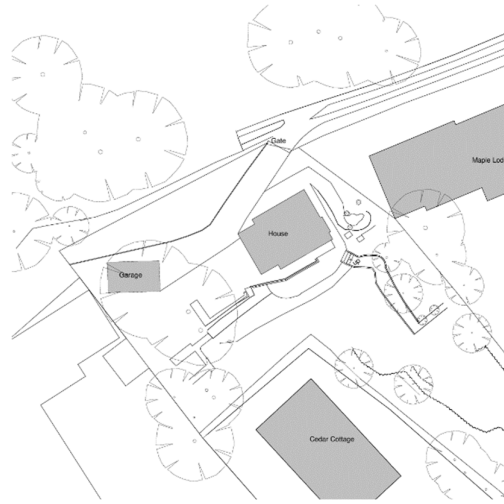


Introduction

This Design and Access Statement is prepared to support the full planning application for The Oaks, located at Ridge Lane, Meopham, DA13 0DP. The Oaks is strategically positioned between the villages of Meopham and Addington, nestled within the serene and protected Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. The site encompasses a substantial expanse of land, with approximately 75% covered by woodland.



The remaining portion of the site features an existing one-bedroom cottage, a garage, and a private garden space, alongside the entrance road leading into the property. This layout not only ensures a blend of natural and built environments but also maintains the tranquil character of the area. The existing structures on the site provide a foundation for thoughtful development that respects the unique landscape and contributes positively to the local environment and community.

The proposed development aims to enhance the functionality and aesthetic appeal of The Oaks while adhering to the principles of sustainability and environmental stewardship. This statement outlines the design principles, site context, and considerations for access and movement, ensuring that the project aligns with local planning policies and the needs of the community.

Existing house

The existing house on the property is a two-storey cottage that has been redundant for many years. Our client acquired this property with the intention of developing it into a more functional and aesthetically pleasing residence. The ground floor of the cottage currently comprises a living room, dining area, kitchen, bathroom, and storage area, offering a basic yet functional layout. The first floor accommodates a bedroom designed for two people, an additional bathroom, and more storage space.

The site benefits from a private entrance road that leads directly from Ridge Lane to the property. This private road ensures easy access and connects to an existing garage and woodland. The garage has space for one car, it also has a separate door and small storage area. The external materials of the property include white UPVC cladding, brown window frames, and wood shingles on roof.

The property also features an L-shaped garden, which is slightly angled, adding to its character and providing potential for creative landscaping. Despite its long-standing presence, the property has no planning history, presenting a unique opportunity for thoughtful development that respects the site's context and enhances its usability and appearance.

The client's vision for The Oaks involves revitalizing the existing cottage and its surroundings, ensuring the new development is both sustainable and harmonious with the natural beauty of the Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. This proposal aims to breathe new life into the property while preserving its inherent charm and integrating seamlessly with the local environment.



Pictures of The Oaks, Ridge Lane

Neighbourhood

The surrounding neighbourhood is predominantly residential, characterized by detached properties that are mostly two storeys in height. Each property is typically surrounded by well-maintained gardens, providing a verdant and spacious environment. Many of these properties also feature private entrance gates, adding to the sense of privacy and exclusivity within the area.

The architectural styles in the neighbourhood exhibit a variety of heights and shapes, contributing to a diverse and visually interesting streetscape. The materials used in the construction of these homes are similarly varied, including brick, render, tile hanging, and timber cladding. This eclectic mix of materials enhances the architectural richness of the neighbourhood and reflects the area's evolution over time.

A significant number of the neighbouring properties have been extended, demonstrating a trend towards modernization and increased living space. Additionally, many properties have been entirely reconstructed, indicating a pattern of redevelopment that aligns with contemporary living standards and aesthetic preferences.

The proposed development at The Oaks seeks to complement this diverse architectural context while introducing high-quality design elements that resonate with the local character. By considering the existing styles, materials, and spatial arrangements, the development will harmonize with its surroundings and contribute positively to the overall aesthetic and functional fabric of the neighbourhood.

Pictures of properties on Ridge Lane





Pictures of properties on Valley Lane



Relevant planning applications

- **Address: Gracy Lodge Valley Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: Alterations and increase in height to roof, including rear dormer and removal of chimney stack. Erection of a double storey front porch and roof light windows to front and rear roof slopes.
 Approved: February 2024
 Reference: 20231286
- **Address: Bluebell Spinney Valley Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: Removal of existing roof, construction of enlarged barn hipped roof, erection of a rear dormer, insertion of roof light windows to front and rear, conversion of loft space to habitable rooms and erection of a front porch.
 Approved: September 2021
 Reference: 20210805
- **Address: La Clef Valley Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: Erection of a single storey rear extension, alterations and increase in roof height to create space with useable head-height on the first floor, rear dormer, additional roof light windows to front and rear roof slopes and erection of a two storey porch.
 Approved: October 2021
 Reference: 20210784
- **Address: Horse Shoes Ridge Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DP**
 Description: Part reconstruction of the ground floor and alterations to the roofline incorporating three dormer windows in the front roof slope and conversion of the roof space into habitable rooms.
 Approved: July 2017
 Reference: 20170570
- **Address: Wonky Log Valley Lane Culverstone Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: ***REVISED DESCRIPTION/REVISED PLANS***
 Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a detached single storey split level 2no. bedroom dwelling.
 Approved: June 2017
 Reference: 20170383
- **Address: Chilton Lodge Valley Lane Culverstone Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement 4no. bedroom detached dwelling and erection of a detached garage.
 Approved: June 2016
 Reference: 20151180

- **Address: Orchid Lodge Valley Lane Culverstone Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: Partial demolition of existing derelict chalet at rear and erection of extension to form sitting, bedroom, hall and shower room/wc at ground floor level with bedroom and ensuite bathroom/wc in roof space above.
 Approved: March 2012
 Reference: 20120126
- **Address: Saas Fee Valley Lane Culverstone Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: ****REVISED/AMENDED DRAWING**** Erection of a detached four bedroom chalet bungalow
 Approved: February 2012
 Reference: 20111027
- **Address: Primrose Cottage And Ricary Ridge Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DP**
 Description: Erection of two detached three/four bedroom replacement dwellings with rooms in the roofspace, each with a detached garage at the front.
 Approved: September 2010
 Reference: 20100456
- **Address: Stella Ridge Lane Culverstone Gravesend Kent DA13 0DP**
 Description: Erection of a detached three bedroom dwelling with rooms in the roof space with a detached double garage, detached stable block and a shed.
 Approved: April 2010
 Reference: 20100150
- **Address: The Retreat Valley Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: Erection of detached replacement four bedroom dwelling with rooms in the roof space and a detached double garage with utility room.
 Approved: September 2008
 Reference: 20080765
- **Address: Clackmannan House Ridge Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DP**
 Description: Erection of a detached replacement dwelling with rooms in the roofspace and a detached double garage.
 Approved: October 2007
 Reference: 20070585
- **Address: Evergreen Ridge Lane Culverstone Meopham Kent DA13 0DP DA13 0DP**
 Description: Erection of detached replacement bungalow with rooms in the roof space and erection of a detached garage.
 Approved: February 2007
 Reference: 20061048
- **Address: Plot 2x/3x Valley Lane Culverstone Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
 Description: Erection of a replacement detached dwelling with rooms in the roof space and a detached double garage at the front.
 Approved: January 2007
 Reference: 20060769

- **Address: Pepperland Valley Lane Culverstone Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
Description: Erection of detached replacement dwelling with three bedrooms in the roof space and a detached garage at the front.
Approved: October 2006
Reference: 20060727
- **Address: 'Le Reve' Valley Lane Culverstone Meopham Kent DA13 0DG**
Description: Erection of a replacement detached dwelling with rooms in the roof space, a detached double garage at the rear and installation of an underground sewage treatment plant in the front garden.
Approved: October 2005
Reference: 20050660
- **Address: 'Havenlee' Valley Lane Culverstone Meopham Kent DA13 0DG**
Description: Erection of a detached dwelling with rooms in the roof space, a detached double garage at the front and installation of a septic tank in the front garden.
Approved: Aug 2005
Reference: 20050457
- **Address: Hettys Rest Valley Lane Culverstone Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG**
Description: Erection of detached dwelling with rooms in the roof space and detached double garage at the rear.
Approved: October 2004
Reference: 20040764

Proposal

The proposal involves the demolition of the existing dwelling and the construction of a new two-storey, three-bedroom property. This project aims to create a modern, functional dwelling while respecting the existing site constraints and the development patterns in the neighbourhood. The design adheres to national housing standards and the planning policies and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) of Gravesham Borough Council. Additionally, the design aligns with Green Belt policies and their design ethos, ensuring that the development is sustainable and in harmony with the surrounding landscape.

The footprint of the new development is designed to be slightly tilted compared to the existing house. This orientation is intended to create a larger front area, providing space for a car to be parked and reversed easily, while also offering a better view of the rear garden from the new dwelling. The proposed house will be positioned at the same level as the existing house, ensuring minimal impact on the surrounding properties and maintaining the site's overall topography.

The internal areas are designed to accommodate a comfortable living space for five persons. The ground floor will feature a kitchen, a combined living and dining room, a study, and a toilet, creating an open and versatile layout. The first floor will include three bedrooms, a family shower room, and an ensuite bathroom, offering ample space for family living and personal comfort.

The new house will have a traditional design outlook, with a pitched main roof complemented by four small flat roof dormers, two at the front and two at the rear of the property. The external materials will include brick and render, combined with black windows and doors, and slate roof tiles. These materials and the overall form of the design have been carefully selected to reflect the architectural styles and materials commonly found in the neighbourhood, ensuring that the new development blends seamlessly with its surroundings.

The property will have two parking spaces, one outside the property and another in the existing garage. Our client will install a car charging point in the garage to support the use of electric vehicles. The storage area in the garage will also be used for cycle storage. The property will have bins located at the front of the house, which will be moved to the Ridge Lane entrance on collection days, ensuring ease of access for waste management.

The proposal is consistent with recent developments in the neighbourhood, where many properties on Ridge Lane and Valley Lane have been demolished and reconstructed. This trend of redevelopment has been successfully approved and implemented, ensuring that the new dwellings meet contemporary living standards and community expectations. By following this established precedent, the proposed development at The Oaks will seamlessly integrate with the ongoing improvements in the area, contributing to the overall enhancement and modernization of the neighbourhood.



By incorporating these design elements, the proposal seeks to enhance the aesthetic and functional qualities of the site, providing a high-quality living environment that respects the character of the Green Belt and the existing neighbourhood..

Conclusion

The proposal is fully aligned with the principles of sustainable and environmentally friendly development. The existing property and its land have been redundant and are in urgent need of repair. By repurposing this neglected site to create a modern dwelling, the proposal adheres to the ethos of sustainable development and design. Car charging point will be added to the existing garage. The existing property's use of UPVC, which is detrimental to the environment, will be replaced with more sustainable materials, reinforcing the commitment to creating an eco-friendly environment.



The design features, including the pitched roof with flat roof dormers, are consistent with many properties in the neighbourhood. The use of brick and render in the external materials further reflects the local architectural style, ensuring that the new development blends seamlessly into its surroundings. The proposal is designed to have no adverse impact on the surrounding environment, instead integrating harmoniously with the existing landscape.

The new development is a detached property, situated with at least 4 meters distance from all surrounding properties. This ensures that the development will have minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt, while simultaneously enhancing the area and its surroundings. The careful positioning and design considerations ensure that the new dwelling complements the local context without compromising the Green Belt's integrity.

Our client intends to reside in the property after retirement, transforming it into a welcoming family home. The proposal promises an excellent design that not only meets the site's development needs but also aligns with sustainable design solutions. It will significantly improve the overall aesthetics of the site and the surrounding land. The new proposal offers a high-quality family home for the current owners and future residents, contributing positively to the local community and environment.

In addition to these benefits, the development will serve as a model for responsible rural living, showcasing how modern architecture can coexist with natural landscapes in a manner that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing. The thoughtful integration of sustainable materials and design principles underscores a commitment to environmental stewardship, ensuring that The Oaks will be a standout example of how new developments can respect and enhance their natural settings. This project will not only rejuvenate a neglected site but also set a precedent for future developments in the area, highlighting the importance of blending traditional design with modern sustainability practices.



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