

15 APRIL 2024

Highland Court Farm

(Policy C17 - "Land at Canterbury Business Park")



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Kent Downs AONB National Landscape



Bridge

Higham Park

Highland Court Farm

North Downs Way

A2

Tower Woods

Cooting Downs

Adisham

YOU ARE HERE

Aylesham

(National Landscape shaded green)

"These are places with national importance, protected for the nation's benefit, but cared for by local teams with a deep understanding of the distinctive web of interconnecting factors that make these places special."



**National
Landscapes
Association**

Policy C17

pages 64-6

Land at Canterbury Business Park

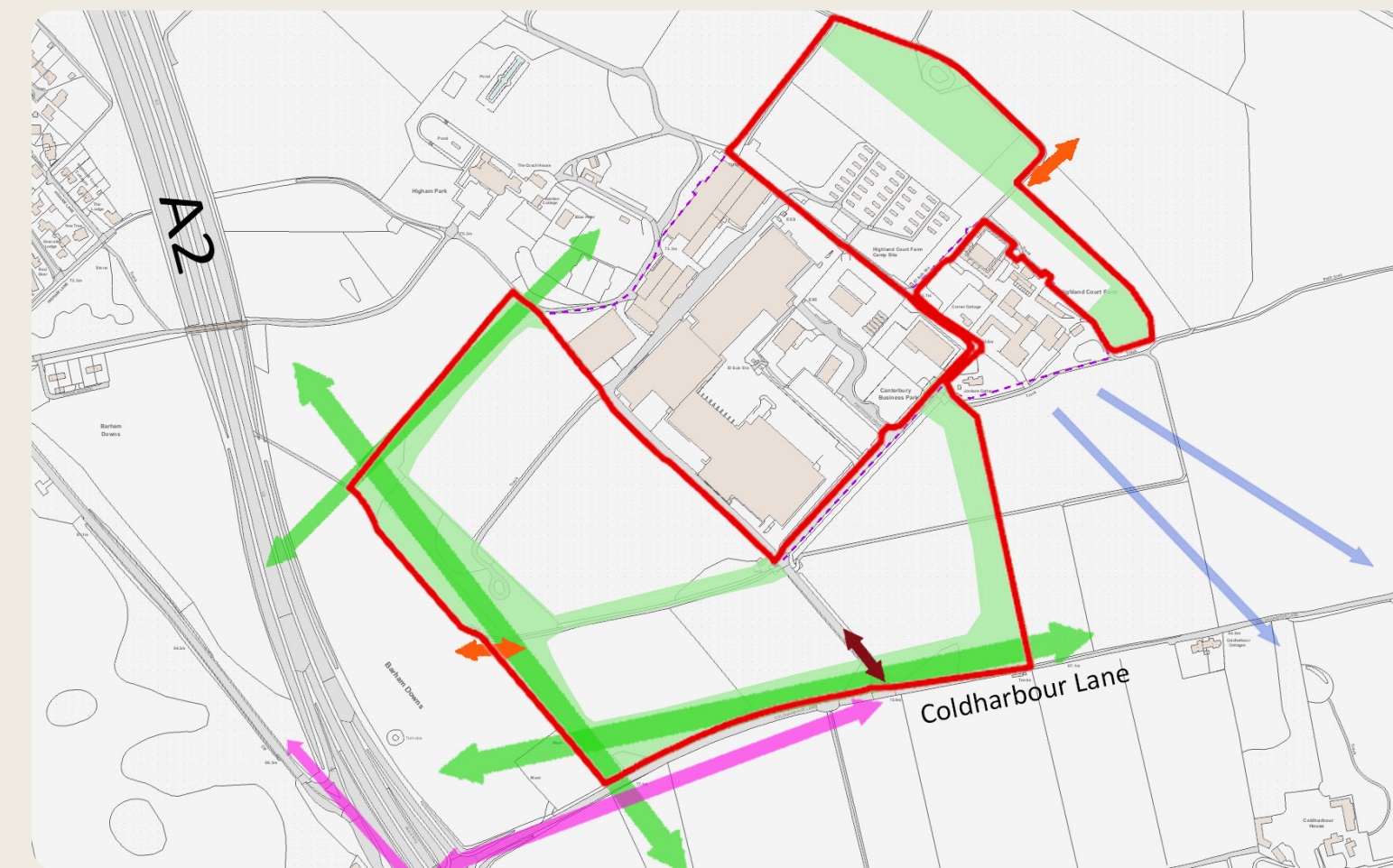
2.20 Canterbury Business Park is an existing employment site which has an established link to the agricultural, food and drink sectors. There is potential for the site to expand to comprise of further larger-scale commercial and business uses, including an opportunity for the creation of a viticulture hub alongside storage and distribution units making use of the sites' excellent links to the strategic-road network and the region's vineyard coverage.

2.21 There is a growth in viticulture and wine tourism in the south east and the creation of a viticulture hub at Canterbury Business Park could bring together various aspects of the winemaking process, such as production, research and storage and distribution. Alongside the main viticulture facilities, there is also an opportunity for smaller-scale associated commercial and business uses, such as those operating in the food and drink sectors.

2.22 The council has been unable to identify any suitable alternative locations for B8 and viticulture outside of the AONB and it is critical that the site is developed in a sensitive and landscape-led design to minimise and mitigate any adverse impacts.

Policy C17 - Land at Canterbury Business Park

Land at Canterbury Business Park – concept masterplan



Key	
	Site boundary
	Opportunities for green corridors
	Long distance views
	Vehicle access
	Landscape buffer/biodiversity opportunities - Indicative locations
	Opportunities to improve cycling/walking access and safety
	Pedestrian and cycle access (Bridleway)

Site C17 is allocated for employment development and viticulture hub. Planning permission will be granted for development which meets the following criteria:

1. Development mix

Across the site, the development mix will include:

- (a) A minimum of 35,500sqm of B8 floorspace including viticulture processing and storage; and

- (b) A limited amount of supporting uses, such as commercial and business, related to the delivery of the viticulture hub.

2. Design and layout

The design and layout of the site should:

- (a) Provide a high quality masterplan, bespoke architectural design and landscaping which respond to the prominent position in the surrounding landscape, the special qualities of the Kent Downs AONB and the historic context;

- (b) Respond positively to the context and character of the landscape, in addition to mitigating negative visual or landscape impacts;

- (c) Assess Areas of Archaeological Potential and protect and enhance nearby heritage assets including Highland Court Conservation Area and Grade 2* Listed Highland Court Hospital; and

- (d) Provide a Minerals Assessment in accordance with the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and other material considerations.

3. Landscape and green infrastructure

The green and blue infrastructure strategy for the site should:

- (a) Provide sustainable urban drainage making use of the existing topography and natural features of the site where appropriate;

- (b) Provide 20% biodiversity net gain, in line with Policy DS21;

- (c) Respond to the surrounding landscape character and provide an appropriate landscape framework for the site to minimise adverse impacts on the Kent Downs AONB;

- (d) Retain and enhance the existing trees along the western boundary as part of a landscape buffer along the ridgeline to minimise the adverse impact of the development on long distance views and views from surrounding PRoW; and

- (e) Provide habitat, pollinator and ecological connectivity across

the site and with the surrounding landscape, including with priority habitats and fragmented woodland.

4. Access and transportation

The access and transport strategy for the site should:

- (a) Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle connectivity, including:

- (i) New and improved walking and cycling connections within the site connecting the different land uses;

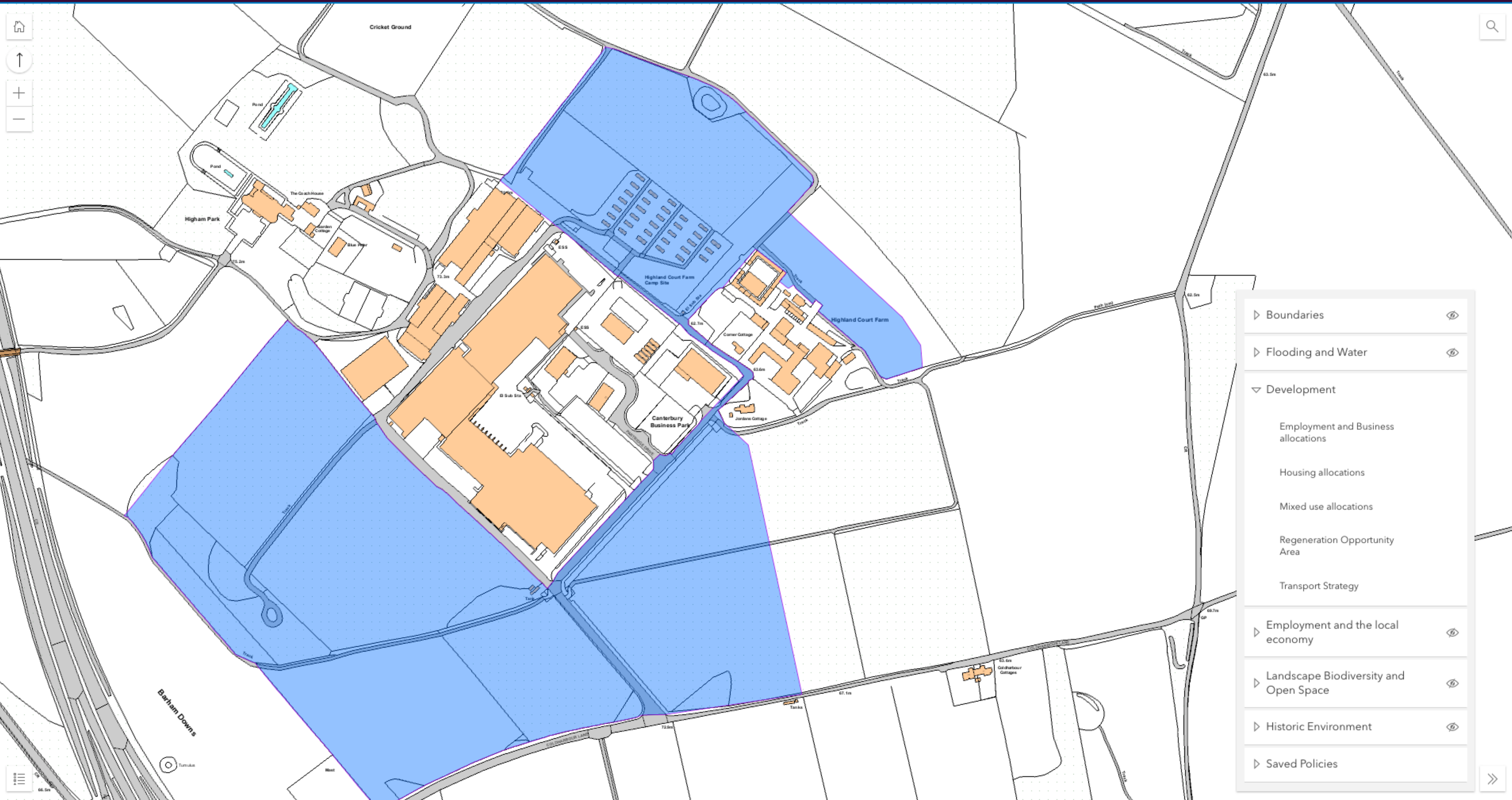
- (ii) New and improved walking and cycling connections to Bridge and existing bus stops on Coldharbour Lane to the south of the A2, including crossings as appropriate;

- (iii) New and improved cycling connections to Regional Cycle Route 16 (Canterbury to Dover) and improvements to that route as appropriate; and

- (iv) Improvements to PRoWs crossing and around the site as required.

- (b) Provide primary vehicle access from Cold Harbour Lane; and

- (c) Provide a Transport Assessment to demonstrate the connectivity of the site with the existing highway network, any necessary mitigation and measures to minimise the need for use of private cars.



- ▶ Boundaries
- ▶ Flooding and Water
- ▼ Development
 - Employment and Business allocations
 - Housing allocations
 - Mixed use allocations
 - Regeneration Opportunity Area
 - Transport Strategy
- ▶ Employment and the local economy
- ▶ Landscape Biodiversity and Open Space
- ▶ Historic Environment
- ▶ Saved Policies



vineyard | 'vɪnjəd, 'vɪnjɑːd |

noun

a plantation of grapevines, typically producing grapes used in winemaking.

- a sphere of action or labour (in allusion to Matt. 20:1): *for those of you still labouring in that academic vineyard, stay strong and watch your back.*



winery | 'wɪn(ə)ri |

noun (plural **wineries**)

an establishment where wine is made.

An architectural site plan for a winery facility. The plan shows a large parking lot with individual parking spaces, a road with a central green landscaped area containing trees, and a building complex. A red line outlines a specific area on the left side of the plan, which is labeled 'EXISTING WOODLAND'. Another red line outlines a different area on the right side of the plan. The text 'HGV MANOEUVRING SPACE' is located in a paved area near the center of the plan.

winery | 'wʌɪn(ə)ri |

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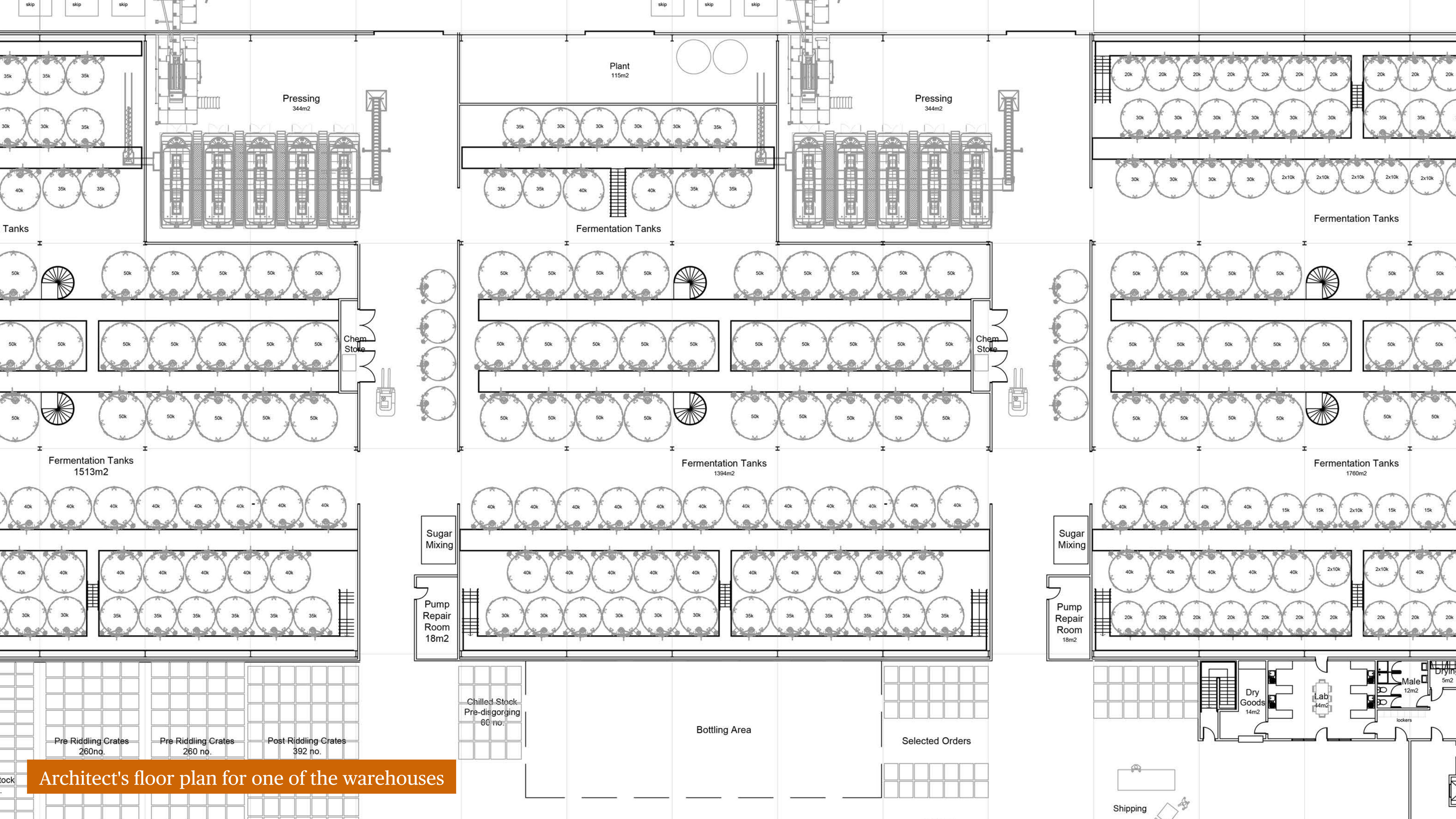




Church Barn, Milton Manor Farm, Ashford Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 7PP

Project: HICO, Chapel Down and Defined Wine Proposed Development at Canterbury Business Park, Canterbury, Kent		Drawing: Proposed Elevations Sheet 2	
Scale: 1:200 @ A1	Client By:	Drawing No: 2655 - 107 A	
Date: September 2022			

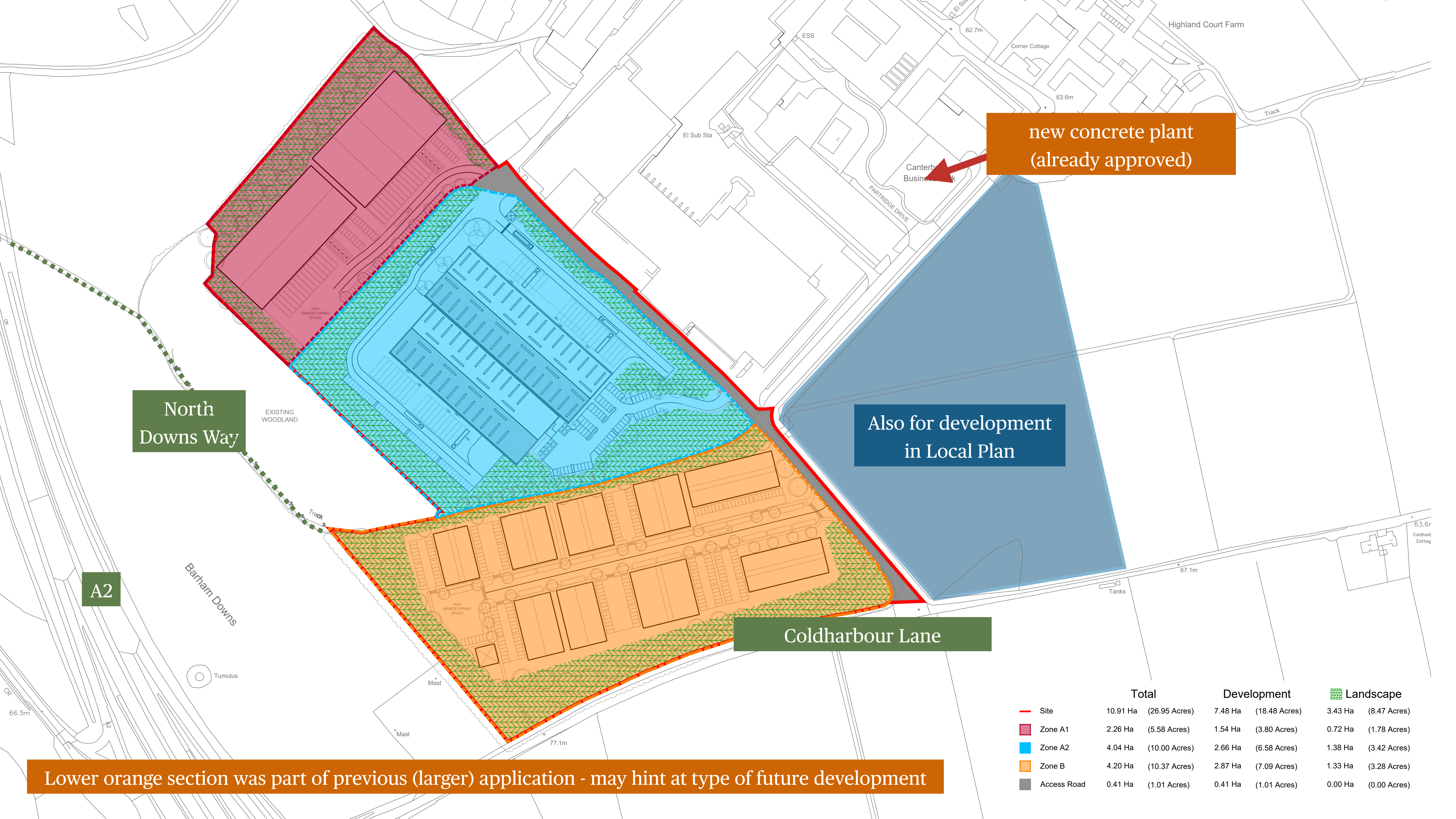
MILTON STUDIO



Architect's floor plan for one of the warehouses

"I have read the transport assessment and framework travel plan. Unfortunately I do not consider that the travel plan will encourage any employee to adopt sustainable transport."

Letter from KCC Transportation Team Leader
to Canterbury City Council, October 2022



new concrete plant
(already approved)

Also for development
in Local Plan

North
Downs Way

Coldharbour Lane

A2

Lower orange section was part of previous (larger) application - may hint at type of future development

	Total		Development		Landscape	
Site	10.91 Ha	(26.95 Acres)	7.48 Ha	(18.48 Acres)	3.43 Ha	(8.47 Acres)
Zone A1	2.26 Ha	(5.58 Acres)	1.54 Ha	(3.80 Acres)	0.72 Ha	(1.78 Acres)
Zone A2	4.04 Ha	(10.00 Acres)	2.66 Ha	(6.58 Acres)	1.38 Ha	(3.42 Acres)
Zone B	4.20 Ha	(10.37 Acres)	2.87 Ha	(7.09 Acres)	1.33 Ha	(3.28 Acres)
Access Road	0.41 Ha	(1.01 Acres)	0.41 Ha	(1.01 Acres)	0.00 Ha	(0.00 Acres)

Higham Park



Photo: Rob Bishop, Wikimedia (CC-BY-SA)



"The construction of large industrial buildings would entirely remove an area of productive landscape associated with the Higham Court estate which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Highland Court Conservation Area."

Historic England



Historic England



Kent Downs
National
Landscape



The
countryside
charity

Local plan process: in theory

SLAA (study of available land)



Draft Plan written



Public consultation (reg 18)



Council considers responses

Revised Plan



Regulation 19 Consultation



Submitted to government



Examined By Inspector



Decision to adopt plan



Planning applications considered

Local plan process: in reality

SLAA (study of available land)



Draft Plan written



Public consultation (reg 18)



Council approves a major commercial warehouse development on a greenfield site within AONB site, a month before local elections

council is sent "pre-action" letter seeking Judicial Review.



council takes legal advice, "quashes" decision, says it will reconsider application



gives one week's notice of new meeting



certain statutory consultees & CPRE refused opportunity to speak at meeting; express concerns over accuracy of inspector's report



campaigners bring new legal action and organise crowdfunding campaign

#Save Highland Court Farm AONB

by Sarah Moakes



Conservation

Canterbury, United Kingdom

Sarah Moakes

Case Owner

I am an environmental and planning campaigner who firmly believes that local planning authorities should not be allowed to ride roughshod over local and national planning policy.

About the case

Comments

17

days to go

£2,900

pledged of £5,000 stretch target from 68 pledges



Pledge now

This case is raising funds for its stretch target. Your pledge will be collected within the next 24-48 hours (and it only takes two minutes to pledge!)

Our aim is to save the grade II* listed Higham Park and its environs from an inappropriate and harmful industrial estate development and in the process defend not only this particular corner of the Kent Downs AONB but also ensure that other similarly protected landscapes cannot be

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS



Mahosadha Ong, Unsplash

Cuxton Winery appeal dismissed by planning inspector as plans scuppered again

Amy Tregenna atregenna@thekmgroup.co.uk

Published: 12:08, 27 July 2023 | Updated: 12:10, 27 July 2023

Read all comments | 5



Plans to build the UK's largest vineyard in Kent have been quashed – again.

Vineyard Farms Ltd proposed a new building including a café/restaurant and a visitor centre with a car park, access road and landscaping in Upper Bush, **Cuxton**.



Vineyard Farms Ltd wanted to invest £30 million into the scheme. Picture: Vineyard Farms Ltd/ Foster + Partners

The development would expand the estate from its current 540-acre site by adding another 570 acres.



Appeal Decision

Inquiry Held on 23 March – 4 April 2023

Site visit made on 4 April 2023

by **Stephen Wilkinson BA BPI DIP LA MBA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/A2280/W/22/3307648

Land south of Bush Road, near Cuxton, Medway, Kent

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Vineyard Farms Ltd against the decision of Medway Council.
- The application Ref: MC/21/2328, dated 30 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 30 March 2022.
- The development proposed is construction of a new winery building including café/restaurant and visitor centre with energy centre, car park, access road and landscaping.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Procedural and Preliminary Matters

2. In addition to the evidence presented by the two main parties, a joint case was presented by Cuxton Parish Council and 'Cuxton against the Winery', the Rule 6 party ('the R6 party') whose evidence covered Heritage, Green Belt and Traffic.
3. The appeal proposal was accompanied by a S106 Agreement (S106), the signed and sealed version being dated 25 April 2023, which I shall refer to later in this decision.
4. At the start of the Inquiry the Council submitted an additional rebuttal addressing economic matters. I did not accept this as it was received beyond the date that I had set for the receipt of rebuttals and could have prejudiced the appellants case contrary to the Wheatcroft¹ principles.
5. I accepted a Legal Opinion from an interested party on Green Belt issues at the start of the Inquiry. This had already been seen by the main parties in advance of the Inquiry. Furthermore, I accepted additional evidence from the R6 party during the Inquiry in respect of Traffic and Heritage. I shall refer to this evidence as the R6 party's evidence.

Cuxton Winery appeal dismissed by planning inspector as plans scuppered again

Amy Tregenna atregenna@thekmgroun.co.uk

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Vineyard Farms Ltd wanted to invest £30 million into the scheme. Picture: Vineyard Farms Ltd/ Foster + Partners

The development would expand the estate from its current 540-acre site by adding another 570 acres.

architectural character or appearance.

107. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset the Framework requires that great weight is given to its conservation. I find that the development of such a large building in such relatively close proximity to the CA would adversely impact on its setting conflicting with Policy BNE14 and the relevant policies in the Framework.

Issue 5-The Kent Downs AONB

108. Paragraph 177 of the Framework advises that when schemes for major development in an AONB are under consideration they should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

109. The Framework advises that this consideration should include an assessment of three matters:

- the need for the development including national considerations and the impact of permitting or refusing it on the local economy,
- the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need in some other way, and
- any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that could be moderated.

a) Need and the Economic Case

110. The appellant's economic case reflects the scale of their ambition in seeking to develop the English wine market for sparkling wine which is currently dominated by foreign competition. In pursuing this goal the appellant has embarked on a considerable investment programme on their estate expanding the area of vineyards from 540 acres to include a further 570 acres. This would make it the largest vineyard in the UK, in a new and growing sector of the economy. The appellant considers that the scheme would celebrate the importance of wine making, acting as a catalyst for its continued growth and contribution to the national economy.

111. The proposed winery would add capacity to the appellant's existing winery in Luddesdown which has a capacity of around 700,000 litres and which cannot be expanded due to physical constraints. The current and committed vineyard planting requires three times that capacity; a situation referred to as the

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty"

paragraph 182, *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

RELOCATION APPROVED DESPITE DISRUPTION FEARS

Green light for concrete firm's move

by Max Chesson
mchesson@thekmggroup.co.uk

Divisive plans to move part of a major concrete-making firm have been approved— despite fears it would destroy the “peace and tranquility” of a village.

Proposals for Brett to relocate their concrete batching plant five miles across Canterbury from Chartham to Bridge - an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - have been approved by officers at the city council.

Conditions attached to the approval of the plans include painting equipment dark olive green to match the surrounding wildlife and strict operational times from Monday to Saturday - with no work permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

The scheme marks the end of an 11-year search for an alternative site, with the firm having operated in Chartham for more than 40 years.

But some neighbours fear any increase in lorry movements around the Highland Court Farm area in the village of Bridge will have a negative impact on their quality of life.

One objector, Neil Roberts, stated: “I always take a walk around the farm, enjoying the peace and tranquillity that this



Brett has pledged to invest a “significant” amount into the new site, pictured here in CGI

area provides me with and this major increase in vehicle movement will have a considerable effect.

“My office looks straight out over this land and the view will be completely destroyed.

“With the height of this building obscuring my views and reducing the natural light, this will have a major effect on my mental health.”

And with Bridge-based fruit-packing firm A Gomez already having multiple lorries coming and going each day, Heather

Greenstreet claims the area cannot take any more.

“This will add considerably to the huge traffic movements caused there by Gomez staff coming and going, and the HGVs arriving and departing,” Ms Greenstreet said.

“The traffic there is already too much. We cannot have it increased.”

Traffic assessors say about 30 HGVs will visit the new batching plant each day.

Brett has had a base at Chartham since 1981, yet the



The current site of Brett's operations in Chartham, where it has been based since 1981

site is deemed outdated and bosses want to relocate and upgrade.

In 2017, the city council advised the company that any extension to its site in Chartham would be rejected.

And national housebuilding firm Persimmon Homes believes the proposed relocation spot is ideally placed geographically to “serve the demands of the local concrete market”.

Simon Breen, a strategic land director at Persimmon, said:

“To meet the aim of the emerging Local Plan to develop the 1,252 new dwellings per year it is essential that Canterbury has sufficient local capacity to supply the concrete required for the proposed developments.

“A plant at this location will service the demands of the local concrete market and especially the housing developments on the southern and eastern sides of Canterbury.

“In our opinion the application site is in an ideal location,

‘The traffic there is already too much. We cannot have it increased...’



Equipment at previous location (Milton Quarry, near Chartham)

Kentish Gazette

11 May 2023



Old equipment at Milton Quarry, the existing Brett Concrete site next to River Stour between Thanington/Chartham



The sprawling 10.4-acre former A Gomez site in Bridge is up for sale

Pictures: Colliers

By Max Chesson
mchesson@thekmgroup.co.uk

A huge industrial park owned by a defunct fruit packaging company is on the market and could fetch more than £20 million.

Fresh produce firm A Gomez Ltd, based in Coldharbour Lane in Bridge, just outside of Canterbury, brought in administrators in December after suddenly shutting down weeks before Christmas, leaving 400 workers without a job.

Now its former headquarters, which covers 10.4 acres, has hit the market for a princely sum, although bosses behind the sale warn the final amount will be dictated by the level of interest in the building.

Made up of four adjoining steel portal frame buildings, the site is described as a logistics facility, with 18 docking levels, offices and a reception.

Marketed by Colliers on behalf of administrators, the industrial park comes on a freehold basis and also has a temperature controlled storage space and 300 parking spots.

The four buildings have been built over the last four decades as the park expanded, with the first built in the late 1980s, and the most recent in 2019.

As late as 2022, A Gomez Ltd was looking to expand the site, with plans approved in September that year to make room for more HGVs to stay overnight.

The sale is the latest sad turn for a firm which once farmed more than 3,250 hectares of land in Spain, while maintain-



The first section of the facility was built in the late 1980s

'We were told we'd have a new beginning for Gomez a few years ago - but now, there's nothing...'

ing much smaller plots in the Netherlands and the UK, and distributing fruits from across Europe.

Employees at the business were left "shell-shocked" at the "atrocious timing" of the closure last year.

A letter signed off by director Raquel Hernandez, seen by the Gazette, said: "It is with regret that I have to inform you that, with effect from Friday, December 8, A Gomez Limited will cease trading.

"As most of you are aware, the business has been encountering many financial challenges following the loss of its business since undertaking a gradual wind-down of its operations over recent weeks.

"Unfortunately the financial pressures on the business have meant that the shareholders and directors of the company have had to take the reluctant decision to cease operations with immediate effect."

The letter also said employees would be paid for the hours they have worked in December.

It is understood bosses at the firm had planned to wind down the business and cease trading between February and March this year - with the sudden closure taking many by surprise.

One employee, who asked not to be named, called it "a bitter pill to swallow".

The worker said: "We're all shell-shocked. When we first heard the business would wind down we couldn't believe it.

"Business has got quieter, but we all feel let down and failed by the senior management - there are people who have spent more than 10 years there and not so much as a thank you. It's horrible not to have one last day with my colleagues.

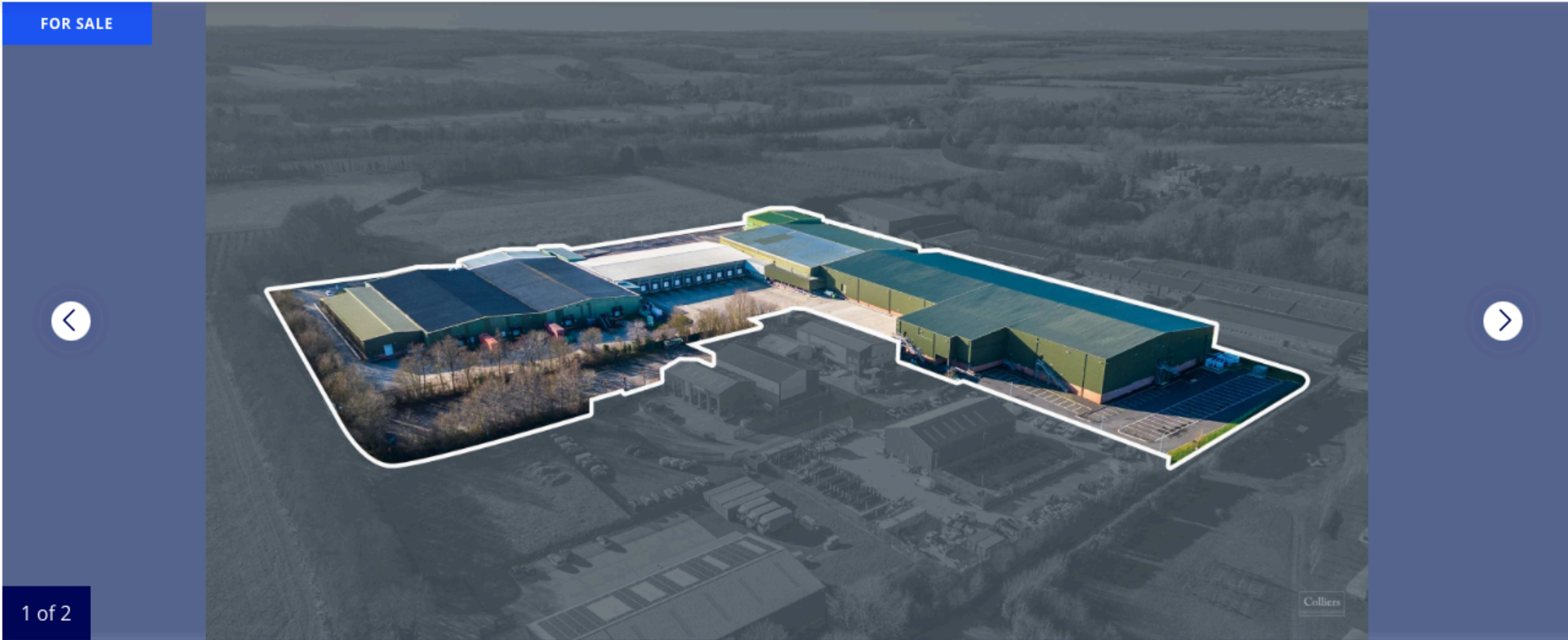
"The timing is atrocious. Everyone thought we would have at least this Christmas to prepare - it has completely knocked everyone off their feet and it's a bitter pill to swallow.

"We were told we'd have a new beginning for Gomez a few years ago - but now, there's nothing."

Gomez was previously owned by Dover Athletic chairman Jim Parmenter but, according to Companies House, he gave up control of the business in September 2021.

Site shut down suddenly before Christmas

Fruit firm's huge factory on sale for more than £20m



1 of 2

Coldharbour Lane, Canterbury

Canterbury 240 | Freehold Logistics Facility | For Sale with Vacant Possession

Industrial & Logistics | Building Size: 242,359 SF | Land Area: 242,359 SF

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[VIEW DOCUMENTS](#)

Colliers is pleased to present this substantial Freehold Logistics Facility on behalf of Joint Administrators.

Canterbury 240 comprises 242,000 sq ft of high quality warehouse accommodation on a self-contained 10.4-acre site, situated in a strategic South East location.

The property comprises a purpose-built, high specification facility, configured as four adjoining steel portal framed buildings known as G1, G2, G3 and G4.

Get More Info

Learn more about this property listing by contacting one of our experts.



Nick Hammond
Head Of Advisory And Restructuring
Advisory & Restructuring



White Helleborine orchid

Björn S, Flickr (CC-BY-SA)

Of all the flowers that grace the Kentish Downs, it is perhaps the orchid family that have acquired a unique attraction, not least for the oddity of their shape and form as for their seemingly enigmatic life cycles.

Notoriously elusive and seldom commonplace in their haunts, their striking looks have bestowed upon them a reputation for as the "royalties" of the plant world.

Dan Tuson, *The Kent Downs* (2007)



Common pipistrelle bat



Daubenton's bat

Martin Janča



Brown long-eared bat



Hazel dormouse

SzymonBartosz



Summary

- greenfield site within a protected landscape
- doesn't pass "exceptional circumstances" test
- commercial development, not in "public interest"
- similar development recently refused elsewhere
- opposed by multiple statutory consultees
- warehouses approved before local plan adopted
- huge empty warehouses on brownfield next door
- industrial scale operation, not a tourist attraction
- wildlife disturbance, net habitat loss
- irreversible loss of farmland
- increased traffic (plus effect of the concrete plant)
- traffic and visual impact on Public Rights of Way
- existing light pollution needs fixing/enforcement



Important things to do

Find policy C17 (Canterbury Business Park) pages 64-6

adisham-countryside.com

Support the legal crowd funder, if you can.

Listen for news about the court case (early May)

Fun things to do

Watch the 1924 Higham silent film, "The Map"

(featuring steam railway!)

Walk the North Downs Way: www.nationaltrail.co.uk

Read Dan Tuson's book: "*The Kent Downs*"

(published by The History Press)

Learn more about wildlife and plants:

bats.org.uk

rspb.org.uk

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

butterfly-conservation.org

rhs.org.uk

froglife.org