

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250283

Location: Vine Cottage 5 Henley Street Luddesdown Gravesend

Description: Erection of first floor rear extension and single storey rear extension.

Applicant: Mrs Anna Evans

Site Visit Date: 07 May 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Application for Planning Permission form;
Drawing no. AE/01 Site location plan;
Drawing no. AE/02 Existing and proposed block plans;
Drawing no. AE/03 Existing layouts and elevations;
Drawing no. AE/04 Proposed ground floor layout;
Drawing no. AE/05 Proposed first floor layout;
Drawing no. AE/06 Proposed rear elevation;
Drawing no. AE/07 Proposed side elevation facing no. 6 Henley Street;
Drawing no. AE/08 Proposed section A-A;
Drawing no. AE/09 Proposed section B-B;
Planning Statement March 2025 and
Email from the agent received 31 May 2025.

Relevant Planning History

None.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

KCC Heritage Conservation (E & W) (Archaeology)

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, based on existing Historic Environment Record data for the area, the previous arable cultivation of this field, 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.

Kent Downs National Landscape Unit

On 22 November 2023, all designated Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales were renamed 'National Landscapes' (NLs). Accordingly, the Kent Downs AONB is now the Kent Downs National Landscape. Its legal designation and policy status remain the same.

Also of note is the changes introduced through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which came into force on 26/December 2023. The Act amends the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, which is the primary legislation relating to AONBs and replaces the previous Duty of Regard to AONBs set out at S85 with a new, strengthened requirement that:

‘In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a relevant authority other than a devolved Welsh authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty’. (Part 12 - Miscellaneous; Section 245. Protected Landscapes; paras (5) - (10).

This places a much stronger duty on relevant authorities, which includes local authorities, to ensure that their actions and decisions seek to conserve and enhance AONBs, marking a significant change to the legal context of AONB policy.

Further guidance is provided in Appendix 2.

The Kent Downs National Landscape team has seen a recent uplift in the number of consultations on planning applications. In accordance with the agreed Kent Downs Planning Protocol, which sets out that the Kent Downs Landscape team will only have a limited land use planning role and will prioritise its involvement in planning to planning policy matters, we will not normally provide bespoke comments on more minor applications such as this. This does not imply support for, or objection to, the proposal. If our

input would be particularly valued in this instance, please get in touch and we endeavour to provide informal advice where our current planning capacity allows.

In determining the application, the local planning authority has a new statutory duty, as set out above, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape. Further advice on the new duty is provided in Appendix 2 of this letter. The Kent Downs National Landscape team recommends that to help fulfill the new statutory duty, the Local Planning Authority should ensure that the decision is consistent with relevant national and local planning policy and takes into account the aims, objectives and principles set out in the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and its associated guidance documents. Further details of these are provided in Appendix 1.

Other consultees

No response has been received from the Dickens' Country Protection Society, Cobham Parish Council or Luddesdown Parish Council

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by a site notice and to two neighbouring properties by letter. No representations have been received. The overall consultation date expired on 02 May 2025.

Officer's Analysis

Green Belt

As the application site is located in the Green Belt, paragraphs 142 and 143 and 153-160 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF 2024) and Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 are most relevant.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 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 Local Plan Core Strategy.

Paragraph 142 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF 2024) sets out that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence and paragraph 143 lists the five purposes that the Green Belt serves. At the application site, the Green Belt assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF 2024 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2024 states that development is inappropriate in the Green Belt unless certain exceptions apply. These exceptions are set out in sub-paragraphs 154(a) to 154(h). Sub-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.

Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside. It sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF 2024, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully; with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with that document.

In particular Saved Policy C13 places an overall limit on extensions of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling unless the increased floor space has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling (criteria (ii)). It also requires the massing, scale and form of any extension to be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting (criteria (vi)). It is considered that these factors are relevant in determining whether the size of an extension is proportionate and as such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF 2024 and should be afforded some limited weight.

The original building, for the purposes of assessing whether the proposed development is a disproportionate addition or not, had a floor area of some 68 square metres, a height of 6.6 metres and was a modest, mid-terraced dwelling with a simple pitched roof and a roughly square footprint. A semi-detached outbuilding was located some 1.2 metres behind the rear wall (spanning the boundary with no. 4 Henley Street) with a floor area of some 2 square metres.

Although no planning permissions exist, a front porch and a rear conservatory have been added to the original building (both of which appear to be lawful through the passage of time). These have floor areas of some 2 square metres and 8 square metres respectively.

The proposed development would add a first floor rear extension and a single storey rear extension to the building. The proposal would result in the enlarged building having a floor area of 85 square metres. Both extensions would have a flat roof and the single storey element would largely replace the existing conservatory and outbuilding. The overall height of the building would be unchanged and the increase in floor area above the original building would be 17 square metres or 25%.

Cumulatively (including the existing porch) the increase in floor area above the original building would be 19 square metres or 28%. It should be noted that because the existing conservatory would be replaced, its floor area is not included in the cumulative floor area figure.

In terms of bulk and mass, the proposal would not result in significant additions to the original dwelling and the proposed flat roof would minimise these impacts. Much of the proposed floor area is already in existence and does not detract significantly from the openness of the Green Belt.

Overall, the proposal would not be a disproportionate addition above the size of the original building and as such, it would be appropriate development in the Green Belt and in line with Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and paragraph 154(c) of the NPPF 2024.

Design, Character and Appearance

The application site is located in the Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area (LCA) and as such, Policy CS12 of the Local Plan Core Strategy is relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan (now known as the Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan) and the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications.

The Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape (page 16). It sets out that the local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the Kent Downs National Landscape will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, siting, landscaping and materials of new development (Principle SD2). That development should conserve and enhance the character and qualities of the Kent Downs National Landscape rather than detracting from it (Principle SD3). That new proposals should conserve and enhance tranquillity and where possible dark night skies (Principle SD7). Furthermore, the Plan will ensure that proposals do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the Kent Downs National Landscape (Principle SD8).

According to the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, the Meopham Downs LCA is characterised by a mixture of grazed pasture and arable land, with field shape and size being varied because of the topography of the area. Tree belts and native hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees form distinct boundaries.

It is noted that there would be no loss of vegetation and that the residential nature of the application site would be retained. The proposed development would result in an increase in size and bulk at the rear of the

building, which would consolidate and extend the level of built development on the plot and in the wider area. However, the proposal would not be excessive in size or harmful to overall landscape character or quality.

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding local area. In particular, the design of new development should be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area.

In relation to single storey rear extensions, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) sets out that they should not dominate the original property in terms of depth (extensions to extensions will not generally be supported); they should not rise above the window cill level of any first floor windows; they should not be excessive in height, especially where they are greater than three metres in depth; or excessive in width (no greater than the original building). Flats roofs can be acceptable where they are not widely visible and pitched roof designs should reflect the main roof.

In relation to two storey rear extensions, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) sets out that they should not dominate the host property in terms of depth (extensions to extensions will not generally be supported); should not be of greater width than the original building; should generally not be built adjoining the side boundaries of the site, should have roof designs that reflect and not overwhelm the main roof and window patterns and proportions that are in keeping with the host building and local character.

The design approach (flat roofed at ground and first floor levels) for the proposed development would result in a subservient extension but it would not be in keeping with the existing building (which has a pitched roof). However, the flat roofed design would reduce the overall bulk of the extension and would match with existing two storey rear projections in the surrounding area. Part of the proposed external facing materials (brown composite shiplap cladding) would not match with those existing but due to its rear location and the rising land at the rear, these materials would have very limited visual impacts. In addition, the comments of the applicant in relation to justifying the proposed shiplap cladding have been noted.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to the character or appearance of the existing building, the surrounding street scene or landscape and would be in line with Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014), the Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan and the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment. The proposal would be broadly in line with the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed development would increase the size of an existing kitchen, dining room and bathroom and sufficient rear garden area and depth would be retained.

In order to prevent a loss of privacy for future occupiers, any proposed bathroom/w.c./en-suite windows should be conditioned to be permanently obscure glazed.

Overall, the proposal would provide a good standard of living for future occupiers and be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Neighbouring Amenity

Due to the design of the proposed development, to the screening provided by boundary treatments and to the layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings. As such, 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 (September 2014).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The application site is located within an area of multi-period archaeological potential and Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. KCC Heritage Conservation have not raised an objection to the proposal. 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.

Suggested Conditions

Time Limit

Development in accordance with the approved plans

Materials in accordance with those specified on the application form and on drawing nos. AE/06 and AE/07

Obscure glazing to en-suite/w.c. windows

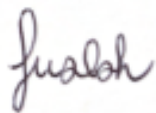
Conclusion

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
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	04 June 2025	Dated:	12 June 2025