

Proposed Extension to West Wickham Development Framework Boundary

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Introduction

The owners of White Gables wish to downsize and they are currently unable to find a suitable smaller property in the village to downsize to. As identified in the Neighbourhood Plan there is “imbalance of our housing stock” and that it does not “meet the needs of local people” and there needs to be “smaller family homes and opportunities for downsizing for local people.” The owners of White Gables wish to resolve both this issue and the Neighbourhood Plan not meeting its objectives by putting forward the land adjacent to their property as a site suitable for a small home(s) for consideration as part of the consultation.

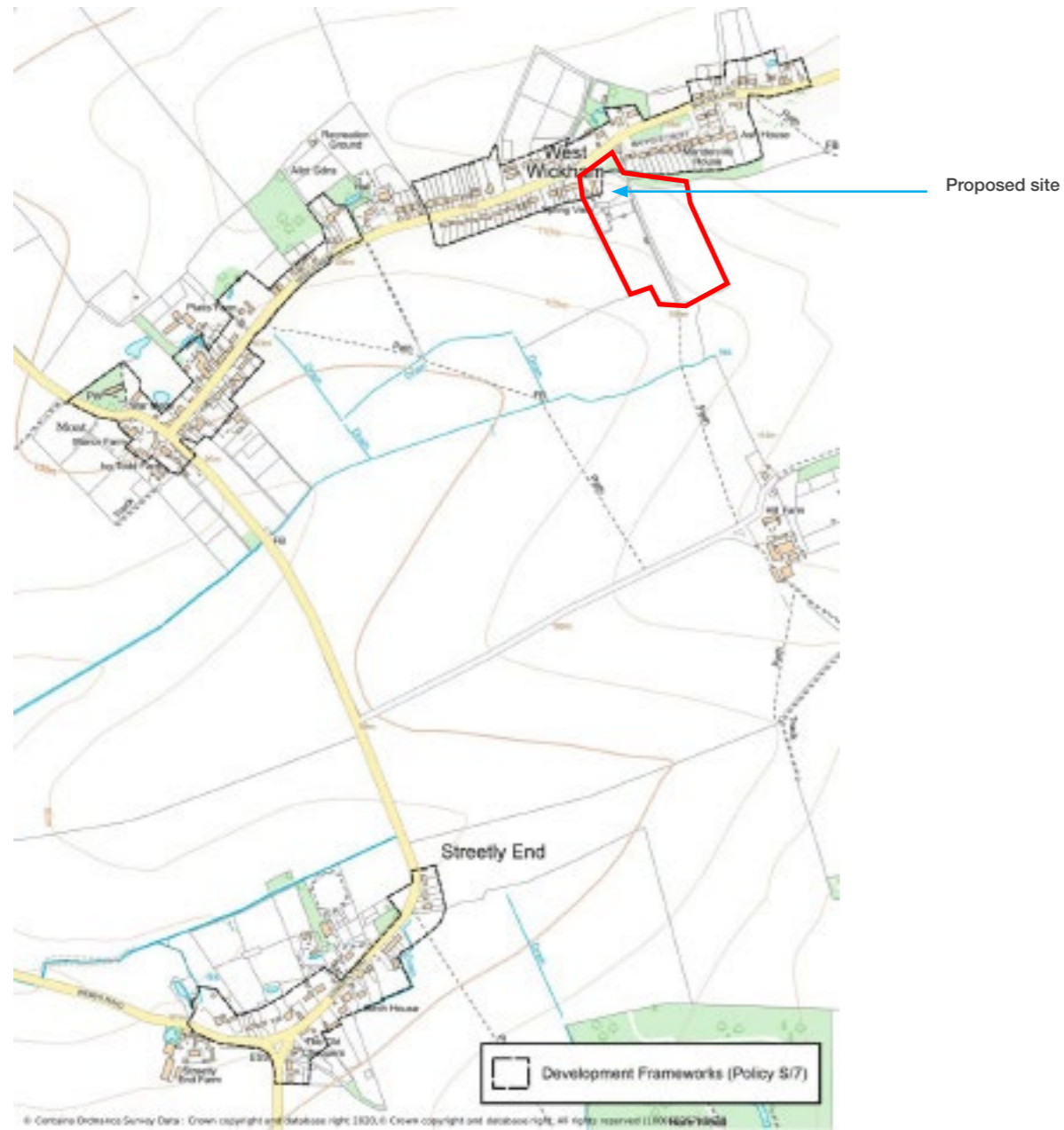
This document establishes the principle of the site adjacent to White Gables (104 High Street) as a suitable site for one to two small homes for older residents of the village and the inclusion in the Development Framework boundary. Development of said homes on this site would ensure the Neighbourhood Plan achieves its objective;

“Sustain a diverse and thriving community with policies that support and facilitate improvements in the provision of community facilities and that deliver a housing mix that meets the needs of local people. This means providing smaller dwellings for the young and old who wish to remain in the Parish.”

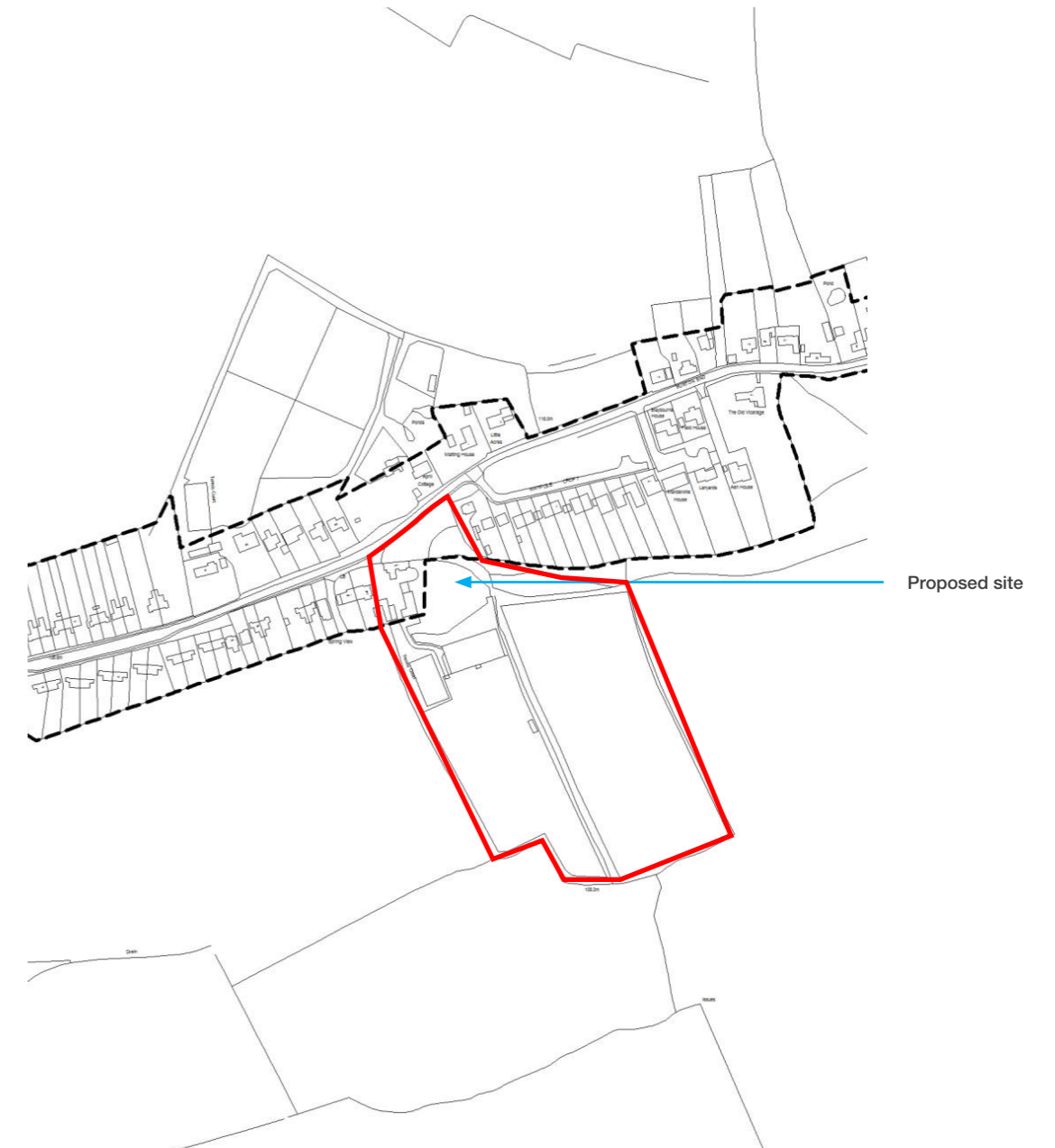
As it currently stands the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the need for smaller homes yet does not identify how or where these would be delivered and thus does not meet its objectives.

Wider Site

White Gables (104 High Street) is located towards the Eastern end of the village on the SW corner of Character Area 3 (Burton End).

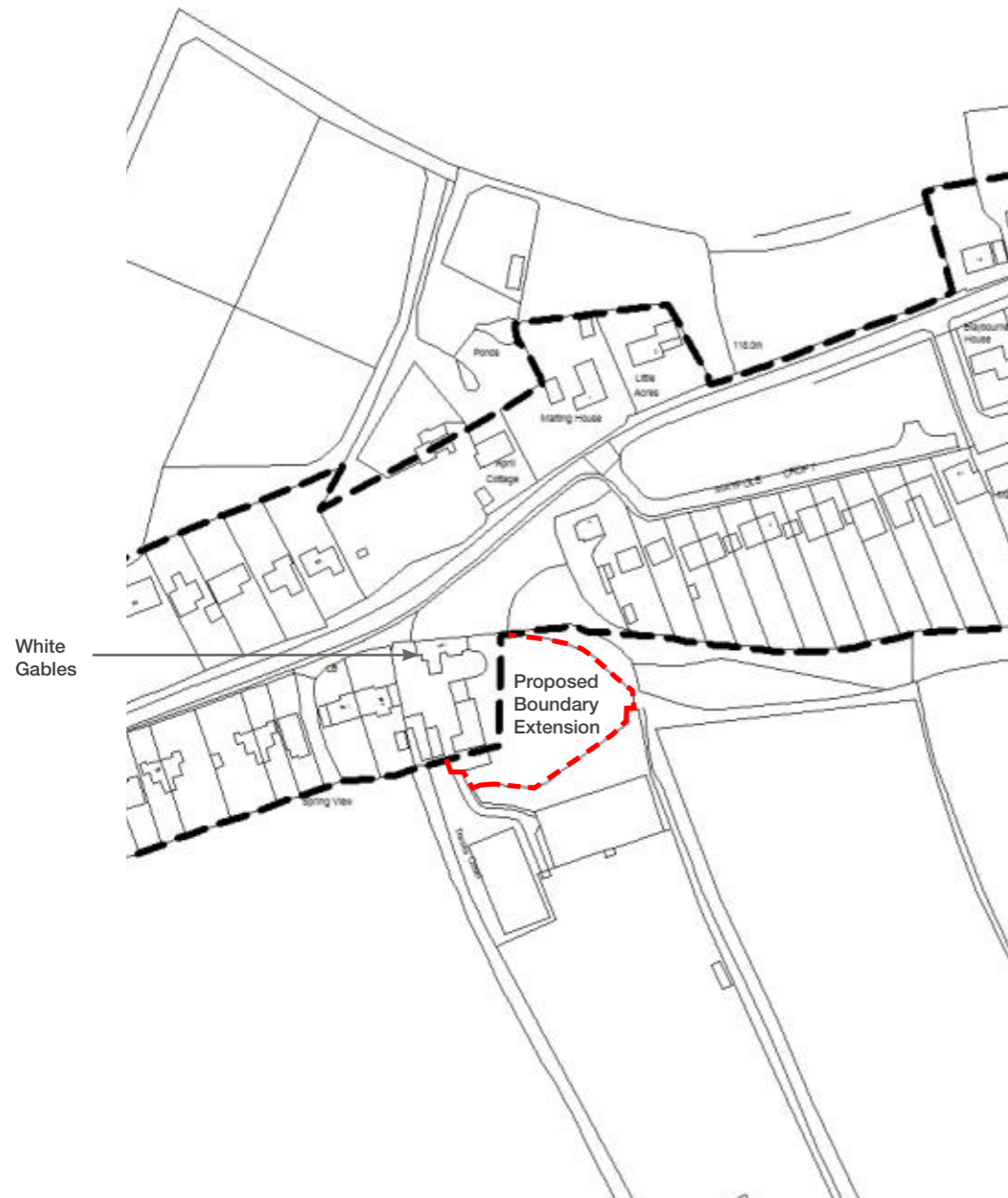


White Gables sits on a large plot and consists of a the main house (Grade II listed), a number of stables/outbuildings, a tennis court and a riding paddock.



Development Boundary

Currently the Development Framework Boundary kinks in to exclude the garden of White Gables. The existing boundary line does not follow any naturally occurring or man made line on the site. We would propose amending this line follow the existing fence line on the site. This would be consistent with the other properties in the area (eg. Argyll Cottage directly north of the site) who's gardens are included in the Development Framework Boundary. This line does not impact the important copse.



Character Assessment Area

Whilst currently outside of the Development Framework it is already included in the WWK /2 Character Assessment Area (purple area).



Settlement Pattern

As noted in section 2.4 “Development in the village has not consistently respected the character of the village, the historic linear settlement pattern and surrounding historic buildings”. This would not be the case for this site. A proposal here would continue the linear settlement pattern meeting Policy WWK/1 and WWK/2.



Important Copse & Hedge

The Neighbourhood Plan Identifies that there is an important copse and hedge adjacent to the proposed site. A building here could comfortably sit in the zone marked blue and not impact either meeting Policy WWk/2 and WWK/7. Additionally a key view out to the countryside beyond (green arrow) would not be impacted thus maintaining one of the main principles of the greenbelt, openness. The copse itself would act as cover for a building located here meaning the visual impact of a building would be minimal.



Summary

Home(s) here would be a natural fit for the village as the site is not an outlying site and the buildings would continue the characteristic linear style of the village, filling a gap between two sets of houses. Development here would be significantly more suitable than backfill development and it would be of a size and scale that the Neighbourhood Plan supports.

The proposed site could accommodate one to two small units, providing much needed homes to older residents downsizing thus meeting policies WWK/9 & WWK/10 and helping meet the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. It would allow a family who have been in the village for years to remain in the village for many years to come and allow a new younger family into the village thus ensuring the diversity and vitality of the village for many years.

A proposal here would be driven by a local family who love and respect the area and want to create something that will enhance the village they have called home for many years. A proposal here would be of the highest design quality and sustainability standards and would respect the character the area. Additionally the bio-diversity of the area could be enhanced through careful landscape design. A thorough application containing heritage and ecological reports (to name but two) would be submitted to ensure that a proposal here would only be of benefit to the area. However we feel that the principle of a small home(s) on this site should be considered as part of this consultation. Without it, we feel that the Neighbourhood Plan does not meet its objectives and therefore urge the parish to consider this site as a route to meeting its objectives as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.

We therefore propose that the Framework Boundary be extended to allow for a small development providing suitable accommodation for downsizing, which would support the objectives set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.