



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20220337
Location:	8 Brice Road, Higham, Rochester, Kent, ME3 7AG
Description:	Conversion of existing garage into living accommodation containing a bathroom, a small kitchen and living/bedroom.
Applicant:	Helen Busby
Site Visit:	10/06/2022

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form - dated 16/03/2022;
Drawing no. PL.001 - Rev. 01 - Site Location Plan and Block Plan;
Drawing no. 20.129.PL.002 - Rev. P01 - Existing Site Location Plans, Floor Plans and Elevations;
Drawing no. 20.129.PL.003 - Rev. P06 - Proposed Site Location Plans, Floor Plans and Elevations.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20201006	Conversion and change of use of garage into classroom for private tutoring business.	TEMPORARY PERMISSION	18.12.2020
20041121	Erection of first floor side extension to form a bedroom.	PERMITTED	10.02.2005
20030274	Erection of single storey rear and side extension to form conservatory and granny annexe comprising of bedroom, living room, bathroom, utility room, kitchen and w.c.; erection of a front porch and erection of a detached building at the side to form a garage and car port.	PERMITTED	23.05.2003

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

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)

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 - Achieving sustainable development and well-designed 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

Higham Parish Council - No comment received.

Local Ward Councillors - No comment received.

Dickens' Protection Society - The Society wish to register an objection on the grounds that in the Society's view there is inadequate information regarding the proposed use of the building. The proposed kitchen area is not identified on the plan. The application, if granted, could establish a second residential use on the site.

If the planning authority is minded to grant consent, the Society would suggest the use should be conditioned to be ancillary to the main dwelling. In addition, in order to control any potential expansion of the building, permitted development rights should be withdrawn to safeguard the amenity of the area.

Neighbouring properties

Seven surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 11th May 2022.

Officer's Analysis

8 Brice Road is a two storey semi detached chalet style property located on the eastern side of the highway, on the corner of the street. The property has a driveway to the front with space to accommodate at least two vehicles and a detached garage to the side with a single car driveway in front, which was permitted in 2003 (ref. 20030274).



This application proposes to convert the garage into habitable rooms. The development will essentially form an annexe. The garage building will be reconfigured to create a living/study space and a bathroom. The garage door and ear access door will be blocked up, with the building being accessed by new sliding patio doors installed on the flank (western) wall. There will be an additional window installed on the western wall to provide additional light into the living space. Although the plans do not detail a kitchen or any cooking facilities, the description of the development indicates that a kitchen will form part of the living/study space. Moreover, the description states that the living space will include a bedroom but is not included on the plans.

Planning History Note - the planning history shows that a temporary permission was granted for conversion of the garage and change of use to a tutoring business. It is noted from the site visit that this development was not implemented, but is a material planning consideration. The plans demonstrate that the building will be used as a living/study space. However, the description indicates that the building will be used as an annexe. Nevertheless, should permission be granted conditions would be attached to the decision notice to ensure that no business operates from the outbuilding.

Design, Character and Appearance

The proposed development will alter the front of the garage building, however these are minor changes to the appearance of the building. Although the removal of the door will change the character of the building, providing the materials used to block up the door match the existing materials, this impact would be negligible and would not impact on the street scene. According to the application form no new materials will be used in the development, which is incorrect, however this is not considered sufficient reason to refuse the application since planning conditions could be attached to a decision to ensure the development blends in with the existing structure. Overall, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed annexe has a living area of approximately 21m². The Nationally Described Space Standards (2015) state that a one bedroom, one person unit of accommodation should have a minimum floor area of 37-39m². The proposed annexe is single storey and would likely be used by a single person, therefore the proposed accommodation falls significantly below the minimum standards set out nationally, and would provide poor quality amenity for any future occupiers.

As aforementioned in this report, the plans are not detailed and do not accord with the description of the development. There is no indication of the internal layout such as the location of the kitchen or cooking facilities, the bed, nor the sitting area. As such it is difficult to ascertain the functionality of the annexe. However, Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) (SPG 2) (2020) set out minimum recommended room sizes and states that a kitchen/living area should have a floor area of 18m² and a single bedroom an area of 6.5m². The living/study space as shown on the plan has an area of approx. 17.9m² which falls below the minimum recommendation of a kitchen/living area alone, without taking into account a bedroom. As such, the RLG reinforces that the annexe is undersized and provides poor quality amenity for future occupiers.

The plans demonstrate that the garden will be shared and there will be no subdivision. As such the annexe will essentially add one bedroom to the three bedroom property and have a total private amenity space of 163m² with a maximum depth of 10.4m. According to the RLG a four bedroom property should have a garden of 100m² with a minimum depth of 10m. Therefore, the development provides adequate garden space for a 4 bedroom property in accordance with the RLG.

The annexe will be approximately 5.4m from the main dwelling and due to the orientation of the surrounding buildings will not be overshadowed.

Overall, the proposed development will provide cramped living conditions that fail to safeguard the amenity of future occupants of the annexe. The substandard unit of living accommodation falls significantly below the minimum areas stated within the Nationally Described Space Standards and RLG, and is therefore contrary to Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Neighbouring Amenity

The development will have no impact on the amenity of surrounding properties, as such the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highway issues related to this proposal. Although the development would remove the garage as a viable parking space, there is sufficient space on the driveway to accommodate vehicles in accordance with adopted parking standards SPG 4 (2006). Moreover, the space in front of the building will remain available for parking.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Impact on the Landscape - the site is located within the Higham Arable Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by very gently undulating topography of open arable farmland with pockets of orchards and garden nurseries. The developments spread from the original Saxon settlement of Lower Higham in the North, with more contemporary developments in the South around main road networks.

Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

The proposed development is not considered to cause any detrimental harm to the character of the Higham Arable Farmlands due to the property being located within the rural settlement.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is contrary to local and national planning policy.

The proposed development will create a residential annexe with all of the facilities required for independent

living, but fails to provide suitable accommodation for future occupiers. The annexe would include a kitchen, living and sleeping area, in addition to a bathroom, in a cramped and undersized space that is significantly below the recommended local and national space standards. Therefore, the development fails to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers of the annexe and is contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

As such, it is recommended that planning permission is refused.

Recommendation

Refusal

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

Case Officer:	Mr Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	10 th June 2022	Dated:	13th June 2022