

Officer's Assessment Sheet

Application Number PA/2025/2225
Type Change of use
Location Willow Tree Hair and Beauty, Willow Tree House, Bromley Green Road, Ruckinge, Ashford, TN26 2EQ
Proposal Change of Use of existing Hair and Beauty business to a Create and Craft Pottery Painting Studio (Retrospective)
Case Officer Georgina Galley
Registration Date 01/12/2025 **Consultation Ends** 30/01/2026
Valid Date 30/12/2025 **Deadline Date** 24/02/2026
Applicant Mrs Chloe Coleman
Agent

Environmental Impact Assessment --

Is EIA Required: No Reason:

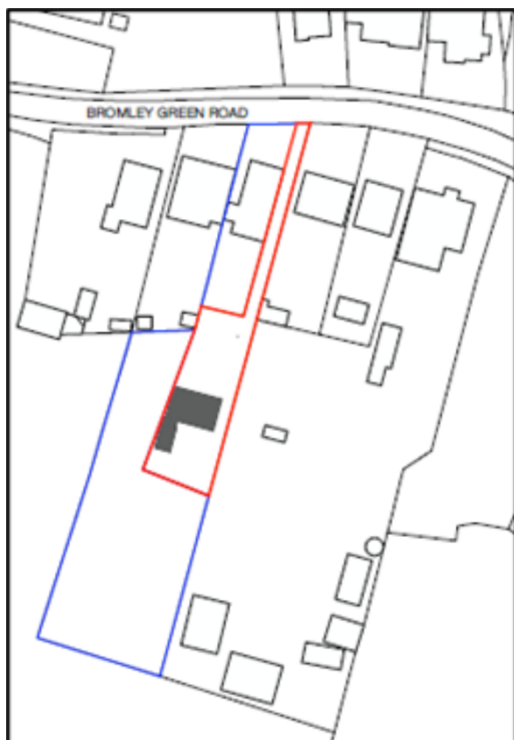
RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

Site and Surroundings

The site comprises of a single storey detached building that is located to the rear of Willow Tree House on the south side of Bromley Green Road in Ruckinge.

The Site Location Plan is shown below with the site outlined in red and the rest of the land under the same ownership outlined in blue:



The site is located in the Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Farmlands Landscape Character Area.

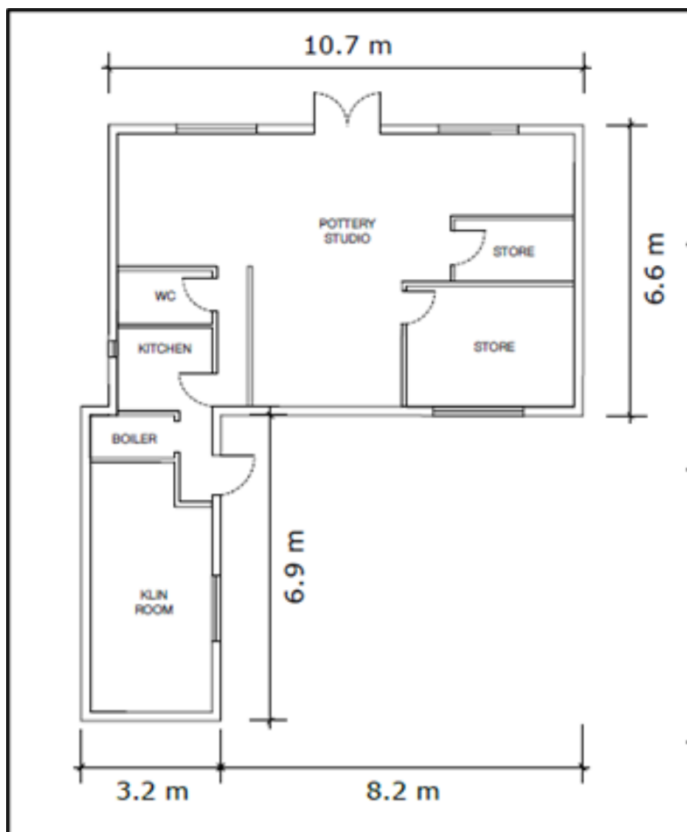
The site is located in the Stour River catchment area.

Proposal

Change of use of existing hair and beauty business to pottery painting studio (Retrospective).

The site was previously occupied by Willow Tree Hair and Beauty Salon; however, this use ceased in 2025 and it has been operating as 'Coleman's Create and Craft' since around September 2025. The application is accompanied by a Supporting Statement ('Mission Statement for Colemans Create and Craft').

The layout of the building is shown below and includes the main pottery studio/painting area that is laid out with tables and chairs, a small kitchen, W.C, storage rooms and a kiln:



The submitted plans include a parking area for 8 cars at the front of the building.

Relevant Planning History

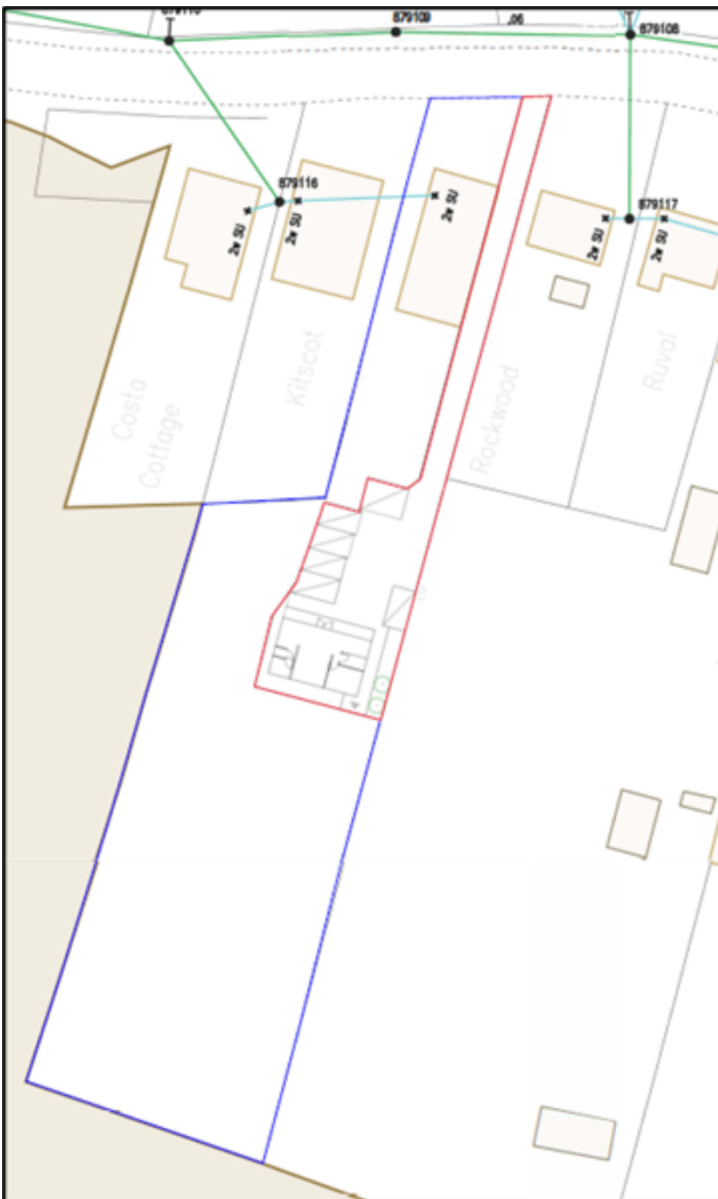
15/01505/AS - Erection of a garage and garden store with a home office above. PERMIT.

17/00632/AS - Change of use of the land and erection of a timber framed building for the use as a beauty salon (retrospective). PERMIT.

This permission was subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Opening hours (The use of the beauty salon building hereby approved shall be restricted to between the hours of 09:30 hours - 20:30 hours Monday to Friday, and 08:30 hours - 17:30 hours Saturdays only. The beauty salon use shall not operate on any Sunday or Bank Holiday)
- 2) Parking as shown
- 3) No external lighting
- 4) Available for inspection

The Block Plan for planning permission 17/00632/AS is shown below:



It should be noted that there was a car parking area for up to 6/7 cars under this proposal.

20/00130/AS - Change of use of land to incorporate rear extension to existing salon building and extension to car park. PERMIT.

This permission was subject to the following conditions:

- 1) 3 years
- 2) Approved plans
- 3) Opening hours (The use of the extension hereby approved shall be restricted to between the hours of 09:30 hours - 20:30 hours Monday to Friday, and 08:30 hours - 17:30 hours Saturdays only (as per the existing salon). The beauty salon use shall not operate on any Sunday or Bank Holiday)
- 4) Parking as shown
- 5) Restriction on staff members (3 members of staff)
- 6) No more than 6 customers receiving treatments at any one time
- 7) Flush entry
- 8) No external lighting
- 9) Available for inspection

It should be noted that the car parking area was reconfigured under this proposal to provide 8 parking spaces at the front of the building for customers and 4 parking spaces at the rear for staff as shown on the Proposed Site Block Plan below:



PA/2025/1535 - Variation of condition 3 (opening hours) and 8 (external lighting) of planning permission 20/00130/AS for Change of use of land to incorporate rear extension to existing salon building and extension to car park. WITHDRAWN.

Planning Policy

The Development Plan for Ashford borough comprises:

- the Ashford Local Plan 2030 (adopted February 2019),

- the Chilmington Green AAP (adopted July 2013),
- the Wye Neighbourhood Plan (adopted March 2016),
- the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan (adopted December 2019),
- the Boughton Aluph & Eastwell Neighbourhood Plan (adopted October 2021)
- the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted March 2022)
- the Charing Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2023)
- the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan Review 2023 (adopted July 2024)
- the Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan (adopted October 2024)
- the Tenterden Neighbourhood Plan (adopted October 2024)
- the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024 - 39 (2025) & the Kent Minerals Sites Plan (2020)

Although not yet part of the Development Plan, the following emerging Neighbourhood Plans are a material consideration:

None at present.

The relevant policies from the Development Plan relating to this application are as follows:

Ashford Local Plan 2030:

SP1 - Strategic Objectives

SP3 - Strategic Approach to Economic Development

SP6 - Promoting High Quality Design

ENV3a - Landscape Character and Design

ENV4 – Dark Skies

TRA3b - Parking Standards for Non Residential Development

Draft Ashford Local Plan 2042

On the 31 July 2025, the Council's Cabinet approved a consultation version of the draft Ashford Local Plan 2042 (Regulation 18). Consultation on the draft Ashford Local Plan will take place on 18 August – 13 October 2025. At present, the policies in this emerging Local Plan should be afforded limited weight.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Landscape Character SPD 2011

Dark Skies SPD 2014

Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide 2021

Consultations/Representations

Ward Member; Has Ward Member requested application go to Committee? No.

Ruckinge Parish Council; Supports subject to a condition that late night opening be restricted to Friday evenings only, and on that day limited to no later than 9.00pm.

Neighbours - 8 neighbours consulted; 1 representation received and 33 letters of support received with the following comments:

1 representation

- The owner is hosting a psychic night where no pottery making will be taking place;
- Is a catering licence needed to serve 'snacks'?

OFFICER NOTE: It has been confirmed by the applicant in an email dated 04 February 2026 that a 5-star rating from the food hygiene team has been received and a certificate is available.

- The owner has stated reduced number of vehicles, however I understand attendees have to return to the property at a later date to pick up their pottery which will mean double the amount of vehicles than quoted. In the winter this is possibly not noticed, however in the summer, neighbours may notice disruption with windows and doors open.

33 support

- There is a good car parking booking system in place so there is enough space for visitors;
- Parking is managed at the time of booking to ensure no overspill parking;
- A positive asset to the Ashford community;
- Good experience for all ages and for the family;
- A pleasant area;
- Good for mental health;
- A relaxed and inclusive environment;
- Private sessions offered for adults with SEND;
- This business is essential to the Ashford community;
- It provides much-needed craft opportunities for all ages;
- The business has not caused any issues with traffic, parking or disturbance to the surrounding area;
- Party hire sessions are well organised, and the availability of alcohol has not presented any problems, as it is offered responsibly;
- This is a small, low impact business;
- The only pottery painting studio in Ashford;
- Workshops offered to all ages and abilities;
- There have been no issues with noise or light;
- The owner is considerate to her neighbours.

Assessment

Background Information

Retrospective planning permission was granted under application 17/00632/AS for the use of a timber framed building to the rear of Willow Tree House as a beauty salon. Conditions were attached to the decision notice relating to opening hours, parking and external lighting. Planning permission was subsequently granted under application 20/00130/AS for an extension to the existing beauty salon, as well as an extension to the car park area. Additional conditions were attached to this decision relating to staffing and customer numbers.

In 2025, an application was submitted under PA/2025/1535 to vary conditions 3 (opening hours) and 8 (external lighting) of planning permission 20/00130/AS. During the course of determination of this application, it came to light that the building was no longer being used as a beauty salon but instead was being used as a pottery painting studio. The applicant was advised that this use would require a new planning application and application PA/2025/1535 was later withdrawn. The current application is a result of the previous discussions with the applicant.

Character and Appearance

Strategic policies SP1 and SP6 require high quality design in new developments. Policy ENV3a states that the Council shall have regard to the landscape characteristics of the site.

NPPF paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area. They should be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. NPPF paragraph 187 seeks to ensure that decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The building itself and car park area are already in situ. In this case, the new use has not resulted in any external changes to the existing building as confirmed on the submitted plans.

With the above in mind, there are no objections from a visual amenity perspective.

Neighbouring Amenity

Strategic policies SP1 and SP6 promote high quality design that responds positively to its surroundings.

NPPF paragraph 135(f) requires for development to achieve a high standard of amenity for existing users.

The building itself and car park area are already in situ. As such, there are no objections in terms of loss of daylight/sunlight, loss of outlook or loss of privacy for neighbouring residents.

With regards to general noise and disturbance, the supporting documents confirm that the previous beauty salon was open Monday to Friday (from 10:00 – 20:30) and on Saturdays (from 10:00 – 17:30) and had 3 members of staff (2 hairdressers and 1 beautician). In comparison, the pottery painting studio would be open 4 days a week, between 10.00 and 16.00, except for on Fridays when hours would be extended to 21.00 to allow for after work/school visitors.

Overall, the new use would have reduced operating hours (of 20 hours per week, excluding private bookings) compared to the previous beauty salon (49 hours per week). The proposal for Sunday and Bank Holiday hours previously being applied for under application PA/2025/1535 is no longer being pursued, as confirmed within the supporting documents.

The supporting documents also highlight that the new use would result in fewer vehicle movements to and from the site compared to the previous beauty salon, which had an 'open booking system' and allowed multiple clients to be scheduled within the opening hours. In this case, there would be a maximum of 16 cars per day for planned sessions and a strict booking system that caps parking at 8 spaces per session.

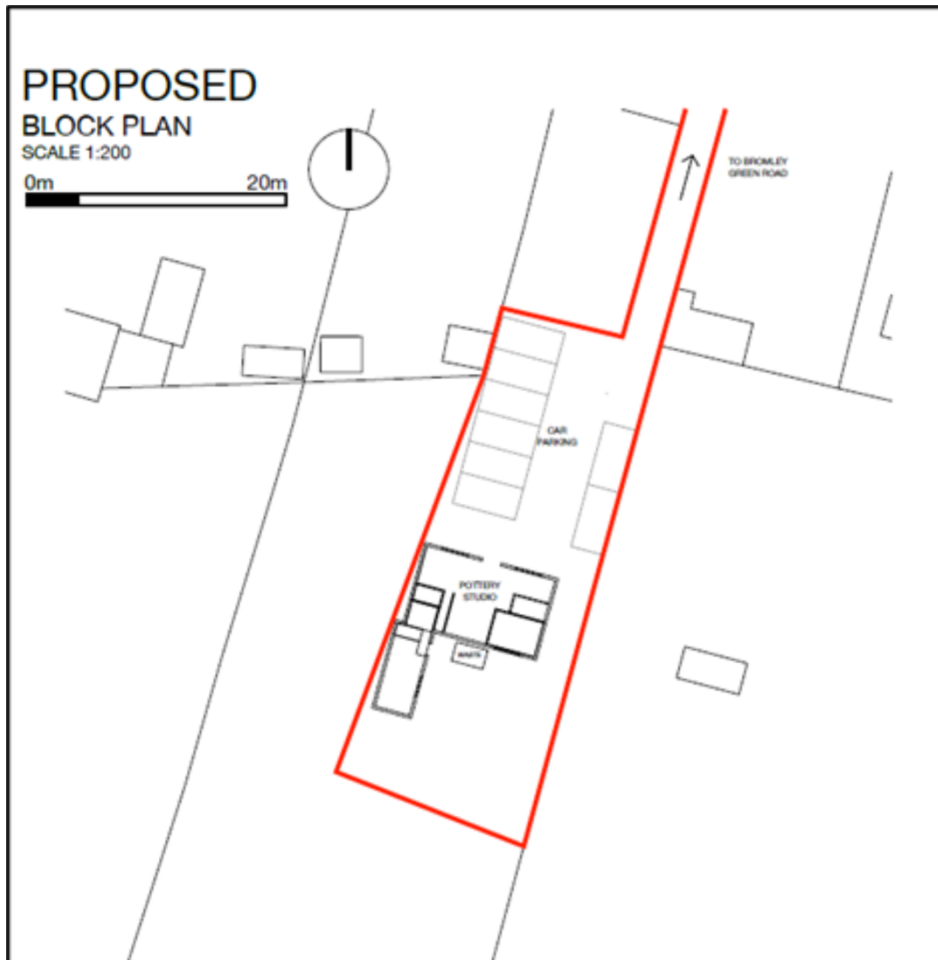
With all of the above in mind, it is considered that the impact on the residential amenity of the surrounding occupiers would be acceptable and there would be no grounds to object in this regard.

Highways Safety

Policy TRA3a relates to parking standards for residential dwellings and policy TRA7 relates to the impact of developments on the road network.

NPPF paragraph 116 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The proposed block plan shows that there would continue to be 8 car parking spaces for customers:



The supporting documents confirm that when a booking is made, there is a mandatory question within the booking form that asks customers to confirm the number of vehicles that require parking spaces for the booking. Once the parking spaces reaches 8, the booking system closes off any further bookings (irrespective of 8 single people booking with a vehicle each or 16 people booking with a vehicle per couple).

The supporting documents confirm that there is no opportunity for walk-ins or passing trade. The pottery painting studio operates a booking system for customers; therefore, visitors to the site are limited to those that have booked their place online.

The supporting documents confirm that the previous beauty salon was open Monday to Friday (from 10:00 – 20:30) and on Saturdays (from 10:00 – 17:30) and had 3 members of staff. In comparison, the new use would be open between 10.00 and 16.00, except for on Fridays when hours would be extended to 21.00 to allow for after work/school visitors.

Overall, the new use would have reduced operating hours (of 20 hours per week, excluding private bookings) compared to the previous beauty salon (49 hours per week). The proposal for Sunday and Bank Holiday hours previously being applied for under application PA/2025/1535 is no longer being pursued, as confirmed within the supporting documents.

It has been highlighted that the application form states 10.00am to 9.00pm (as the proposed hours of opening for Monday to Friday) but this is due to the fact that the Planning Portal does not allow for variations between Monday to Friday. Therefore, this

time period also allows for variation (if required) for occasional private bookings such as an existing booking from 16.00 to 18.30 once a month on a Tuesday.

The supporting documents confirm that the number of visitors to the previous beauty salon consisted of 2 clients every 2 hours on average per hairdresser and 2 clients per hour on average for the beautician. This generated over 30 cars on average to the beauty salon each working day, 5 days a week. In comparison, the new use would involve reduced operating hours, as well as fewer vehicle movements to and from the site with a maximum of 16 cars per day for planned sessions and a strict booking system that caps parking at 8 spaces per session. There would also only be 1 member of staff, who currently lives at the site.

With all of the above in mind, it is considered that the overall highways impact would be acceptable and there would be no grounds to object in this regard.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Policy ENV1 states that proposals should conserve and enhance biodiversity.

NPPF paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity. Paragraph 193 states that opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

It should be noted that BNG does not apply in this case as the application is retrospective.

Other Matters

Stour River catchment

The proposal would not involve any new overnight accommodation; therefore, it would not be caught by the advice from Natural England relating to the internationally protected Stodmarsh Lakes.

Conclusion

In light of the above assessment it is considered the development proposal would comply with the requirements of Development Plan policy and Central Government guidance. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is approved subject to conditions.

Working with the Applicant

In accordance with paragraph 39 of the NPPF Ashford Borough Council (ABC) takes a positive and creative approach to development proposals. ABC works with applicants/agents in a positive and creative manner as explained in the note to the applicant included in the recommendation and the decision notice.

Human Rights

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 represents an appropriate balance between the interests and rights of the applicant (to enjoy his land subject only to reasonable and proportionate controls by a public authority) and the interests and rights of those potentially affected by the proposal (to respect for private life and the home and peaceful enjoyment of their properties) and the wider public interest.

Conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Description	Date
Plans and Drawings (including Site Location Plan, Existing / Proposed Block Plan, and Existing / Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations)	30 December 2025

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 2 The use hereby permitted shall be restricted to the following hours:

Monday to Thursday - 10:00 to 18.30
Fridays - 10:00 to 21.00
Saturdays - 10:00 to 18.00

The use shall not operate on any Sunday or Bank Holiday.

Reason: To protect the residential amenity of the locality and to ensure the proposal is carried out as specified.

- 3 The area shown on the proposed block plan as vehicle parking spaces and turning 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 re-enacting that Order), shall be carried out on that area of land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved parking space.

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

- 4 No external lighting shall be installed on the site without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity of adjoining residents.

Informatives:

- **Working with the Applicant**

In accordance with paragraph 39 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.

- **Biodiversity Net Gain**

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition)” that development may not begin unless:

- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission, would be Ashford Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply and these are set out in [The Biodiversity Gain Requirements Exemptions Regulations 2024](#).

This permission will not require the approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements are considered to apply.

The effect of section 73D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

If planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) and a Biodiversity Gain Plan was approved in relation to the previous planning permission (“the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan”) there are circumstances when the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan is regarded as approved for the purpose of discharging the biodiversity gain condition subject to which the section 73 planning permission is granted.

Those circumstances are that the conditions subject to which the section 73 permission is granted:

- i) do not affect the post-development value of the onsite habitat as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan, and
- ii) in the case of planning permission for a development where all or any part of the onsite habitat is irreplaceable habitat the conditions do not change the effect of the development on the biodiversity of that onsite habitat (including any arrangements made to compensate for any such effect) as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan.