



Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Planning Application No:	20231297
Location:	The Chestnuts, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Gravesend
Description:	Addition of 1no bedroom to 2nd floor.
Applicant:	Mr J Read
Site Visit Date:	Undertaken on previous application

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Design and Access Statement
Drawing no. BDS-CH-P01 (Existing Ground & First Floor Plans)
Drawing no. BDS-CH-P02 (Existing Second Floor and Roof Plans)
Drawing no. BDS-CH-P03 Rev. A (Existing & Proposed Elevations Proposed Staff Accommodation)
Drawing no. BDS-CN-P04 (Proposed Floor Plans)
Drawing no. BDS-CH-P05 Rev. A (Proposed & Existing Site Plans Block Plans & Site Location Plan)

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230457	Addition of 1no bedroom to 2nd floor and erection of outbuilding for staff accommodation.	Refused	13.07.2023
20110103	Erection of single storey side extension to form a kitchen and a day room.	Permitted	28.03.2011
19880295	Erection of 2 no three storey rear extensions each comprising of additional bedrooms, wc, laundry rms office & extension to self-contained accommodation at 2nd floor level & continued use of premises as a retirement home for the elderly and as a private registered nursing home.	Permitted	14.09.1988
19850039	Erection of two storey extension on north side to form additional old persons accommodation comprising six bedrooms and two bathrooms erection of double garage at rear and formation of car parking area	Permitted	21.03.1985
19840511	Erection of single storey extension at side to form enlarged kitchen and erection of external fire escape to elderly persons rest home	Permitted	24.09.1984
19840068	Change of use of ground floor and first floor to rest home for elderly people and second floor as owners flat requiring the erection of two external staircases	Permitted	06.04.1984

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS10 – Physical and Social Infrastructure
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS14 – Housing Type and Size
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development and Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) 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 (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 11 – Making effective use of land
- 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

KCC Archaeology

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, 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.

Internal Consultees

GBC Highways

The proposed alteration of one additional bedroom cannot be considered to be significant in highway terms. No objections.

Environmental Protection

No objection to this application. It is anticipated that the extension will use the existing drainage/foul sewage system for the care home. The following conditions/informatives are suggested.

Code of Practice on Construction and Demolition: Please apply as appropriate.

Lighting: Artificial lighting can cause a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. It is important that the applicants are not permitted to install external lighting that illuminate anything other than the ground within the curtilage of the buildings in order to assist in preventing a nuisance from occurring (which would be most likely if the bedrooms on neighbouring properties are illuminated).

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised on site. The consultation period expired on 30.01.2024.

No letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties.

The Dickens Country Protection Society and local Ward Councillors were also consulted, and no responses were received.

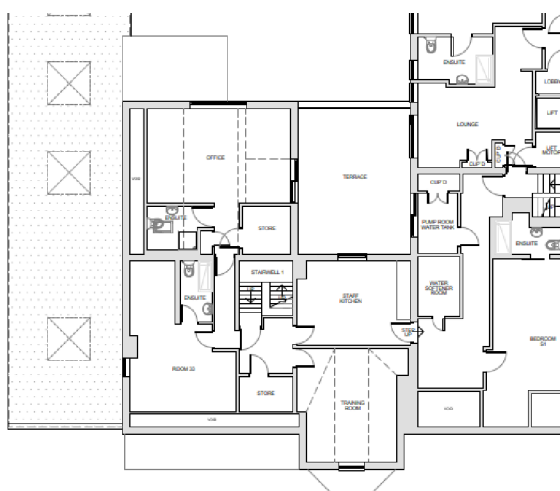
Officer's Analysis

Proposal

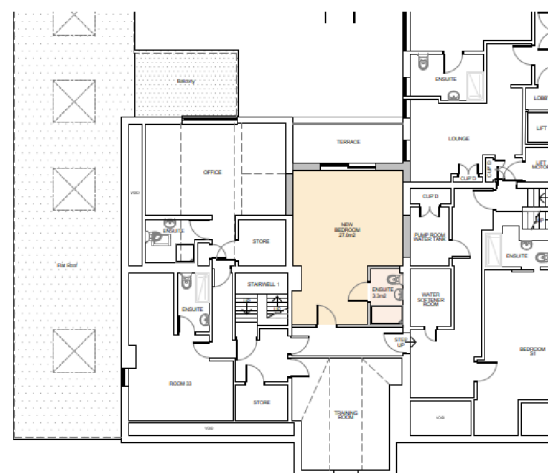
This application seeks permission for the addition of 1 no bedroom to the 2nd floor in the form of a dormer extension to the rear roof slope. This development was also sought under the previously refused application 20230457. It was considered to be acceptable, but the application was refused on the other element of the proposal for an outbuilding for staff accommodation.

The proposal for the additional bedroom involves converting an existing roof terrace into an additional room. The wall will be clad in tile hanging to match the existing with a flat black single ply membrane with fascias to match the existing. The patio doors, soffit, fascia, rainwater goods and balustrading will also match the existing.

Existing second floor plan:



Proposed second floor plan:



Existing elevation:

Proposed elevation:



Existing elevation:



Principle Issues

The site comprises an established care home immediately adjoining (but outside) the Hook Green Meopham settlement boundary. The main care home building is large, and it has various detached outbuildings around it to the north and a parking area to the front and side.

Current Google Earth Image:



Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy 2014 gives support to proposals that protect, retain or enhance existing physical and social infrastructure. Policy CS14 also states that “sheltered housing and extra care housing for people with special needs will be supported on suitable sites in areas with access to a range of services that provide for the needs of future occupants”. It is considered that as the site is a care home that has been in operation since the 1980s, the use has been clearly established on site and if there is an opportunity to increase the capacity of this care home, planning policy would support this, subject to there being no conflict with other local and national planning policies.

The site lies outside the settlement boundary in the countryside, in the Green Belt and in the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. Taking these designations into account, the main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development in the Green Belt
- Impact on openness
- Design
- Landscape character

Principle of development in the Green Belt

The site lies within the Green Belt. Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (paragraph 142 of the NPPF 2023). Paragraph 152 of the NPPF 2021 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting

the Green Belt and policies in the Core Strategy 2014.

Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt (paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2023). However, there are exceptions to this which, as in the case of this proposal, include:

(c) 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.

With regards to the proposed roof extension, and the matter of whether the proposal would be a disproportionate addition, the proposed additional floorspace would amount to approximately 20m². This addition would be entirely within the existing footprint of the building. Such a minimal addition to the property would only modestly increase its size and would not significantly impact on the bulk of the property or create an extension that was disproportionate in comparison to the size of the original building. It is therefore considered that the proposal would fall within the paragraph 154 (c) exception and would therefore be an appropriate development in the Green Belt that would not be harmful.

Landscape Character

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF 2023 aims for development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 is also 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 (GLCA) 2009 will be taken into account in determining applications. The site is located within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, where topography is gently undulating with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland. The overall condition of the landscape is good and has moderate sensitivity. It is recommended that key landscape elements should be conserved and reinforced.

The proposed rear roof extension would be within the established care home grounds, and the development would be seen only within this context. The development would not therefore have an adverse effect on the rural character of the wider area, considering its care home setting. The site does not contribute to the distinctive features identified within the GLCA and is unlikely to add to those features as it would remain part of the care home grounds.

The proposal would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area and would comply with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to conserve, restore or enhance the landscape character of areas identified within the GLCA.

Design

Development Plan policy places considerable emphasis on the importance of achieving high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places (paragraph 131 of the NPPF 2023). Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2023 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 Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The design of the proposed roof extension is considered to be modest and in keeping with the character of the original building. Matching materials would also ensure this and should be conditioned.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the site and sympathetic to the surrounding built environment. The proposal would therefore accord with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2023).

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2023 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 135f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, 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, and avoid adverse environmental impacts.

Future Occupiers

The application involves the addition of a bedroom to the main building. There are no conflicts with the requirements of paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2023 and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy in respect of the living conditions for future occupants. The new room will have an ensuite and will exceed the minimum room size standard of 12m² recommended by the Care Quality Commission.

Overall, it is considered that the proposals would comply with residential layout guidelines and the Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards in terms of the size of the proposed accommodation.

Neighbouring Properties

Due to the distance from neighbouring residential properties, and the small-scale intensification of the use, the proposal would not cause harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties in terms of outlook and privacy, daylight and sunlight, and environmental impacts. As such, the proposal would comply with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Highways

Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy 2014 and saved Policy P3 of the Local Plan 1994 require new development to mitigate the impact on the highway and public transport networks and provide sufficient parking in accordance with the adopted parking standards, taking account of the availability of alternative means of transport and accessibility to services and facilities. This is reflected in paragraph 115 of the NPPF 2023, which states development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where the cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

No changes are proposed to the current vehicular access or parking arrangements. As the proposal will involve the increase in the number of bedrooms at the care home only by one, and staff numbers will not change, the impact on parking and highways would be negligible. On this basis, the proposal is deemed to be acceptable in terms of parking and highways matters.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Archaeology

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, it is considered unlikely that these proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 203 of the NPPF 2023.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The proposed roof extension would be considered appropriate development that would not be harmful in the Green Belt and would conserve the rural landscape context of this site within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. Additionally, the proposal would be acceptable in relation to design, residential amenity, highway and archaeological matters. As such, the proposal would comply with the requirements of

Policies CS02, CS11, CS12, CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, saved Policy P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and paragraphs 131, 135, 142, 152, 154, 180 and 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023. The application is accordingly recommended for permission.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	1 February 2024	Dated:	06 February 2024