



Delegated Report

Planning Application

Application no: 20211328

Location: Taralee Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of a single storey rear extension, balcony to front elevation and conversion of the single dwelling to 3 self-contained flats (2 x 1-bed and 1 x 2 bed).

Applicant: Ms K Clarke

Site Visit Date: 27 October 2021

Site Description and Surroundings

Taralee is a modern late 1960's detached and extended two storey 4-bed single-family dwelling on the east side of the A227 Wrotham Road Meopham to the south of a small parade of local shops at Meopham Station.

It is constructed of facing bricks with a concrete tiled roof with integral garage and projecting canopy at the front. It has a vehicular access on the north side of the frontage to Wrotham Road across a grass verge with the majority of the forecourt block paved. There is a high hedge to the frontage.



To the south is the Stables a former single storey outbuilding within the grounds of Waterditch, and which

was converted in 2019 from use as an office into a one-bedroom dwelling. Waterditch is a weatherboard two-storey dwelling and a Grade II listed building formerly comprising several cottages converted into one.

To the north are High Firs and Pear Tree House (formerly Fletchers), which are similar modern detached two storey dwellings. Opposite on the west side of Wrotham Road are older style detached two storey dwellings Little St Marys, Maycroft and Fircroft). The application site adjoins the northern boundary of the Hook Green conservation area to the south.

The first two case officer photographs (27.10.21) below show the existing frontage to the site and a street view looking south from the existing access to the dwelling. The third photograph was taken at a previous site visit in 2021 and shows a street view looking north. It is noted that since the earlier visit the vehicle access has been widened and a section of hedge removed without the benefit of planning permission.





Planning History

Ref No	Description and Site	Decision	Date
19580424	The erection of dwellings	Refused	13.08.1958
19680098	The erection of dwellings	Permission	27.06.1968
19820826	Erection of single storey rear extension to form dining room utility room and wc	Permission	22.12.1982
20060217	Erection of first floor rear extension to form a bedroom and shower room/wc.	Permission	10.05.2006
20120934	Erection of two storey front extension to form enlarged lobby and enlarged garage at ground floor level with a bedroom at first floor level.	Permission	21.12.2012
20130099	Erection of two storey front extension to form garage/store, lobby and porch at ground floor level with a bedroom at first floor level.	Permission	28.03.2013
20210715	Erection of a single storey rear extension, balcony to front elevation and conversion of single dwelling to 3 self-contained flats (2 x 1-bed and 1 x 2 bed).	Refused	17.09.2021

Proposal

The proposal is described as being for the erection of a single storey rear extension, balcony to front elevation and conversion of the single dwelling to 3 self-contained flats (2 x 1-bed and 1 x 2 bed).

Plans and Documents

Application Form;

Un-numbered OS Red Line Location Plan

Drawing No 21/2721 A: Existing Block Plan;

Drawing No 21/2725 A: Proposed Block Plan;

Drawing No 21/2726: Plans and Elevations - Existing and Proposed;

Details of the Development

This application has been submitted following a refusal for a very similar application (ref 20210715) in 2021, also for conversion into 3 self-contained flats. The changes to the scheme since the previous refusal are:

- Changes to the layout of Flat 1 in respect of location and size of single bedroom;
- Changes to the layout of Flat 3 in respect of size of bedroom 2;
- Subdivision of garden and allocation of specific amenity areas per each flat;
- Amendment to access, parking spaces and indication of possible turning areas within frontage;
- Amendment to the red line boundary of the plot in relation to the adjoining dwelling to the north (High Firs) which had been incorrectly drawn;

There have been no changes to the external elevations. Below is an extract from the submitted drawings showing the existing and proposed front elevations.



Front Elevation - Existing



Front Elevation - Proposed

The lean-to roof over the existing garage and front entrance hall is to be replaced with a flat GRP roof to create a balcony leading off the main bedroom to Flat 3.

Below are the existing and proposed rear elevations. The rear extension will accommodate a kitchen within a catslide roof.



Rear Elevation - Existing



Rear Elevation - Proposed

Two one-bed flats are proposed on the ground floor with a two bed flat (both as double rooms) with balcony on the first floor. Access to the rear ground floor flat (flat 2) and the first floor flat (flat 3) will be gained by entrance doors on the north side elevation. The front ground floor flat (flat 1) will be accessed by the front main entrance.

Brickwork and roofing tiles are to match those of the existing building.

The existing garage is to be converted to a bedroom for the front ground floor flat (Flat 1).

The applicants Design and Access Statement indicates that:

The applicant is to continue residing within the property (Flat 3) while her children attend university and plans to rent out the 2 ground floor flats to make use of the spare space and bring in additional income.

For various reasons the applicant does not wish to have couples renting the flats considering individuals to be easier to manage and less likely to cause any conflict. The flats are therefore to be 1 bed 1 person and as such have comfortable living standards. The applicant's main objective is to retain the house as a family home but allow flexibility within it. The ground floor is to be let out in the short term but will hopefully be occupied by the children at a later date. The flats will allow them independence whilst still living in the family home. In the long term the applicant would like the flat(s) to be able to function as an annexe with one of the children possibly taking over the main accommodation.

The building would hence retain the character of a family home with the applicant retaining possession throughout. From all visual aspects the building will have no other outlook than to be that of a single-family home.

The applicants Design and Access Statement also gives the following information about floor areas to the flats:

FLAT 1 (1-bedroom)

GIA of 39.4m² comprising of -

Hall	2.4m ²
Shower Room	4.0m ²
Open Plan Kitchen, Dining, Living Room	22.7m ²
Bedroom	8.5m ²
Amenity	12.6m ²

FLAT 2 (1-bedroom) - Note: The D and A Statement erroneously says this is a 2-bedroom flat

GIA of 43.7m² comprising of -

Hall	2.9m ²
Open Plan Kitchen, Dining, Living Room	28.6m ²
Bedroom	8.4m ²
Shower Room	4.0m ²
Amenity	35.5m ²

FLAT 3 (2-bedroom)

GIA of 75.0m² comprising of -

Open Plan Kitchen, Living Room	24.9m ²
Dining Room	9.6m ²
Bathroom	10.7m ²
Bedroom 1 with ensuite	13.1m ² (1.2m ²)
Bedroom 2	11.8m ²
Balcony	5.9m ²
Amenity	156.0m ²

In terms of parking it is indicated that each flat will have a parking space allocated at the front with space left over for visitors.

The applicants Design and Access Statement indicates that the site layout demonstrates how comfortably 3 cars can manoeuvre in and out of the site without having to reverse onto Wrotham Road. It is stated that:

¹ See the Judgement in the Court of Appeal on R(on the application of William Corbett) and The Cornwall Council and others [2020] EWCA Civ 508 at <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2020/508.pdf>

supplementary planning guidance, and, where they exist, neighbourhood plans. There are currently no adopted neighbourhood plans.

Previous decisions on planning applications and appeals relating to the site and relevant case law etc. are also capable of being material considerations.

Local Planning Guidance

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, September 2014

The Core Strategy sets out the Council's spatial vision and strategic objectives for the Borough to 2028 and the policies which will deliver them. It identifies the main areas where major change is likely to take place and allocates sites which are key to achieving the strategy.

The application site is shown as being within a **rural settlement inset from the Green Belt** (Policy CS02) as defined in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policies Map. It is adjacent to a **conservation area** (Policy CS20). Wrotham Road is **Primary Distributor** on the highway network (Saved policies T1-T3).

The most relevant policies from the adopted Core Strategy in relation to this development are as follows:

Core Strategy Policy CS01: Sustainable Development
Core Strategy Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development
Core Strategy Policy CS11: Transport
Core Strategy Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure
Core Strategy Policy CS14: Housing Type and Size
Core Strategy Policy CS15: Housing Density
Core Strategy Policy CS18: Climate Change
Core Strategy Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles
Core Strategy Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment

Policy CS01 (Sustainable Development) sets out that support will be given to proposals that accord with the development plan. A positive approach to new development will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF and the Local Plan Core Strategy

Policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) prioritises development in the urban area by promoting regeneration by the redevelopment and recycling of underused, derelict and previously developed land, revitalising Gravesend Town Centre and bringing forward a range of suitable sites for residential and employment development. It makes a commitment to meeting the Borough's objectively assessed need for 6,170 new dwellings over the plan period and outlines where new development will take place. Paragraph 4.2.27 indicates that the rural area, development will be supported within those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map.

Policy CS11 (Transport) sets out that new developments should mitigate their impact on the highway and public transport networks as required. As appropriate, transport assessments and travel plans should be provided and implemented to ensure the delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunities for travel. Sufficient parking in new development will be provided in accordance with adopted parking standards reflecting the availability of alternative means of transport and accessibility to services and facilities.

Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) requires that there should be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough and gives protection amongst other things to internationally designated sites. It sets out that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes within the borough will be conserved and enhanced, with greatest weight being accorded the Kent Downs AONB. In other areas, the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment and any relevant Cluster Study should be taken into account.

Policy CS14 (Housing Type and Size) expects new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes, taking into account the existing character of the area and evidence of local need to create sustainable and balanced communities. **Paragraph 5.10.8 indicates that the Council will protect the mix of housing in the existing housing stock and will resist the conversion of family sized units to smaller properties.**

Policy CS15: (Housing Density) states that sites will be delivered at a variety of densities, depending on their location and accessibility to public transport. It states that all new housing will be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated. Subject to this overriding consideration, within the urban area, new residential development will be expected to achieve a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare, while in the rural area new residential development will be expected to achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare.

Policy CS18 (Climate Change) seeks to ensure that Water Framework Directive objectives are secured and that the impact of development on waste water drainage systems is minimised. Surface water run-off from all new development should, as a minimum, have no greater adverse impact than the existing use. It requires the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems where technically and financially feasible. It requires the water efficiency measures to be installed to achieve the equivalent of level 3/4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (105 litres per person per day)²

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) sets out detailed criteria against which the acceptability or otherwise of proposed development will be evaluated. In particular it requires new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards. 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 and to the character of the area.

It requires account to be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings and of the wider context including features of townscape and landscape value, which contribute to local character and sense of place.

It requires new development to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land and avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution. New residential development is required to accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines and will be required to provide appropriate levels of private and public amenity space.

Proposals should include details of appropriate hard and soft landscaping, protect and where opportunities arise enhance biodiversity and provide appropriate facilities for the storage and disposal of waste.

Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) gives a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place. Particular attention in this regard will be focused on those heritage assets most at risk. When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset's conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset. For non-designated assets, decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

The Gravesham Local Plan First Review was originally adopted in November 1994.

A substantial number of policies of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review were saved by a Direction dated 25 September 2007 of the Secretary of State under paragraph 1 (3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as transitional arrangements pending adoption of the Core Strategy.

Saved policies contained in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review should still be accorded significant weight, albeit that the weight accorded should be greater where policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, paragraph 219).

Those Local Plan First Review policies that remain in force are listed in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan Core Strategy. The remaining saved policies will be replaced following the adoption of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document.

² Now equivalent to 110 litres per person per day as required by National Standard – see GBC Housing Standards Policy Statement (2015) at http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/201625/Housing-Standards-Policy-Statement.pdf

The following remaining saved policies are relevant to the consideration of this application:

Policy H5: Increasing the Housing Stock by the Conversion of Existing Buildings

Policy TC2: Policy for Listed Buildings

Policy TC3: Development Affecting Conservation Areas;

Policy T1: Impact of Development on the Highway Network

Policy T5: New Accesses onto Highway Network

Policy P3: Vehicle Parking Standards

Saved Policy H5 indicates that in considering proposals for the conversion of existing properties to flats etc. regard will be had to certain criteria, namely that the building should be in an appropriate area for conversion to flats, the building should be of a size that is unsuitable for single family accommodation, the proposal should comply with residential layout guidelines and the adopted vehicle parking standards must be achieved wherever feasible.

Saved Policy TC2 (Listed Buildings) indicates that applications involving alterations or extension to listed buildings or affecting the setting of listed buildings the primary consideration will be the maintenance of the original listed building and proposals will need to be sympathetic to the listed building in terms of massing, scale, appearance and materials.

Saved Policy TC3 indicates that where development is acceptable in relation to other policies in this Plan, it will be carefully judged for its impact and will be expected to make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The Borough Council will expect applications to contain sufficient details to enable the impact of the proposal upon the conservation area to be assessed.

Saved Policy T1 requires that all proposed developments are adequately served by the highway network identified on the Proposals Map.

Saved Policy T5 requires that the formation of new accesses or the intensification of use of existing accesses to the roads forming the highway network shown on the Proposals Map, will not normally be permitted, except where no danger would arise and where a properly formed access can be created in a location and to a standard acceptable to the Local Planning and Highway Authorities.

Saved Policy P3 requires development to make provision for vehicle parking, in accordance with the Kent County Council Vehicle Parking Standards, as interpreted by Gravesham Borough Council, unless justified as an exception. All vehicle parking provision should normally be made on the development site.

Review of the Local Plan

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) sets out those 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 it 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 adoption and the need to ensure a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan First Review (1994) generally conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these in due course.

Gravesham Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation Part 2: Draft Development Management Policies Document October 2020

The Council published in 2020 a Regulation 18 (stage 2) consultation on its proposed Development Management Policies Document, replacing the 2018 Stage 1 version, which will in due course form part of and update the Gravesham Local Plan. Under paragraph 48 of the NPPF 2021, policies in this document may be accorded weight in the decision making process with this varying according to its stage of preparation; the extent to which there are unresolved objections; and the degree of consistency of policy with those in the Framework. As the Development Management Policies Document is at an early stage and the fact that the consultation has only recently concluded, the policies therein should at this stage be

given very limited weight. It should be noted, in any event, that many of the relevant policies reflect those set out in the Framework and for the purposes of this application these should be relied on instead.

The following draft policies from the Regulation 18 (Stage 2) Development Management Policies Document (2020) show the direction of travel the Council is going and are considered as being relevant to the consideration of this application albeit the weight that these emerging policies may be accorded at this stage is very limited.

Proposed Policy INF 2: Transport Design Principles;
Proposed Policy INF 3: Understanding and Mitigating Transport Impacts;
Proposed Policy INF 4: New Accesses and Junctions;
Proposed Policy INF 5: Electric Vehicle Charging Points;
Proposed Policy GI 5: Landscape Character;
Proposed Policy RES 2: Residential Space Standards;
Proposed Policy RES 5: Residential Intensification through Sub-Division and Conversion
Proposed Policy AM 4: Sunlight and Daylight within New Development;
Proposed Policy AM 5: Noise;
Proposed Policy HER1: Development Involving Heritage Assets;
Proposed Policy HER 2: Listed Buildings;
Proposed Policy HER 3: Conservation Areas;

Proposed Policy RES 2: Residential Space Standards states:

9.2.16. The Government's Nationally Described Space Standards will apply to all new housing developments in Gravesham, unless otherwise justified as an exception. Where these standards do not apply because of the form or configuration of the units created, it will be for the applicant to demonstrate on the basis of evidence that a high standard of amenity for residents can still be achieved.

9.2.17. New residential accommodation and existing residential accommodation should be served by adequate external private amenity space to meet the day-to-day needs of existing or future occupiers. In assessing the adequacy of provision, the Council will have regard to its minimum garden and amenity space standard guidelines set out in the table below, in addition to context and design. In certain cases, the Council will expect the provision of private amenity space to be more generous:

- where gardens or amenity space incorporate steep gradients, protected trees and/or vehicle parking; and/or
- to respect the scale, mass and bulk of the property and/or the character of the area including the spaces between properties.

Proposed Policy RES 5: Residential Intensification through Sub-Division and Conversion states:

9.5.15. Proposals for flats, maisonettes, bedsits, hostels, houses in multiple occupation or residential institutions will only be allowed where they:

- Will not result in the loss of family-sized dwellings. Development proposals which include the loss of a family-sized dwelling will only be permitted where evidence is provided of the property being proactively marketed for a minimum period of 12 months, on realistic terms;
- Achieve good quality living conditions for future residents, including providing a suitable internal layout, sufficient floorspace and adequate useable amenity space;
- Will not adversely affect the amenity of existing or neighbouring residents; demonstrate that a satisfactory standard of servicing and parking can be provided, including making adequate provision for bin storage, cycle storage and drying areas; and
- Will not result in the clustering together of similar uses which harm the overall character and amenity of the area.

9.5.16. For the purposes of this policy, a family-sized dwelling is defined as one with up to 4 bedrooms or a maximum gross internal floor area of 118 square metres, whichever is the greater.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021 is a material consideration.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) which means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and where there are no relevant development plan policies or where the policies are out of date planning permission should be granted unless policies of the Framework provide a clear reason for refusing the development such as where land is designated as Green Belt or any adverse impacts would so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or specific policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

The NPPF includes (in paragraph 8) three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development:

- An economic objective;
- A social objective; and
- An environmental objective.

The following paragraphs are specifically highlighted as being of importance to the consideration of the application proposals, but it should not be taken that these are the only parts of the NPPF that need to be considered. Reference to the national planning guidance is also considered in the analysis section of this report.

- Section 2, Paragraphs 7 - 14: Achieving Sustainable Development;
- Section 4, Paragraphs 38 - 59: Decision Making;
- Section 5, Paragraphs 60 - 80: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- Section 9, Paragraphs 104 - 113: Promoting Sustainable Transport;
- Section 12, Paragraphs 126 - 136: Achieving well-designed places;
- Section 14, Paragraphs 152 - 173: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change;
- Section 15, Paragraphs 174 - 188: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment;
- Section 16, Paragraphs 189 - 208: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment;

Section 2, Paragraphs 7 - 14: Achieving sustainable development

Paragraph 8, advises that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The social objective is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

Section 4, Paragraphs 38 - 59: Decision Making

Paragraph 47 indicates that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraphs 55-58 of the NPPF contain advice on planning conditions and obligations. Paragraph 56 indicates that conditions should be kept to a minimum and only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Section 5, Paragraphs 60 - 80: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Paragraph 60 indicates that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

Section 9, Paragraphs 104-113: Promoting Sustainable Transport

Paragraph 110 indicates that in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- (a) Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be - or have been taken up, given the type of development and its location;
- (b) Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;
- (c) the design of streets, parking areas, and other transport elements reflects current national guidance; and
- (d) Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

Paragraph 111 advises 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.

Paragraph 112, requires applications to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Section 12, Paragraphs 126 - 136: Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 126 advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 indicates that, amongst other things, planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change

Section 14, Paragraphs 152 - 173: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

This sets out (amongst other things) national policy in relation to flood risk. This should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG 2014) and the Environment Agency Flood Risk Standing Advice available on line via <https://www.gov.uk/flood-risk-standing-advice-frsa-for-local-planning-authorities>

Section 15, Paragraphs 174 - 188: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF indicates that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things:

- (a) Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes,
- (b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- (d) Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

Section 16, Paragraphs 189 - 208: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF indicates that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Planning Practice Guidance (<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>) supports and clarifies areas in the NPPF. It contains guidance on assessing housing need; design; public consultation; open space provision in new development; travel plans, transport assessments and statements in decision-taking; health and wellbeing; water supply, wastewater and water quality; light pollution; determining a planning application; the use of planning conditions and viability, amongst other things

The NPPG gives guidance on what is a material planning consideration in determining a planning application indicating that the impact of a development on the value of a neighbouring property or loss of private rights to light could not be material considerations.

The NPPG includes more detailed advice on the use of planning conditions (replacing the cancelled Circular 11/95).

Supplementary Planning Guidance and other Documents

The Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents, Development Briefs and Conservation Area Appraisals. These elaborate on saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and policies in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and are material considerations in determining planning applications.

In addition, the Council has adopted a number of documents that have been produced by Kent County Council also as Supplementary Guidance.

The following documents are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Adopted Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG 4 published in 2003 and adopted in 2006);
- GBC Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015, (SPG2) Adopted February 1996 - amended June 2020;
- Planning Policy for vehicular accesses to classified highways (SPG 6, November 1992);
- Hook Green Rural Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document 2017;
- Management Plan - Rural Conservation Area Appraisals 2016;
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, May 2009 (a technical document which underpins policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy);

The application site lies within the Meopham Downs landscape character area in the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment.

The key characteristic elements of the landscape are distinct, providing coherency and a strong sense of place within the landscape. Although woodland is restricted to small woodland clumps, hedgerows that run along field boundaries are historic and distinct. Both the settlements of Meopham and Meopham Green have distinct traditional village centres. In addition, traditional vernacular architecture can be found scattered across the landscape. The other two remaining settlements have more recent architecture that is less in keeping with the local vernacular. Strength of character and visibility are moderate, providing a moderate sensitivity overall.

Legislation

Under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council has a statutory duty in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architect or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended states that, with respect to buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Consultations and Publicity

Internal Consultations

GBC Highways Development Management Officer

This application raises several questions, not least the suitability of the car parking. However, the situation is existing and serves a four bedroom dwelling, so car parking requirements would be similar. The loss of the garage does however alter the car parking layout and no details have been given regarding the choice of vehicle for the swept paths. This needs to be clarified, as any car could be parked on a drive, so generally I request swept paths for a BMW5 series or similar to be a representative vehicle.

In terms of cycle parking, there should be one secure space per flat, but as a four bedroom dwelling would require 4 spaces, there is no justification to request more.

Finally I would request that given the fact three dwellings are liable to generate more vehicle movements than a single one, that it is a requirement to keep the hedge trimmed to a maximum height of one metre within 2 metres of the edge of the driveway.

GBC - Conservation Officer

No comments received

Ward Councillors (Meopham North Ward)

No comments received

External Consultations

Meopham Parish Council

Following discussion by Meopham Parish Council's Planning Applications Committee; the Council wishes to provide the following response:

The Parish Council wishes to object on the same grounds as the previous application made for this site despite the amendments to the proposal;

- *Inappropriate development of a family home*
- *It will generate issues with traffic and parking due to the lack of capability at the site to accommodate an increase in vehicular access that would be caused by an increase in occupiers.*

KCC Heritage and Conservation

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, I consider it unlikely that these proposals will have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Publicity

To 13 adjoining dwellings. In addition, the application was advertised on site and in a local newspaper as being development affecting the character and appearance of a conservation area and affecting the setting of a listed building.

The final expiry date for receipt of representations was 03 December 2021

Objections

Three representations received objecting to the application and commenting:

Firstly, the architecture of the building and surrounding properties do not lend themselves to flats, it is a family home and would be wrong to change its use from that when Meopham is renowned as a beautiful family village.

Secondly, whilst the drive is a reasonable size, if the properties was to be for 3 flats the amount of cars needing parking could far exceed what the drive would allow. Parking is already a huge issue in the area and this would only add to it and the congestion we already see.

Finally, I think it is so disappointing that our beautiful village is quickly turning into an area to pump more and more properties whilst not improving or enhancing local services (doctors, schools etc.). My family already experience overwhelming demand in these services and it would be wrong to allow more individual properties/flats before investment in these services.

There are two objections from the same property both commenting:

1. Flat 1 has had its bedroom size increased, however this has been at the expense of the lounge, kitchen, diner which now falls well below Gravesham's minimum standards - it provides inadequate living accommodation which will impact on future residents. It should be noted that this flat does not meet with Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy as it would lead to cramped living accommodation.

Whilst the architect may argue that flats 1 and 2 will be single person dwellings there is no way that this can be enforced in the future. The applicants children (who are both living at home) will be 20 in January and are likely to be wanting to live with potential partners at some point, the size of the rooms in these flats would prevent them from doing this, therefore this will not be a family home in the future as has been suggested in the Design and Access Statement.

2. This is an overdevelopment of a site in a residential area which is (in spite of what has been argued in the Design and Access Statement) situated in a primarily single family dwelling area. The Statement references both 2 Neville Villas and Arborfields as being examples of conversions, both of these were converted in the last century (according to sales listings), as far as I am aware there have been no subsequent conversions in the surrounding area.

3. Parking remains an issue. Meopham is a rural community, this property could potentially accommodate at least 6 adults. Whilst there is a train station, this only serves the Victoria line. To get to Gravesend by train you would have to go to Rochester and then catch a second train to Gravesend, alternatively there is a bus service which is every 90 or 120 minutes, unfortunately a car is a necessity in order to provide a decent quality of life and also to be able to access employment opportunities. In light of this flat 3 does not have enough parking particularly as both the applicant and at least one of her children have cars. This therefore might impact on the future tenants of flats one and two, particularly as there are double yellow lines on the road outside this property. This would not be an issue if this property remained as a family home, in contrast, for flats the parking is not fit for purpose.

4. The amenity space for flat 1 is too small, whilst a 10m² allocation might be suitable towards a communal area, an enclosed 14m² area is not large enough for the future resident to put out their washing, enjoy recreational activities and keep their bins.

5. In my previous objection I noted that the boundaries on the documents were inaccurate and that the plans encroached on a neighbouring property, I am hoping that this issue will be rectified and that all new boundaries and measurements will be rigorously checked.

Support

There is also one representation received in support commenting:

We feel that it is an excellent use of what is an existing very large plot offering affordable accommodation to people in an area that has seen property prices soar. There are already properties similar to this along the

Wrotham Road and other roads in Meopham and they have no negative impact on the local community.

Our only concern is the proposed development of the fields in Norwood Lane, 100's of new houses would have an incredibly negative effect on the local area, increased traffic, additional strain on already stretched public services and the general changing of the landscape, losing yet more countryside, a threat to the village status of Meopham; our council tax has always been very high and we've always been of the understanding that this is to protect and maintain the area that we have chosen to live in.

Planning Analysis and Assessment

Introduction

This planning application is for the erection of a single storey rear extension, balcony to front elevation and conversion of this single-family detached dwelling located in the village of Meopham near to Meopham railway station to 3 self-contained flats (2 x 1-bed and 1 x 2 bed).

A very similar previous application (20210715) was refused in September 2021 on grounds that:

- 1. The proposed flats will introduce a form of development that is at odds with the predominately single-family dwelling character of the surrounding area and the application dwelling is essentially is of a size appropriate for continued single family accommodation. The application relies on the proposed extension to increase the available floorspace to achieve the subdivision into smaller separate units. The proposal is therefore an over development of the site contrary to Policy CS14 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and saved policy H5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 and the development would not accord with the character and appearance of the area.*
- 2. The proposed layout and floor space of the ground floor one bedroom flats would be cramped offering a low level of amenity for the future occupants of the flats and not fully meeting the minimum standards as set in SPG2: Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 - amended June 2020. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and paragraph 130 (f) of the NPPF.*
- 3. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the more intensive use of the property and additional separate vehicular access/usage of the front forecourt of the dwelling exiting on to what is an A Class classified highway and primary distributor and where the visibility to it is poor due to high hedges either side, would be acceptable in highway and pedestrian safety terms or that there is sufficient parking space and turning space to serve the needs of the development. As such as it stands the proposal is contrary to Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS11 (Transport), saved Policy T5 (New Accesses onto the Highway Network) and Policy P3 (Policy for Vehicle Parking Standards) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 and supplementary guidance in the adopted KCC vehicle parking standards (SPG4) and Planning Policy for vehicular accesses to classified highways (SPG 6, November 1992).*

The changes to the scheme in this latest application since the previous refusal, as indicated earlier in this report, are:

- Changes to the layout of Flat 1 in respect of location and size of single bedroom;
- Changes to the layout of Flat 3 in respect of size of bedroom 2;
- Subdivision of garden and allocation of specific areas per each flat;
- Amendment to access, parking spaces and indication of possible turning areas within frontage;
- Amendment to the red line boundary of the plot in relation to the adjoining dwelling to the north (High Firs) which had been incorrectly drawn;

The Key Issues

The key planning considerations in the assessment of this revised application are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Design and Impact on Character and Appearance

- Living conditions of future occupiers
- Impact on amenity of surrounding properties
- Parking and Highway issues
- Other Material Considerations

The assessment will also consequently consider whether the revised proposals have sufficiently addressed the previous reasons for refusal being the concerns relating to the loss of single family accommodation, the low level of amenity for the future occupants of the flats and the adequacy of parking and turning within the site for the proposed number of vehicles and lack of visibility from the existing vehicle access

Principle of Development

Policy CS01 (Sustainable Development) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) indicates that when considering development proposals, the Borough Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and in the Core Strategy.

The existing dwelling is located within a rural settlement inset from the Green Belt. Policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 indicates that the strategy prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. Paragraph 4.2.27 indicates that in the rural area, development will be supported within those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map.

Policy CS02 (LPCS) sets out the Borough's objectively assessed need for housing over the Plan period (up to the year 2028) and finds that there is a need for at least 6,170 new dwellings during the period. Evidence now available shows that the Council is not able to demonstrate a five-year housing supply (a 3.27 year supply has most recently been calculated within the statement published [here](#)), and as the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75%) that required by the Housing Delivery Test, the housing delivery element of Core Strategy Policy CS02 must be regarded to be out of date, as required by the Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.

In the Gravesham context, the policies referred to in paragraph 11(d)(i) above are those set out in the NPPF(2021) at footnote 7 (rather than those in development plans) relating to any of the following:

- Habitats sites (and those sites listed in the NPPF 2021, paragraph 181)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Green Belt,
- Local Green Space,
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Irreplaceable habitats;
- Designated heritage assets (& other heritage assets of archaeological interest, see NPPF footnote 68); and
- Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

It should be noted that whilst the application site is not within a conservation area, it does adjoin the boundary of the Hook Green conservation area and the curtilage of a Grade II listed building and which are both designated heritage assets.

In determining applications for planning permission involving housing, the Council will therefore apply a weighted balance in favour of granting planning permission in accordance with relevant case law and guidance, having regard to the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals when evaluated against development plan policy, the need to make efficient use of land (paragraph 125(c)) in context, the relative contribution the proposal makes towards the alleviation of any shortfall in housing delivery at that time and any other considerations material to the proposed development.

The development for a net increase of two units would offer a minimal contribution towards meeting this local need and carries some very limited weight in support of this development.

However, as part of this balancing exercise, it should be noted that paragraphs 130, 134 and 135 of the NPPF (2021) requires development to add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive,

sympathetic to local character and create acceptable amenity for future occupiers.

Notwithstanding the Council's shortages in housing delivery and the consequent weight to be given in favour of the proposed development, it is necessary to assess the proposals against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and established local planning policy taken as a whole.

There are a number of planning, highway and other material planning issues that need very careful consideration in the assessment of this development and taking into account any relevant consultee or neighbour responses.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Whilst it is recognised that development which makes effective use of land should be supported, this comes with the proviso that it should safeguard and improve the environment and not conflict with other policies in the NPPF 2021 (paragraph 119). Relevant to this proposal, paragraph 124 of the NPPF 2021 states that developments that make efficient use of land should take into account the identified need for different types of housing, the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting, and the importance of securing well-designed buildings and places. This latter point is fundamental to what the planning and development should achieve.

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF 2021 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places and helps make development acceptable. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed, and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

In a similar vein, Policy CS14 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 sets out that new housing development is expected to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes, taking into account the existing character of the area and evidence of local need to create sustainable and balanced communities.

Conversely, paragraph 5.10.8 in Policy CS14 indicates that the Council will protect the mix of housing in the existing housing stock and will resist the conversion of family sized units to smaller properties. In addition, saved Policy H5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 indicates that in considering proposals for the conversion of existing properties to flats etc. regard will be had to certain criteria, namely that the building should be in an appropriate area for conversion to flats, the building should be of a size that is unsuitable for single family accommodation, the proposal should comply with residential layout guidelines and the adopted vehicle parking standards must be achieved wherever feasible.

Also emerging policy RES 5 (Residential Intensification through Sub-Division and Conversion) of the Gravesham Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation Part 2: Draft Development Management Policies Document October 2020 indicates that proposals for flats, maisonettes, bedsits, hostels, houses in multiple occupation or residential institutions will only be allowed where they:

- Will not result in the loss of family-sized dwellings (being up to 4 bedrooms or a maximum gross internal floor area of 118m²). Development proposals which include the loss of a family-sized dwelling will only be permitted where evidence is provided of the property being proactively marketed for a minimum period of 12 months, on realistic terms;
- Achieve good quality living conditions for future residents, including providing a suitable internal layout, sufficient floorspace and adequate useable amenity space;
- Will not adversely affect the amenity of existing or neighbouring residents; demonstrate that a satisfactory standard of servicing and parking can be provided, including making adequate provision for bin storage, cycle storage and drying areas; and
- Will not result in the clustering together of similar uses which harm the overall character and amenity of the area.

The property is an extended 4 bed dwelling and currently would be regarded as a family-sized dwelling.

It is acknowledged that locally, there may be some smaller units of accommodation above local shops and

there is a purpose built flatted accommodation nearby in Wrotham Road at Sunningdale Court on the site of a former petrol filling station and also at Hook Green Court at the junction of Wrotham Road and New Road Meopham but generally the application dwelling is located within an area of single family dwellings and essentially is of a size appropriate for continued single family accommodation. It relies on the proposed extension to increase the available floorspace to achieve the subdivision into smaller separate units.

It is noted that the applicant's agent in the latest submission has referred to other examples of flats within residential houses including at Neville Villas nearby in Wrotham Road although it is noted that this a more substantial older property and the permission for flats appears to date back to the late 1960's.

Fundamentally therefore, there is still a policy objection to the development as being contrary to Policy CS14 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and saved policy H5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 and that the development would not accord with the character and appearance of the area.

It is noted that there are still neighbour objections and a Parish Council objection to the loss of a family home in this location.

Impacts on the Conservation Area/Heritage Assets

Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) gives a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment.

In this case, it is not considered that the works of conversion would materially impact on the adjoining Hook Green conservation area or other heritage assets including the Grade II listed building at Waterditch adjoining to the south.

Design Considerations

The principle design alterations are the proposed rear extension, the removal of the lean to roof to the single storey front projection and the incorporation of a balcony over a flat roof and the conversion of the existing integral garage.

Although the rear extension with its cat slide roof design appears slightly incongruous and bulky with the existing form of the dwelling the proposed external alterations and additions would not materially harm the character and appearance of the dwelling per se and are not contrary to local and national design policies.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy requires that all development should be 'fit for purpose' and be 'adaptable to allow changes to meet the need of users' and that 'the design and layout of new residential development, including conversion, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines'.

The Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2 Residential Layout Guidelines referred to above sets out the Council's standards in relation to private garden areas and internal space standards, amongst other things.

On 25 March 2015, the Government issued a written ministerial statement, which introduced new technical housing standards in England. This means that the Borough Council now interpret Tables 1 and 3 of the Residential Layout Guidelines July 1996 in accordance with the new standards.

Internal Space Standards

In terms of the size of the units, it is indicated that the 2 x one bedroom flats on the ground floor (Flats 1 and 2) have overall floor areas of 39.4m² and 43.7m² respectively while the two bed flat on the first floor would have an overall floor area of 75.0m².

It is indicated that the applicant does not wish to have couples renting the ground floor flats considering individuals to be easier to manage and less likely to cause any conflict and thus indicating them as one person flats. Nevertheless it is perhaps unrealistic that the ground floor flats would be only one person in this location notwithstanding the limited bedroom sizes. Under the technical housing standards (national described space standard) minimum floor areas for one bed 1xperson flats are 39m² while for one bed 2xperson flats the requirement is for 50m². It is evident that the floor space for flat 1 includes an entrance hall in the calculation of overall living space.

The one bedroom flats have bedroom sizes of 8.5m² for flat 1 (an increase from the previous application when it was 7.4m²) and 8.4m² for flat 2, while the technical housing standards (national described space standard) requires as a minimum bedrooms of 7.5m² (one bed space) and 11.5m² (two bed space).

Conversely it is noted that the combined dining/kitchen/living room for flat 1 at 22.7m² is slightly substandard based on the Council's own standards (minimum standard for lounge/diner - 18m² and kitchen - 7.2m, thus 25.2m² in total in the residential layout guidelines).

It should be noted that the layout, size and number of flats can only be achieved through the extension of the dwelling rather than by direct conversion alone.

All of the above suggests that what is being offered as living space for the future occupants of the flats is still a little cramped and on the margins of acceptability.

As such, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy CS19 of the Local Plan Core Strategy and paragraph 130 (f) of the NPPF.

It is noted that the applicants Design and Access Statement says:

The intention is for Taralee to remain a single dwelling and not to be sub-divided into separate dwellings that can be sold off individually. It is considered that this will retain the character of the building as a single family home dwelling. The applicant is agreeable to a condition being applied that will prohibit the building being split up into multiple dwellings.

However it is unclear how this could be so conditioned and necessarily enforced. The application form indicates that the development is for market housing and is for permanent permission rather than on a temporary basis.

Amenity Space

It is indicated that the amenity area or garden curtilage will be available for the use of all 3 flats and it is considered that this would be sufficient for the number of flats proposed.

The Gravesham Residential Standards require amenity space in excess of 10sqm for each flat, which is met with a rear garden area of over 200m².

The revised application has shown how the amenity space could be allocated per each flat.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires new development to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land and paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2021) requires development to have a high standard of amenity for existing users (In this case surrounding properties).

The proposal will result in a more intensive use of the dwelling with the potential for neighbour impacts in respect of additional noise from numerous households living in the previously one property.

In terms of potential overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbours whilst there are some additional windows and openings in the dwelling most notably in the north elevation, they are principally at ground floor, or are high-level roof lights. There would be a new first floor window in the north side elevation serving a

bathroom but this would be obscure glazed and could be non-openable.

The front balcony could potentially result in overlooking although the dwelling is sufficiently set back not to result in material harm.

On balance, it is not considered that the development would result in any material loss of privacy or amenity for adjoining dwellings

Parking and Highways

At a local level Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS11 (Transport) states that new development should mitigate their impact on the public highway and that transport assessments should be provided and implemented to ensure delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunities for travel. Furthermore, it states that sufficient car parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with adopted standards, which will reflect the availability of alternative means of transport accessibility to services and facilities.

This approach to development is also supported by saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review Policy T1 (Impact of Development on the Highway Network), Policy T5 (New Accesses onto the Highway Network) and Policy P3 (Policy for Vehicle Parking Standards) and in supplementary guidance in the adopted KCC vehicle parking standards (SPG4) and Planning Policy for vehicular accesses to classified highways (SPG 6, November 1992).

Saved Policy T5 requires that the formation of new accesses or the intensification of use of existing accesses to the roads forming the highway network shown on the Proposals Map, will not normally be permitted, except where no danger would arise and where a properly formed access can be created in a location and to a standard acceptable to the Local Planning and Highway Authorities.

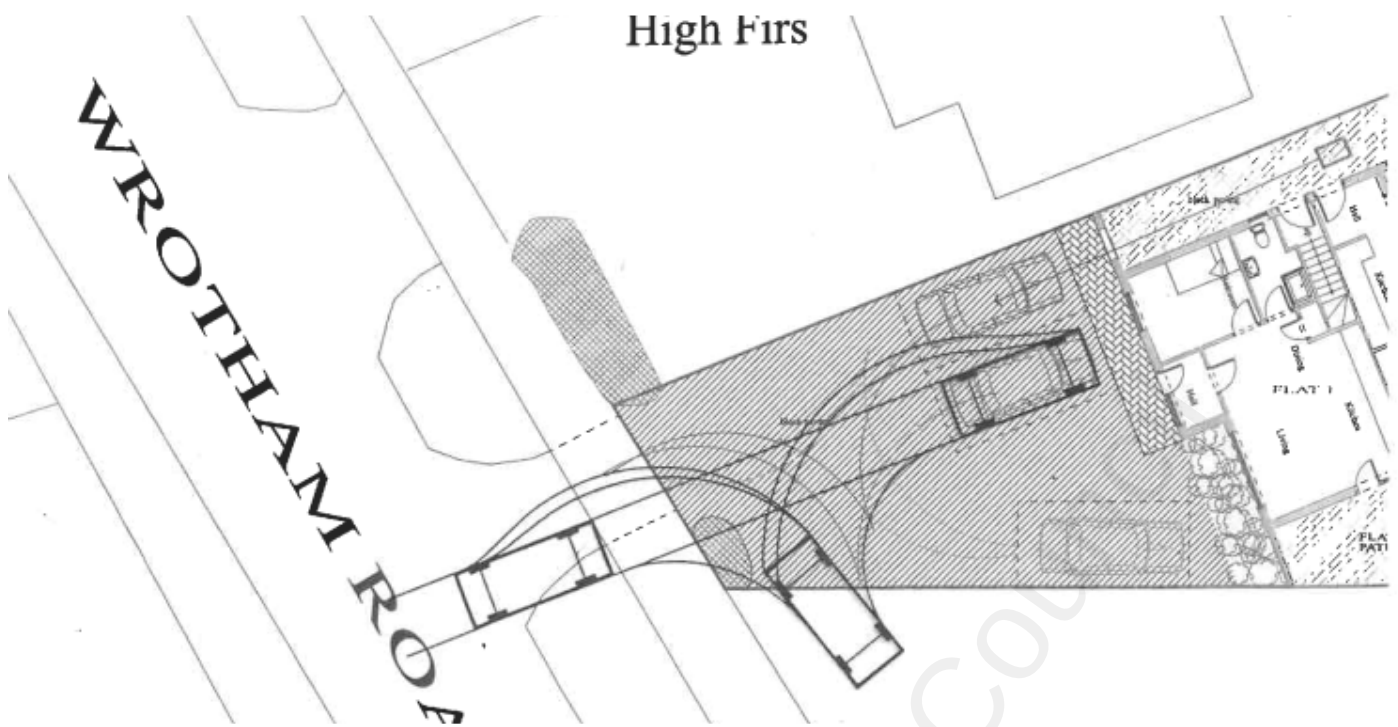
Planning Policy for vehicular accesses to classified highways (Planning Guidance Note No 6) gives detailed advice regarding design criteria for vehicular accesses and sets out the circumstances where permission will be granted for new vehicle accesses onto classified roads. It has been the subject of thorough public consultation. The Council's policy and guidance for controlling the formation of vehicular accesses to classified highways is long established dating from the mid 1970's and reaffirmed in November 1980. It was established as a planning policy through the original Gravesham Local Plan in 1987. The policy guidance was revised in September 1991 following which an explanatory leaflet was produced. In November 1992 the policy guidance was reappraised. It was further revised in February 2009.

The standards require full visibility splays appropriate to the class of road and the speed of passing traffic. Typical standards are 2 x 2 metres (measured along back of footway) for pedestrians and 2 x 45 metres (measured along kerb line) for vehicles. Access should also be provided on-site turning space - typically, this will require a minimum forecourt area of 7.5 metres width and 8 metres depth. This can be compromised if forecourts are used for multiple car parking.

The GBC Highways Development Management Officer has some concerns at the suitability of the car parking and the ability of motor cars to manoeuvre within the space available within the front garden so that cars can enter and leave the site in a forward direction. This is important given that the A227 Wrotham Road is an A Class classified highway and a primary distributor route.

The existing parking area at the front of the property is already somewhat constrained in that whilst nearer the front wall of the dwelling it is much wider at some 10m it only has a frontage width to the highway of 6m albeit a depth of circa 12m. With as an absolute minimum 3 parking spaces and notwithstanding the applicants turning circle shown on the submitted drawing it is evident that based on Design Bulletin DB32 this shows that it is difficult for a vehicle to turn within the site without multiple point manoeuvres and made worse with two plus other vehicles parked there.

This is shown in the drawing below.



Whilst the access to the A227 Wrotham Road is existing, the visibility to it is constrained due to high hedges either side and with a more intensive use of the property and additional separate vehicular access/usage of the frontage exiting on to what is an A Class classified highway and primary distributor it is paramount that there is sufficient parking space and turning space to serve the needs of the development and with satisfactory visibility from a highway safety aspect and this has still not been adequately demonstrated in this latest submission.

Since the previous application it is noted that the access has been widened and part of the hedge cut away although in a somewhat poor fashion by the applicants and without the benefit of a proper consent. Even with those changes this does not address the issue of the ability for cars to enter and leave in a forward direction and the use of the access will clearly intensify with the proposed change from a single family dwelling to 3 separate independently operating flat units.

It is noted in the applicants Design and Access Statement that it is indicated that with 3 parking spaces allocated to the flat units there will be space left over for visitors but the turning circle overlay shows that this would not be possible and even though the applicants suggest that there were occasions when 9 cars were parked on the site as a family dwelling it would clearly not be possible to access the site by motor vehicles safely and where highway safety is paramount.

As such as it stands the proposal is still considered to be detrimental to highway safety and contrary to Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS11 (Transport) saved Policy T5 (New Accesses onto the Highway Network) and Policy P3 (Policy for Vehicle Parking Standards) of the Gravesham Local Plan First review 1994 and supplementary guidance in the adopted KCC vehicle parking standards (SPG4) and Planning Policy for vehicular accesses to classified highways (SPG 6, November 1992).

Other Material Considerations

It is not considered that there would be an adverse impacts in terms of archaeology or biodiversity.

Conclusions and Balancing Exercise

The proposal would have the benefit of providing two additional flats to the Borough's housing stock, which would be a minimal contribution to the Borough's housing supply and adds some limited weight to the proposal.

On balance, it is considered that the benefit of the two additional units do not outweigh the harm that has been identified above. In addition, it is considered that the changes made since the same scheme for the conversion of this family home into three separate flat units was refused in September 2021 have not fully

addressed the previous concerns and objections nor given any confidence that the application could be supported.

There are neighbour objections and an objection from the Parish Council to the principle of conversion and loss of a family home as well as on parking and traffic grounds.

As such, it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

Recommendation:

REFUSED on the grounds that:

1. The proposed flats will introduce a form of development that is at odds with the predominately single-family dwelling character of the surrounding area and the application dwelling is essentially is of a size appropriate for continued single family accommodation. The application relies on the proposed extension to increase the available floorspace to achieve the subdivision into smaller separate units. The proposal is therefore an over development of the site contrary to Policy CS14 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and saved policy H5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 and the development would not accord with the character and appearance of the area.

2. The proposed layout and floor space of the ground floor one bedroom flats would be cramped offering a low level of amenity for the future occupants of the flats and not fully meeting the minimum standards as set in SPG2: Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 - amended June 2020. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and paragraph 130 (f) of the NPPF.

3. Insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the more intensive use of the property and additional separate vehicular access/usage of the front forecourt of the dwelling exiting on to what is an A Class classified highway and primary distributor and where the visibility to it is poor due to high hedges either side, would be acceptable in highway and pedestrian safety terms or that there is sufficient parking space and turning space to serve the needs of the development. As such as it stands the proposal is contrary to Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS11 (Transport), saved Policy T5 (New Accesses onto the Highway Network) and Policy P3 (Policy for Vehicle Parking Standards) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 and supplementary guidance in the adopted KCC vehicle parking standards (SPG4) and Planning Policy for vehicular accesses to classified highways (SPG 6, November 1992).

INFORMATIVES

1 DRAWINGS AND DOCUMENTS

For the avoidance of doubt, the decision to refuse this application was taken in relation to the following forms, plans and documents

Application Form;
Design and Access Statement, Amended October 2021;
Un-numbered OS Red Line Location Plan
Drawing No 21/2721 A: Existing Block Plan;
Drawing No 21/2725 A: Proposed Block Plan;
Drawing No 21/2726: Plans and Elevations - Existing and Proposed;

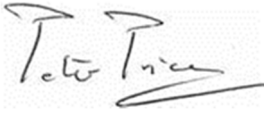
2 STATEMENT OF POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE APPROACH TO DECISION-MAKING

In accordance with Article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), and paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, the Local Planning Authority has approached the assessment and determination of this application in a positive and creative way and, where appropriate, has worked pro-actively with the applicant to secure a

development that is sustainable and that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area, and that is in accordance with the Development Plan for the area.

In this instance the application is not in accordance with the Development Plan for the area and cannot be supported.

See draft Decision

Case Officer:	Mr Peter Price	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	04 January 2022	Dated:	05 January 2022

File Location: H: Plan/Typing/General/Peter/Delegated Reports/Uniform - 20211328 - Delegated Report - Taralee Wrotham Road Meopham - Extension and conversion to 3 flats