

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No: 20231177

Location: Stavesacre Cottage, Longfield Avenue, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 9HP

Description: Retrospective application for fencing and gates on the front boundary.

Applicant: Mr Paul Gubb

Site Visit: 07 December 2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form – dated 20 November 2023;
- Supplementary Information – Planning Statement
- Drawing no. PG/18 – Site Location and Block Plans;
- Drawing no. PG/19 – Proposed Plans and Elevations.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230704	Erection of a first floor extension.	PERMITTED	23.08.2023
20230484	Erection of first floor rear extension; new raised roof incorporating two front dormers and one rear dormer to create habitable accommodation within the new roof space; and upward extension of chimney on eastern side.	REFUSED	06.07.2023
20190908	Erection of a first floor extension.	PERMITTED	23.10.2019
20190565	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed erection of a first floor rear extension.	CERTIFICATE GRANTED	05.08.2019
20180953	Erection of a first floor extension.	REFUSED	06.11.2018

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 13 – Protecting green belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

KCC Highways - It would appear that this development proposal does not meet the criteria to warrant involvement from the Highway Authority in accordance with the current consultation protocol arrangements. If there are any material highway safety concerns that you consider should be brought to the attention of the HA, then please contact us again with your specific concerns for our consideration.

Internal Consultees

GBC Highways – As built I object to the proposal, but this would be withdrawn if the boundary treatment were set-back from road by 2m/2.4m, with a condition that all landscaping and any secondary boundary treatment is restricted to a maximum height of 1 metre between the fence and the carriageway.

Local Ward Councillors – No comment received.

Neighbouring properties

A notice was displayed on site 7 December 2023.

In addition, three surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 29 December 2023.

Officer's Analysis

Site Description

Stavesacre Cottage is a detached dwelling located on the northern side of Longfield Avenue. The property is in a fairly remote location within the Green Belt, on an unadopted road which is principally utilised as an access for properties and not a through route.

Proposed Development

This is a retrospective application seeking to retain fencing and gates on the front boundary. The fencing has been constructed up to the front boundary of the property, directly on the edge of the road, with three brick piers, at a height of 2m.

The images below provide a before and after comparison:



Assessment

The application site is located in the Green Belt and as such Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) is relevant. Development in the urban area is prioritised as the sustainable location for development. In the rural area, Policy CS02 states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the policies map. Development outside those settlements, i.e. in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS.

- Design, Character and Appearance
- Openness of the Green Belt
- Residential Amenity
- Parking and Highways
- Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Design, Character and Appearance

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) states that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It also seeks to conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding local area, whilst ensuring that the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area.

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Istead Arable Farmlands landscape character area. This area is characterised by gently undulating topography of open arable farmland, dissected by minor open roads with the exception of the larger A227. Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

The fencing, gates and brick pillars, as constructed, are not considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Although there is some impact on the Green Belt in terms of openness (assessed later in this report), the materials and colours of the fencing, gates and bricks are considered to be appropriate for the rural setting.

Within the wider street scene, boundary fencing fronting the road are common with a number of properties having constructed walls or fencing to enclose their frontages. Therefore, this development is not out of character and will not have a detrimental impact on the street scene. Even though the development has a

stark appearance in the comparison photographs above, this is due to the fact that the fencing and brickwork are new and overtime will weather which will soften its appearance.

Overall, even though the development will have an urbanising impact, the fencing is not out of character with other boundary treatments in the street scene. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023).

Openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF (2023) states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Any new built form of development is likely to impact on the openness of the Green Belt, however it is important to establish the degree of harm caused. The proposed development, by virtue of introducing a close boarded fence at a height of 2m has some impact on the open character of the Green Belt. However, as referenced above, Longfield Avenue is characterised by existing high boundary treatments on other dwellings, as well as hedging and tree cover framing the road, which create a sense of enclosure and reduce openness. The fencing, as constructed, is within this existing character and therefore is only considered to have a minimal impact on the openness.

Although the development will have an impact on the open character of the Green Belt, the introduction of a fence is considered negligible and as the boundary treatment ages and weathers, its appearance will soften, which serves to mitigate harm.

Residential Amenity

The development would have no impact on residential amenity. As such the proposal safeguards amenity in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023). No neighbour representations have been received.

Parking and Highways

The fencing and brick pillars has been constructed up to the front boundary of the property, which means that there are no visibility splays provided for vehicles egressing from the driveway. Gravesham's Highways Officer has identified this, stating that the gate and pillars should be recessed into the curtilage to provide splays and alleviate vehicles stopping on the road waiting to enter the site.

While these are key considerations for applications on adopted highways, Longfield Avenue is an unadopted road, is maintained by the occupiers and is lightly trafficked, due to the condition of the surface which is littered with potholes and subject to flooding. Given these conditions, it is not considered to be expedient to request an alteration to the entrance of the driveway to set back the gates. Therefore, on balance, even though the position of the access and fencing close to the edge of the road would ideally be set-back, in this case due to the location of the property and the road being unadopted the set-back is not required and as such is insufficient grounds to refuse the development on highway grounds.

Overall, the development is acceptable in highway terms and in accordance with Policy CS11 (Transport) (LPCS).

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

The front boundary fencing, pillars and gate are not out of character with established developments within the area, will weather over time to become softer in appearance and only results in minimal harm to the openness of the Green Belt. There is no impact on the amenity of future occupiers or surrounding

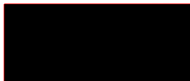
residents. In terms of highways policy and guidance, although the access is not set-back from the road, due to Longfield Avenue being unadopted and lightly trafficked, this is not considered to be a risk to safety and

Therefore, subject to conditions, it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mr Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	15 th January 2024	Dated:	16 January 2024