

Address: Blue Ash
Rhododendron Avenue
Culverstone Green
Kent DA130TT



Supplementary information, planning submission

Description: Alterations to roof to create usable space, rear dormer, roof light windows to the front, porch and single storey rear extension with habitable space in the roof.

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Introduction

This supplementary information has been provided to show how the design and development of the property has taken into account the five principle issues when determining an application.

- *Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?*
- *The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;*
- *Any very special circumstances?*
- *The effect on the character and appearance of the area;*
- *Other matters; and*
- *Impact on the Landscape*

(delegator report, householder Planning Application, 6 January 2023)

Navigating the guidance and understanding how a '*dominant appearance*' and '*perceptions*' (notification of refusal 6th January 2023) of bulk are determined is challenging, such is the variation in approvals and properties being developed which seemingly contradict guidance provided in the Local Plan Core Strategy; including flat roofs, extensions from the ridge height, increases in wall height and large dormer windows are all features in buildings receiving planning permission.

Properties within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area vary greatly in design and visual impact. A previous application for the development of Blue Ash adopted a variation of 'approved' elements of design, including flat roof areas and pitched dormer windows, from other properties which had achieved planning permission. The interpretation of these have been rejected, leading to a reconsideration of our approach to achieve desired outcomes.

The feedback provided from the rejected planning application was helpful, providing clarity that there is an understanding for the need for increased living space, yet how this is achieved sits within narrow tolerances. In our review of the initial plans, we've taken guidance from the delegated report, household planning applications (in conjunction with reviewing permitted development of properties in the same situation) as a route to establish a satisfactory planning proposal.

This document serves to support the planning application and associated plans and documents.

Approach to the design, an overview

From the refused application, the delegated report, household planning application identified:

The footprint of the rear extension extended further back than preferred; with this in mind the dimensions of the proposed design have been reviewed, reducing the depth, and increasing the width accordingly.

The flat 2 Storey roof style extension originally proposed was felt to be of bad design and against Local Planning guidance. The design of this has been amended to a full hip barn style and to match to the main dwelling.

Concerns were raised regarding the visual impact and perceived bulk of the front dormers; therefore, a full hip barn style roof introduced to the main dwelling, with Velux style roof windows to the front.

The size of the rear dormer was felt to be too dominant in the roof: A pitched dormer is still proposed at the rear of the property with the size and positioning changes made.

A front porch with dormer window above has been introduced. This addition does not increase the footprint.

Approach to the design, points to note

Full hip barn roof: This is a common style of roof seen on existing properties and homes being developed and modernised within the local area. We have reviewed recent planning applications which have received approval and have used these as a direct reference point in relation to dimensions, expansion in height and the overall visual impact. In reviewing these we noted that properties were making significant changes to their existing ridge height and overall bulk and size of the roofline. One property has a significant flat roof area, and a dormer extending from the ridgeline. This indicated that there is an openness to changing the overall design of the roof as part of the development proposal.

The initial part of our amendment is to replace the existing gable end style roof with a full hip barn style variant. To ensure that the overall bulk and visual impact of the roof remains unchanged, the ridgeline of the proposed roof will not exceed the ridgeline of the current roof. The current gable end pitch height will also remain largely unchanged with an approximate internal head height of 1.8 metres at the point of pitch. The roofline and overhang will also remain as the current roof.

Velux inline roof style windows will be introduced to allow for natural light within the upstairs living space. Windows will be aligned with the window openings on the ground floor, creating a symmetry and balance between them, yet ensuring the upper windows are not overly dominant in the roof space.



Rear dormer: the ridge height of the dormer has been designed to ensure that it does not dominate the roof line. The width has been reduced to align with the door opening below at a proposed 2.4m. This size and positioning of the ground floor doors mirrors the window at the front of the building, provide further symmetry to the overall development.



Front porch: The proposed front porch development will not increase the footprint of the current property. Doors and windows will remain within the boundary of the current property. The frame of the porch will extend slightly, yet will still fall within the overhang of the existing\proposed roofline. The roof of the porch/dormer window will not feature an overhang on the front face Ensuring the size and bulk remains demonstrative to the proposed roof.



Extension: a sympathetic full hip barn roof styled single Storey extension is proposed. The ridgeline for the extension will be below the existing/proposed ridgeline of the main dwelling.



The depth of the extension has been limited to 4m. This ensures that the depth of property including the extension is no greater than the width of the main dwelling. The width of the extension has been increased to 8 metres, matching the depth of the existing dwelling. This provides a balance between the extension and the main property. The footprint of the extension fits within the 1/3 increase permitted.

Gravesham Borough Council

Is the proposed development appropriate in the green belt?

The extension area follows the guidelines associated with the Saved Policy C13. The increase in footprint being one third (approx.) of the property.

The extension is sited on an existing patio area; impact upon the natural environment is minimised

The extension is a single storey extension with living space in the roof.

Development to a hip barn roof style will not extend beyond the existing ridge height, with existing gable end heights maintained.

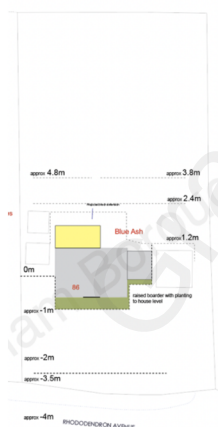
Front porch ridge line is below the ridge line of the main house. The width of the front porch is less than 20% of the face of the main dwelling. Overhang has been minimised and does not extend beyond the main house.

The dormer is set back from the external walls, with a ridge line below that of the main house. Overhang is reduced. The overall visual impact being subservient and in keeping with the revised hip barn roof style.

Roof line windows at the front of the property ensure that the bulk of the property is not adversely impacted upon by their introduction.

Increases to the ground level with planting to the front of the property will further reduce the overall visual impact of the building.

The extension sits 1.2m below the surrounding/adjoining garden.



Effect of the proposal on the openness of the greenbelt

Much consideration has been given to the elevations and the surrounding ground levels. Looking East from Rhododendron Ave at the front of the property the ground rises steeply. As such sight lines from the bridleway are mixed from being able to see the full view of the property and height above the driveway, to a much reduced view where only a small segment of the roof can be seen.



Where the property can be seen, the boarder immediately in front of the property is over 60 centimetres lower than the brickwork, exposing block work ordinarily unseen. This effects the overall front face area making the existing property look bulky within its surroundings.



To reduce the visual impact of the property, the level and depth of the border will be increased to 1m high and a depth of approx. 2m. This will increase the ground level immediately in front of the main house to the same level of the fascia brickwork. This will lead to the visual impact of the property being reduced. Planting and shrubs will also be introduced, further allowing the house to sit more comfortably within the landscape. The level of the driveway at the southwest corner of the house will also increase, creating a more gradual increase in height between the surrounding garden and the existing elevated the property occupies.

Looking South at The North Face of the building the ground level remains below the property at a low point of around 1.2m. This low area extends from the front of the house back as far as the chimney breast. The ground level then continues at the same level as the property to the depth of the existing rear wall. Here an existing wall retains the ground level to approximately 1.2 metres. The ground level then steadily increases as you move further away from the property. As such the proposed extension sits below the surrounding ground level by at

least 1.2 metres. By the nature of the landscape, the proposed extension is 'basemented' to such an extent that the visual face area is greatly reduced within its surroundings, giving the building a demonstrative quality from this aspect.



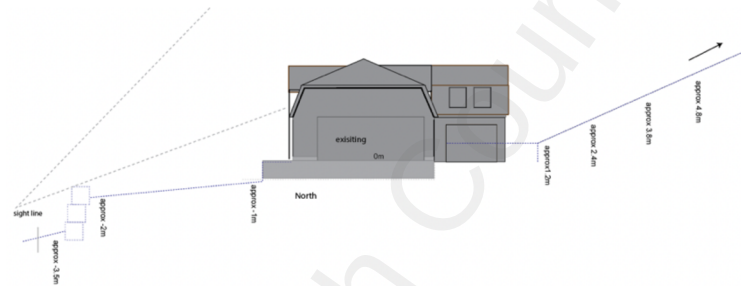
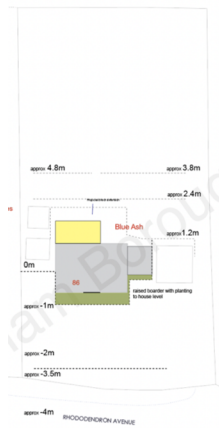
Looking West at the East face / rear of the property: As the main dwelling is in part dug into the hillside, the proposed rear extension is therefore much lower than its surroundings. At 2m from the rear of the proposed extension is a retaining wall at 1.2 metres high. This height of the ground increases greatly, reaching approximately 2.4m high at 4m and around the height of the existing property's ridgeline at 10m. From this aspect the existing property and proposed extension sit well below the eyeline when stood anywhere other than right next to the back of the house.



Looking North at the South elevation, the ground level is lower than the existing property by approximately 1.2m where the existing garage is positioned. At the back of the property the ground level increases to approximately 1.2m above the existing property and extension. From the boundary line the property and garden is below the ground level.



Summary: the natural topography dictates that all but the front of the property is nestled into its surroundings. The current disproportionate visual area of the front of the property will be reduced by introducing raised borders and planting. Due to the extension being sited on existing patio area, surrounded by at least a 1.2m increase in ground level; the visual impact of the extension is greatly reduced. Sight lines are virtually unchanged given various outbuildings and ground levels.



Very Special circumstances

Our main concern in this application is the hip barn style single storey rear extension with living space in the roof. We hope that we have shown the design and size of the extension is disproportionate and subservient to existing dwelling when considered in isolation. We also hope that when considered within its setting, a hillside, the rear extension has a greatly reduced visual impact and is therefore permissible. Yet it is a necessity of increasing living space which is driving the need for this development. Although not a very special circumstance, both national and local planning report up on the need for affordable housing. The impact of this requirement on families with teenagers and young adults is that living space within a family home is now at a premium, with family units becoming multigenerational out of necessity. With the removal of permitted development and such stringent guidelines upon development in the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area, increasing living space to meet the needs of multiple adults living under one roof is challenging.

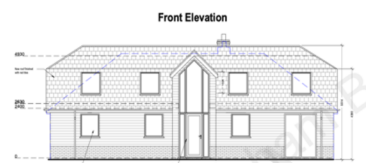
Due to the historic nature of development of properties within this area; there is a general limitation a footprint for existing properties to approximately 93 square metres. With the restriction of an increase in footprint limited to only 1/3 of the existing property means that any increase is small. To put this into context the available space allowed for an extension is no greater than two disabled parking bays. Therefore, the requirement to ensure that living space is permissible in the roof section of any extension is all the more important. Achieving this without there being some perception of increase in bulk though is impossible by the very definition of what an extension is.

The considerations we ask to be made, is that historic planning guidance is considered in conjunction with current and future challenges for families, where housing stock is sparse for both first time buyers and retirees; leading to multigenerational family units living under one roof. Any 'harm' considered to be involved is already mitigated by actions being taken, and due to the natural landscape surrounding the property. Where harm is still considered to exist, we would ask that consideration is given for the need for space. The health and wellbeing of everyone in the home being essential in order to be productive and reach full potential.

Further details of 'disabilities' are available, with a focus being on a diagnosis of Autism. How the design has an impact upon meeting the needs of individuals living in the home cannot be referenced in this document. Occupational Therapy reports and further evidence can be made available if required.

Effect on the appearance and character of the area

Design is subjective. As such the consideration on the 'character' of the proposed design is going to vary from one individual to another. Therefore, the proposed development design is almost identical to an approved planning application, for a property sitting in an elevated position on a sloping plot.



Example of an approved development

This ensures that our proposed development both compliments and corresponds to the existing character and wider context. The extension does not overwhelm the roof slope and remains demonstrative to the main dwelling, ensuring the design conforms with the Gravesham's design guidance and National Planning guidance.

Other matters

No comments

Impact upon the Landscape

It has already been identified that the extension sits with the hillside and is barely visible. The existing roof and porch will be developed in a style that has already been subject to approval, and a common style used in the design of chalet bungalows.

summary

We hope this document reflects our intent to work proactively within planning guidance and to clearly define our approach in responding to comments made in relation to a previous submission, the local plan & other Local Authority guidance and the consideration of national guidance regarding development in the green belt.

The design has taken into account the footprint, visual impact, impact upon the greenbelt.