

Application Number	16/00554/AS	
Location	Dover Place Car Park, Dover Place, Ashford	
Grid Reference	01158/42376 (Dover Place) and 01528/42276 (Stour Centre Car Park)	
Parish Council	None	
Ward	Victoria	
Application Description	Full application for a building (with a total floor space of 7,477 m2 plus 166m2 rooftop plant enclosure) to include a flexible mix of B1, A1, A2 and A3 uses at ground floor level with B1 office accommodation above plus 220 car parking spaces.	
Applicant	Quinn Estates Limited, Highland Court Farm Bridge Near Canterbury CT4 5HW	
Agent	Mr Stuart Bonnage Clague LLP 62 Burgate Canterbury CT1 2BH	
Site Area	1.79ha (Dover Place 0.83ha, Stour Centre Car Park 0.96 ha)	
(a) 57 / -	(b) -	(c) KCC:Drainage X, KH&T X, KCC:Arch X, RSIDB X, UKPN X, SW X, KWT X, NE X, EA X, Stagecoach X, Southeastern X, Network Rail X, Kent Police X, HE X, CACF X; ABC CO X, ABC-EHO X, ABC CS-OSO X

Introduction

1. This application is reported to the Planning Committee as it involves the construction of 7,477 sqm of floorspace plus 166sqm of rooftop plant enclosure and is therefore classified as a “major” development that requires determination by the Planning Committee under the Council’s scheme of delegation. It is also considered sensitive due to the potential regeneration importance of the scheme for the Town Centre and because it is on land owned by Ashford Borough Council.
2. The application comprises a full application for a building (with a total floor space of 7,477 sq. plus 166sqm of rooftop plant enclosure) to include a flexible mix of B1, A1, A2 and A3 uses at ground floor level with B1 office accommodation above plus 219 car parking spaces. It will be the first phase of the implementation of Ashford Borough Council’s masterplan for a Commercial Quarter adjacent to Ashford International Station.
3. The site for the office building is located in an old industrial part of the town that now contains various low-key land uses and vacant plots characterised in particular by small-scale commercial, light industrial and educational uses and an extensive car park. The site of the car park adjoins a large existing car park near to the Stour Centre and residential uses across the river.
4. In summary, the proposal is for a six-storey building containing ground floor office use with five storeys of office space above and a rooftop terrace and roof top plant.
5. The buildings appearance consists of brick and regular arrangement of large glazed areas and facades with some interesting architectural detailing and a simple palette of materials. Other key elements include providing 39 cars private parking spaces for the office and retail units adjacent to them, a cycle store and a freestanding refuse store, recycling and substation enclosure. The design of the public realm will complement the 2014 public realm works within Dover Place and will include landscaping, high quality paving, seating, lighting, a stepped terrace and an urban swale.
6. The application also involves an extension to the existing Stour Centre car park 300metres away to provide 180 car parking spaces an extension to South Park Meadows amenity area landscaping and lighting.
7. In terms of S106 contributions, a viability report was submitted with the application, to carry out an independent financial appraisal of the proposed development in order to assess the viability implications. This was to help identify the level of Section 106 costs that can be incurred without the proposed scheme becoming unviable in a planning context. This report was then assessed by the Council’s independent Viability Consultant and this independent appraisal of the scheme was conducted for the purposes of

agreeing appropriate obligations and a valuation of the subject site or scheme.

8. The planning process in respect of the application has included presentation to the independent Ashford Design Panel. This has helped to provide good guidance on the approach to be taken.
9. Through consultation with Officers, the applicants have made efforts to ensure that their proposal takes into account any potential future developments on wider neighbouring sites.
10. A site plan is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Site and Surroundings

11. The application site is divided in two distinct plots. The part of the site upon which the building will be built, is 0.83ha in extent and is part of the temporary surface car park known as Dover Place, which lies immediately to the east of Station Road, with Saturn House (the former Ashford Working Men's Club) immediately to the north, now an Indian/Nepalese restaurant on the ground floor with 11 residential units above. The second part of the site will be an extension of the Stour Centre car park. An area of approximately 0.96 ha, it creates a southern belt to the existing car park, starting from the southwest corner of the car park and reaching the Ryan Clements Skate Park, to the north east of the car park.
12. The former site has a wide pavement along its frontage to Station Road, and is relatively flat with a slight slope towards the rear (eastern) boundary. It is predominantly rectangular with spurs for access as described below. It is tarmacked with no vegetation, apart from some scrubby vegetation adjacent to the eastern boundary of the car park, which is outside the application site. The GIS analysis shows that the site is located within a zone of contaminated land (A). It lies approximately 200 meters from Ashford train station and 650 meters from Ashford town centre.

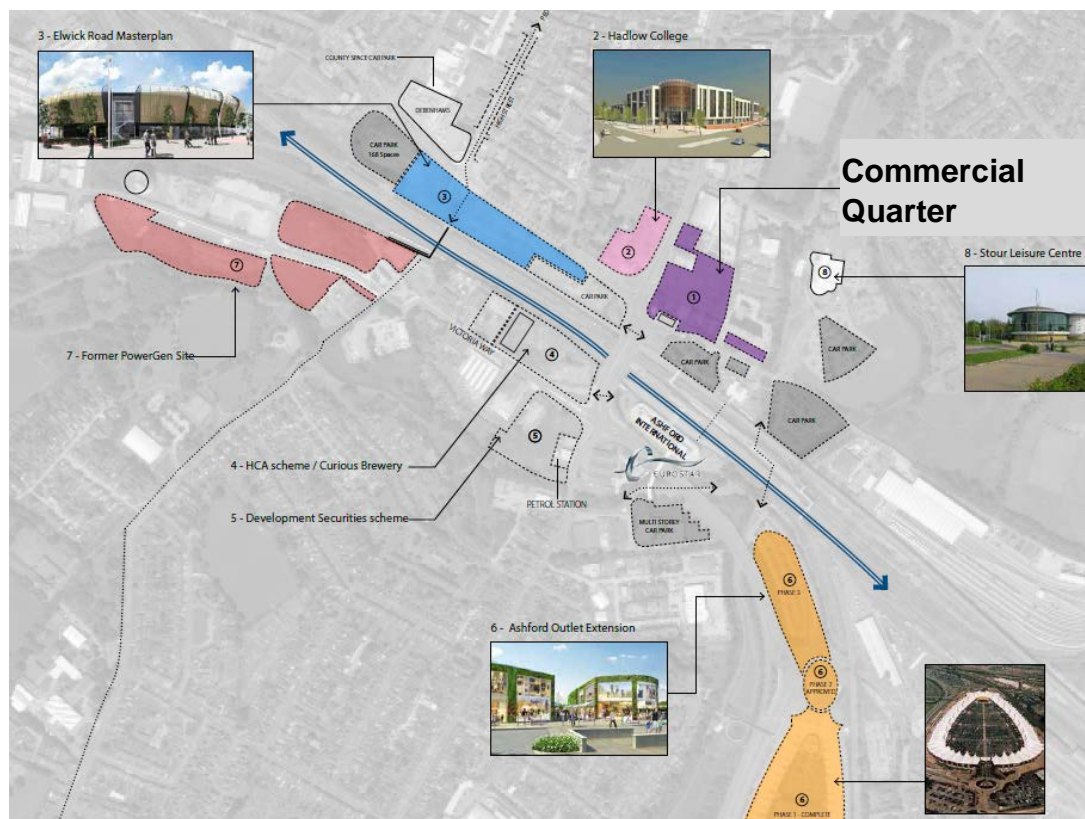
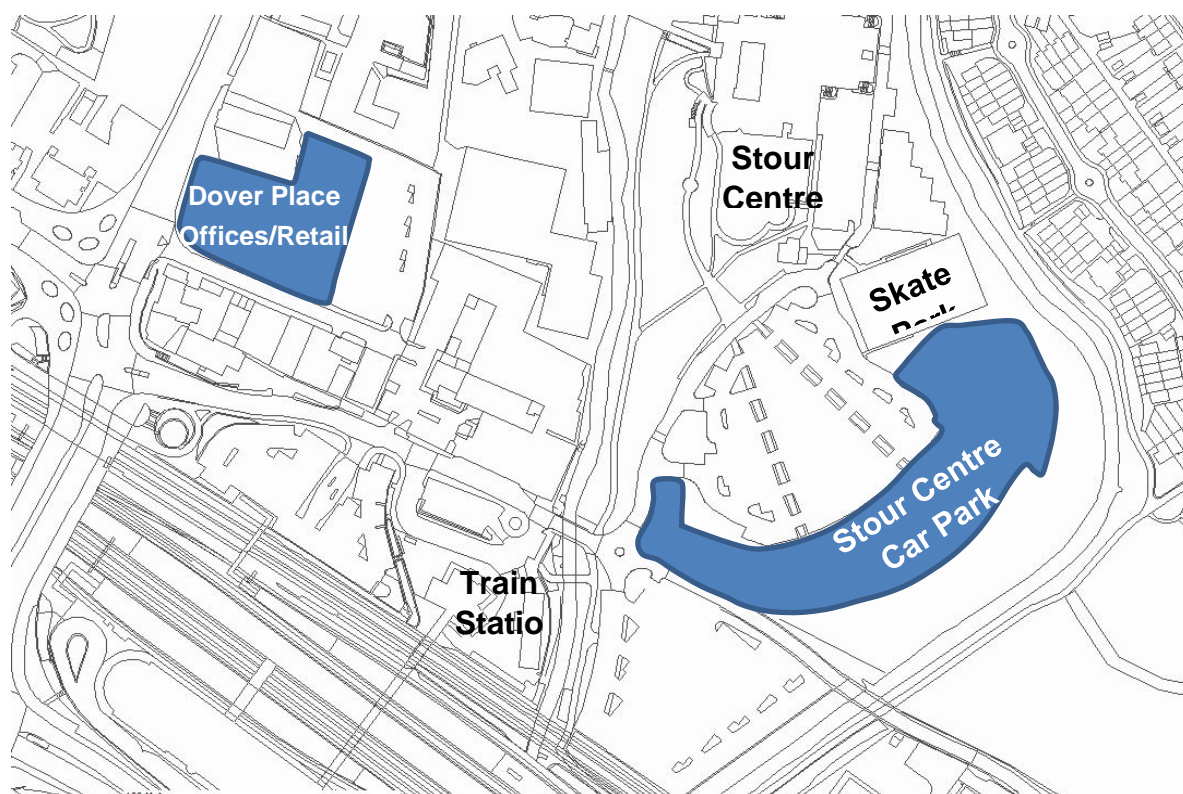


Figure 1 - Context site plan

13. Vehicular access to the car park is from Station Road via Dover Place and a restricted access from Station Approach through International House. The car park has two exit points, both on Station Road, one located in the northern part of the car park beyond Saturn House and the other via Dover Place.
14. Recently, cycle racks, a pedestrian access ramp, some hard and soft landscaping, and a wooden bin store have been installed at the junction of Dover Place and Station Road. The landscaping continues along Dover Place and stops halfway along before reaching Station Road. This was implemented following the grant of a reserved matters application for new public realm plus landscaping in relation to the outline planning permission that was granted in March 2013 for an office building on the application site, referred to in the Planning History section below.
15. The site lies in a commercial/economically active area of Ashford, with various businesses located all around it. The Everest restaurant is located immediately to the north, as already stated. To the southeast lie International House and the Hitachi maintenance depot. There are also diverse businesses to the south in Dover Place, located in older buildings, including a pizza takeaway, a pub /restaurant, a car and furniture sales as well as Hustle Nightclub, set in a listed warehouse, which lies beyond those buildings with its

frontage to Station Approach. These buildings on Dover Place range in height from single storey (garages) to four storeys. Further to the north and east of the site, various warehouses can be found, including the Ashford Post Office depot and Kent Wool Growers. Finally, the site is located directly opposite the college, which is currently under construction in Station Road.

16. The second part of the site will be an extension of the Stour Centre car park (0.96 ha). The site is currently a large, flat-grassed area that includes four mature trees. The South Park Meadow and the East Stour River delineate the southern boundary of the site. The site lies in the middle of a flood zone level 3. The South Park Meadow is now a flood meadow that provides a valuable zone for wildlife and an enjoyable space for people. The car park will comprise two access points for vehicles, one to the southwest corner of the car park, a few metres south from the existing entrance. The second access point will be located at the opposite end of the car park, by the Skate Park, and will provide access to the current Stour Car Park. The two access points will be equipped with barriers, as the car park is planned to be reserved for Commercial Quarter users only. A 3-metre wide access to the southern lawn of the car park will be provided for maintenance. Landscaping is proposed at both access points as well as six trees along the southern edge.
17. The site is part of the wider Commercial Quarter as designated in the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (Policy TC9). A plan in appendix 1 shows the extent of the application site.



Proposal

18. The application comprises a full application for an office and retail building plus 219 car parking spaces. It will be the first phase of the implementation of Ashford Borough Council's masterplan for a Commercial Quarter adjacent to Ashford International Station.
19. The scheme comprises development across the two parcels of land, as shown in the plan above.
20. The proposal is for a six-storey building with flexible café, restaurant or retail accommodation at ground floor. Above this will be five storeys of flexible open plan office space. The top 6th level of the building is smaller as it is set back on all sides and includes some external space for a rooftop terrace. Above this is a rooftop plant enclosure to screen ventilation plant.
21. The building has a rectangular footprint and will have a 38m wide frontage onto Station Road and a depth of 29.5 metres along Dover Place. Its total height will be 28.5m high although to the top of the fifth floor parapet the height will be 22.7metres.
22. The total gross internal area (GIA) totals 7,477 sqm/80,481 sqft. In terms of floor area the ground floor A1, A2, and A3 retail uses the floorspace area will be 987 sqm/10,627 sqft which could be easily divided up into a maximum of up to four units. Each B1 office use on levels 1 to 4 office will be 1,122sqm /12,078 sqft with each floor plates capable of being divided up into 4 separate premises. The smaller 5th floor has an area of 986 sqm / 10,611 sqft. The total office accommodation will be 5,474sqm/55,243 sqft. There will also be 166sqm of rooftop plant room.
23. The buildings appearance consists of brick and regular arrangement of large recessed windows some of which are floor to ceiling height. The applicant proposes to use brick masonry, in a contemporary manner, in the architecture to help anchor the development in its surroundings while benefiting from its natural sense of robustness and endurance. The material palette has been given careful consideration; brick has been chosen as the most suitable material finish in order to achieve an urban/metropolitan feel in accordance with the aims of the ATCAAP.
24. The architectural style is embellished with interesting window fins and surrounds some of which project very slightly beyond the brick façade. At ground floor, large glazed shopfronts with their own doorways are included to all four elevations. The two office entrances into the reception lobby are on the two main elevations (east and west). The main entrance from Station Road includes a cantilevered canopy. It is proposed to provide a photovoltaic array on the flat roof above fifth floor level.

25. In terms of materials will include a simple palette of materials to complement the surrounding context.
- The building will be built using a red brick, which is a traditional local material. The preferred red brick consisting of some subtle colour variations is proposed but the applicants are willing to compare this with other options on site. Ceramic backed glass spandrel panels at floor zones (black)
 - Polyester powder coated aluminium shop fronts, aluminium windows fins, aluminium window surrounds, soffits and aluminium coping to parapet (black)
 - Polyester powder coated fascia to fifth floor roof, rooftop plant enclosure, horizontal louvres (grey).
26. The design of the public realm will continue the theme set by the existing public realm works within Dover Place. The following principles have been incorporated within the design of the public realm and landscaping and will include;
- Parking Spaces for 39 cars including three disability bays. Nearly all of these will be private and access to this part of the car park will be controlled by automatic barriers
 - A freestanding cycle store
 - A refuse, recycling and substation
 - An elevated terrace with continuous expanse of steps with handrail
 - The reinforcement of the public realm character through further tree planting and extending the character of the existing palette with similar hard materials for new highway works;
 - The provision of attractive hard landscape items including surface materials, site furniture, and boundary elements, that combine to create a simple palette of high quality, robust, and unified elements that complements both existing public realm areas, and the proposed architectural.
 - The provision of attractive planting throughout based on maximising biodiversity and ecological potential through the selection of diverse planting mixes with native or wildlife attracting attributes with a minimum of 15 semi mature trees.
 - Street furniture to include seating, lighting columns, bollard and CCTV on building.

- A restrained palette of trees, shrubs and plants
 - A mix of porous and non-porous surfaces.
 - Non-porous paving with run-off collected locally within slot drains and then, where possible, directed towards and discharged into an urban swale.
27. The application involves alterations to the existing Stour Centre car park which is located 300metres to the east of the application site. It will be extended to provide dedicated spaces for the application. Overall, the scheme proposes a sensitive design that should allow the development to sit comfortably within its setting without detriment to the localised landscape character and includes
- 180 car parking spaces with access to be controlled by two automated vehicle barriers
 - An extension to the South Park Meadows amenity area to include seating and landscaping.
 - Hard and soft landscaping to complement the style and appearance of the existing Stour Centre Car Park
 - The retention and enhancement of the existing vegetation structure associated with the site boundaries. This would include reinforcing the site boundaries in particular along the southern boundary of the Stour Centre Extension Car Park.
 - A extension to the existing footpath route to align and connect into the South Park Meadow access points for pedestrians
 - Lighting columns to make the car park feel safe
28. Kent Highways and Transportation identified that as a result of the additional traffic generated by the development there is a capacity problem at the Elwick Road / Station Road / Station Approach signal junctions that required mitigation. This was compounded by the impact on increased traffic resulting from other current emerging, proposed and approved major developments close by within this part of the town centre. This key traffic junction also functions with the south Victoria Road/Station Road/ Romney Marsh Road/ Beaver Road junction and so a significant highway improvement scheme was felt to be needed to comprehensively deal with traffic flows in this part of the town centre.
29. Junction modelling has been undertaken for the both the Victoria Road/Station Road/ Romney Marsh Road/ Beaver Road junction and the Elwick Road/Station Road/ Station Approach signal junctions, based on an

altered road layout to improve the flow and capacity of vehicles. The assessment outputs indicated that the proposed mitigation measures when implemented together would have a significant positive impact on the operation of the junction in terms of increased practical measure capacity.

30. The modelled improvements to the Elwick Road / Beaver Road / Station Road / Station Approach signal controlled junction include introducing a new left-turn only filter lane on the northbound Beaver Road arm for vehicles turning into Elwick Road. The stop line for the Elwick Road arm would also be brought forward and the pedestrian crossing on the Station Approach arm staggered. A copy of the proposals are attached as **Appendix 2**.
31. As a result of proposals for the ACQ, the applicant has agreed to fund these works at an estimated cost of £200,000. In total, the developers are proposing £250,000 toward highway improvements and public realm outside the site. This will be secured by way of a S106 contribution.

Amendments

32. During the course of the application the following supporting documents have been submitted as amended;
 - Planning Statement
 - Viability Statement
 - Heritage Statement
 - Ecological Statement
 - Transport Statement
 - Landscape Strategy
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
33. The following amendments have been made;
 - Improvement to the design of the combined bin/recycling store and substation enclosure;
 - Improvements to the design of the cycle store
 - Change to the building brick façade to include architectural brick detailing and texture

- Outlining proposals to enhance space next to Skatepark by improving access to the adjacent flood meadow and river corridor, providing a better grass land areas with information boards and seating additional habitat creation and bird boxes, and reinstatement measures such as replacement hedgerow planting, replacement tree planting, and wildlife friendly lighting
34. These were consulted upon and the closing date for these comments is 15th July 2016. All consultees that commented on the original plans have responded to these changes and should any further comments be received before the Committee meeting they will be contained in an update report or reported verbally.
35. Further amendments regarding the brick detailing for the building have been requested and these will be expected to be received before the Committee meeting

Supporting Documents

36. This section of the report sets out a summary of the main supporting documents submitted by the Applicant.

Planning Statement

- PS 1. The planning statement sets out the background to the proposal and explains the rationale for the development of the site. It has identified certain key issues, considered the planning policy background at national and local levels and assessed the proposals against those factors.
- PS 2. It states that the proposal is consistent with the principles of the allocation of this site within the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan.
- PS 3. It then goes on to say that the delivery of new employment floor space will complement the work of the council in generating growth within the town centre and providing an appropriate balance between new housing and employment for existing and future residents of Ashford. It will enhance the image of the town and provide a link between the two stations and the town centre.
- PS 4. It concludes by saying that the site will be transformed from an unattractive open car park as a result of the construction of this building of distinguished architectural design, which will create a greater sense of enclosure and a significantly improved public realm.

Design and Access Statement

- D&A 1. The D&A includes an in-depth analysis of the site comprising a description of the site with photographs, its history, an analysis of its connectivity, vehicular, pedestrian, cycle movement, the surrounding land uses, and building heights in relation to the masterplan for the development of Commercial Quarter.
- D&A 2. The D&A then goes on to examine the design process of the building, which involved different stakeholders (Design South East, Members of Ashford Borough Council and local residents) at different stages of the process. It explores different design, landscaping, sustainability options as well as the impact that the building will have on its surroundings.
- D&A 3. It states that although the proposed development is six storeys high the main mass of the building is lower than the maximum height parameter of 25.5m as set by the outline approval. The proposed building has a parapet height of approximately 22.7m. Compared to the original outline application the upper sixth storey is set back from the building facade, therefore the mass of the proposed building (at street level) would appear less than that consented under the outline approval, whilst providing more employment accommodation.
- D&A 4. The D&A states that the proposed development works within the development framework of the wider masterplan for the 'Commercial Quarter' with the character of the proposed building fitting within the masterplan.
- D&A 5. The D&A states that the proposed building achieves their objective of creating a high quality building using a simple limited palette of good quality materials with a simple timeless elegance. A building that is designed to ensure that this intent can be followed through as the proposals are implemented on site.
- D&A 6. The D&A asserts that the proposed landscaping scheme continues the character of the implemented public realm within Dover Place to provide an attractive urban environment that fits well with the objectives of the masterplan for the 'Commercial Quarter'. The proposed scheme has the ability to provide an attractive pedestrian route to and from the town centre and railway station, something the Town Centre Development Framework has aimed to achieve for some time.
- D&A 7. The D&A concludes that the proposed building provides high quality accommodation that will make the development attractive to a large

number of retail / professional / cafe / restaurant and businesses looking to relocate to Ashford, bringing investment into Ashford town centre.

Transport Statement (TA)

- TA 1. The TA states that the level of parking proposed will be increasing from 140 spaces to 219 as a result of this revised proposal. A total of 180 dedicated spaces are to be provided at the existing Stour Centre, controlled by way of a barrier, the remaining 39 car parking spaces are to be located adjacent to the building.
- TA 2. It then goes on to say that the level of parking to remain in the Dover Place car park will be reduced from 360 spaces to 226 spaces. However, the Dover Place car park does not form part of the Ashford Parking Strategy having been allocated for future commercial uses.
- TA 3. The TA states that the consented outline scheme established that the loss of parking resulting from Phase II, compared to that currently provided in the Dover Place car park, reduced the trip generating potential of the site, and therefore reducing its impact at regeneration, the existing junction of Dover Place and Station Road and the junction with Station Road at the northern end of the site. Using this same argument, the loss of 95 spaces from this locality will also result in a significant reduction in the trip generation potential of the site, bringing about improvements at existing junctions.
- TA 4. The TA goes on to say that a review of the Elwick Road signalised junction is being completed by Kent Highway's that will include a scheme of highway improvements. Additional traffic flows have been calculated for this junction and will amount to approximately one additional movement every minute, which is not expected to result in a severe impact. As a result of this proposal the applicant has agreed to provide an appropriate S106 contribution towards these works.
- TA 5. The TA also considers the Tannery Lane junction with relevance to the traffic assessment undertaken alongside the historic application for Kent Wool Growers Ltd. It has been established that the junction will function well within capacity following redevelopment of that site. The current application will not adversely impact that junction during the AM network peak with the majority of additional movements being unopposed at the junction. During the PM peak the existing queue on Tannery Lane is likely to increase, however, with a maximum of 2 Private Car Unit's (PCU) in the queue in 2018, an additional vehicle every 45 seconds is not expected to

result in a severe impact and will not impact on the free flow of traffic on Station Road.

- TA 6. The T&A asserts that the level of parking proposed alongside this scheme amounts to 219 spaces, 79 more than that included within the consented outline scheme. Based on the total floor area of the building 199 spaces will be allocated to the B1 office use, in line with the maximum parking requirement, whilst the remaining 20 spaces will be managed through the Travel Plan for the A3 or B1 uses, as demand dictates.
- TA 7. The TA states that this additional parking is required to make the proposals viable for future occupants. Since the Ashford Park and Ride Strategy came out in 2005 no park and ride sites have been provided. Without these facilities the need to provide adequate parking on site is now a necessity as no alternative is provided.
- TA 8. The TA demonstrates that the site can be serviced, with vehicles entering via Dover Place, and exiting to the north directly onto Station Road. A marked service bay is also proposed on Dover Place.
- TA 9. It states that the application will bring forward improvements to the Dover Place/Station Road Junction, comprising the extension to the existing central island to further restrict movements at this junction to 'left in left out' only. This will tie in with wider improvements by Ashford Borough Council for Dover Place.
- TA 10. A Travel Plan can be conditioned alongside the proposals that will assist in promoting sustainable forms of travel and discourage the use of private motorcar.
- TA 11. The report concludes that the proposals accord with sustainable transport principles and will not result in a severe impact as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Flood Risk Assessment Commercial Quarter and Extension Car Park

- FRA 1. The report states that the proposed building lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered to be at low risk of tidal or fluvial flooding. The proposed car park extension area lies within Flood Zone 3 and is therefore at a high risk of fluvial flooding, although the vulnerability of this car park use is low. It is recognised that the River Stour frequently floods the adjacent Stour Centre Car Park and public open space. The dominant geology is made up of Atherfield and Weald Clays underlying Alluvial clays, suggesting little opportunity for infiltration drainage.

- FRA 2. It goes on to say that, Dover Place car park is already served by a drainage system approved by ABC, which controls the rate of discharge from this area. To meet the SPD requirements, the drainage strategy for this building and associated landscaping around the perimeter, aims to reduce the impermeable area by introducing new landscaping features, including tree pits and rain gardens/urban swales. Whilst the reduction in the impermeable area is small, it does achieve the requirement of Ashford's Supplementary Planning Document that aims to reduce the rate of runoff for Brownfield sites.
- FRA 3. The report states that The Stour Centre car park extension comprises some minor land raising in the floodplain, but this is completely offset by partly removing an existing landscape bund, resulting in a marginal increase in floodplain storage. Permeable paving covering approximately 2200m² is provided, which replicates the approach followed in the design of the existing Stour Centre car park. Whilst infiltration to ground is unlikely due to soil conditions, the voids within the underlying subbase will be used to temporarily store surface water runoff. The depth of subbase has been calculated to provide storage for the 1 in 100 year rainfall event, including a 20% allowance for climate change.
- FRA 4. The Flood Risk Assessment asserts that an Outline Flood Evacuation Procedure is provided for the Stour Centre car park extension which will be further developed and managed by the Facilities Manager.
- FRA 5. The report states that detail design of the specific drainage management measures is expected to be provided as part of a suitable planning condition.
- FRA 6. Finally, the report concludes that foul sewerage discharges to the existing Public Sewer, and will be subject to an application to Southern Water. Correspondence from Southern Water has been received indicating that it would be possible to connect the Proposed Building to the Public Sewer.

Economic Benefit Statement

- EBS 1. This report demonstrates how the proposal complies with the Area Action Plan and the Ashford Strategic Economic Framework, which specifically mentions the acceleration of development plans within the commercial quarter as a priority, acknowledging the importance of creating a strong office market within the town.
- EBS 2. It states that the Proposed Development will deliver B1 and A1/A3 floorspace, helping to stimulate the office the office market within the

Commercial Quarter. The future workforce will also help stimulate investment in complementary uses within the local area.

- EBS 3. The report estimates that over the 18 months construction period the development will contribute to 179 construction jobs, 125 indirect jobs, £13.4m in direct construction Gross Value Added (GVA) and £8.6m in indirect construction GVA.
- EBS 4. The report projects that the completed development will provide 481 Full Time Equivalent (FTE), £25m in GVA generated per annum by workforce and £0.6m in business rates.

Land Contamination – Remediation Strategy

- LC 1. The report states that the objective of the remediation works detailed within this strategy is to remediate the site to a standard that is suitable for a commercial end use and is based on the findings from a previous investigation and assessment undertaken at the site.
- LC 2. It then goes on to say that due to the presence of hydrocarbons in shallow soil and groundwater and of a layer of Made Ground at the surface there is the potential for the generation of ground gas that may pose a risk to the proposed re-development workers and end users.
- LC 3. The report identifies 3 potential receptors, which are human health, plastic utilities and controlled water. It subsequently identifies two potential pathways, which are human health (i.e. through dermal contact) and environmental (i.e. dilution into the underlying Secondary Aquifer).
- LC 4. The report asserts that a remediation strategy is designed to remove the linkages between relevant pollutant-pathway- receptor that pose the most significant risks to the end users of the site. The remediation strategy will address the contamination reported in shallow soils and the risk associated with contamination within the deep soil and groundwater.
- LC 5. The report then goes on to describe a remediation works implementation strategy, a communication plan and a verification plan.

Noise Assessment

- N1. The report provides details of an acoustic survey carried out at the site of the proposed Ashford Commercial Quarter development and a subsequent assessment of construction and operational noise levels to enable the discharge of any planning conditions relating to noise.

- N2. The report states that the assessment has found that the noise levels generated during the demolition and construction phase will be similar to current ambient noise levels and as such are unlikely to be cause for complaint. A recommendation has been made for a demolition and construction noise management plan to be put into place prior to work being undertaken on site to ensure any noise to neighbouring properties is minimised.
- N3. It then goes on to say that mechanical equipment for the new office building has yet to be selected. Noise limits have therefore been set based on a target noise level at the nearest noise sensitive properties of 10dB below the average L90 background noise level measured on site.
- N4. The report states that an assessment of traffic noise impact from the new office building has found that the increase in traffic will result in a negligible increase in traffic noise.
- N5. The noise assessment concludes that based on the above assessment of construction and operational noise from the proposed new development, noise is not a determining factor in granting planning permission.

Air Quality Assessment

- AQA 1. The report states air quality concentrations in Ashford are well below the relevant air quality standards.
- AQA 2. It then goes on to say that, the potential for construction dust nuisance has been considered through a qualitative impact assessment. It is anticipated that the construction phase represents a 'medium risk site' of causing significant dust effects to sensitive receptors within the immediate vicinity of the development. Therefore, best practise mitigation measures will be in place to minimise the risk of emissions of dust giving rise to annoyance. Dust mitigation measures will be incorporated in the Construction Environmental Management Plan
- AQA 3. The report considers that the operation of the Proposed Development will lead to minimum changes during the operational phase due to low traffic flows in the surrounding area and emissions from proposed heating facilities. Therefore, these increases are considered to have a negligible effect.
- AQA 4. Overall, the report concludes that the effects are considered to be of negligible significance for both phases of the Proposed Development.

Phase 2 Ecological Appraisal

- EA 1. The River Stour, adjacent to the eastern aspect of International House is the most notable habitat in this part of Ashford, but this is not anticipated to be impacted by the proposed works on the site.
- EA 2. The report states that the current Phase 2 landscape illustration for the site shows that the existing trees, beyond the southern boundary of the site are to be retained and not impacted by the proposals. These trees must therefore be protected.
- EA 3. The ecological appraisal asserts that Phase 2 landscape illustration for the site shows the additional planting of eight trees on the site. It is recommended that the southern boundary treeline also extend to the east in order to connect up with the River Stour to provide connectivity for wildlife, notably bats and birds.
- EA 4. The report states that the site has potential to support bats and breeding birds, as detailed below.
- EA 5. It then goes on to say that the scoping survey, the internal and external inspection, the emergence / re-entry survey and the Phase 1 habitat survey of the site collectively identified no – negligible potential for roosting bats in the seven buildings immediately adjacent to the site.
- EA 6. The report states that despite the limited activity of bats across the site, it is still recommended to minimise lighting at night during the construction phase to avoid undue disturbance to bats commuting over and recommends that low-pressure lights are installed as part of the development.
- EA 7. The report recommends that any works involving vegetation clearance (including lopping, trimming or felling of trees) are scheduled to avoid the bird breeding season. If it is not possible to clear vegetation outside of the bird breeding season, it is recommended that all vegetation required to be removed is checked by a SQE.
- EA 8. Finally, the report concludes that, it is important to plant native tree and shrub species of local provenance as these are invariably the most beneficial species for native fauna.

A further ecological statement for Ashford Commercial Quarter, Ashford (Stour Centre Car Park) has been provided by the applicant.

- EA 9. The report states that in regards to ecology, the issues identified largely relate to the proposed extension to the Stour Centre Car Park, and potential for adverse effects on the adjacent area of public open space, which has recently been restored as flood meadow.
- EA 10. It then goes on to say that the area of site proposed for construction of the car park is dominated by habitats of low ecological value, whilst the proposals have sought to retain the majority of habitats created as part of an adjacent flood South Park Meadow restoration scheme. Where it has not been practicable to avoid loss of habitats, new habitat creation has been proposed to reinstate habitats to be lost.
- EA 11. The report asserts that the habitats within the site are unlikely to be subject to any significant use by protected faunal species, although nesting birds could make use of woody vegetation to be removed to facilitate development works, whilst the adjacent flood meadow and river are likely to be used by a range of wildlife species. Accordingly, mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise adverse effects on faunal species, whilst enhancement measures are also proposed in order to maintain and enhance the conservation status of local populations, in accordance with national and local policy objectives.
- EA 12. The report concludes by stating that the proposals have sought to minimise impacts and, subject to the implementation of appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures, it is considered unlikely that the proposals will result in significant harm to biodiversity.

Heritage Assessment

- HA 1. The report states that the proposals do not lie within the setting of any heritage asset and do not adversely impact upon the setting of the conservation area. Nor do they adversely impact upon any listed buildings, monuments and any other non-designated heritage assets. The proposals do not materially detract from the significance of any heritage asset.

Energy Statement

- ES 1. The report demonstrates that the proposed energy strategy of the development is in line with the current Building Regulations – Approved Document Part L2A 2010 – Conservation of Fuel and Power in Buildings Other than Dwellings, local planning policies and Ashford’s wider sustainable energy agenda for an outline planning application.

- ES 2. The report concludes that an air source heat pumps and photovoltaic technology shall be adopted to meet the carbon reduction target.
- ES 3. A Combined Heat and Power unit should be considered as part of the wider Commercial Quarter energy strategy to reduce the overall carbon emission of the site.
- ES 4. Part L Compliance with Criterion 1 Achieving the BER, Criterion 2 Limits on Design Flexibility and Criterion 3 Limiting the Effects of Solar gains in the Summer have been met.
- ES 5. The development is fully air-conditioned and the desired temperature will be achieved in the areas, which are to be cooled. To reduce the cooling loads design features have been implemented to reduce the overall solar gains to the development.
- ES 6. The full height glazing to the office areas of the development provides good daylight levels at the perimeter thereby reducing the requirement for artificial lighting. The predominant environmental ventilation strategy is displacement ventilation. The windows have been flushed on the North facades and recessed on the East, South and West facades.

Statement of Community Involvement

- SCI 1. The report states that consultation has included discussions with local councillors, local residents, businesses, Ashford Borough Council, Design South East, Locate in Kent and Kent Police.
- SCI 2. It then goes on to say that the applicant has undertaken an extensive pre-application consultation process with a wide range of key stakeholders from the local community. The application has employed a variety of techniques in accordance with best practice to engage with stakeholders in the formulation, development and refinement of the application proposals.
- SCI 3. The report asserts that the attendance at the exhibitions by the representatives of the Applicant and members of the consultant team provided residents with the opportunity to discuss particular point of interest and concern and to obtain further detailed information.
- SCI 4. The report concludes that the applicant states that the comments received as a result of the consultation process have resulted in amendments to the scheme and the submission of additional information where appropriate.

Pedestrian Level Wind Microclimate Assessment

- P1 The report states that the ground level wind microclimate for the proposed development is generally compatible with the intended pedestrian use of the site, classified as acceptable for leisure walking through to sitting use during the windiest season.
- P2 The report asserts that the inclusion of the proposed landscaping is likely to have a beneficial impact on the expected wind conditions (particularly during the summer season when trees would be in full leaf).
- P3 The report concludes that the wind microclimate around the Proposed Development is expected to be suitable for the intended uses of the site. Any wind issues at potential amenity spaces would be minor, and would be readily mitigated (if outdoor seating use is required) by the implementation of localised screening or landscaping.

Planning History

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 03/01659/AS | Remodelling of the Stour Centre leisure facility to create new leisure water facilities and reception, a refurbished 25m pool and sports hall, changing accommodation and fitness suite, also provided is a new access road off station approach an new car park on South park. |
| 07/00466/AS | In 2007, planning permission was granted for the use of the site for a temporary period as a surface car park until 2012. |
| 11/00382/AS | Outline Planning Permission granted in March 2013 for the construction of mixed use development comprising office building (B1) with ground floor retail/professional/café/restaurant (A1,A2,A3), landscaping, car parking and associated works. |
| 12/00294/AS | Variation of Condition 2 of application number 07/00466/AS to allow the use of the site as a short and long stay car park for a further five years. |
| 12/01352/AS | Removal of existing raised bank along the river East Stour, reduction of ground level adjacent to river, formation of new bank (to accommodate earth from previous work) between existing skate park and station car park. Fencing and planting to above areas. Works within the river to re-profile bank |
| 14/00750/AS | An application for reserved matters relating to details of landscaping on planning permission reference 11/00382/AS. |

Consultations

Ward Members: one of the Ward Members is a member of the Planning Committee

KCC Highways and Transportation:

KCC has no objections providing that conditions being attached to any planning permission granted, and providing the relevant obligations are secured via the appropriate mechanism.

The local highway authority has provided details of the cost of implementing the scheme of highway mitigation to the Local Planning Authority for consideration. Accordingly, the principle by which monies are to be collected has been indicatively defined. The local highway authority wishes to input into these discussions as part of discussions to conclude the S106/funding position in advance of a final response to this planning application being provided.

Other comments included

- Pedestrian connection to car park extension area. No comment as not on public highway.
- Off-site highway improvement – extension of existing traffic island. The local highway authority is satisfied with the highway scheme and the applicant will be required to implement the works under a S278 Agreement with the local highway authority.
- Scheme of off-site highway mitigation - The local highway authority commissioned Amey, the County Council's technical consultant, to undertake a review of a number of town centre major development proposals that are currently subject to 'live' planning applications in order to understand and define the implications of the traffic generated by the various schemes on two key junctions in Ashford town centre, namely the junctions of Beaver Road/Victoria Way and Beaver Road/Elwick Road.
- This clarified that the improvement to highway capacity brought about through implementation of the scheme of highway improvement will not only mitigate the highway impact associated with traffic generated from a defined list of town centre development proposals, to include the scheme of development promoted under this application, but would achieve a demonstrable benefit to the capacity of the town centre highway network when taking account of all development traffic and background traffic growth. The scheme of highway mitigation is to be implemented by Kent County Council.
- The local highway authority has provided details of the cost of implementing the highway mitigation scheme to the Local Planning Authority, to include

calculations of the relative split of S106 contributions to be collected from those town centre development proposals that are the subject of planning applications currently out to consultation. Accordingly, the principle by which monies are to be collected has been indicatively defined, although the local highway authority's preference is to secure and collect S106 monies from a single party and then allow for reimbursement to that party as monies are collected from promoters of other development proposals from which monies are to be secured.

- Width of access aisle to serve on-site car parking - The local highway authority advises that the access aisle to serve the on-site car parking is only 5 metres width. Owing to the orientation of the car parking spaces perpendicular to the access aisle a reversing distance of 6 metres is required, whereas a width of 5 metres is provided for. The proposed layout could, therefore, give rise to low levels of utilisation of the on-site car parking because of difficulties for users in accessing/egressing these spaces. Whilst the local highway authority does not believe this will give rise to a highway safety problem off-site per se, there is sufficient space within the extent of the application red line boundary for the aisle width to be widened to 6 metres to achieve the necessary car parking layout requirements.
- They have suggested the following conditions are attached to any planning permission granted and that relevant obligations are secured via the appropriate mechanism.

Condition 1: Provision of construction vehicle loading/unloading and turning facilities prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction. Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Condition 2. Provision and permanent retention of the vehicle parking spaces shown on the submitted plans prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted. The drawing references are as follows:

- 32508/2003/003 Rev C
- 22671A_10 Rev B – noting the advised modification under point iv)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Condition 3. The scheme of off-site highway works referenced 'Station Road Highway Works' as shown on Drawing No. 4779-002 Rev. A Ref 4300472/0100/01 P01.1) shall be constructed and opened to traffic prior to occupation of the scheme promoted under this application. The associated works are to be undertaken by the applicant under a S278 Agreement.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Condition 4. Prior to the commencement of development a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and local Highway Authority. This shall include details of the following:

- wheel washing facilities/measures to prevent debris and spoil and the discharge of surface water onto the public highway
- access point for HGV's and site personnel
- provision of parking facilities for site personnel and visitors prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction
- dust suppression methods
- plant and noise generated from operation of vehicles and machinery
- fencing/hoardings
- lighting
- HGV routing
- hours of operation
- any temporary traffic management/signage required

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Condition 5. All details of the approved construction management plan shall be adhered to during the construction period.

Reason: To ensure provision of adequate off-street parking for vehicles and in the interests of highway safety and to protect the local amenity.

Informative

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, before the development hereby approved is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents where required are obtained and that the limits of highway boundary are clearly established in order to avoid any enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority. The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under such legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

The movement of construction traffic/delivery vehicles into/out of the site will only be permitted on the local highway network between 09:30 and 16:00 on weekdays. Any restriction on Saturday will be at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority on the basis of amenity implications. This requirement is to be secured by condition.

Southern Water: no objection

Initial investigation indicates that Southern Water can provide foul sewage disposal to service the proposed development. Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the public sewer to be made by the applicant.

In reference to Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS):

Where a SUDS scheme is to be implemented, the drainage details submitted to the Local Planning Authority should:

- Specify the responsibilities of each party for the implementation of the SUDS scheme
- Specify a timetable for implementation
- Provide a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development.

This should include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

The Council's Building Control officer or technical staff should be asked to comment on the adequacy of soakaways to dispose of surface water from the proposed development.

The Council's technical staff and the relevant authority for land drainage should comment on the adequacy of the proposals to discharge surface water to the local watercourse.

A wastewater grease trap should be provided on the kitchen waste pipe or drain installed and maintained by the owner or operator of the premises.

Land uses such as general hardstanding that may be subject to oil/petrol spillages should be drained by means of oil trap gullies or petrol/oil interceptors.

The following condition should be attached to the consent: Construction of the development shall not commence until details of the proposed means of foul and surface water sewerage disposal have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water.

Note: (Plans attached to letter)

No development or new tree planting should be located within the 3.5 metres either side of the centreline of the public sewer and all existing infrastructure shall be protected during construction works.

No new soakaways should be located within 5 metres of a public sewer.

Due to the legislation that came into force on the 1st of October 2011, any sewer found during construction works, will be investigated.

SouthEastern:

South Eastern is concerned that their customers will lose valuable parking space if Dover Place is developed which is utilised by many of their commuting passengers and so the loss of this facility will have a detrimental effect on the availability of spaces available to our customers in the area surrounding the station.

Southeastern is also concerned about the impact of increased amount of traffic on Station Approach Road due to the Stour Centre car park extension. Southeastern states that this road is already operating at capacity during peak times.

Southeastern feels that the development should contribute towards maintenance of Station Approach Road or to improvements that help better manage this increased flow of traffic.

Kent Police:

Kent Police states that the recent introduction of approved document "Q" building regulation for doors and window specifications, which require products to be tested PAS 24 2012 (2016), tested products do not comply with SBD requirements which require doors and windows to be tested and certified by a recognised 3rd party body.

Kent Police also states that there is merit in pre-application meetings prior to submission of any planning application and by meeting with us and discussing issues such as Crime Impact Statements (CIS) and any formal applications for this scheme such as BREEAM, Secured By Design (SBD), and SBD National Building Approval Scheme need to be addressed and agreed.

Potential relevant notes were taken at a meeting between Stuart Bonnage Agent for Quinn Estates and John Grant from Kent Police.

Highways England:

Highways England does not offer any objections to the proposal.

Kent Wildlife Trust:

Initially they had no objections to the development scheme proposed at Dover Place, but couldn't support the proposals.

- Kent Wildlife Trust expresses serious concern to the extension to the Stour Centre car park. The Stour Centre car park lies in the floodplain of the River Stour, which is recognised as an important wildlife corridor and form a key part of the Ashford Green Corridor Nature Reserve (LNR).
- It states that the South Park lies within the Civic Quarter of the town centre TCAAP Policy TC17 states that "proposals in this Quarter will need to respect the setting of the Green Corridor and be consistent with policy TC26". Policy TC26 seeks specifically "to protect the Green Corridors through the town centre from any significant built development".
- Kent Wildlife Trust asserts that the Council's 2015 Green Corridor Plan consultation documents included a "Town Centre – Green Corridor Vision" poster confirmed that The Stour Centre car park (South Park Meadows) is a new flower meadow, with plan for future enhancement.
- Kent Wildlife Trust therefore objects to the grant of planning permission for application 16/00554. Hard surfacing almost all of the remaining green space in South Park contradicts the Council's stated vision for the Civic Quarter and the Ashford Green Corridor Local Nature Reserve. It will diminish the value of South Park at a critical point in the LNR where the three arms of the Green Corridor are linked together as a functioning whole.

Following amendments Kent Wildlife commented;

- Accept that appropriate measures to address the risks of harm to wildlife interests during the construction period have been identified.
- welcome the proposals to compensate for disturbance to the recently completed flood meadow restoration scheme.
- The one area of concern is the proposal to introduce six (replacement) semi-mature London Plane trees. The London Plane has no place in the meadow restoration scheme area. The use of this 'introduced' species is contrary to all ecological principles and undermines the value of the wider 'native' scheme. The opportunity should be taken to introduce semi-mature native specimen that will reinforce local biodiversity in this part of the Green Corridor.
- In the circumstances, I am prepared to withdraw my objection subject to the use of native replacement tree species and the imposition of planning conditions (and/or legal agreements) to secure implementation of

- the full range of mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures spelt out in the supplementary ecological statement (June 2016); and
- an appropriate management regime for the verges and bunds that is consistent with that operating across the flood meadow.

Stagecoach:

Stagecoach states that consideration is given to establishing a new southbound bus stop; it would be complementary to the northbound stop being provided by application 11/00757. This could be accommodated in the area between the pedestrian crossing opposite the Memorial Park and the exit from the Dover Place car park on Station Road - the location shown in the photograph below.



Central Ashford Community Forum:

The Central Ashford Community Forum have commented on the planning application and stated;

- are '*critically supportive*' referenced the DSE Panel comments (see a summary below). However, they are sceptical about the amount of parking allocated and are critical of the integration of the building into the townscape, and the choice of palette.
- support the comments quoted from the Borough Design Panel, but generally we are discouraged by the "city" feel of too many of the new developments.
- are critical of the integration of the building into the townscape, and the choice of palette.

- The corner of the building should incorporate some form of articulation to create a feature on the corner and to reduce the austerity of the proposed building.
- We would ask that more thought is given to integrating the West and South facades with Dover Place and the remaining buildings on Station Road
- The bulk of the building could surely be minimised by more sympathetic architectural features?
- Conclusion - We would like to see more effort given to the integration of this dark blocky building into its surroundings.

Kent County Council Heritage: (no objections subject to condition)

The site in question lies close to the river, which means there is a possibility of palaeoenvironmental remains being present as well as any remains associated with use of the river from the prehistoric period onwards.

Furthermore, the route of the Roman road linking Ashford with Canterbury broadly follows the line of Station Road along the western edge of the site and it is possible that common roadside features.

Finally, historic maps indicate the site was in an area of post medieval industrial activity. Remains associated with these structures would be of industrial heritage interest.

The following condition is recommended:

Prior to the commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure and implement:

i archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and

ii further archaeological investigation, recording and reporting, determined by the results of the evaluation, in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority

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

Kent County Council Drainage:

KCC holding objection pending the receipt of further information.

KCC expects to see an updated surface water management strategy for this site, which considers current legislation, and best practice, updated climate change allowances and the requirements of Ashford Borough Council's Drainage SPD to demonstrate that the proposals provide sufficient surface water management within the layout.

In relation to the Stour Centre car park extension KCC states that the FRA describes 'the discharge rate will be controlled by the existing outfall', however we consider it is likely that further controls will be required prior to connection to the existing system to ensure flood risk is not increased by the development. KCC would request further information to confirm the controls required and an assessment of the storage volumes required to ensure this can be accommodated with discharge limited to the requirements of Ashford Borough Councils Drainage SPD.

Following receipt of more information and amendments they have stated;

I have now reviewed the information for this site, the relevant documents were uploaded three days later than your initial consultation request. The additional details provided demonstrate adequate management of surface water upon these sites and KCC therefore have no objections to the application subject to conditions to provide detailed design information, implementation and maintenance arrangements.

Accordingly, we would recommend the following conditions are attached should planning permission be granted:

1. Development shall not begin until a detailed sustainable surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to (and approved in writing by) the local planning authority. The detailed drainage scheme shall be based upon the proposals within the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy by PBA ref. 37281/2502 Rev. A, June 2016) and demonstrate that the surface water generated by this development (for all rainfall durations and intensities up to and including the climate change adjusted critical 100yr storm) can be accommodated and disposed of without increase to flood risk on or off the site.
2. No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until details of the implementation, maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. Those details shall include:

- i) a timetable for its implementation, and
- ii) a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage system throughout its lifetime.

Reasons: - To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal, to ensure ongoing efficacy of the drainage provisions, to protect vulnerable groundwater resources and ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Environment Agency:

The environment Agency expresses concerns about the potential negative impact of the extension of the Stour Centre car park on the recently completed environmental scheme – South Park Meadows. A re-survey has been arranged to see if the impacts on the bund / wildlife corridor can be minimised.

Following the submissions of Ecology survey and statement amendments the EA commented;

We have no objection.

We note that the revised Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), dated June 2016, now includes a surface water drainage design strategy which we understand is acceptable to KCC as Lead Local Flood Authority – subject to the inclusion of conditions.

From our perspective we are pleased to see that the FRA confirms that the proposals will result in no loss of flood storage, no impedance of flood flows and, as a result, no increase of flood risk. The use of Flood Zone 3 for car parking is acceptable subject to no increase of flood risk.

The inclusion of a 'Flood Evacuation Procedure' is welcome: the acceptability of this is a matter for Ashford Borough Council and we suggest this is reinforced via a suitable planning condition.

The extension to the car park will potentially impact on our access to the East Stour and we will be pleased to work with the developer to ensure our access is maintained through both the construction stage and on project completion.

We request that ABC seek funding from the developer (S106) towards creating a backwater to the river for fish refuge / diverse habitat to mitigate the inevitable damage to the wetland meadow habitat. Separately, we are looking to include some

seating and interpretation panels in the meadow area. Again, can ABC seek to include a developer financial contribution towards these as mitigation for the impact on the public open space?

Please be aware that the East Stour, is a designated 'main river' and under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency for its land drainage functions. As of 6th April 2016, the Water Resources Act 1991 and associated land drainage byelaws have been amended and flood defence consents will now fall under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010. Any activities in, over, under or within eight metres of the top of bank may require a permit with some activities excluded or exempt. Further details and guidance are available on the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>

The River Stour (Kent) IDB:

It is understood that the site of the proposed building, which is currently used as a carpark, is already served by a drainage system which provides attenuation and that post-development surface water runoff rates are proposed to be restricted further (to less than 5l/s), with the welcome inclusion of swales and rain gardens, and that runoff from the proposed carpark extension site is to be restricted to 4l/s/ha in accordance with ABC's SuDS policy. Provided that details of the proposed SuDS for both sites and their future maintenance are designed and agreed in direct consultation with KCC's drainage and flood risk team and ABC's drainage engineer, and provided that floodplain and pollution issues are agreed with the Environment Agency, IDB interests should not be affected by this proposal.

Natural England:

Natural England has not comments to make on this application.

Network Rail:

Suggested informatives on

- List of construction works affecting Network Rail Land
- Safe operation of the railway and the protection of Network Rail's adjoining land.
- Future maintenance
- Drainage

No Storm/surface water or effluent Suitable foul drainage. Soakaways,

- Fencing
- Lighting
- Vehicle Incursion
- Recommends the developer contacts Network Rail strongly to agree an Asset Protection Agreement

Environmental Health Manager:

States that paragraph 1.13 of the planning statement refers to a further noise assessment to take account of proposals for air conditioning/ventilation. Has this assessment been included with the application as I have been unable to find it?

The Environmental Health Manager has confirmed that the need for a noise assessment can be dealt with by condition as the choice and detailed design of air conditioning and ventilation systems have not been decided by the applicants.

UK Power Networks:

No objections to the proposed works.

Cultural Services/Open Space Officer:

- Summary of open space provision in the vicinity of the proposed extension provided with a calculation showing its impact on the local availability of open space in relation to the SPD standard. The proposed extension will not result in a local quantity deficit in informal amenity space for residential purposes. There will be a remaining surplus of 1.76 hectares.
- Although the proposed development risks displacing young people to the developing wetland habitat and therefore potentially impact the biodiversity of the site, it is acknowledged that North Park is close, available and can provide for the loss of grassland amenity.
- The space to be lost as a result of the proposed extension is not obsolete and is regularly used especially adjacent to the skate park as an informal ball games area and as over-spill space for skate park users.
- Council Policy on the loss of open space is referred to in Core Strategy CS18, and paras 4.24 and 4.25 in the Public Green Spaces & Water environment SPD

Assessing any loss of Green Space

- The existing green space helps to soften the hard landscape in the area and thus enhances the visual quality of the setting for the skate park and southern façade of the Stour Centre and existing car park. This will be reduced.
- The site is within the Ashford Green Corridor and most of it lies immediately adjacent to a newly created river-side wetland area. The existing amenity grassland is well used by young people and there is a risk that as they will be displaced they may put undue recreational wear and tear on the developing wetland habitat and effect the bio-diversity of the site.
- As yet there is no proposal to mitigate against the loss by providing alternative amenity grassland but it is acknowledged that the North Park is close and available to provide such activity.
- The development does not involve new leisure buildings where the wider benefits to the community of additional leisure facilities outweigh the loss of public open space in terms of their environmental or functional value

Planning Policy

37. The Development Plan comprises the saved policies in the adopted Ashford Borough Local Plan 2000, the adopted LDF Core Strategy 2008, the adopted Ashford Town Centre Action Area Plan 2010, the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD 2010, the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD 2012 and the Chilmington Green AAP 2013. On 9 June 2016 the Council approved a consultation version of the Local Plan to 2030. Consultation commenced on 15 June 2016. At present, the policies in this emerging plan can be accorded little or no weight.
38. The relevant policies from the Development Plan relating to this application are as follows:

Local Plan 2000

ET3 – Ashford Employment Core

TP6 – Cycle parking

Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008

CS1 – Guiding principles for sustainable development.

CS2 –The Borough Wide Strategy

CS3 – Ashford Town centre

CS7 – The Economy and Employment Development

CS9 – Design quality.

CS10 – Sustainable design and construction.

CS11 – Biodiversity.

CS15 – Transport.

CS 16 – Retail

CS18 – Meeting the Community's Needs

CS19 – Development and Flood Risk

CS20 – Sustainable drainage.

CS21 – Water supply and treatment.

Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan 2010

Policy TC9 - The Commercial Quarter

The Commercial Quarter is proposed to play a leading job creation role for the town centre, predominantly from new office development (indicative capacity 55,000 sqm). Other uses, such as small scale retail and/ or leisure uses (indicative capacity 2,500sqm), alongside residential (indicative capacity 150 units) and community-related development, would also be appropriate in this Quarter, providing they complement the objective to deliver the substantial commercial space envisaged here.

The Quarter should be planned comprehensively and a master-plan for the Quarter including public realm improvements outside the station entrance, shall be agreed with the Borough Council prior to consideration of individual schemes. These will need to demonstrate that they would not prejudice the ability to deliver the indicative quantum of office development.

Development in this Quarter should generally be an average of 5-6 storeys above ground level. In certain locations within the Quarter, development in the order of 10 storeys may be justified. The layout of the Quarter shall enable the creation of pedestrian routes through the area in line with the principles established in the Public Realm Strategy and Town Centre Design SPD.

Development in this Quarter should also help to facilitate and contribute towards the delivery of proposed public realm improvements around the domestic station approach and along Station Road.

TC1 – Guiding Principles for Town Centre Development

TC22 – Office, retail, and Leisure Parking Standards

TC24 – Cycle Parking Standards

TC25 – Commuted Parking

Local Plan to 2030

Policy S1 - Commercial Quarter

TRA3b – Parking Standards for Non Residential Development

TRA6 – Provision for Cycling

TRA7 – The Road Network and Development

ENV1 – Biodiversity

ENV7 – Water Efficiency

ENV9 – Sustainable Drainage

ENV10 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

ENV11 – Sustainable Design and Construction – Non-residential

IMP1 – Infrastructure Provision

39. The following are also material to the determination of this application:-

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Sustainable Drainage (SUDS) SPD October 2010

Public Green Spaces & Water Environment SPD 2012

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD April 2012

Dark Skies SPD 2014

Government Advice

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

40. Members should note that the determination must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A significant material consideration is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF says that less weight should be given to the policies above if they are in conflict with the NPPF.
41. The NPPF is designed to facilitate positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations and delivering sustainable development without delay. The policy document holds a ‘pro-growth’ agenda. Paragraph 21 highlights some crucial points in this respect, including:
 - investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations
 - policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances
 - Local plans should identify priority area for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement.
42. Paragraph 23 requires that planning policies should be positive and promote competitive town centre environments. It continues that town centres are at the heart of their communities and that they should provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres. Paragraph 24 sets out the town centre first approach, which is crucial in achieving these aspirations.
43. The key theme of the central Government policy is one of promoting sustainable development. The purpose of the planning system is therefore defined as one that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development, being economic, social and environmental.
 - an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
 - a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and

future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

44. Central Government policy attaches great importance to the design of the built environment as set out in paragraph 56 of the NPPF. Good design is a key component of sustainable development, 'indivisible from good planning' and contributes positively to making places better for people.
45. NPPF states that it is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Local planning authority should therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites.
46. The NPPG provides a general overview but focuses on viability in the context of both plan making and individual application sites. The site specific guidance covers a number of areas including different development types, brownfield sites, considering planning obligations in viability, values, costs and land value, but in particular expands upon paragraph 173 of the NPPF in regards 'competitive returns to developers and landowners'.
47. Paragraph 024 states:

"A competitive return for the land owner is the price at which a reasonable land owner would be willing to sell their land for the development. The price will need to provide an incentive for the landowner to sell in comparison with the other options available. Those options may include the current use value of the land or its value for a realistic alternative use that complies with planning policy."
48. Paragraph 173 of the NPPF and the NPPG thereafter have introduced financial viability into Central Government planning policy and guidance and the concept of a competitive return as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
49. Paragraph 173 highlights that Local Plans should be deliverable. Therefore, the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability, the costs of any

requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing landowner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable. In light of this, the Council should in my view be mindful that the site-specific application policy and other related policies were developed prior to the financial crash of 2008 and as such, the deliverability of this site and any obligation need to be considered in light of current market conditions.

50. In terms of design Central Government advocates that the local planning authority should not seek to dictate architectural style particular tastes and should not seek to stifle innovation, originality. Decisions should focus on the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials. Decisions should also seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness where possible.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

51. Paragraphs 23 – 28 set out those aspects of design that local authorities should consider as a minimum. These are:
1. layout – the way in which buildings and spaces relate to each other
 2. form – the shape of buildings
 3. scale – the size of buildings
 4. detailing – the important smaller elements of building and spaces
 5. materials – what a building is made from
52. Government advice goes on to highlight that the quality of new development can be spoilt by poor attention to detail. Careful consideration should be given to items such as doors, windows, porches, lighting, flues and ventilation, gutters, pipes and other rain water details, ironmongery and decorative features. It is vital not only to view these (and other) elements in isolation, but also to consider how they come together to form the whole and to examine carefully the ‘joins’ between the elements.
53. Town centre buildings should include active frontages and entrances that support town centre activities. Where appropriate they may help to diversify town centre uses and the offers they provide. The quality of signage, including that for shops and other commercial premises, is important and can enhance identity and legibility.

Assessment

54. The main issues for consideration are:
- a) The principle of the proposals, i.e. how the redevelopment of the site fits within the existing local and national planning policies in terms of use and location
 - b) The quantum of parking provision
 - c) The impact of the development on the surrounding highway network;
 - d) The design quality of the building and the impact on the character of the surrounding area.
 - e) The Impact on residential amenity
 - f) The quality of the public realm in relation to the Commercial Quarter
 - g) Impact of the Stour Centre car park extension on surface water drainage, local flood conditions, open space, wildlife and ecology.
 - h) Sustainable Construction
 - i) Other Issues
 - j) Development Viability & Planning Obligations

(a) The principle of the proposals, i.e. how the redevelopment of the site fits within the existing local and national planning policies in terms of use and location

55. The development of the Commercial Quarter has featured in the Council's development plan for several years, through the adoption of its Core Strategy in 2008 and the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (ATCAAP) in 2010. An outline planning application for a large office building with ground floor mixed uses consisting of retail or food and drink outlets was approved on this site in 2012.
56. One of the key priorities of The Core Strategy is to provide an environment that is conducive to business growth and enterprise. The Economic Strategy within this recognises the importance to the town of the Commercial Quarter securing a strong office market within the town close to the domestic and international train stations, with a vibrant commercial centre to take advantage of fast journey times to London and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The Guiding Principles Policy CS1 highlights that sustainable development and

high quality design are at the centre of the Council's approach to plan making and deciding planning applications. It also identifies how the Council's key planning objective is to support the provision of a commercial environment that is conducive to encouraging new and existing businesses (part J)

57. Policy CS2, sets out the importance of creating thousands of new jobs, the need to expand the town centre and the use of brownfield sites. Policy CS3 supports development that helps revitalise the town centre where it demonstrates a quality of design that makes a real, and significant, contribution to improving the character of the town centre. CS4 emphasises the importance of developing appropriate brownfield sites for helping job creation. Policy CS7 sets out the importance of aiming to improve the economy of the borough and providing for job creation and growth in the town centre to benefit from the fast rail links to London.
58. The local policy framework for the application site is established in the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (ATCAAP). The site lies within the Commercial Quarter as allocated in Policy TC9 of the ATCAAP. The ATCAAP requires, given the fundamental importance of delivering significant amounts of new development in this Quarter, that development coming forward here must make the best use of land. The TCAAP stated the Quarter should be planned comprehensively and a master-plan for the Quarter including public realm improvements outside the station entrance, shall be agreed with the Borough Council prior to consideration of individual schemes. These will need to demonstrate that they would not prejudice the ability to deliver the indicative quantum of office development.
59. It is envisaged that the masterplan will establish the template for development proposals coming forward in the Quarter and in turn, they will need to demonstrate that they achieve an appropriate level of development, in terms of scale, massing, quantum, density and mix of uses so as not to prejudice the aims of the Quarter. It is also anticipated that the phased development of this Quarter will also need to clearly demonstrate that it would result in the successful delivery of public realm improvements to help establish a strong and positive local character as early as possible. Car parking for the large amount of office development proposed in the Commercial Quarter should be provided in accordance with policies TC22–TC25 of the ATCAAP. Opportunities for shared parking facilities between different uses within the Quarter should be fully explored as part of the comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of this Quarter.
60. The vision for the Commercial Quarter as expressed in the ATCAAP is: *“The dynamic new main business sector of the town, stimulating major investment opportunities in new large scale office space that exploits the excellent strategic links. A lively new Station Square presents a welcoming and contemporary face to those arriving in Ashford. Robust and high quality hard*

and soft landscaping around key routes through the site, with convenience uses, eating and drinking places located to help bring life to key routes. Imposing architecture and building forms create a strong sense of identity for the Quarter, with heights stepping down to the scale of Station Road and the riverside boundaries”.

61. One of the requirements of the TCAAP is that a comprehensive masterplan shall have been agreed with the Council prior to the consideration of individual schemes. A draft development framework masterplan was endorsed by the Council in 2012 based on significant supporting work that accompanied the 2011 Outline Application. In 2015 the Council acquired a significant proportion of land from the Homes & Communities. As pre application discussions took place on the early ideas for this current Phase 1 office proposals the Council’s Strategic Sites & Design Team undertook a simple master planning exercise to update the 2012 SEEDA framework and to refine the Commercial Quarter masterplan layout. This was to ensure the masterplan responded to land ownership of the Council to ensure early phases could be delivered in a way that delivers the overall vision set out in the Town Centre Area Action Plan. The following masterplan was submitted showing the current phase 1 proposals.



62. In my view this indicative masterplan demonstrates that the Phase 1 office building could be provided without undermining any future phases of development in the Commercial Quarter. The masterplan exercise also demonstrated clearly how a central space could be retained to provide the important urban square at the heart of the commercial quarter vision. The masterplan also accommodates some other uses to complement the commercial environment; seeks to retain the interesting unlisted heritage buildings to complement the commercial quarter; and identifies opportunities to provide an effective wider circulation of access. I consider that the principle of the siting its form and design phase 1 office and retail building are in accordance with the agreed masterplan, the Town Centre AAP and its vision for the Commercial Quarter Masterplan.
63. The National Planning Policy Framework focuses closely on building a strong competitive economy in paragraphs 18-22. The importance of sustainable growth job creation and prosperity is set out and identifies that local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. The NPPF also highlights the importance of identifying priority areas for economic regeneration, setting out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth; set criteria, or identify strategic sites for investment to match the strategy. The creation of robust local development framework, policies and visions for the commercial quarter in the Core Strategy, AAP and subsequent masterplan, demonstrates that the proposals are in accordance with the NPPF by supporting the economy and growth principles.
64. The NPPF (para 24) sets out to ensure the vitality of town centres and requires applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres instead of edge of town locations.
65. The National Practice Planning Guidance 'Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres' states in para 1 that Local Authorities *'should plan positively, to support town centres to generate local employment; promote beneficial competition within and between town centres; and create attractive, diverse places where people want to live, visit and work.'* The guidance also highlights the importance of adopting a 'town centre first' approach importance of a strategic vision for the town centre (para 2), adopting a 'town centre first' approach
66. The site is within the town centre and in close proximity to transport hubs and other facilities within the town centre. It is therefore in a sustainable location, and the proposed development will be the first phase of this planned Commercial Quarter in the town. The principle of the proposals are acceptable by virtue of their town centre location, the fact that they are following a clear strategy and masterplan for the regeneration of the area, and

that they are creating jobs and growth. I therefore consider that the principle of the proposals are in full accordance with the development plan policy and I am satisfied they are entirely consistent with the aim of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework and related Guidance in that it will provide and encourage further economic growth as well as improving the overall vitality and viability of the town centre.

(b) The quantum of parking provision

67. The site of the application is on one of the town centre's pay and display car parks in Dover Place. Currently the Dover Place car park has 360 spaces. As a direct result of the siting of this proposed office building, 95 parking spaces would be lost, leaving the proposed total number of public and private parking spaces at 265. Of these, 39 parking spaces, located immediately to the east of the building will be designated solely for the use of the staff of the offices and retail units. 226 public parking spaces would remain available in Dover Place and this would represent an overall net reduction of 134 public car parking spaces.
68. The applicant requires a total of 220 dedicated car parking spaces for staff. As stated 39 of these spaces are to be provided adjacent to the building and the remaining 181 parking spaces will be provided within the extended Stour Centre Car Park which is about 300 metres away. All of these parking spaces will be privately controlled and dedicated for the staff of the office building and will not be available for public use.
69. The town centre Area Action Plan states it is the long term aim that parking for office, and retail uses within the town centre will be progressively reduced as alternative infrastructure comes on line. Policy TC22 of the ATCAAP states that maximum parking standards for office use should be;
- 1:30 sq m before the delivery of any operational park and ride services.
 - Then it should reduce to 1:60 sq. m once one Park and Ride service is operational,
 - and reduce further to 1:85 sq. m, once two Park and Ride services are operational.
70. TCPAA policy TC22 states retail uses would require a maximum of ;
- 1:30 sqm before any new multi-storey car park or park and ride service is operational;

- 1:40 sqm, once either one multi-storey car park or one park and ride service is operational (whichever is sooner);
 - 1:50 sqm once either two multi-storey car parks or two park and ride services, or one of each, are operational (whichever is sooner)
71. The starting point for TCAAP policy TC22 would therefore require a total of 182 parking spaces for the office use (floorspace 5474m²) and 33 parking spaces for retail uses (floorspace 1004m²) giving a total target of 215 parking spaces before any new multi-storey car park or park and ride service is operational. However Policy TC25 would require 107.5 of these spaces to be commuted off site into a public car park and the remaining 107.5 spaces to be provided on site as operational parking. The commuted parking requirement that technically should be paid for by the developer contributions amounts to £320,000 for Multi Storey Car Park and £380,000 for Park & Ride.
72. The commuted parking sum requirement that technically should be paid for retail uses through developer contributions amounts to £210,000 for Multi Storey Car Park and £45,000 for Park & Ride.
73. Whilst normally this would be secured through Section 106 agreements in this case as our independent advice shows, the associated development build costs are causing substantial viability concerns.
74. The proposed office and retail parking spaces are to be private operational and this is therefore contrary to the aims of policy TC25, which seeks to try and prevent these sort of large new private, non-residential car parks being developed in the town centre. Such car parking represents an inefficient use of valuable town centre land, is inconsistent with the aim of achieving a more sustainable modal split and is restrained by the reduced capacity of the former ring road and associated road network. However the benefits of getting this scheme off the ground, creating jobs, boosting the local economy and hopefully kick starting more growth and interest in the Commercial Quarter. means that on balance these benefits are of such importance to the wider town centre that, in this case I consider that the delivery of the phase 1 Commercial Quarter building outweighs the importance of providing the level and type of parking provision envisaged in policy TC22 and TC25. On these grounds I support the proposals. Discussions suggest that without this dedicated parking, the scheme will not prove attractive to the relatively immature Ashford office market .
75. The proposals suggest initially 20 spaces would be allocated to A3 retail uses although TCPAA policy TC22 requires a total 33 spaces would be required. I am satisfied that retail customers would have the option to park for short term periods in public spaces in Dover Place car park or several other car parks in the vicinity. Also I support the retail parking proposals being flexible, so if

demand dictates the need for them to be office parking spaces instead of retail. I consider that this could be actively managed through the Travel Plan and I am satisfied with this flexible arrangement.

76. The initial flexibility of parking levels would assist with the marketability and attractiveness of the development to potential occupiers of the building and I support the early levels of parking spaces proposed in the short term.
77. In the long term the issue about the levels of parking provision is more complicated. The proposals for the phase 1 office and retail scheme will include a freehold for the Dover Place car parking spaces and a 999 year lease agreement for the 180 spaces in Stour Centre Car Park. This will help to ensure the 219 parking spaces are allocated solely for the users of the proposed building in perpetuity.
78. However the proposed development is considered to be an exceptional case requiring private dedicated long term parking provision close by to ensure parking remains viable and attractive to the first prospective occupiers taking the important first step to move to the Commercial Quarter. This is because there are many challenges that the Ashford Commercial Quarter will face, particularly with regard to attracting inward corporate occupiers from the national and international market. This includes the Commercial Quarter having to compete with other comparator office locations both within Kent and around London successfully in order to meet the objectives of the Council. In 2010 Jones Lang LaSalle advised SEEDA on the Commercial Quarter proposals and they stated that in order to attract Finance and Business occupiers a critical success factor in any such development proposal would be to compete with other locations in terms of parking density, quality and location. It was indicated that whilst corporate, fiscal and planning policies have increasingly emphasised sustainable modes of transport, underlying occupier demand inevitably gravitates towards locations where parking provision is optimised, all other things being equal. The Commercial Quarter's location adjacent to Ashford International in part offsets this, but it was felt in the conclusions to this report by Jones Lang LaSalle, that a minimum density of 1 space to approximately 40 sq. metres to be reserved available during office hours.
79. Those who are currently interested in taking occupancy of the proposed building as tenants are looking for car parking provision of a ratio of one space for 200ft² which equates to (approx. 1:18m²) of office accommodation. The applicants have submitted a joint letter from Smith Woolley/TaylorRiley Stafford dated 7th June 2016 which supports this point. This level of dedicated provision could be an important factor in establishing and building demand for the first phase of the Commercial Quarter and to ensure the development could start to act as a catalyst to the regeneration of the area and to help bring forward interest in future phases that are based on much

lower parking provision and which would see value in employees being able to use the high speed trains. Once interest in the future phases of the commercial quarter begin to emerge then a much reduced level of parking will be sought in line with the town centre policy.

80. The proposals are therefore not in accordance with TCAAP policy TC22 and Core Strategy policy CS15 as the level of on site parking proposed is too high and the scheme is not viable enough to pay for commuted parking sums. However it is evident that the proposals need dedicated parking spaces to give potential occupiers certainty and this requirement is key to the investment in the first phase. Therefore this opportunity to deliver Phase 1 office scheme is critical as it has such substantial economic benefits for the town centre and the wider economy of the area as this first phase of the Commercial Quarter is considered to be crucial to the delivery of the next phases. For these reason I support the amount of proposed parking provision and accept that commuted parking sums are not affordable and therefore do not wish to object to the proposals on the grounds of not being in accordance with these parking policies.

81. I am satisfied that the extra parking provision in the town centre will not set a precedent for future phases for the Commercial Quarter. Each future phase of Commercial Quarter development will need to accord with TCAAP policy TC22 and would be determined on their own merits. There would also be very little physical space within Commercial Quarter to provide the same level of dedicated parking provision on future phases, as currently proposed, without jeopardising and undermining the principles of the masterplan. Providing parking at this same level within the Commercial Quarter would adversely affect the potential to achieve the total amount of floorspace planned for the whole Commercial Quarter in TCAAP policy TC9, which set out an indicative capacity 55,000 sqm). Therefore providing any more areas of car parking would have severe implications for the number of jobs and economic benefits to the town. Also providing parking in the commercial quarter on this scale for future phases would harm the intention to introduce more commercial buildings clustered around a substantial public square to create a space that could be nicely enclosed and containing high quality landscaping. I also consider that there would be no more physical space or a desire for extending the Stour Centre car park beyond what is currently proposed. Given the fact that Ashford Borough Council are also actively exploring opportunities to deliver a multi storey car park in close walking proximity to the Commercial Quarter the future phases are likely to be in a much stronger position to be able have their parking needs provided more conveniently. A further problem for providing the required parking within the commercial quarter area is that the traffic capacity of the junctions might struggle to cope without major investment in traffic signals and associated highway improvements.

82. Officers have required that independent viability consultants were involved in the S106/viability discussions around the application from the outset, as the applicants identified early on that the development would not be able to bear the full costs of all developer contributions sought by the Council through the application of relevant policy. The applicant is proposing to make a substantial one off contribution of £250,000 to highway improvements and public realm improvements to improve the capacity of the main junction of Station Road, Station Approach and Beaver Road, and as a result the applicant is not proposing any commuted sums towards town centre parking provision for reasons of viability.
83. Although the application is therefore contrary to policy TC25, I am satisfied with the position on parking commuted sums. As the scheme could deliver financial contributions towards these critically important highways improvements, and if viability is assured, then it would be more likely to generate an early commencement of the Commercial Quarter. This could have major regenerative benefits for Ashford through the provision of more jobs, a stronger local economy through the additional spend from the retail floorspace and a number of employees working in the building (estimated to be 475 in total) that could boost local spending power to help to strengthen the viability of the town centre.
84. Therefore despite the scheme not being in accordance with policy ATCAAP policy TC25 I support the position not to request commuted parking sums.

(c) The impact of the development on the surrounding highway network:

85. Policy CS15 requires development proposals to show how all highway needs arising from the development would be satisfied. It states further that developments which would generate significant traffic movements must be well related to the primary and secondary road network, and this should have adequate capacity to accommodate the development. Intensified use of existing accesses onto the primary or secondary road network are not permitted if a materially increased risk of road traffic accidents or significant traffic delays would be likely to result.
86. Dover Place has recently been stopped up as a public highway and is now under the ownership of Ashford Borough Council. Some changes to enhance the appearance of the street and public realm are proposed but the development does not alter the access and egress arrangements from the Dover Place Car park, off Station Road and Dover Place that served the previous light industrial uses on the site and the current public car park. Access will into the car park will be via Station Road (southbound only direction) into Dover Place. Exit from the car park remains in two places onto Station Road from the extra car park area immediately to the north of Saturn House as well as via Dover Place and left only into Station Road. There will

be a total reduction of 95 parking spaces in the Dover Place car park. This reduction in combination with the allocation of 39 spaces for the office and retail building will generate fewer vehicle movements on average than the equivalent number of public car parking spaces over the course of a week. This is because a dedicated office parking space will often contain a single car parked in it all day, whereas a public parking space is more likely to have several short term users throughout the day as people visit the town centre or nearby businesses. Overall I am satisfied the proposals have no highway implications for the Dover Place access arrangements and that they are safe and acceptable.

87. There were some concerns expressed by Southeastern over the impact that an extra 181 vehicles using the Stour Centre Station Approach would have on the condition of this road as Southeastern own and maintain it. They have suggested that they would require contributions if vehicles generated by this development intended to use this Station Approach. Internal legal advice is that there are no formal access rights enjoyed by Ashford over the land other than for leisure and if Network Rail wanted to restrict access they would be well within their rights to do so.
88. However it would be extremely difficult to design the extension to the Stour Centre car park to ensure vehicles can only use Tannery Lane only and prevent drivers from using Station Approach. Also it would be unreasonable to include a condition to try and prevent vehicles using Station Approach as the council would be unable to effectively monitor this and enforce.
89. Therefore Tannery Lane will provide the primary access to the extended Stour Centre car park. The agreed lease for the proposed extended car park land, will only grant occupiers of the building a formal vehicular access route using Tannery Lane. Occupants of the proposed building will be asked not to drive and use Station Approach and they will be made aware of the correct route of access. If any tenants chose to use Station Road then that is something for the land owner (Southeastern) to address directly with them.
90. The applicant's Transport Assessment works on the basis that traffic entering and exiting the Stour Centre Car Park will be split between both the Elwick Road junction and the Tannery Lane junction. Kent Highways and Transportation have not raised any highway objection to using Tannery Lane and the evidence in the TA indicates that Tannery Lane can cope with the predicted extra transport flows and is not expected to result in a severe impact on traffic along Tannery Lane or at its junction with Station Road.
91. The application has been accompanied by a Transport Assessment, which has assessed existing capacity, and committed developments within the town centre. Traffic flow analysis identified that post development the Station Approach and Elwick Road junction will need to accommodate an additional

66 movements during AM network peak and 61 movements during the PM network peak. Such flows would amount to approximately one additional movement every minute during these periods. Assuming a maximum 120 second cycle time for the junction, this would be the equivalent of 2 extra vehicle movements each cycle. The conclusion was the development would potentially have a significant impact on the local highway.

92. However assessment outputs of options indicated that the off site mitigation measures when implemented would have a significant positive impact on the operation of the main junction in terms of increased practical measure capacity.
93. Subject to the off-site highways mitigation proposed in drawing number 4300472/0100/01 in Appendix 2, secured by the proposed contribution of £250,000 (£200,000 towards the junction improvements and £50,000 toward public realm improvements), being secured before development commences, i.e. before the development begins to have a material adverse impact on the existing highway network, the Highways Authority have confirmed that they are satisfied that the development would not result in increased risk of accident, congestion or delay. In light of this I recommend that the development be subject to entering into a s106 agreement to secure the necessary and related contributions.
94. It should be acknowledged that the developer is proposing to fund the entirety of the highways mitigation over and above the actual impact of their proposals thus releasing capacity for other key town centre sites. It has been discussed with the applicant that the proportional contributions that other envisaged sites would have been required to make toward the highway works would still be secured as and when they come forward and that these would be allocated to public realm improvements in vicinity of the highway works. The development does, however, generate the need for the highway improvements in its own right, and there is no lesser scheme. It therefore complies with the tests of CIL Reg. 122.
95. It is also considered that this approach is pragmatic and reasonable, and in light of the overall development viability, secures the best outcome for the town centre in the short and long-term. In light of the above, I do not have any objections to the proposed highway works as it will help improve the traffic capacity and flow of the surrounding highway network. Although vehicles will be actively encouraged not to use Station Approach if they did, I am confident there will be no highway implications for the Station Road, Station Approach Elwick Road and Beaver Road junction as a result of the highway improvements to be secured as part of this application. Traffic using the extended Stour Centre Car Park will have to use Tannery Lane under lease arrangements. I am satisfied that Tannery Lane and Station Road junction

would provide a safe and convenient primary point of access to the Stour Centre car park extension without impact on the local road network.

96. Bus services - The scheme will include contributions to provide a new bus shelter close to the development. Stagecoach agree with the idea to secure an extra bus shelter in Station Road and their preferred location is slightly north of Saturn House on the east side of Station Road where the carriageway is very wide and where there is a very generous footway width also.
97. It had been hoped that this might avoid the need to use the station forecourt and ease some congestion on Station Approach but subsequent comments from Stagecoach suggest the distance might not be convenient enough for their customers and buses using the proposed bus stop would still be likely to need to access the station forecourt. The location of the bus shelter will serve the area well especially the proposed office and future phase of the Commercial Quarter well and also the new Hadlow College building currently under construction. A new bus stop on the west side of Station Road in front of the College is to be provided as part of the College proposals and combined with this proposed bus stop will improve public transport connections and might serve as an alternative hub for local buses in this important new part of the town centre.

d) The design quality of the building and the impact on the character of the surrounding area

98. The location of the proposed building, fronting Station Road, is a sensible position to commence the development of the Commercial Quarter, without prejudicing the form and siting of any further development as set out in the masterplan. It will enable the building to have a frontage to Station Road, as well as an entrance to the rear, which initially takes advantage of the existing car park but which ultimately will access onto the Commercial Quarter square as the subsequent Commercial Quarter phases come forward.
99. That road will remain as a main route into the Commercial Quarter and the buildings on the Commercial Quarter will need to have a presence onto Station Road, as this is one of the main arterial routes within the town. As such, the proposed building, on the corner of Station Road and Dover Place will not prejudice any further development on the Quarter.
100. Furthermore, it is directly opposite the Ashford College site, which is at an advanced stage of construction, and the combination of these two buildings will dramatically enhance the appearance of the area by providing enclosure to this section of street, and at the same time as improving the commercial appeal of the town. The location of this building here will also act as an

advertisement for the Commercial Quarter, and as such the quality of the design will be important.

101. The scheme has been subjected to a robust design process with stakeholders, the Ashford Design Review Panel and officers. The applicants and their team have always sought to respond to design feedback positively and changes have been creatively thought through to improve architectural detailing of this contemporary building. It remains clearly important to a range of stakeholders that the traditional brick buildings of this once industrial part of the town should try to influence the contemporary office building. This is also based on the original views of Design Review Panel who commented on;

- the building avoiding an austere appearance;
- ensure proportions, materiality and modelling were correct;
- the fact it'll be a considerable landmark;
- its civic responsibility;
- making sure the bricks are not oppressive; avoiding ambiguity between solid and void areas;
- each façade being expressed differently;
- the need for the architecture to be taken to a good level of sophistication and subtlety through articulation and materials.

102. Also the Central Ashford Community Forum made some criticisms of the integration of the building into the townscape, and the choice of palette; the corner of the building need to incorporate some form of articulation to create a feature on the corner and to reduce the austerity of the proposed building. They wanted to see more thought given to integrating the West and South facades within Dover Place and the remaining buildings on Station Road. The Forum wanted the bulk of the building to be minimised by more sympathetic architectural features and wanted to see more effort given to the integration of this dark blocky building into its surroundings.

103. I have acted in response to the opportunity to use these proactive design comments to actively influence discussions of how to enrich the detailed design of the building and in particular its brickwork. The amendments and changes so far received and which are still currently being refined include some of the following elements

- The introduction of projecting brickwork to give a ridged texture, shadow lines and a subtle emphasis to the prominent corner of the building on

Dover Place/Station Road. The recess/shadow line would need to be generous. This brickwork effect should wrap round the corner and extend from above shopfronts up to the parapet. The precise detail of this architectural feature could be conditioned.

- Introducing a horizontal brick feature detail running round all 4 elevations to attempt to break up the expanse of brickwork above 5th floor window and top of the parapet. A continuous band of vertically arranged bricks would help achieve this and this type of soldier course brickwork should be to a depth of at least 4 vertically arranged bricks. This continuous horizontal band of bricks could be broken up slightly into a series of sections corresponding to the pattern of each pair of windows below. Another alternative we could also support would be to have this brick feature detail slightly recessed or projecting in a similar way to the corner detail.
 - Remove the brick soldier courses above all windows as this is a more domestic small scale feature that would not add anything to the contemporary look and feel of the building of this nature.
 - The brick colour, variation and texture look effective. A sample panel will be constructed on site in due course alongwith an alternative light brown brick sample with an alternative colour/tone variation option to enable comparison. This will be dealt with by condition.
 - The execution of the colour of the mortar joints needs to be as dark and understated as possible, the recess of the mortar joint needs to be deeper. These details can be covered by condition.
 - The vertical expansion joints between some windows need to be blended in carefully to the brickwork. Alternatives to brick weep holes should be explored and details agreed and should be covered by planning condition.
 - Ensuring the glazing is recessed significantly from the brickwork will also be important.
104. I am confident with the design changes that proposed building will result in a well designed and articulated building that responds creatively to its heritage context and which with careful execution will be a major landmark and asset to the town centre and will be pivotal to the success of the Commercial Quarter.
105. The height, scale and massing of this 6 storey building is in keeping with the TCAAP and Commercial Quarter development framework and masterplan. TCAAP policy TC9 stipulates an average building height of 5-6 storeys would be acceptable, but that up to 10 storeys may be justified in places within quarter. The proposed office building would make a strong and bold statement

in the town and the modest simplicity of the design is appropriate for a building of this size. The massing with the recessed 6th floor will add further interest to the building.

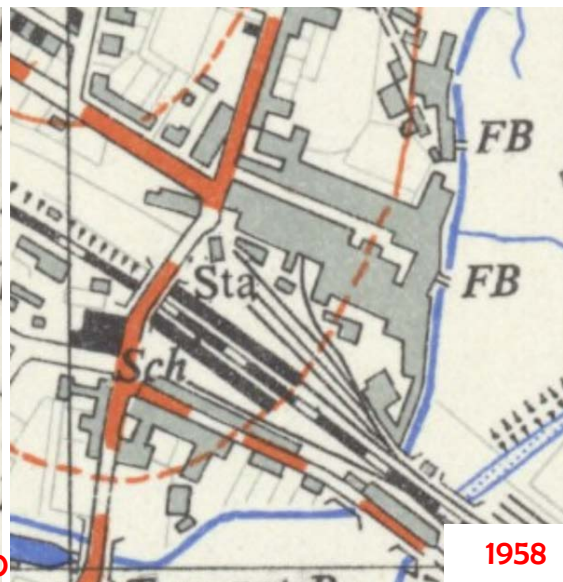
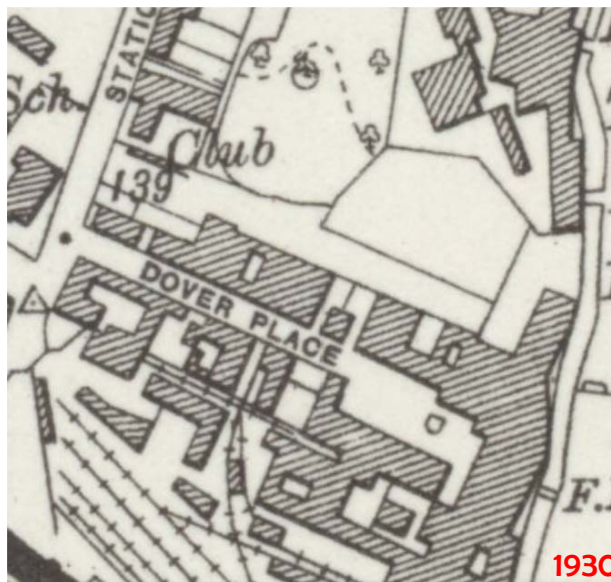
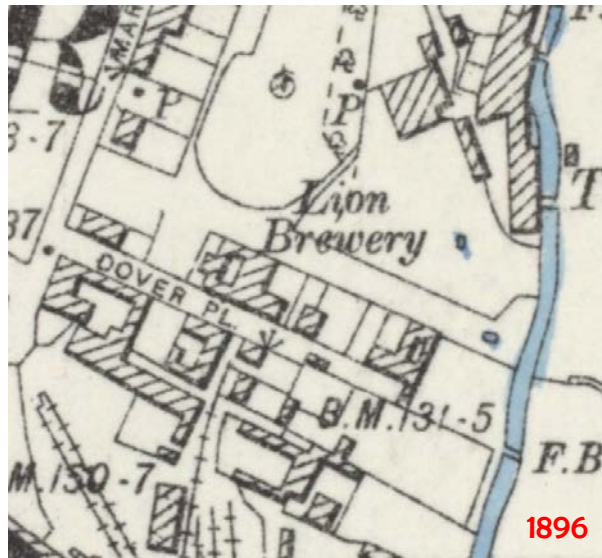
106. The building will make a positive impact visually. It will enclose long distance views eastwards along Elwick Road. Also it will act to form the sense of a new cluster of interesting buildings from what is an area that currently consists of a very disjointed townscape with too many gaps in the street scenes and a distinct lack of cohesion. The views entering the town centre over Beaver Road will be transformed with the proposed office development providing better enclosure to Station Road and Dover Place filling in left over spaces between the new college building, the traditional buildings in Dover place and also Saturn House. This building will be a critical part in setting the standard of the next Commercial Quarter phases and the adjoining public square.



107. The well designed architectural detailing of the building adds interest to the external facade. The building is well designed at ground floor with appropriate shopfronts to all four elevations. I am comfortable with the proportions and combinations of the main brick facades and substantial areas of glazing. The recessed metal windows with contemporary protruding frames in a stylish

dark restrained finish will enrich the elevations too. There have been some amendments to ensure a greater richness in the brick detailing of what is essentially a modern interpretation of a traditional warehouse style building. This includes the introduction of some subtle protruding brickwork. I am satisfied this would better reflect the character of the area and the town centre.

108. The uppermost recessed 6th level has been adequately designed to be subservient to the main built form and to complement its appearance. The design of the rooftop area which includes the plant room and includes photovoltaics will be recessed further and will be barely noticeable from street level. The precise choice and colour of the materials on the rooftop plantroom will be refined by condition to make sure they are discrete and the design has been carefully thought through to ensure no further additions such as safety rails, vents, pipes, cables, equipment or telecommunications paraphernalia will be required externally. This means the building will have a sharp clean look and will add an interesting silhouette to the skyline of the town.
109. Conditions detailing all the architectural details plus the construction methods of the brickwork and other details such as expansion joints in brickwork, brick weep holes, window detailing, mortar will be important. Precise samples of bricks will be tested and explored with 1x1 metre sample walls constructed on site to ensure colour, texture and quality of brick are acceptable and to test mortar colour and recessed finish and to look at any other agreed details.
110. Heritage - I am satisfied the building will have a positive impact on the traditional buildings in the area. The design of the new building will improve the perceptions of the area which had become rather isolated and run down in recent years.
111. This area in the c19th century was much more industrial and built up than at present as the following map from 1850 to 1950 illustrates. Many businesses took advantage of the proximity of the river and then the train station from the 18th century until the late 20th century and a dense cluster of buildings developed here peaking in 1960's. These including a brewery, a corn mill, a tannery and various other working buildings, factories and warehouses with railway tracks extending into Dover Place to help move goods and materials about. The following historic maps and photo show how the density of the area was much higher up to early 2000's than at present.



The site in 2000 showing density of industrial buildings on what is now Dover Place Car Park including 1-5 storey buildings.



Image of Dover Place – Approx early 2000's

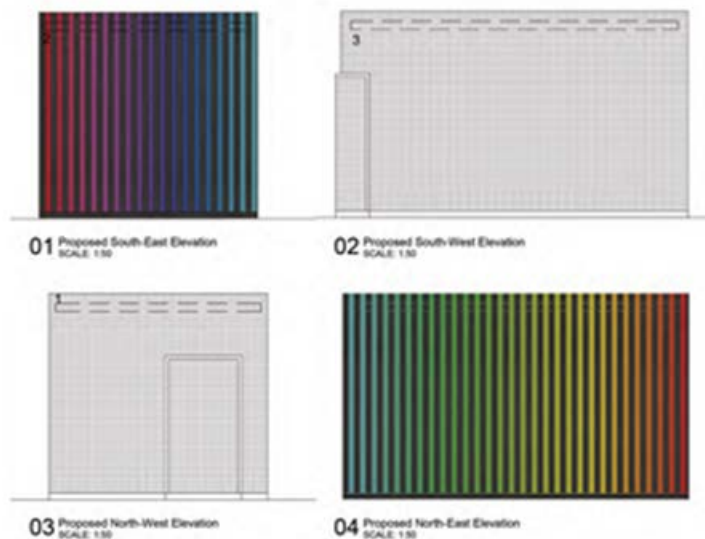
112. The scale and dominant form of the proposed office building will have no adverse impact on the special historic or architectural character of the grade 2 listed former warehouse Cameo nightclub building. The interesting juxtaposition of tall and domestic scale buildings in the town centre will add to the richness and character of urban places and the Commercial Quarter development framework and masterplan and Town Centre Area Action Plan accepted that this variation in large scale new modern buildings with smaller historic buildings would be a key part of the character of the Commercial Quarter. The proposed building is starting to reinstate the dense and intimate enclosure to the streets that this working area traditionally had. The interesting detailing to the brickwork of the proposed building will reflect the original interesting industrial history of Dover Place and the area around the station.
113. The character and setting of the adjacent Listed Warehouse was originally that it nestled in amongst other commercial buildings and activities in what was a busy and successful working area. Consequently the principle of this traditional building becoming surrounded by new commercial buildings is supported. This is also the reason why I consider the scheme will protect and enhance the setting of the group of un-Listed, non-designated heritage assets that form part of the setting of the Listed warehouse.
114. The Conservation Area boundary lies on the other side of Station Road. The new college building is elevated above Station Road and is the equivalent to a 5 storey building. Around the building is some green landscaping and the treelines in Memorial Gardens are visible. The creation of a stronger enclosure to Station Road with decorative reddish brown brickwork on robust buildings would introduce a welcome addition that complements the character of this part of the conservation area. The opportunity to plant more street trees would also complement the leafy character of this part of the conservation area.
115. The site is very open to all sides and a building of the scale proposed will be visible both directly and over the top of other buildings when viewed from many public view points but this sort of tall strong brick building is what is envisaged in Commercial Quarter. The building will add further drama and visual interest to the skyline of the town.
116. The set-back to the sixth storey will create a more interesting built form with subdued coloured materials and glazing to play on the contemporary dark warehouse style. The 6th floor and rooftop will barely be visible from street level around the building but there will be glimpses of the rooftop building will be mainly from further away on the approach to the town centre from the south, down along Station Road and from along Elwick Road. I am satisfied the design of the roof plant will not be overbearing and plays an important role in prevent clutter externally on the building. The use of dark grey materials,

glazing and textured cladding will be designed to ensure the rooftop structure is considered holistically with the rest of the building. Further conditions will be recommended to control the fine detail.

117. I note that the simplicity of form and symmetry of the design and I consider it to reflect the warehouse character feel that remains in some buildings within what was once the heart of the town and a key factor in defining the character of this part of Ashford.
118. On the surrounding historic buildings, the quality and detailing of the brickwork creates the interest on what were simple, functional industrial buildings. Therefore based on constructive criticism from various quarters I have sought amendments to enrich the brick detailing of the building.
119. I have looked carefully at the make and colour of bricks proposed and visited a scheme in Canterbury where the developers had used the same brick. I was pleased with the subtle variation in the colour of this brickwork and feel it would reflect the local palette of materials well subject to conditions .
120. I do not consider that the proposed office building will have any adverse impact on the setting of the listed building, the conservation area or the buildings in Dover Place that are considered to be heritage assets. The building's scale, design and materials are considered to be in keeping with the vision for the market town, and I am satisfied it will complement the existing heritage buildings. The strong street landscaping in Station Road will also complement the setting of the conservation area. If this scheme is supported I consider that the scheme will be a major first step in creating a new and exciting new transformational piece of commercial townscape that combines contemporary architecture with traditional buildings and will help continue the process of create a dynamic new place that boosts the image of the town centre and growth of the local economy.
121. Wind Micro-climate - Due to the size and scale of the building in a changing area an assessment of the potential impact of wind turbulence around the building was felt to be important to ensure the public realm around the building is comfortable for pedestrians walking by and to ensure the external spaces around the building are capable of being used as outdoor eating and drinking areas. The assessment was based on worst case scenarios for wind during the year. A study of the impact on sunlight and shadowing was not felt to be important as it would have a negligible effect on the Saturn House flats as only one small bedroom window faced southwards and as this was at the western end of the building there is not considered to be any impact on sunlight, daylight or outlook.
122. The wind study demonstrates that wind conditions around the building will be acceptable for sitting in the summer season and are therefore desirable for

use as public amenity spaces or outdoor seating areas. Conditions at street level even during the windiest months will be fine for pedestrians.

123. However the study also indicates, show that during the windiest months, winds may accelerate through the gap between Saturn House and the proposed office building. The wind may also accelerate around all corners of the proposed buildings. However the inclusion of the proposed landscaping and the new Ashford College Campus development is likely to have a beneficial impact on the expected wind conditions around the building by providing some shelter from prevailing winds. Further details of the landscaping scheme will help mitigate these issues easily enough through the implementation of localised screening and appropriate landscaping in these areas around the building and will be addressed by thorough landscaping conditions.
124. I agree that the built form of the office block will not result in a microclimate where wind turbulence can cause problems for passing pedestrians, people using the benches, or customers using potential outdoor seating areas associated with any restaurants, cafes and bars that may occupy the ground floor retail spaces.
125. Cycle Provision – The scheme provides 52 cycle parking spaces of which 34 are secure and 18 will be for visitors. Policy TC24 of the Town Centre Area Action Plan requires new office developments to provide a minimum cycle parking standard of 1 space per 5 car parking spaces and for retail uses 1 space for every 10 car parking spaces. As 215 parking spaces are required under the TCAAP policy this means for office use 36 cycle parking spaces are required and for the retail uses 3 cycle parking spaces are required giving a total of 39 cycle spaces. A cycle store is provided for secure provision and some cycle hoops are to be provided in the vicinity of building entrance for short term visitor cycle parking. I am satisfied by this level of provision.
126. A bold design is proposed for the secure 34 space cycle store, which is colourful and consists of some attractive semi-transparent metal mesh material on two sides to give a degree of visibility into the store on safety and visibility grounds. It includes a laminated material with printed spectrum of colour finish to it and then with black stained timber cladding fixed on top to break it up and give definition and texture.

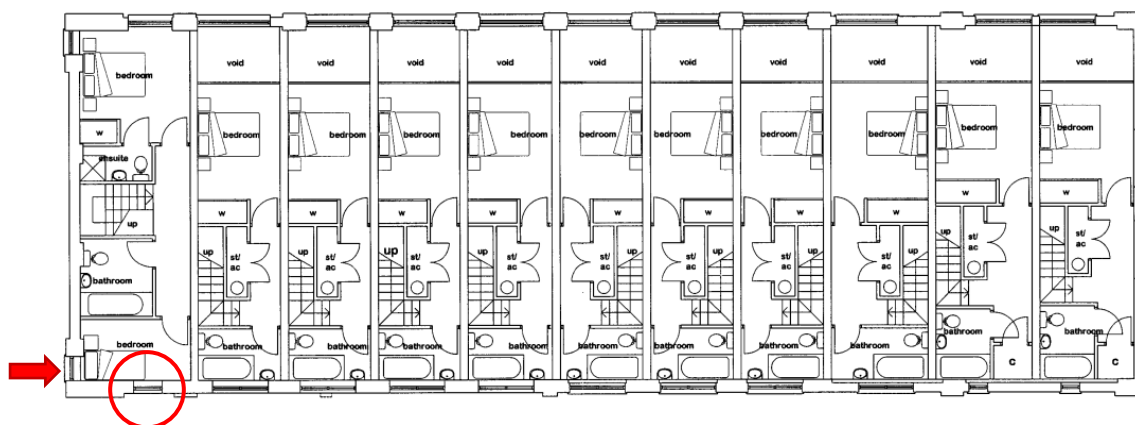


127. .This is quite a bold move but could look quite good if executed well. I consider the design of the store to be acceptable subject to conditions over the precise materials, colour and detailing.
128. Bin/Recycling Store and Substation - A very similar design to the cycle store is proposed for the combined bin, recycling store that also wraps around a substation that is all to be located immediately behind Saturn House. Unlike the cycle store it doesn't include the mesh material. This is a larger structure but located in a slightly more discrete location, and I support the design and form of the structure subject to conditions over the precise materials, colour and detailing.



e) The Impact on residential amenity

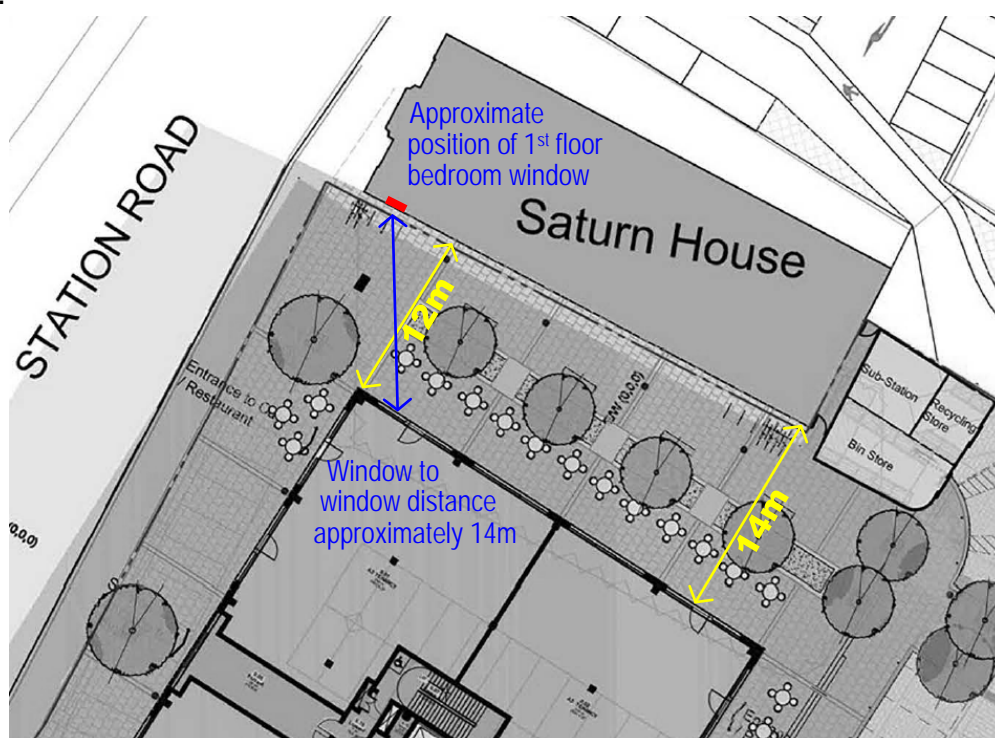
129. The building is located to the south of Saturn House which has a restaurant at ground floor level and 11 duplex style one and two bed flats above arranged over two levels in a linear line east to west. The distance between the buildings would vary from 12 metres at the western edges of the buildings splaying out slightly to 14 metres at eastern edge of Saturn House. At first floor level the Saturn House flats have a series of large windows facing south in the direction of the proposed office building. These just serve a communal corridor with habitable windows facing south. At the western end closest to Station Road is a window serving the main communal stairwell. I do not consider there to be any privacy or overlooking issues impacting on residential amenity at first floor level.
130. At second floor level each duplex flat has a substantial bathroom window with standard clear glazing facing south directly towards the proposed building. The westernmost flat at the front of the building adjacent to Station Road, has a small window to a single bedroom facing south towards the proposed office building (circled). However this single bedroom also has a high level feature circular window facing west (highlighted by arrow).



second floor mezzanine plan
(new level)

131. I do not consider these bathrooms to be habitable rooms based on Building Regulation definitions as there is no single legal definition of a habitable room. However the second, third and fourth floors of the proposed office development would therefore potential cause privacy overlooking problems for the residents using the bathrooms. To overcome the privacy issues for the residents the preferred solution to overcome this matter is to seek to negotiate the replacement of all the bathroom window glazing with opaque glazing to all the second floor south facing bathroom windows of the flats. I have therefore recommended a condition to agree and implement a solution with the owner of the rented flats before the offices can be occupied.

132. In terms of the impact of the office development on the second floor bedroom window fronting onto Station Road I am not concerned there is a significant privacy issue. As the extract from the site plan shows below, the proposed office windows at first, second and third floor level will also be at an oblique angle to this existing bedroom window at the closest no nearer than 14metres which means the line of sight is deflected rather than direct between the office and bedroom windows. This bedroom also has a second window albeit at high level to provide an outlook and daylight. In an urban environment this sort of tight and compact arrangement is a common feature. I do not consider that the office development will have a detrimental impact on the residential privacy of this bedroom.



f) The quality of the public realm in relation to the Commercial Quarter

133. Public Realm – I support the proposed design of the public realm as it will complement the recently completed Dover Place public realm scheme funded by the HCA. The principle of this quality of landscaping will help the building transform the area and support the potential for cafés and restaurants to use the outdoor space and give the area an even greater feel of vitality and vibrancy. I am satisfied that the layout of the offices, the public realm and the two rows of 39 car parking spaces will not prejudice the ability to provide a distinctive urban square in the Commercial Quarter immediately to the east of the building as future phases come forward. Despite the inclusion of these two rows of permanent parking the proposed design of the public realm and

landscaping would suitably define the western edge of the Commercial Quarter Square.

134. The proposed row of trees in Station Road is especially important to the character of the place and good sized trees have been encouraged here from the outset. The landscaping scheme also provides interesting outdoor seating spaces for the ground floor retail units, semi mature trees, soft landscaped beds, quality paving, and distinctive steps in response to the changing levels across the site. The images suggest there could be an over dependence on handrails and bollards and other items such as vehicle barriers need to be agreed by condition. The full details of the hard and soft landscaping need further refinement and a clear management strategy will need to be secured and I recommend these are covered by condition.
135. The loss of the town centre parking spaces in Dover Place car park has been accepted in principle through policies in the TCAAP. The Council has also only granted 5 year temporary permissions for the use of Dover Place car park specifically for the reason of helping the Commercial Quarter developments to come forward.
136. Despite the overall reduction in public parking spaces in Dover Place car park, and the fact it is close to capacity, the proposals will not affect the ten resident permits currently issued. Four of these are for residents of the Saturn House flats. At the moment there are 320 Town Centre Season (TCS) ticket holders and these can be used in Dover Place Car Park, Station Road Car Park and Edinburgh Road Car Park. This means that there are nearby alternatives and the terms of the season ticket means that a space can never be guaranteed in any particular car park. There are currently on average about 120 season ticket holders using Dover Place Car park as a preference. In the near future it is likely that Henwood Car Park will be included as an extra option to town centre season ticket holders, over and above the existing three car parks. There also remains the option to buy a Henwood only season ticket which is £220 a year cheaper than the town centre season ticket and which has lots of capacity. I am satisfied that with these alternative locations, sufficient capacity and financial incentives available that the loss of the parking spaces in Dover Place car park will not have an impact on the residents who use the car park and will not discourage people from coming to work, chop or visit the town centre.

g). Impact of the Stour Centre car park extension on surface water drainage, local flood conditions, open space, wildlife and ecology.

137. Impact on Flooding & Surface water drainage - The NPPF advises that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where

development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

138. Policy TC1(I) states that development in the 100 year floodplain must avoid worsening flood conditions on the site or elsewhere. Para 1.65 of the TCAAP states that development on sites within the floodplain would normally be resisted but could be balanced with other considerations, such as the need to bring forward key sites for regeneration. Policies CS1(A), CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy require all development to respect the limits of the local environment, including the efficient use of natural resources and minimising downstream flood risk.
139. The site for the proposed office building is not within the floodplain. The site for car park extension is located within the floodplain. This is however a site in an area where there is already a strong precedent for developing the existing car park and the area proposed has been safeguarded and left vacant as it was always envisaged that the area might become a future car park Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership, the Environment Agency, Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council were discussing the plans for the South Park Meadow. .
140. The applicants have worked closely with the Council's Drainage Engineer and the Environment Agency to provide an acceptable solution for the proposal. KCC's SUDs team Flood Risk Project Officer, has confirmed that there will be adequate management of surface water upon these sites and therefore they have no objections to the application subject to condition. The imposition of a number of conditions is recommended to provide detailed design information, implementation and maintenance arrangements. As a result I am satisfied the development would not result in increased risk of localised or downstream flooding. I am satisfied that the surface water drainage proposals are well considered and comply with the aims of local policy as well as the NPPF. I support this aspect of the proposals.
141. With regard to drainage issues no objection is raised by Southern Water and the Environment Agency. The Council's drainage officer raises no objection to the scheme subject to a condition requiring final details of a sustainable drainage system to serve the site.
142. The updated Flood Risk Assessment Statements demonstrates clearly how it will provide suitable flood mitigation without worsening the flood situation on site or elsewhere. The FRA now also includes a surface water drainage design strategy for both South Park and the Dover Place sites. This meets the requirements of Ashford Borough Council's Drainage SPD and demonstrates that the proposals provide sufficient surface water management within the layout and that explains any interactions with elements of the surface water drainage already implemented for the current car park. KCC in its role as

Strategic Flood Risk Authority, is satisfied and has recommended conditions and has therefore withdrawn its holding objection. The Environment Agency and Southern Water are satisfied subject to conditions. Southern Water is happy with sewer arrangements and have provided plans showing the location of sewers.

143. Green Corridor - Policy TC1(H) in the Town Centre Area Action seek to protect and enhance the Town Centre's existing green open spaces, and the river corridors by enhancing their wildlife, biodiversity and landscape value. The Town Centre Area Action Plan Policy TC26 states there is a presumption that development will not normally be permitted in the Green Corridor unless there are overriding planning benefits, and it can be demonstrated there would be no significant harm to the environment, biodiversity, visual amenity and overall function and nature conservation value of the Corridor. Local Plan EN13 and EN14 seeks protect the green corridor.
144. I consider there to be overriding planning benefits that mean the principle of the development in the green corridor should be supported. These include the economic benefits and boost to the town centre economy of permitting the development plus the provision of jobs are sound reasons that outweigh the retention of this grassed area. The importance of establishing confidence in the first phase Commercial Quarter and attracting occupiers are also sound justifications for providing parking facilities for the proposed offices in this location. There are no other practical alternatives. This in my view is an overriding planning benefit.
145. This leaves the question of whether there would be significant harm to the environment, biodiversity, visual amenity and overall function and nature conservation value.
146. This area is of little biodiversity value. The site is simply grassed and contains about 6 semi mature trees which lie between the large existing car park and the new landscaped South Park Meadow. The proposal would not harm the overall environment as it will be well landscaped with appropriate hedging trees and shrubs which encourage ecology, so conditions will require appropriate species to be planted.
147. The setting of the green corridor is already dominated by large car parks and some simple structural landscaping. This proposed modest addition with further rows of car parking will have minimal effect on the visual amenity of the area. The proposed landscaping design is seeking to replicate the lines of hedging and rows of tree planting that currently exist to create the appearance of a soft environment. Landscaping would also further screen the views of the cars from the South Park Meadow amenity areas and foot/cycle paths across the river. I am confident that screening the carpark will enhance the perception of this being a green corridor.

148. The role of the green corridor is to connect the riverside location and its floodplain. Flooding is dealt with separately in later sections but the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on flooding or the overall function of the corridor.
149. I note a pedestrian route will be provided to the South Park Meadow from the skatepark to encourage the skateboarders to continue to access the extended meadow area next to the river for amenity purposes and extra seating is to be provided.
150. The proposals would not impact on the visual amenity of the green corridor. The existing area proposed for the car park extension, simply consists of a grassed area between the car park and the edge of the meadow fence boundary. As part of these proposals the adjacent Stour Park Meadow amenity area which has just opened in June 2016, will be extended slightly immediately next to the skatepark and river with the intention of providing extra seating, trees and landscaping to a high standard to mitigate the development of the plain grassed area. I am confident that the extended South Park Meadow area with seating would create a better quality recreation space that is more attractive than the existing basic grassed area does at present.
151. The proposals should provide a better connection to the meadow amenity space and would improve access and awareness of this amenity space. This would encourage more people to use this part of the green space and thereby will increase accessibility of the corridor. The proposals are acceptable as they do not impact on ability to provide excellent opportunities to link the town centre and the surrounding network of green spaces running through the town and will not have an adverse impact on helping to promote walking and cycling complementing the wider agenda for a healthier wider community.
152. I consider the proposals will protect the green corridor and will have cause no harm to biodiversity, nature conservation, setting, role, amenity value and accessibility of the corridors. I am satisfied the proposed office development and car park extension are considered to generate overriding planning benefits that overcome the presumption against development in the green corridor. I am confident the proposed car park extension would not be significantly harmful to the environment, biodiversity, visual amenity and overall function and nature conservation value of the Green Corridor. A condition will ensure the hard and soft landscaping will help soften the views of the car park, enhance the riverside setting and support greater biodiversity.
153. Public Open Space - The car park extension is proposed in the Civic Quarter as set out in TCAAP, which mentions the spacious softer character than the rest of the town centre and the importance of the presence of the river and the protected landscaped greenspace around it and the informal green spaces for

informal recreation uses. Policy TC17 points out the need to respect the setting of the Green Corridor.

154. Part of the site for the car park extension is designated as public open space under Local Plan Policy LE11 (Loss of Public Open Space) for recreation and leisure. The Borough Council will normally seek the full protection of this public green space. It's therefore important to assess this impact or loss of any Public Green Space.
155. I consider that there is no significant adverse impact on the quality or character of the local green open space. The tests that I have applied in reaching this decision is that an alternative open space area is provided of a similar equal amenity and functional value and located so that the local community suffers no significant loss of accessible public open space. There are relatively few residents nearby who would rely on the strip of land between the car park and South Park Meadow as their main recreational area.
156. Cultural Services have provided a summary of open space provision in the vicinity of the proposed extension (sheet 1) with a calculation showing its impact on the local availability of open space.

Residential requirement for informal amenity space

SPD requirement for informal green space

Walking distance 400m
 Quantity 2.0ha/1000 population

Existing quantity available within 400m

	Area within 400m(ha)	Type	Distance (m)
North Park	1.39	Amenity	265
South Park	2.49	Wildlife	0
Total	3.88		

Loss incurred by car park construction

Existing area available 3.88
 Car Park area 0.45
 Remaining open space 3.43

Residential requirement (existing dwellings within 400m)

Dwellings 290
 Population 696
 Requirement ha 1.392

157. This shows loss of open space incurred in South Park as a result of the proposed extension will not result in a local quantity deficit in informal amenity

space for residential purposes. There will be a remaining surplus of 1.76 hectares.

158. The main users of the open space are some of the young using the skatepark. In my eyes the amount of green open space along the river and due to the size of the nearby North Park indicate, that even with the loss of this grassed area, there is plenty of green space serving the immediate area which is a highly attractive environment. The expansion of the amenity space associated with Stour Park Meadow will enhance the remaining informal area of open space with a better leisure value to the area that would be lost.
159. Amendments have been secured setting in more detail how the proposals will improve the left over space around the edge of the skate park next to the river which will seek to sensitively improve the green space area next to the meadows area in order to mitigate the impact. The car park layout at the end skate park has been reconfigured to create a greater sense of space around the skateboard park the proposals will involve tapering the end of the earth bund down to ground level and provide a new section of hedge planting to maintain the wildlife corridor. This approach helps to open up this space and create a better interface with the meadow creating some views from the skate park end towards the river. Extra seating to meet the needs of the skate park users would create an interesting place to socialise. Conditions would be required to refine the details of the design of these amenity spaces.
160. Ecology - Kent Wildlife Trust objected due to the development initially based on the potential impact on South Park Meadows on grounds of the extent of hard-surfacing and the Ashford Green Corridor Local Nature Reserve. Natural England have stated they have no comment. An Ecology statement has since been provided with clear recommendations to protect the wildlife and ecology of the green corridor in accordance with the requirements of these policies. The applicant has agreed to conditions to this effect, and I am satisfied that the car park extension will not diminish the ecological value of the area and will protect and enhance South Park Meadows.
161. Lighting effect on residential amenity - The lighting scheme and details of the layout and type of lighting units and columns will need to be in full accord with ABC's Dark Skies SPD to avoid any disruption to residents immediately to the north of the car park. Because of the distances involved there would be no risk of any harm to residential amenity. The lighting design could therefore be covered by condition.

h) Sustainable Construction

162. The application is accompanied by a report which addresses the Energy Strategy for the site based on the 2011 strategy that generally covered the Commercial Quarter.

163. Core Strategy Policy CS10 and the adopted SPD (2012) require office developments in the town centre to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% and to be BREEAM very good rating through the provision of on-site sustainable energy technologies. Policy CS10 also required energy credits to be excellent; water credits to be maximum and material credits to be excellent.
164. The applicant's is seeking to achieve a lower overall standard than set out in CS10. They are aiming to achieve a BREEAM 'good' standard rather than very good and with reduced targets for energy credits, water credits and material credits. Also the intention is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 10% rather than 20% required by policy CS10. The applicant is intending to achieve this through the following ways;
- Reducing CO2 emissions through enhancing thermal performance of external fabric and installing efficient mechanical and electrical installations.
 - Introducing low or zero carbon technologies.
 - Introducing facilities for cyclists.
 - Reducing use of potable water.
 - Inclusion of rooftop photovoltaics
 - Specifying robust, durable, responsibly sourced materials that have an A, or A+ rating under the Building Research Establishment, Green Guide.
 - Enhancing the ecological value of the Site.
 - Minimising watercourse pollution.
 - Reduction of Night Time Light Pollution.
165. Given the viability issues for this development and the agreed substantial highways contributions to be paid, I am satisfied that these lower standards are acceptable in this case. This is only the basis that these agreed standards are a minimum that must be achieved. I am happy for this to be subject to further discussion and testing, and to be secured by imposing appropriate conditions to reflect advice set out in Core Strategy and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, and to ensure that the proposed development achieves the reduced targets.
166. In terms of carbon neutrality, the applicant would normally need to be obligated to make a Policy CS10 based carbon off-setting contribution if the combination of all other measures does not achieve a carbon neutral development. However in this case for viability reasons no such contribution is being sought. Through negotiation the LPA has sought to secure additional tree planting and landscaping around the building and in the Stour Centre car park and the high levels of public realm landscaping would assist in carbon

treatment whilst bringing very real environmental benefits in reducing heat island effects and providing shade in summer. I am recommending that landscaping conditions are imposed to secure this.

167. Given the acceptance that there are viability issues with the scheme I am satisfied that it is appropriate to accept a reduced GOOD standard of BREEAM and 10% Carbon Dioxide reduction.

i) Other Issues

168. Contamination - Previous preliminary site investigation reports within the last 5 years have discovered the potential for some contamination on the site following the previous industrial uses. The need for further preliminary assessments was not essential. The same conditions are recommended requiring the submission of a remediation scheme to deal with contamination found on the site. This information will need to be agreed and signed off in close liaison with the Environment Agency and Environmental Health Manager.

169. Refuse Strategy - An external bin store is provided in a discrete location behind Saturn House for refuse and recycling areas. A specific refuse strategy has not been submitted but tracking diagrams for refuse vehicles have been provided in the Design & Access Statement. It is unclear whether the size of the refuse and recycling store is sufficient for the retail and offices uses but the preference would be to cover this by condition so that a detailed refuse strategy is submitted and issues such as establish the frequency of collections can be specifically addressed.

j) Development Viability & Planning Obligations

170. Policy CS18 requires that infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs generated by new development should be provided, and that these should normally be provided on-site. From the start of negotiations on this scheme however, the applicant identified that the development would be unable to bear the full costs of developer contributions sought by the Council through the CS policy. The applicant was therefore advised to submit a viability assessment, which the Council has had reviewed by an independent viability consultant.

171. The initial starting point for contributions were as follows:

- Commuted Car Parking Sum £1,269,583.04
- Bus Contributions £15,000 – £20,000
- CS10 Contributions £43,037.22
- 20% Renewables/BREEAM Very Good

- Monitoring Fee £1000
- Travel Monitoring Fee KCC to clarify
- The Travel Plan and Public Art were to be confirmed separately.

172. Subsequently, it became clear that a contribution towards off-site highway improvements was also needed. The application scheme has provided evidence to show it can only afford S106 contributions of £250,000 and some minor bus contributions. This is significantly lower than what would normally be sought through Policy and SPD requirements. Therefore the Council's viability consultant was asked to assess the report to specifically take into account the key issues relating to ;

- the viability of the scheme are the base build cost used in the applicants appraisal;
- the value in the open market of the commercial elements;
- and the level of return for risk and profit for some elements of the commercial scheme.

173. The initial independent assessment report concluded that the original appraisal needed refining. This was to allow for a shorter void period between construction and letting of non offices based on the pre-let effects. Also the profit element on the offices was reduced in the light of the UK decision to leave the EU and the associated risk to development finance and funding going forward. The rents for the offices were initially too optimistic and a lower more reasonable assumption has been agreed. The final independent report concluded that there was a negative residual value for the development. However the applicants are comfortable with an offer of £250,000 still being made towards planning obligations.

174. The Consultants advice to the Council is that this offer is reasonable under the current circumstances and I broadly support that position. However I feel there is still some scope to seek some minor contributions towards the creation of a bus shelter in close proximity of the new office building in order to help promote bus use amongst workers in the Commercial Quarter.

175. As the development is not viable and to request any further substantial contributions would place in jeopardy the viability/deliverability of the scheme and much needed regeneration.

176. It is appropriate to look at a planning justification for recommending a scheme that does not meet its full share of developer contributions. It is an imperative for the Council that regeneration schemes in the town centre come forward as quickly as possible since the town centre has suffered a decline in the past

few years. The retail market is unlikely to be strong enough on its own to generate investment in the short term, so a way of increasing the amount of money spent in the town centre is to increase the number of people working in and using the town centre. This site, with pedestrian access directly between the station and the town centre core is seen as one of the key drivers for improving spend in the town centre and attracting further investment. Also the Commercial Quarter is critical to the increase in the number of jobs in the town and likely to be a key driver of a successful local economy.

177. The Council's viability consultant agrees that the proposal is at its limit in terms of the S106 contributions now being offered. It is considered that there are appropriate material considerations in this instance to forego any further contributions and to recommend the scheme where it does not meet its full share of developer contributions.
178. It is important to note as well, that the lack of full S106 contributions does not come at the expense of the quality of the development. The proposed development has been the subject of extended negotiations over its quality, including Design Review and Member presentations. The provision of a high quality development, with an early implementation, will allow the market to continue to strengthen, thus having very positive benefits for the town centre as a whole. It is therefore considered that in this instance, there is a justification in planning terms for recommending the reduced amount of S106 contributions.
179. Planning Obligations - Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 says that a planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for a development if the obligation is:
- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms,
 - (b) directly related to the development; and
 - (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development
180. I recommend the planning obligations in Table 1 be required should the Committee resolve to grant permission. I have assessed them against Regulation 122 and for the reasons given consider they are all necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, are directly related to the development and are fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. Accordingly, they may be a reason to grant planning permission in this case.

Planning Obligations

Table 1

Planning Obligation			Regulation 122 Assessment
Detail	Amount(s)	Trigger Point(s)	
Highways and public realm contribution for (i) improvements to the Beaver Road/Victoria Way junction and the Elwick Road/Station Road junction as shown on drawing 4300472/0100/01 P01.1 or alternative works of like effect and (ii) enhancing the public realm in the vicinity of the Site	£250,000	On commencement of development	<p>Necessary in order to meet the demand generated by the development, in the interests of highway safety and in order to create a high quality and attractive street scene pursuant to Core Strategy policies CS1, CS2, CS15 and CS18, Town Centre AAP policy TC1 and guidance in the NPPF</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will travel and the highway improvements to be funded will be available to them and the public realm improvements will be in the vicinity of the site.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development and the benefits it will bring to the developers in marketing their building and the future occupiers of the building using the junction</p>

Planning Obligation			Regulation 122 Assessment
Detail	Amount(s)	Trigger Point(s)	
<p>Bus Stop</p> <p>Contribution towards a new bus stop on Station Road</p>	£20,000	On commencement of development	<p>Necessary in order to meet the demand generated by the development, promote public transport and encourage a modal shift away from private car use pursuant to Core Strategy policies CS1, CS2, CS15 and CS18, Kent Local Transport Plan and guidance in the NPPF.</p> <p>Directly related as occupiers will travel and the facilities to be funded will be available to them.</p> <p>Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind considering the extent of the development.</p>

Human Rights Issues

181. I have also taken into account the human rights issues relevant to this application. In my view, the "Assessment" section above and the Recommendation below represent an appropriate balance between the interests and rights of the applicant (to enjoy their land subject only to reasonable and proportionate controls by a public authority) and the interests and rights of those residents in Saturn House potentially affected by the proposal (to respect for private life and the home and peaceful enjoyment of their properties).

Working with the applicant

182. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner as explained in the note to the applicant included in the recommendation below.

Conclusion

183. It is acknowledged that the development does not provide all of the contributions ordinarily required nor does it comply fully with all of the site policies, as the quantum of parking for the scheme provides a new 180 space private carpark and 39 further private parking spaces and sustainable construction issues including a lower BREEAM standard and lower reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. I can only conclude therefore that the development is contrary to Development Plan policies. The non-compliance of the proposal is a consequence of development viability on what has been a difficult site to develop and the policies that the scheme is contrary to were in the main conceived in a much stronger and robust economic environment.
184. Against this and in the development's favour, the proposal brings forward the beginning of the Town Centre regeneration in the Commercial Quarter, which has been a long term aspiration of the Development Plan and Council, resulting in significant benefits to the local economy, much needed skilled jobs, more retail and in the short and longer term through the construction phase and with increased spend in the town centre directly benefitting existing and future businesses.
185. The development would result in an increase in traffic movements and as a result contributions for highway improvement works have been secured for a specific scheme to improve capacity materially increased risk of road traffic accidents or significant traffic delays would be likely to result.
186. The siting and design of the proposals have responded to the Commercial Quarter vision and masterplan and will assist with securing a new high quality commercial environment with an interesting public square adding to the identity and appeal of the place.
187. The proposals would provide a unique and high quality design that responds to the context of the site and delivers a contemporary form of architecture that innovatively interprets the 19th century industrial warehouse character and which should add to the character and appearance of the street scene and setting of the listed buildings and nearby conservation area. There will be significant positive impact on the character of the surrounding area.

188. The potential impact of offices overlooking Saturn House can be mitigated against with a scheme to replace the current standard glazing with obscure glazing in the 10 affected bathroom windows or any other suitable solution that could be agreed with the owner.
189. The proposed extension of Stour Centre car park would involve a reduction in the amount of informal open space in the green corridor next to the skatepark that the development plan would normally seek to retain. However due to the limited value of the space in an expanding town centre area with growing parking pressures this was always going to be difficult. To address this, the development would provide better direct access to an extended South Park Meadows amenity space including the provision of new seating which although reducing the net amount of informal open space it would be a much better quality amenity space that mitigates any adverse impact from the reduction of the informal open space.
190. The development would not have an adverse impact on the green corridor subject to the mitigation proposed.
191. The proposed building and car park extension would have no adverse impact on wildlife and ecology and with more landscaping proposed there would be scope to increase biodiversity through careful species selection.
192. The proposals would not result increase or worsen the likelihood of localised or downstream flooding. The EA has no objection to the proposals.
193. In light of the above, it is considered that the benefits of approving the application significantly outweigh the deficiencies of the proposal, and that there are other material considerations that indicate that planning permission should be granted. It is therefore recommended that permission be granted subject to a s.106 agreement and the conditions set out at the end of the report.
194. The high quantum of parking provision at a level significantly more than the Local Development Plan requires is considered to be acceptable given the need to support the first phase of the Commercial Quarter and the likelihood that this will boost investment confidence in Ashford Town Centre and kick start future phases of the Commercial Quarter, which would have major positive effects for skilled job creation and the local economy.

Recommendation

- (A) Subject to the receipt of acceptable amended drawings relating to the refinement of the architectural brick detailing on the office building and the applicant first entering into a Section 106 agreement/ undertaking in respect of planning obligations as detailed in Table 1, in terms agreeable to the Head

of Development Strategic Sites and Design or the Joint Development Control Managers in consultation with the, Director of Law & Governance with delegated authority to either the Head of Development, Strategic Sites and Design or the Joint Development Control Managers to make or approve minor changes to the planning obligations and planning conditions (for the avoidance of doubt including adding additional conditions or deleting conditions), as they see fit.

(B) **Permit**

Subject to the following conditions and notes:

Implementation Period

1. The development in Dover Place and Stour Centre car park hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Phasing

2. Prior to the occupation of the office building the approved extension to the Stour Centre car park development shall be available for parking unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the proper planning of the development.

Residential Amenity

3. Within 3 months of the start of construction a mitigation scheme which seeks to ensure the privacy of the 10 second floor south facing bathroom windows of the affected flats in Saturn House shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented and completed prior to the occupation of the offices.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and privacy of the 10 flats in Saturn House.

Highways

4. Prior to the occupation of the office space or retail units (or a later period which may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority if the works are underway but won't be completed by then) the scheme of off-site highway and public realm improvement works referenced 'Station Road Highway

Works' as set out on drawing no 4300472/0100/01 P01.1 or alternative works of like effect agreed by Kent Highways and Transportation as the responsible Highway Authority shall be completed and opened to traffic.

Reason: To ensure that there is sufficient capacity available within the highway network and in order to improve the amenity of the area.

Parking

5. The areas shown on the approved plans as office and retail parking areas shall be provided, surfaced and drained in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the occupation of the offices and retail units to which they relate, and shall be retained for the use of the occupiers of, and visitors to, the development, and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and/or amending and/or re-enacting that Order), shall be carried out on those areas of land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to those parking space/s.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to parking inconvenient to other road users.

6. The approved bicycle storage facilities shall be provided prior to the occupation of the development and shall thereafter be retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the provision and retention of adequate off-street parking facilities for bicycles in the interests of highway safety.

7. A plan or details showing the method of control of all private office and retail parking spaces, including all dimensions, demarcation lines, signs, bollards, barriers and related materials shall be agreed in writing with LPA one month prior to the opening of the car parks. The approved method of control shall be provided before the car parks are opened and thereafter maintained. Thereafter any substantial changes to these arrangements or other associated proposed changes to these car park environments need to be agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to parking inconvenient to other road users and to protect the visual amenities of the environments.

8. Within 3 months of the occupation of the development hereby permitted, a Green Travel Plan for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority unless otherwise agreed in writing with

the LPA. The Plan shall describe the means by which employees, visitors and users of the development could be encouraged to travel to the site by means other than the private car. The Plan as agreed shall include assessment of travel and parking trends and be reviewed and monitored on an annual basis and a copy of that annual review and action plan arising shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The measures described in the action plan shall be implemented in the time period identified.

Reasons – In the interest of promoting sustainable forms of travel and discourage the use of private motorcar, improving air quality and minimising traffic in the town centre..

Architecture, Fine Detailing & Materials

9. Within 1 month of the commencement of construction, unless specified to the contrary, the full architectural details set out below shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and, thereafter, the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless agreed otherwise by the Local Planning Authority in writing. Where relevant, the following details should be provided on drawings at an appropriate scale of 1:50 (where detail needs to be considered contextually related to a façade) and at 1:20 in other cases:-
 - a. Entrances including doors and canopies
 - b. Shopfront detail including a consistent approach to accommodating signage in future
 - c. Fifth floor parapet feature.
 - d. Sixth floor rooftop detail include eaves, glazing, cladding and rooftop terrace
 - e. Rooftop plant enclosure
 - f. 1:20 horizontal and vertical cross sections through typical sections of each of the facades sufficient to show the relationship between the façade and those elements of detail to be embedded within the façade as well projecting from it (such as the extent of recessing of glazing and doors in openings created in the façade, the consequential treatment of window reveals, the details of cills and the extent of projecting elements from the façade),
 - g. Cycle Store detailing (1:20),
 - h. Refuse Store and combined sub-station enclosure detailing (1:20),

- i. Full details of glazing and external doors, including all external joinery and framing methods and external colour (1:20),
- j. Feature brickwork including; 1:50 scale details of recessed or projecting sections; horizontal brick feature soldier course; details of brickwork finish around windows, shopfronts and the where the brickwork meets the ground.
- k. Prior to installation - mortar colour and mortar joint finish, between brickwork
- l. 1:100 elevation detailing the locations of all expansion joints in facades, weep holes and any damp proof courses
- m. Details of integral rainwater disposal system behind brickwork
- n. prior to installation - details of vents, louvres, extractor vents, external pipes, meters etc.

Thereafter the development shall be carried out only using the approved external materials.

Reason: Further details are required to ensure that the external appearance and fine detailing are of an appropriate high quality.

10. Prior to final installation, at least 2 different brick types shall be erected on the Dover Place site in the form of a 1metre by 1metre section of sample panel walls so that the LPA can approve the bricks to be used with reference in particular to their quality and suitability. The development shall be carried out only using the approved bricks. All other samples of materials to be used externally shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation and the development shall be carried out only using the approved external materials.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

11. Within 3 months of the occupation of the development a Cleaning Strategy for the building's exterior shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority including window cleaning methods and any associated paraphernalia or equipment that may require fixing to the building. The building's exterior shall only be cleaned in accordance with the approved Cleaning Strategy

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

Art Work

12. Details of artworks within the scheme and timetable for their implementation together with details of future maintenance shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development. The approved artworks shall be installed in accordance with the approved timetable and maintained in accordance with the approved details:

Reason: In the interest of the visual amenity of the area.

13. No vents or flues shall be located on any façade of the buildings hereby approved other than in accordance with details previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

Hard Landscaping

14. Within 3 months of the start of construction full details of the public realm landscaping scheme for the surroundings of the building at Dover Place and the Stour Centre extension car park together with a programme/mechanism for its implementation and future maintenance shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning in writing unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details to be submitted shall include

- a. The full details of the hard landscape works shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its approval shall include detailed information on the following including but not limited to;
- i. Hard surfacing materials;
 - ii. proposed finished levels or contours; including terraces, ramps, steps, (including a 1:50 scale drawing of step detail) levels detail, paving, cycleway, urban swales, kerbs, lighting, handrails (including illumination),
 - iii. minor artefacts and structures (e.g. furniture, bins, benches, bollards, gates, footbridges, tree guards, tree grills, signs, lighting, decked walkways, cycle racks, artwork, barriers bird boxes etc.);
 - iv. Outdoor seating areas including details of layout and any other associate paraphernalia such as weather screens or patio heaters
 - v. Fencing or other means of enclosure;

- b. a programme/timescale for implementing and completion of all such works in full within 6 months following the occupation of the building or car park.

The approved public realm landscaping scheme shall be implemented in full in accordance with the details and programme/timetable approved by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be maintained in accordance with the approved detail.

Reason: In order to protect and enhance the amenity of the area.

15. Within 3 months of the commencement of development full details of the soft landscape works for the area around the building and around the Stour Centre car park extension together with a programme/mechanism for its implementation and future maintenance shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The full details of the soft landscape works to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its approval shall include;
- a) the planting plan for amenity space next to skatepark; the urban swale to north of building;
 - b) Details of species and size of street trees together with any tree infrastructure including tree pits, sub base foundations; grilles and guards;
 - c) written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment)
 - d) details of the planting that is designed to create year round colour;
 - e) schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
 - f) an implementation and planting programme/timetable to ensure that all soft landscaping and planting is completed at least prior to the final occupation of the building.

The soft landscaping works shall be implemented in full and thereafter maintained in accordance with the details and timetable approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that adequate details of the proposals are submitted in the interests of the protection and enhancement of the area. Also, to ensure that ecological functionality and protected species population are not

impacted by the proposed development and foraging and dispersal routes remain open and connected throughout construction and occupation.

16. If any trees and/or plants whether new or retained which form part of the soft landscape works approved by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with Condition 17, die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased prior to the completion of the construction works or within a period of 5 years from the completion of construction, such trees and/or plants shall be replaced in the next available planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent otherwise.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area.

Lighting

17. Prior to occupation details of external lighting shall be submitted to the local planning authority and agreed in writing. The details shall include:
 - a. Details of the lighting fixtures and location
 - b. Details of the colours of the light
 - c. Hours of operation
 - d. Any proposed colour phasing
 - e. Details of compliance with the Institute of Lighting Engineers guidance notes for the reduction of light pollution

The approved lighting shall be installed prior to occupation of the building and no other external lighting shall be installed on the site without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area, comply with the Council's adopted Dark Skies SPD and to protect the flight path and foraging of bats and birds.

Construction

18. Prior to the commencement of development a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and local Highway Authority. This shall include details of the following:
 - wheel washing facilities/measures to prevent debris and spoil and the discharge of surface water onto the public highway

- access point for HGV's and site personnel
- provision of parking facilities for site personnel and visitors prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction
- dust suppression methods
- plant and noise generated from operation of vehicles and machinery
- fencing/hoardings
- lighting
- HGV routing
- hours of operation
- any temporary traffic management/signage required

The approved plan shall be implemented during the course of construction

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

19. Prior to the commencement of the development a Code of Construction Practice shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The construction shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved Code of Construction Practice and BS5228 Noise Vibration and Control on Construction and Open Sites and the Control of dust from construction sites (BRE DTi Feb 2003) unless previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority The Code of Construction Practice shall include,
- a. Measures to minimise the production of dust
 - b. Measures to minimise the noise (including vibration) generated by the construction process to include the careful selection of plant and machinery and use of noise mitigation barrier(s) The measures shall include but not be limited to a BS5228 assessment to protect **Saturn House** from construction noise and vibration.
 - c. Maximum noise levels expected 1 metre from the affected façade of any Saturn House adjacent to the site
 - d. Location of construction compound and design and provision of site hoardings

- e. Management of traffic visiting the site including temporary parking or holding areas
- f. Provision of off road parking for all site operatives
- g. Measures to prevent the transfer of mud and extraneous material onto the public highway
- h. Measures to manage the production of waste and to maximise the re-use of materials
- i. Measures to minimise the potential for pollution of groundwater and surface water
- j. The location and design of site office(s) and storage compounds
- k. The location of temporary vehicle access points to the sites during the construction works (including loading and turning of construction vehicles)
- l. Lorry routing to the site from the M20
- m. A detailed Site Waste Management plan for reducing construction waste during the building process
- n. The arrangements for public liaison during the construction works
- o. Provision of construction vehicle loading/unloading and turning facilities prior to commencement of work on site and for the duration of construction.

All details of the approved Code of Construction Practice shall be adhered to during the construction period.

Reason: To ensure provision of adequate off-street parking for vehicles and in the interests of highway safety and to protect the local amenity.

20. No construction activities shall take place outside the hours of 0730 to 1800 hours Mondays to Fridays excluding bank and public holidays and no construction activities shall take place at all on Saturdays, Sundays and bank and public holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.

Archaeology

21. Prior to the commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, will secure and implement:
- i) archaeological field evaluation works in accordance with a specification and written timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and
 - ii) further archaeological investigation, recording and reporting, determined by the results of the evaluation, in accordance with a specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

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

CCTV

22. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved details of a CCTV scheme to provide coverage of the surface car parks together with any signage shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of public safety and crime prevention.

Control of Noise and Vibration.

23. Prior to the occupation of the development, a noise survey shall be carried out and submitted to the Local Planning Authority alongwith a scheme for the control of noise and vibration of plant within the development (including mechanical ventilation, refrigeration, air conditioning and air handling units) to protect occupants from noise and vibration. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the occupation of the development and the equipment shall be maintained and operated in compliance to the approved scheme whenever it is operation. After installation of the approved plant, no new plant or ducting system shall be used without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent the transmission of noise and to protect occupiers from undue disturbance by noise.

Control of Fumes and odours

24. Prior to the first occupation of the ground floor units, a scheme and maintenance schedule for the internal extraction and treatment of fumes and odours (as a result of potential A3 uses), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any equipment, plant or process provided or undertaken in pursuance of this condition shall be installed prior to the first operation of the premises and these shall thereafter be operated and retained in compliance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To prevent the transmission of fumes and odours into neighbouring properties to protect amenity

Drainage – Foul and Surface Water

25. Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas and hardstandings shall be passed through an oil interceptor designed and constructed to have a capacity and details compatible with the site being drained. Roof water shall not pass through the interceptor.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

26. Within 3 months of the commencement of development details of the proposed means of foul water and sewerage disposal shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Southern Water unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved the works for the disposal of sewage shall be provided on the site in accordance with details previously submitted to and approved.

Reason: Insufficient details have been submitted and to ensure proper sewage disposal and avoid pollution of the surrounding area.

27. Within 1 months of the commencement of development, plans and particulars of a sustainable drainage system for the disposal of the site's surface water shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted system shall comprise retention or storage of the surface water on-site or within the immediate area in a way which is appropriate to the site's location, topography, hydrogeology and hydrology. The submitted system shall be designed to

- i) avoid any increase in flood risk,
- ii) avoid any adverse impact on water quality,

- ii) achieve a run off rate to be agreed in writing with ABC
- iv) promote biodiversity,
- v) enhance the landscape,
- vi) improve public amenities,
- vii) return the water to the natural drainage system as near to the source as possible, and
- viii) operate both during construction of the development and post-completion.

This detailed drainage scheme shall

- be based upon the strategy detailed within the PBA Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report reference Project Reference 27281/2001.
- demonstrate that the surface water generated by this development for all rainfall durations and intensities up to and including the climate change adjusted critical 100yr storm) can be accommodated and disposed of at rates agreed with the Lead Local Flood Authority, Ashford Borough Council and the Environment Agency.
- include identification of the proposed discharge points from the system.
- be provided in accordance with the approved timetable.
- be maintained in accordance with the approved details
- be retained in working order until such time as the development ceases to be in use.

The following should be submitted;

- a plan indicating the size, location and specification of proposed roof, parking areas and hard standings detailing the surface water drainage arrangements, location of oil interceptors and interceptor design, specification, future maintenance proposals and ownership.
- a plan identifying all the elements that make up the surface water drainage system, (including areas of porous paving, underground storage crates, box culverts, soakaways) and indicate the proposed future ownership / maintenance responsibility for each element.

- a programme that identifies a sequence of installation that provides adequate surface water drainage provision throughout the construction of the development.
- a programme and schedule of on-going future maintenance to be carried out to the surface water drainage system after completion and by whom.
- a plan indicating the routes flood waters will take should the site experience a rainfall event that exceeds the design capacity of the surface water drainage system.

The approved system shall be provided in accordance with the approved timetable. The approved system shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in working order until such time as the development ceases to be in use.

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal in order to reduce the impact of the development on flooding, manage run-off flow rates, protect water quality and improve biodiversity and the appearance of the development pursuant to Core Strategy Policy CS20 and to ensure ongoing efficacy of the drainage provisions and to protect vulnerable groundwater resources and ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

28. No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground is permitted other than with the express written consent of and in accordance with details approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Environment Agency.

Reason: To protect vulnerable groundwater resources and ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Flood protection

29. The Stour Centre Car Park shall be kept free from future development including any structures or permanent storage which could impede flood flows

Reason: This area is located within the fluvial floodplain and needs to be kept clear to allow for floodplain storage and the movement of flood flows across the site.

30. Prior to the commencement of Stour Centre car park extension a scheme for the provision and management of an 8 metre wide (measured from the top of the bank) buffer zone alongside the East Stour River shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme for

the relevant Plot and any subsequent amendments shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The buffer zone shall thereafter be free from any further built development including lighting and formal landscaping. The scheme shall include:

- plans showing the extent and layout of the buffer zone
- details of any proposed planting scheme (planting must be native species)
- details demonstrating how the buffer zone will be protected during development
- details of any other proposed built development

Reason: Development adjacent to rivers presents risks and opportunities to the river's ecological value. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 109 which recognises that the planning system should aim to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF also states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

31. Any works hereby permitted that have the potential to affect or disturb the banks of the East Stour River the bed of the East Stour River or the water quality of the East Stour River should not take place during the period between 1st December to 1st March in any year.

Reason: To protect brown trout, a salmonid species present in the river, during the spawning season including the period when fry and eggs remain in the gravel.

Sustainable Construction

32. The building hereby approved shall be constructed to achieve a minimum Building Research Establishment BREEAM (or subsequent equivalent quality assured scheme) overall 'Good' standard with under criterion Ene4 (Low and Zero Carbon Technologies) (or subsequent equivalent criterion) 1 credit for a feasibility study and 2 credits for a 10% reduction in carbon emissions.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no work on the building shall commence until details of the measures and technologies to be used to achieve the 10% reduction in carbon emissions below the predicted total energy demand through the use of on-site sustainable energy technologies such as renewables and/or low carbon technologies, have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be

carried out in accordance with the approved details and the measures and technologies for achieving the 10% reduction shall thereafter be retained in working order.

Within three months of the building being occupied the following in respect of that building shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval:

- a. SAP calculations from a competent person stating
 - i. the actual amount of carbon emissions from energy demand with the LZC technologies that have been installed and what the emissions would have been without them and
 - ii. the actual amount of residual carbon emissions
- b. a BREEAM 'Post Construction Stage' report and related certification produced by a registered assessor confirming the BREEAM standard that has been achieved and the credits awarded under Ene4 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to (i) limit the growth in carbon emissions and ensure the construction of sustainable buildings and a reduction in the consumption of natural resources, (ii) seek to achieve a development with reduced carbon emissions through sustainable design features and on-site low and/or zero carbon technologies and (iii) confirm the sustainability of the development and a reduction in the consumption of natural resources, all pursuant to Core Strategy policy CS10, the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD and advice in the NPPF..

Contamination

33. A site investigation report to establish the level of contamination on the site following the previous industrial uses, shall be carried out and submitted to the Local Planning Authority, one month before construction commences.

Reason: To establish if any land contamination exists and to help ensure future users of land and neighbouring land are minimised.

34. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed remediation scheme to ensure that the site is suitable for the intended use (by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Environment Agency and Environmental Health Manager. The scheme must describe all the relevant works to be undertaken including, the proposed remediation

objectives and performance criteria, a schedule of works and site management protocols.

The scheme must deliver a site that will not qualify as 'contaminated land' under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, having regard to the intended use of the land after remediation.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation scheme, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Following completion of the remediation scheme and prior to occupation of the building hereby approved, a verification report for the area, that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be prepared and submitted for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

35. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted, and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority for, a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved, verified and reported to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the building.

Reason: To ensure the site is remediated.

Foundations

36. Piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods shall not be permitted other than with the express written consent of the Local Planning Authority, which may be given for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to groundwater. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure no unacceptable risk to groundwater.

Compliance with approved plans

37. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed in the section of this decision notice headed Plans/Documents approved by this decision and notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approval and to ensure the quality of development indicated on the approved plans is achieved in practice.

38. The development shall be made available for inspection, at a reasonable time, by the local planning authority to ascertain whether a breach of planning control may have occurred on the site (e.g. as a result of departure from the plans hereby approved and/or the terms of this permission).

Reason: In the interests of ensuring the proper planning of the locality and the protection of amenity and the environment, securing high-quality development through adherence to the terms of planning approvals, and ensuring community confidence in the planning system.

Ecology

39. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved details of an ecology mitigation and biodiversity enhancement strategy in accordance with the Ecological Appraisal shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing and thereafter implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:

- Measures to safeguard retained habitats including boundary trees and watercourses;
- Mitigation strategies in respect of protected species including reptiles and Water Vole;
- Details of habitat provision and enhancement measures to be incorporated under the proposals including native and wildlife friendly planting, grassland seeding and faunal habitat features (including bat and bird box provision);
- Sensitive lighting design to minimise impacts to bats;

Reason: To ensure that wildlife is adequately provided for as part of the proposed development mitigation and in the interests of biodiversity and habitat protection and enhancement.

40. No vegetation (including trees and shrubs) shall be removed between February and September inclusive except if (i) no more 24 hours before any removal an ecologist has inspected the vegetation to be removed and certified that no occupied bird nests are present or (ii) a buffer zone of at least 5m is created around all occupied bird nests and no vegetation is removed within that zone until the young have fledged.

Reason: To protect breeding birds and their chicks and ensure that protected and important species are adequately provided for as part of the proposed development mitigation and in the interests of biodiversity and habitat protection.

Informatives:

1. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, before the development hereby approved is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents where required are obtained and that the limits of highway boundary are clearly established in order to avoid any enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority. The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under such legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.
2. The movement of construction traffic/delivery vehicles into/out of the site will only be permitted on the local highway network between 09:30 and 16:00 on weekdays. Any restriction on Saturday will be at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority on the basis of amenity implications. This requirement is to be secured by condition.
3. No development or new tree planting should be located within the 3.5 metres either side of the centreline of the public sewer and all existing infrastructure shall be protected during construction works.
4. No new soakaways should be located within 5 metres of a public sewer.

Due to the legislation that came into force on the 1st of October 2011, any sewer found during construction works, will be investigated.

5. Network Rail strongly recommends the developer contacts AssetProtectionKent@networkrail.co.uk prior to any works commencing on

site. Network Rail strongly recommends the developer agrees an Asset Protection Agreement with us to enable approval of detailed works.

Note to Applicant

1. This development is also the subject of an Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which affects the way in which the property may be used.

2. **Working with the Applicant**

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by;

- offering a pre-application advice service,
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application
- where possible suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome,
- informing applicants/agents of any likely recommendation of refusal prior to a decision and,
- by adhering to the requirements of the Development Management Customer Charter.

In this instance

- the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit,
- was provided with pre-application advice,
- the application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.
- the applicant/ agent responded by submitting amended plans, which were found to be acceptable and permission was granted
- The applicant was provided the opportunity to submit amendments to the scheme/ address issues.
- The application was dealt with/approved without delay.

- The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

Background Papers

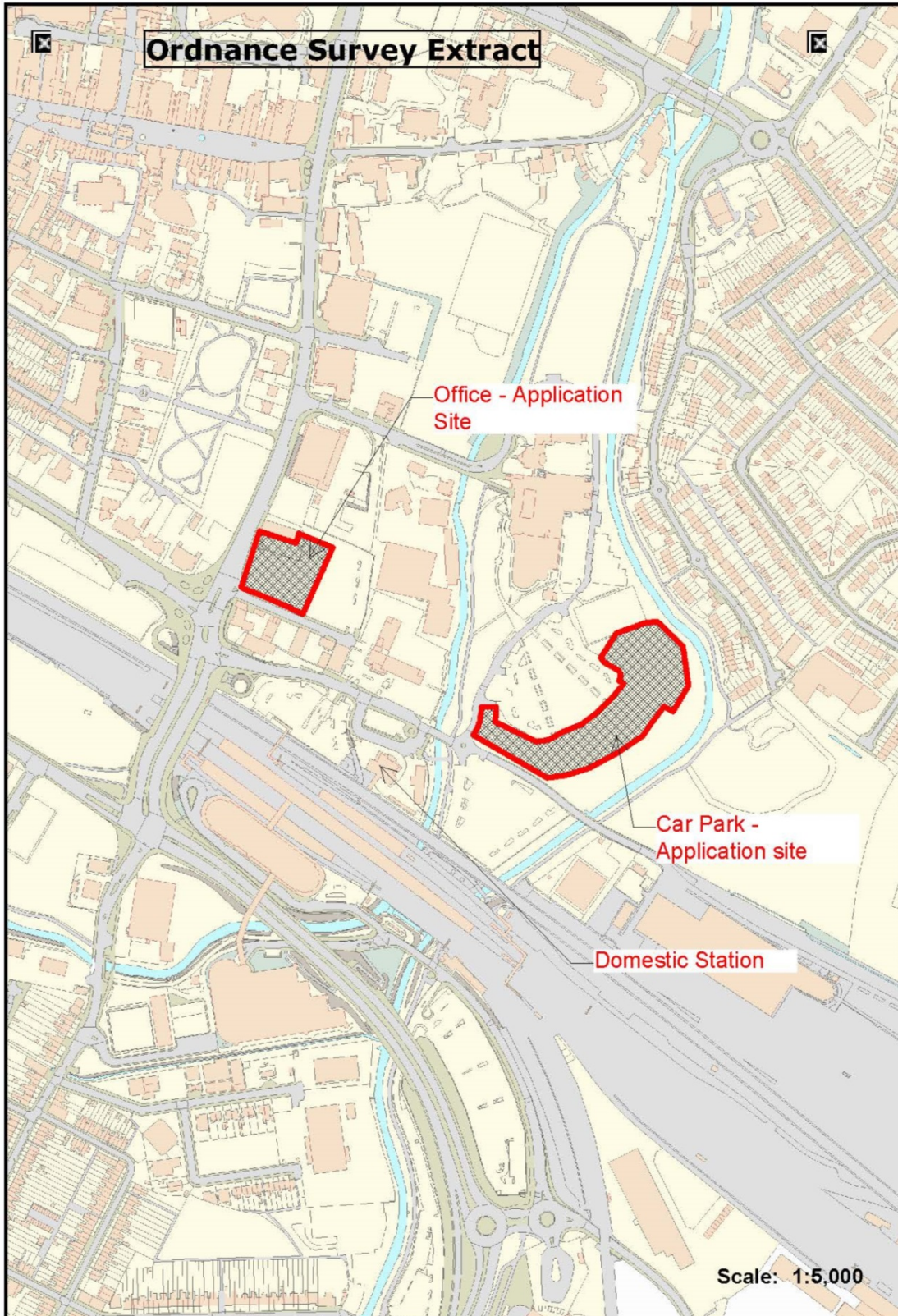
All papers referred to in this report are currently published on the Ashford Borough Council web site (www.ashford.gov.uk). Those papers relating specifically to this application may be found on the [View applications on line](#) pages under planning application reference 16/00554/AS.

Contact Officer: Mark Chaplin

Telephone: (01233) 330240

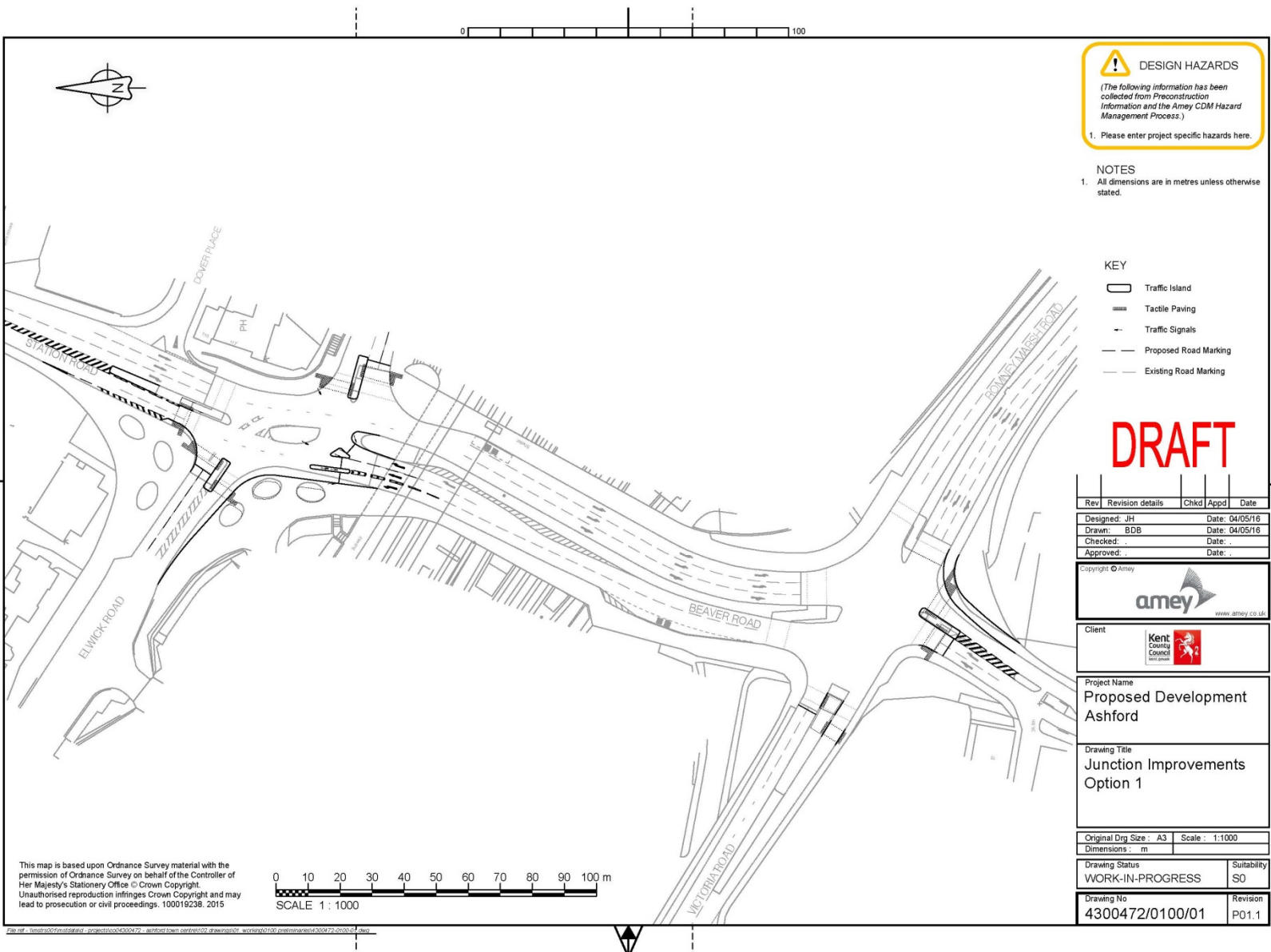
Email: mark.chaplin@ashford.gov.uk

Appendix 1



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Appendix 2



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