



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20260555

Location: Forge House Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Demolition of existing porch; erection of front porch, installation of UPVC windows at front and side; and erection of front boundary wall/railings/gate.

Applicant: Ms Ann-Marie Christie

Site Visit Date: 17 June 2026

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Planning Application form;
Drawing no. 01 Site location plan;
Drawing no. 02 Existing block plan;
Drawing no. 03 Existing ground floor layout;
Drawing no. 04 Existing elevations;
Drawing no. 05 Existing front elevation and layout for wall and gates;
Drawing no. 06 Rev. A Proposed block plan;
Drawing no. 07 Proposed ground floor layout;
Drawing no. 08 Proposed elevations;
Drawing no. 09 Rev. B Proposed front elevation and layout for wall and gates;
Householder Planning Statement 28 May 2026; and
Email received 23 September 2026 with materials details.

Superseded Documents/Plans

~~Drawing no. 06 Proposed block plan;~~
~~Drawing no. 09 Rev. A Proposed front elevation and layout for wall and gates; and~~
~~Drawing no. 09 Proposed front elevation and layout for wall and gates; and~~

Procedural Issues

Following requests from the GBC Conservation Officer, the design of the proposed front boundary treatment was amended. Due to the minor nature of the alterations, no additional publicity was required.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20211173	Part demolition of existing side extension and erection of a single storey side extension.	Permitted	10.12.2021
20210143	Erection of a detached garage/store.	Permitted	06.04.2021
20160400	Erection of a rear oak framed orangery.	Permitted	22.06.2016

20100987	Erection of part two storey and part single storey rear extension to form day room, ensuite shower room/wc and wc at ground floor level with an enlarged bedroom and store at first floor level.	Permitted	04.02.2011
20090876	Application for approval of condition 2 of planning permission reference number 20090539 relating to the brick sample.	Approval of details	12.11.2009
20090539	Conversion of side extension (garage) into a kitchen/utility room.	Permitted	26.08.2009
19790640	Erection of 2 single storey extensions to form workshop and enlarged garage on the northern side and a porch and wc at the rear the erection of 2 two storey extensions on the southern side to form enlarged dining room and lounge and two enlarged bedrooms	Permitted	08.08.1979
19790316	Erection of 2 single storey extensions to form a workshop and enlarged garages on the northern side and a porch and wc at the rear the erection of 2 two storey extensions on the southern side to form enlarged dining room and lounge and two enlarged bedroom above and the provision of a new external wall on the eastern side	Refused	22.05.1979
19580407	Erection of house, demolition of timber oasthouse and conversion of brick oasthouse into private garage	Permitted	09.07.1958
19550197	Erection of a private garage and creation of a new vehicular access	Permitted	03.08.1955
19550196	Erection of a private garage and creation of new vehicular access.	Permitted	03.08.1955

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

As set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012 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

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 (2026), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

- Section 4 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 5 – Meeting the challenge of climate change
- Section 12 – Making Effective use of land
- Section 14 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 19 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 20 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 – Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020
- SPG 4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Meopham Green Rural Conservation Area Appraisal SPD (2017)

Other material considerations

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Emerging Local Plan as a Material Consideration

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) make it clear that planning applications can only be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Decision Making Policy DM4 of the Framework sets out that when considering development proposals, relevant policies may be given weight, however, this is subject to:

- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- The degree of compliance of the relevant policies in the emerging plan with the policies for plan-making in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework, the greater the weight that may be given to them).

West Oxfordshire District Council v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government & Rosconn Strategic Land Ltd [2018] EWHC 3065 (Admin) is a High Court judgement that deals with the weight to be given to a Regulation 19 Local Plan. In this judgement, the Court found that the weight to be given to an emerging Local Plan was a matter of planning judgement, which had to be reached having fully considered the relevant part of the Framework, which from 17 August 2026 Decision Making Policy DM4 of the Framework.

The Council's emerging Local Plan has reached the Regulation 19 Consultation stage, with the consultation having ended on 18 August 2026. The emerging Local Plan does not form part of the Development Plan.

The Council is aware that third parties have raised objections to the wider emerging Local Plan and specific policies within it. Therefore, at present the Council cannot categorically state that the emerging Local Plan can be considered sound and consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) [as an emerging Local Plan being brought forward under the legacy system, it would be examined under the 2024 Framework]. Taking this into consideration, one can only conclude that at this stage of the process, **limited**

(i.e. minimal) weight should be afforded to the emerging Regulation 19 Local Plan.

This position would only change once the emerging Local Plan has progressed towards submission and examination, with the Council being fully aware of policies that are subject to unresolved objections and with knowledge of policies that have had their soundness and conformity against the Framework challenged.

This approach accords with the approach taken in a separate High Court case, Gladman Developments Ltd v SSHCLG & Corby Borough Council; & Uttlesford DC [2020] EWHC 518 (Admin) and Court of Appeal [2021] EWCA Civ 104, which was also the subject of a Court of Appeal Ruling [2021] EWCA Civ 104.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

GBC Conservation Officer

Fourth response:

I've looked through the submissions for Front Door, Porch Roof and Porch and Wall Brickwork, and have no adverse comments for the selections submitted.

Third response:

This addresses my outstanding design comments on the boundary treatment. The wall has been reduced in height as requested, the gate piers have been raised to match the railing height, and they are now shown with stone copings. The overall railing datum lines through consistently with the gate height across the frontage. I have no further concerns regarding the wall, railings or piers, and consider this element of the scheme now acceptable from a conservation perspective.

One point remains outstanding from my previous comments: the drawing still does not show a separate pedestrian gate, only the single pair of vehicular gate leaves. Could you ask the agent to confirm whether pedestrian access is intended to be taken through the vehicular gates, or whether a separate pedestrian gate is proposed? If the latter, this would need to be shown on a further revision before the application is determined.

Subject to that clarification, I have no objection to the boundary treatment as now shown.

Second response:

I welcome the removal of the brick piers along the wall and the change to a plain, straight-topped railing design. Both changes go a good way toward addressing my original concerns regarding the overly suburban and ornamental character of the boundary treatment, and bring the scheme closer in spirit to the simplified, rural vernacular precedent I referred to at Valley Road, Barham.

The railings are now shown sitting directly on top of the existing brick wall, but the wall itself has not been reduced in height. To achieve the low, dwarf-wall character appropriate to this semi-rural edge of the Conservation Area, I would ask that the wall be lowered by at least half of its currently proposed height, with the railings then reading as the dominant, lightweight element above a low plinth, rather than a tall wall with railings added on top. The overall railing height can line through with the height of the gate posts/gates, so that the boundary presents a consistent, level datum along the frontage rather than a stepped or visually heavy edge.

While I support the removal of piers along the wall run itself, I consider that brick piers either side of the vehicular gates remain appropriate to provide a suitably robust, well-defined entrance feature. These gate piers should be the same height as the railings (lining through with the datum described above) and should be capped with stone copings to give a crisp, finished appearance in keeping with the rural character of the setting, rather than a flat brick top.

I also note that the amended plan (drawing 09) shows a single pair of vehicular gate leaves only, with no separate pedestrian gate. Given the extent of the frontage and the 44m access track, I would ask the applicant/agent to confirm whether a separate pedestrian gate is intended, or whether pedestrian access is

to be taken through the vehicular gates in all cases. If a pedestrian gate is proposed, this should be shown on a further revised drawing so it can be properly assessed as part of the boundary design.

I would ask that the applicant be requested to submit a further revision showing: (i) a reduced wall height (at least 50% lower than currently shown) with railings lining through with the gate height; (ii) piers either side of the vehicular gates matched in height to the railings and capped with stone copings; and (iii) clarification of pedestrian access arrangements, before the application is determined.

Initial response:

I have no objection to the porch or window elements of the scheme, but I do have concerns regarding the proposed front boundary treatment.

The site lies within the Meopham Green Conservation Area, and the character of this part of the village – as identified in the Meopham Green Conservation Area Appraisal (October 1999) – is semi-rural, defined by low brick walls, timber gates and informal soft landscaping rather than architectural ironwork. The existing boundary (1m brick wall with 1.5m brick piers and 5-bar timber gates, as shown on drawing 05) reflects this character.

The submitted proposal (drawing 09) introduces brick piers supporting decorative metal railings with a wavy/scrolled top profile. In my view this treatment reads as suburban estate railing rather than a design rooted in the rural, village-edge context of Meopham Green. The combination of substantial brick piers and ornamental ironwork is more typical of formal or urban settings and would appear incongruous against the informal, agricultural character of this part of the Conservation Area, to the detriment of its appearance.

I would recommend a simplified alternative, closer in spirit to the boundary treatment found on the frontage of a property on Valley Road, Barham, near Canterbury (photograph attached). This comprises a low dwarf wall with plain, straight-topped railing panels supported on slim metal stanchions rather than brick piers. This is a more restrained, rural vernacular solution and would sit more comfortably within the street scene at Meopham Green.

I would ask that the applicant be encouraged to revise the boundary design to a simplified dwarf wall with straight-topped railings on stanchions, in the manner illustrated, before determination. As currently designed, I consider the boundary treatment causes less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which under NPPF paragraph 212 should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme; a suburban-style alternative is available that would avoid this harm altogether.

KCC Highways & Transportation

The following is a summary of the comments received. The full response can be found on the GBC website.

I refer to the above planning application and having considered the development proposals and the effect on the highway network, raise no objection on behalf of the local highway authority.

Meopham Parish Council

No objection.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by a site notice and press notice and to 17 neighbouring properties by letter. No representations have been received. The overall consultation period expired on 10 July 2026.

Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the

character of the built environment and take account of the scale, height, building lines and other architectural features of buildings. Account should also be taken of strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.

In relation to front extensions and porches, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) sets out that proposals can change the character of the original building and where poorly designed, have a negative impact on the appearance of the street scene; that their scale and design should respond to the existing dwelling; that existing features such as bay windows should be preserved; that open porches, where they are an original feature, should generally not be enclosed; and that proposals should not undermine the depth of front parking spaces.

In relation to front garden boundary treatments, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) sets out that boundary treatments help to define the relationship between a dwelling and the street and that those visible from the street should;

- Respond to the design of the dwelling;
- Be consistent with the height of other enclosures on the road;
- Avoid the introduction of different styles along the street. Treatments should reinforce the dominant boundary type along the street, ensuring consistency with the style and age of the property;
- Consider well-maintained planting as an alternative solution and retain any hedgerow;
- Encourage natural surveillance of the street and help design out crime;
- Incorporate visibility splays and sight lines for pedestrian and vehicular safety; and
- Hedges are also encouraged given their air quality benefits.

Policy CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 places a high priority on the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment. Saved Policy TC3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 sets out that development within or affecting conservation areas will be carefully judged for its impact and will be expected to make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The application site is located within the Meopham Green, Meopham Conservation Area. Forge House is a building highlighted as one which contributes to the character of the conservation Area. The Meopham Green Conservation Area Appraisal SPD document describes Forge House as follows;

This building is today in two halves. Towards the Green it has a simple symmetrical brick front with a low pitched hipped roof and a central front door typical of the early 19th century. The roof is clad in modern concrete tiles. The projecting porch is modern as is the lean-to roofed end extension. Secondly, and attached behind, there rises a higher, more bulky, two storey pitched and gabled-roof structure, possibly a later 'raising' of, or extension to, the original building.

The GBC Conservation Officer has advised that the character of this part of the village, as identified in the Meopham Green Conservation Area Appraisal, is semi-rural, defined by low brick walls, timber gates and informal soft landscaping.

The existing front boundary wall is between 0.9 and 1 metre tall, with two brick pillars of 1.5 metres height and there are two wooden five bar gates, which are characteristic of the surrounding area. The proposed development would result in a 0.6 metre tall wall, with metal railings on top (at a total height of 1.8 metres), with two brick pillars and metal gates. Whilst ironworks are not typical of the area, following amendments to the proposed front boundary treatment, the GBC Conservation Officer has not raised an objection to this aspect of the proposed development. He considers that the overly suburban and ornamental character of the original proposed boundary treatment has been reduced and the alterations have brought the scheme closer to a simplified, rural vernacular design.

The proposed replacement porch would the same overall design approach as the existing one but with an increased total depth of 2.7 metres (1.3 metres above the existing) and the proposed replacement windows

would be UPVC. The GBC Conservation Officer has not raised an objection to these aspects of the proposal.

The proposed front boundary treatment would be appropriate to the rural conservation area setting. The proposed porch would be larger than existing but be subservient to the existing building and match with the general design and facing materials of the existing porch/building. The proposed windows would be very similar to those existing and as such, would not be out of character with the building.

In order to ensure that the external facing materials match with the existing building, an appropriate condition should be attached to any planning permission granted.

Overall, the proposed development would be appropriate in terms of design and would not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of existing building or the Meopham Green Conservation Area. Therefore, the proposal would be in line with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Saved Policy TC3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 and the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021).

The application site is located in the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area where, according to the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment 2009, the overall condition of the landscape is good and it has moderate sensitivity. The document recommends that the key landscape elements should be conserved and reinforced. Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) requires proposals to take account of the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment 2009 and to ensure that landscape character is conserved, restored and enhanced.

The proposed development would result in a small increase in built development, within the confines of an existing residential garden, located in the village of Meopham. The domestic character of the application site would be retained and the development would not be especially visible in the wider landscape setting. Therefore, there would be no adverse impacts to landscape character and the proposed development would be in line with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 and the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment 2009.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants. In this regard, the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) and the Borough Council's adopted Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) are relevant.

The proposed development would not adversely affect the private amenity space or internal layout of the application property and would not adversely impact on the privacy, daylight or sunlight of its occupants. As such, the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of future occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of neighbouring occupiers. In this regard, the Borough Council's adopted Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) are relevant.

The closest residential properties to the application site are Ye Olde Forge and The Oast House, Wrotham Road (located to the north and south respectively).

Due to the design of the proposed development and to the design, layout and orientation of surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts to any of the surrounding residential occupiers.

Overall, the proposed development would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of surrounding

occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Parking and Highways

The proposed development would not alter the existing access or parking arrangements at the application site. Therefore, there would be no adverse impacts to highway safety or parking provision and the proposal would be in line with Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

The highways advice given by KCC Highways & Transportation can be brought to the attention of the applicant via an informative attached to any planning permission granted.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The application site is located within an area with some palaeolithic potential and was former forge and smithy and is within Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. However, as the proposed development is within the confines of an existing residential garden and only a relatively small amount of groundworks would occur, then it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts to groundwater or archaeology. As such, the proposal would be in line with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC7 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

The GBC Conservation Officer has requested clarification of whether pedestrian access is intended to be taken through the vehicular gates, or via a separate pedestrian gate. However, as the application details show only one proposed entrance, it can be concluded that no separate pedestrian gate is proposed.

It is noted that the application site is within an area covered by an Article 4 direction (reference Ar/09/4 Meopham Green) which removes various permitted development rights from dwellings including Classes A, C, D and H of Part 1, Class A of Part 2 and Class B of Part 31 of Schedule 2 to the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

It is also noted that Meopham Parish Council do not object to the proposed development.

The application details show the removal/demolition of a tennis court and outbuilding located on land to the north of the application property. However, the applicant has confirmed that the demolition works are shown for indicative purposes only and do not form part of this application. As such, an informative should be added to any planning permission granted to clarify this issue.

Suggested conditions

Time Limit

Development in accordance with the approved plans

Materials in accordance with the email received 23 September 2026

Conclusion

The proposal would comply with local and national planning policies and subject to the conditions set out above, the proposal would be acceptable.

Recommendation

Planning permission subject to conditions is recommended.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
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Signed:	K Joyce	Signed:	Jusaboh
Dated:	24th September 2026	Dated:	24 September 2026