



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2026

by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 January 2026

Appeal Ref: 6001413

22 Mulberry Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8NZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Natasha Gosain against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20250813.
 - The development proposed is a first-floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 16 December 2025, the Government published a consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Whilst broad changes to the structure of the Framework are proposed as part of this consultation, these proposals could be subject to further change and can only be given very limited weight at this stage. It has therefore not been necessary to consult the parties on the changes, and in reaching my decision, I have had regard to the Framework published in December 2024.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property at No 24 Mulberry Road, with particular regard to outlook, sense of enclosure and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property forms one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings located on the southern side of Mulberry Road within an established residential area. The dwellings share a broadly uniform scale, ridge height and pattern of setback, with single-storey garages positioned between the paired houses at ground floor level. The street exhibits a coherent rhythm, assisted by the spacing between dwellings at first floor level and the visual relief this affords in the street scene. Whilst there are examples of extensions and alterations elsewhere, these are generally

subservient to the host dwellings and do not significantly erode the perceived spacing that contributes to the area's character.

5. The proposal would introduce a first-floor extension above the existing single-storey projection which runs along the shared boundary with No 24. The development would extend built form close to the boundary at first-floor level, appreciably reducing the degree of perceived spacing between the dwellings within the street scene. The extension would appear visually dominant and disproportionately broad, undermining the prevailing and coherent rhythm of side separation that is characteristic of this part of Mulberry Road.
6. The Design for Gravesham Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2024) states that the pattern and rhythm of buildings play a fundamental role in local character. Consistent with this, the Householder Extensions and Alterations SPD (2021) advises that two-storey side extensions should not unreasonably interrupt existing rhythms, including characteristic gaps between properties. It adds that a minimum gap of 1 metre should normally be retained between a two-storey extension and the side boundary. By taking the extension up to the boundary at two-storey height, the proposal would remove the gap between the dwellings and increase the apparent width and bulk of the appeal property, eroding the established pattern of development.
7. Furthermore, the combination of flat and pitched roof elements at first-floor level would result in a visually disjointed addition that would not relate comfortably to the existing roofscape. Although the external materials would match the host dwelling, matching materials alone do not resolve the issues of massing, proportion and roof form. The increased prominence of the extended first-floor envelope, when combined with the loss of spacing to the boundary, would result in a dominant and visually intrusive form of development that would fail to integrate with the established character of the area. When viewed from the road as well as from neighbouring dwellings, it would thus appear as an incongruous addition.
8. The appellant refers to the existing first-floor rear extension at No 20 and to other examples in the wider area. However, the extension at No 20 differs materially in its positioning, scale and form, and pre-dates the adoption of Gravesham's Design Guidance SPD (2024). As such, it carries limited weight in support of the proposal. Other cited examples are dispersed within a wider geographical context, do not replicate the same boundary relationship, and do not demonstrate a consistent pattern that would alter the prevailing character of Mulberry Road. I have assessed the proposal on its own merits and find that the developments referred to are not entirely comparable or relevant. Consequently, they attract only very limited weight.
9. For these reasons, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling and the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) insofar as it seeks to ensure proposals are well-designed and integrate well with the surrounding area.
10. The proposal would also not adhere to guidance in the Householder Extensions and Alterations SPD (2021), which seeks subordinate extensions and harmonious rooflines, and the Design for Gravesham SPD (2024), which expects development to respect established scale and built form rhythm.

Living conditions

11. The proposal would be erected over the existing single-storey WC/utility projection along the shared boundary with No 24, resulting in a two-storey flank wall of substantial height. The increased vertical massing in such close proximity would give rise to a materially greater sense of enclosure for the neighbouring occupants when compared with the existing arrangement. This effect would be perceptibly increased by the modest difference in ground levels between the properties, as the appeal site sits at a higher level than No 24. As a result, the effective height and dominance of the flank wall would be experienced more acutely from No 24's ground floor rooms and adjoining outdoor space.
12. Due to its height and position on the boundary, the proposed extension would be seen as an imposing and overbearing addition that would dominate the neighbouring patio area. It would also negatively affect the neighbouring occupier's outlook from the rear conservatory.
13. No 24 lies to the west of the proposed development. As such, during the morning period, sunlight would approach from the east and south-east. The increased height of the built form along the shared boundary would lead to additional overshadowing for an appreciable duration of the morning, reducing natural light to rooms and the adjoining patio area at No 24. Whilst overshadowing would fluctuate seasonally, the degree of impact would be sufficient to materially diminish daylight reaching the neighbour's property during times of typical domestic use.
14. I note the appellant's contention that their own property at No 22 experiences a more significant impact on outlook from the neighbouring extension at No 20 than any impact the present proposal would have on No 24. However, the existence of the extension at No 20 does not justify or diminish the effects of the appeal proposal on the occupants of No 24. I recognise the appellant's concern, but my assessment must consider the current proposal and the subject of this appeal. The existing extension at No 20 therefore does not lessen the need to safeguard the living conditions of the occupants of No 24.
15. Given this, the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at No 24 Mulberry Road due to a loss of outlook, an adverse sense of enclosure and loss of light. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) insofar as it seeks to ensure proposals safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight of the occupants of neighbouring properties.
16. Furthermore, the proposal would also run counter to the guidance contained within the Householder Extensions and Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021) and Design for Gravesham SPD (2024), both of which resist extensions that unduly diminish light or create oppressive relationships with neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

17. The proposal would enlarge bedrooms at first-floor level and would make use of matching external materials. These matters would improve the internal functionality of the dwelling and would ensure a coherent external finish. However, such benefits carry limited weight in the planning balance.

18. The appellant refers to other developments in the wider area. A number of these, such as the extensions at Nos 2 Mulberry Road and 1 Baker Hill Close, relate to properties that sit within larger plots and that are quite different in form and profile to the appeal dwelling. The extensions also do not seem to be positioned directly on sensitive boundaries. The side extension at No 4 Kemsley Close has been built above an existing side garage and abuts the neighbouring boundary. However, it is positioned at the bottom of the neighbour's garden rather than directly adjacent to the neighbour's rear rooms and veranda. This is also the case with the side to rear extension at No 7 Ladyfields.
19. I must also stress that I have limited information about these developments and the circumstances in which they were permitted. A number of the extensions referred to also appear to be somewhat dated and may have been allowed in a different policy context. Consequently, the extensions referred to are not entirely comparable and I do not find that they lend any significant weight in favour of the proposed scheme.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

20. The proposal would result in harm to both the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. The limited benefits identified would not demonstrably outweigh this harm.
21. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
22. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

INSPECTOR