **Manual for Street Works** is 40 metres. The junction is appropriately distanced from the roundabout in highway safety terms. There is no formal arrangement in place for any bus layover area at present, but even so the bus stop close to the roundabout is on the opposite carriageway heading east and on the other side of the roundabout, approximately 165m from the proposed new access, so can hardly be seen to be affected by the new road access. There are pedestrian crossings either side of the roundabout, which are not controlled by signals or other means, and again this is no reason to presume against the new access.*
- The turning into the site is tight and will affect other traffic on Tower View - *The required turning radius for a major access road is 6.0m, whereas the radius used for the proposed access is in fact 10.0m, thereby exceeding the minimum requirements. This is wholly in line with the required design standards. The reason why a wider radius has been used here is to ensure that large refuse vehicles can access any land beyond that is developed. Even if the extra turning movements did result in impeding traffic flows on Tower View, it is not clear why this is viewed as a problem when the Parish Council has been campaigning for speed indicator devices on Tower View to reduce vehicle speeds. Following consultation on the Kings Hill Phase 3 proposals, there is a strong desire for a formal pedestrian crossing on Tower View, and Liberty are proposing to include a Pelican crossing between the proposed new road access and the Tower View / Alexander Grove roundabout, which would be controlled by signals and would require traffic to halt and not just slow down.*
- No right turns in or out of the entrance would require drivers to do a U-turn on the busy roundabout on the junction of Tower View and Alexander Grove, and be dangerous with other drivers not expecting cars to go the whole way around the roundabout - *The access road is deliberately left in - left out and any drivers approaching from the north, from the Tower View / Kings Hill Avenue roundabout, would have to proceed to TV / AG roundabout and return. This is perfectly safe, conventional and acceptable, and is in fact a principle that is adopted currently on this road, as demonstrated by the exit from 30 Tower View which is also a left in – left out and drivers wishing to exit Kings Hill have to U-turn at the roundabout. This is perfectly acceptable in highway terms and safely changing the direction of travel is one of the key purposes of roundabouts.*
- No provision for pedestrians using the access road - *Revised drawings following initial scrutiny by the Borough Council, now clearly indicate 2.0m wide footpaths on both sides of the road.*

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- Staff from 30 Kings Hill Avenue would use the walkway as a shortcut from their office to the central retail area – *This might well be a possibility but it is unclear why that should be a problem or a concern for anyone other than the landowners.*
- No cycleway proposed on the road - *No cycleway is intended on the access road, other than the 2.0m wide footpath / cyclepaths, as provided extensively elsewhere at Kings Hill.*
- The entrance road is narrow compared to 11 Tower View – *As mentioned above, the access is of an appropriate width. The design of the entrance to 11 Tower View can cater for all types of vehicle, and serves a private car park for one of Liberty's office sites, and by exceeding the standards basically provides a more prestigious commercial presence on the road frontage. There is no need for the County Council car park to emulate that higher standard of provision, especially when the intention is to minimise landtake and visual intrusion in the landscaped area.*
- The road is intended to link to future development and the Parish Council has significant further concerns about the impact of traffic arising from the third primary school and other future development – *These concerns are not relevant to the current planning application, which is for an access off Tower View, a car park and a footpath. There is no detailed planning application for either a school or any other development yet. The only application that applies for these other uses is the outline Phase 3 development and concerns relating to the impacts of those developments should be submitted in response to other applications.*
- The narrow road is insufficient for an access road to a primary school, given that parents drive to school -*The proposed access road is classified as a Major Access Road and provides movements for cars, buses (although none are proposed to use this road), refuse vehicles and occasional HGV's, and can serve up to a maximum of 300 dwellings. The road is certainly wide enough and appropriate to serve as an access to a primary school, but the responsibility for ensuring adequate parking provision is available for the school will lie with the applicant for the school. There will be no on-street parking provided on the road, but the detailed plans for the school will be expected to accommodate provisions for both operational parking and some parent drop-off traffic. Since the road would be private, parking restrictions and enforcement could be introduced if necessary.*
- If the access road is one-way from Gibson Drive to Tower View, a small stretch of two-way traffic would cause confusion and lead to abuse of the one way system – *Despite some initial suggestion that the road might be one-way only, it is now intended that it would be two-way throughout.*
- Tower View will be affected by the Phase 3 planning application, and there appear to be no traffic assessments for the future development planned to understand the effects of the increased traffic - *The Phase 3 planning application submitted in May 2013 was supported by a fully comprehensive Transport Assessment that does address these issues.*
- Alternative use of the car park entrance from 11 Tower View to the new car park – *The possibility of alternative sites and solutions is not a material planning consideration and a decision has to be reached on the proposals currently before us. 11 Tower View is not owned by the applicant (or Liberty) and it is inappropriate to suggest access via third party land. Moreover such a solution would lead to an otherwise unnecessary loss of spaces at 11 Tower View to provide the internal access.*
- Moving the location of the car park closer to 30 Kings Hill Avenue either between the 2 buildings or within the existing commercial services site – *In addition to the points mentioned above, there is insufficient space to accommodate the additional parking within the curtilage of 30 Kings Hill Avenue, and the former KCC Depot site is already required for other uses, such as the new primary school. Moreover, in terms of landtake and visual impact, there would be no advantage in switching one car parking area for another car parking area.*

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Concerns about the numbers of employees using 30 Kings Hill Avenue which exceed the number for which it was designed, and the likelihood that employees would detrimentally affect parking in an already overcrowded central area.– *This is not relevant to this application, which anyway seeks to address the extra parking requirements of the development. The concept for the occupation of the office building is explained above.*

Other Issues

20. In response to comments made about the lighting proposals, the applicants have stated as follows:

“With regard to the lighting, it is proposed that the bollard lighting be LED and the columns would have 60w lamps. Ordinarily street lighting will be controlled by a lux sensor possibly coupled with a time switch. This will mean that the lights will turn on when the light level is sufficiently low, and switch off when the building becomes unoccupied. If this is installed and maintained, nocturnal wildlife will be minimally inconvenienced.”

The proposed car park and walkway are required to be lit to allow use of the car park outside of daylight hours, and details of columns and bollards have been provided. The level of lighting would be less than that which already illuminates Tower View, and no more than in adjacent car parks, and whilst the walkway adjoins existing trees, that part is currently illuminated by bulkhead lighting on adjacent buildings. Therefore, I have no concerns about the introduction of further lighting into this already well-lit environment.

- 21 The Borough Council’s request for a cycle ramp can be conveyed to the applicants, but realistically it may not be needed since cyclists are more likely to continue cycling around to the entrance off Kings Hill Avenue, where the cycle parking facilities are, rather than dismounting and walking along the pedestrian route.
- 22 Apart from partial removal and re-shaping of the existing landscape bunds, several trees and shrubs would be lost as result of the development. The proposals provide for some substantial replacement planting, but precise details have not been submitted as yet, so if planning consent was to be granted I would expect to impose a condition requiring further approval of the landscape planting details.

Conclusion

23. In summary, I consider that the proposed development generally accords with the thrust of the relevant Development Plan policies and does not fundamentally conflict with the Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. Points raised by the Borough Council can be addressed by condition and informatives, and none of the Parish Council’s points of concern are of sufficient import or relevance to the current application as to presume against withholding planning consent.

Recommendation

24. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:
- The standard time limit for commencing the proposed development;
 - The development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted details;
 - The submission of a scheme of landscaping, including details of species, positioning

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of saplings and shrubs to be planted, as well as its implementation and maintenance.

I FURTHER RECOMMEND that the applicants BE ADVISED of:

- (a) the need to ensure that the proposed lighting complies with the advice of the Bat Conservation Trust, in order to minimise the impact of external lighting on any bats; and
- (b) the suggestion of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council of incorporating a cycle ramp by the pedestrian walkway steps.

Case officer – Jerry Crossley	01622 221052
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Background documents - See Section heading
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