



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240560

Location: 4 New Dairy Farm Cottages Church Street Higham Rochester

Description: Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey extension to the rear and side.

Applicant: Mr Miles Brooke

Site Visit Date: 12th September 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
Location Plan
01 A – Existing and Proposed Block Plans
01 A - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19860089	Section 53 determination as to whether planning permission is required for the erection of a single storey side extension to form a lounge	Certificate Granted	24.02.1986

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
- C13 – Policy for Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

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

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Higham Parish Council

No comments received.

KCC Heritage

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, based on existing Historic Environment Record data for the area and the relatively limited extent of the proposed works, I consider it unlikely that these proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Southern Water

Further to reviewing the submitted documents, it has not been made clear if the applicant proposes to use the existing wastewater connection and Surface Water scheme. If the applicant is using the existing drainage scheme, Southern Water has no objection to the proposed works proceeding. If not, the applicant will need to make an application for the foul and surface water drainage using the following link:

<https://www.southernwater.co.uk/developing-building/connection-charging-arrangements>

Neighbouring properties

2no. surrounding properties were consulted and a site notice was placed on 12th September 2024. The final date to submit comments ended on 11th October 2024. No comments were received from members of the public.

Officer's Analysis

Description of Site

This application relates to an end of terrace dwellinghouse, in a rural area, within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The area is within the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area, an area of Archaeological Potential and the Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar Buffer Zone. There is an existing conservatory to the side elevation. The images below were taken during the site visit.



Principle of Development in the Green Belt

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 152-156 of the NPPF address proposals which would affect the Green Belt. It seeks to ensure that inappropriate development in the Green Belt would not be approved except in very special circumstance.

The relevant exceptions to this policy are as follows:

Paragraph 154(c) identifies 'the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building', as an exception to this policy.

Paragraph 154(g) identifies another exception as;

'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
- not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority'

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

Core Policy CS02 sets out where development should be distributed in the borough. Preference is given to those urbanised areas as sustainable locations. Outside urbanised areas, those rural settlements which are inset from the Green Belt would also be considered acceptable in principle. This site is in a rural area, in the Greenbelt **NOT** forming part of settlement inset from the Greenbelt. In this context the policy states that developments; 'will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan.'

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

Policy C13 sets out the requirements for extensions to dwellings. Of particular consideration and to assist in assessing whether the addition would be disproportionate, this policy limits the increased floorspace to one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling. However, this policy does pre-date the NPPF, and greater weight should be given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 154 the NPPF 2023. "Original dwelling" for the purpose of Policy C13 means the building in permanent residential use at 1st July 1948.

A Certificate of Lawful Development was granted for erection of a single storey side extension to form a lounge, under ref 19860089 in 1986. This extension does not exist on the current building and instead there is a conservatory with a smaller footprint, set further back. The row of terraced buildings do not appear on the 1929-1952 maps, or before on KCC's Heritage Maps. Google Earth's Aerial Images show the buildings as appearing in 1960. Based on, existing plans from planning reference 19860089, and aerial imagery, it appears that this dwellinghouse is relatively unchanged in terms of its footprint, with exception of the conservatory, which is proposed to be removed as part of this development. The below table therefore details the floorspace of the building as originally built, without the conservatory and how this would compare to the building as proposed.

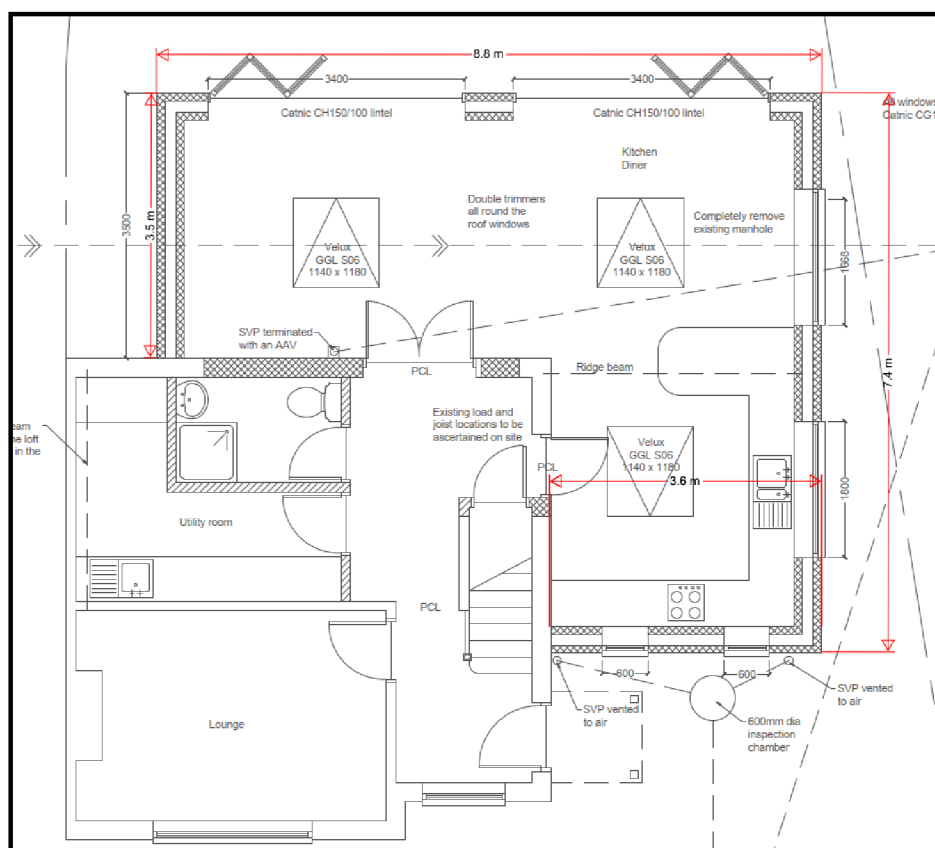
	Original Building	Proposed Building	Increase/Decrease
Ground Floor	40m ²	85m ²	+ 45m ² / 112.5%
First Floor	40m ²	40m ²	NO CHANGE
Total Floorspace	80m ²	125m ²	+45m ² / 56.25%

This would result in an overall 56.25% increase, which would be greater than half the floorspace of the original dwellinghouse and significantly above the one-third limit. However, the design, scale and bulk of the addition should also be assessed, in considering the impact in terms of whether the addition would be

disproportional. The following section will assess the additional in terms of its design, character and appearance and will conclude, whether the addition would be proportionate and therefore whether it would be appropriate in the Green Belt.

Design, Character and Appearance

The proposed extension would extend beyond the side and rear elevations, essentially forming a wrap-around extension. From the existing side elevation, it would be 3.6m wide. Beyond the rearmost elevation, it would be 3.5m deep. Both the side and rear elements would be joined to form an 'L' shape extension. As such, the encompassing width would be 8.8m and depth would be 7.4m.



Not to scale image of proposed floor plan with added dimensions

It would be single storey with an overall 3.4m high pitched roof. The existing dwellinghouse is square in shape with a width of 6.4m and depth of 6.4m, excluding the conservatory. The footprint of the building would be increased by 112.5% from the original footprint, which is excessive.

Paragraph 10.4 of the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide, specifically states that single storey side extensions should not be greater than half the width of the original building. In this case, the extension would be greater than half the width. Beyond the side elevation it would be 3.6m, and all encompassing the extension would be 8.8m wide, both measurements which are greater than half the original width of 6.4m.

From the front elevation, there would be room for improvement, in terms of design, with a reduced width. However, given the nature of the site and its wide views of the side elevation from the public perspective, the significant depth of the overall extension which would total 7.4m would be entirely visible and would result in significant impacts to the character of the area. Therefore, a reduction in width alone and improvements to the front elevation alone would not solve the issues over overdevelopment at the core of this scheme. It is noted that currently the conservatory is visible from the side elevation, and is not considered to be of particularly high design quality. And so, its removal does weigh positively into the overall assessment. However, although not of high-quality design, the conservatory is a much smaller

addition and so would have lesser impacts on the visual appearance of the building than the proposed scheme, which would dwarf the footprint of the dwellinghouse and create a substantial increased level of bulk visible from the side and rear elevations.

Considering the design tools that have been utilised there are a number of factors which would usually meet the requirements of local and national planning guidance, for instance, the use of a pitched roof to reflect the main dwellinghouse, use of materials to match the existing dwellinghouse, step back from the front elevation and appropriate window placement and size. These features generally help to integrate new development with existing dwellinghouses, ensuring their subservient appearance. However, in this case, due to the significant scale of the increase, the use of some appropriate design features does little to mitigate the fact that the extension would result in an obviously and overbearing disproportional bulk, footprint, and overdevelopment of the site.

Impact on openness

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.

Given that the development would be disproportionately large as established above, it is considered that the increased size and scale of the appeal property would detract from this setting and the rural character of the area and would contravene the provisions of paragraph 142 and 154 (g) of the NPPF (2023)

Summary on Green Belt and Design

Green Belt

The proposed extension would have a disproportional appearance in terms of its scale and would therefore be harmful to the Green Belt, contrary to paragraph 154(c) and 154(g) of the NPPF (2023) and, Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2014).

Design and Character

On balance, the proposed development would result in overbearing disproportional bulk, footprint, and overdevelopment of the site contrary to the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2023) in terms of design, character and appearance.

Landscape Character

With regard to the impact on the landscape, Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 is relevant to this application, relating to green infrastructure. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 2009 will be taken into account in determining applications. The site is located within the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area.

The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Area are described as:

- Gently undulating topography with open arable fields
- Fields divided by tracks, roads and occasional hedgerows
- Orchards to the east
- Minor native woodland clumps
- Few roads, which are open in character
- Instead Rise modern housing development
- Clusters of properties and farmsteads
- Large pylons

Whilst the proposals would result in some new built development on the in the form of residential extension, this would not represent a significant change in the mixed rural/residential character and appearance of the site and would not therefore result in any adverse visual impact on landscape character.

Overall, the proposals comprise appropriate alterations in terms of their size, scale and appearance, and would maintain the character and appearance of the site and landscape quality of the surrounding rural area. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in design and landscape terms and would comply with the requirements of Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, and paragraphs 135 and 180 of the NPPF 2023.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The NPPF (2023) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land. The impact on neighbours will be assessed in the next section of the report.

Room Type	Proposed Internal Floor Area (m ²)	Minimum Space Standard (m ²)
Kitchen	37	7.2
Bathroom and WC	3.1	3.6

Garden Measurement	Proposed Internal Floor Area (m ²)	Minimum Space Standard (m ²)
Area	168	100 (Maximum requirement for 4 bedrooms)
Depth	21.7	10 (Maximum requirement for 4 bedrooms)

It is noted that the bathroom and WC proposed in the ground floor would be undersized by 0.5m². However, there is no current ground floor bathroom and so it is highly likely that an existing bathroom is available in the first floor and so adequate bathroom facilities would be maintained.

Neighbouring Amenity

As outlined above, it is important that any development safeguards the amenity of neighbouring properties and land. Following a period of consultation with neighbouring properties, no objection to the proposal was received.

There is one adjoining neighbour to the north; 5 New Dairy Farm Cottages. As the proposed block plan shows, this neighbour has a single storey rear extension which has a similar depth to the one proposed. The image below was taken during the site visit and shows the neighbours single storey brick extension to the right of the image.



The proposed extension would be pulled away from the shared boundary, with a distance of 1.2m. The neighbouring property has no side openings which would be impacted by the proposed development. Given the similar expanse of rear depth, the extension would also not result in overbearing bulk or overshadowing to this neighbour's amenity.

The proposal is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in compliance with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Highways and Parking

The proposed development would not increase the number of bedroom and so there would be no increase in parking provision required to this site.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposal, by virtue of its proposed size, scale, massing and form, would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling and harm the openness of the Green Belt. It would therefore would not comply with paragraph 154(c) and 154(g) of the NPPF (2023) and, Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2014). No very special circumstances have been submitted which would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. As such, as per paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023), this inappropriate development should not be approved.

The proposed development by reason of its excessive scale and disproportional appearance would result in

significant harm to the character of this area, constituting over-development of the site. The development would not contribute to the character of the area and would as a result fail to comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023), in terms of design, character and appearance.

(For detailed conditions / reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	14 th October 2024	Dated:	14 October 2024