



Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20260241

Location: Meopham Green Baptist Church Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Application of lime render and paint finish to lower facade of front elevation and to entrance porch.

Applicant: Mr Michael Hegarty

Site Visit Date: Desk top

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Drawing no. 03 – Site Location Plan;
- Drawing no. 04 – Block Plans As Existing & As Proposed
- Drawing no. 05 – Part Plan & Elevations As Proposed;
- Drawing no. 06 – Part Plan & Elevations As Existing;
- Photographs; and
- Heritage Statement.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20240933	Application for the approval of conditions 3, 4 and 5 attached to planning reference number 20240302 relating to; details of the mortar mix and pointing finish (3), a method statement on how the render shall be removed (4) and details of the mix for the lime render (5) being submitted.	Approved	10.01.2025
20240302	Repair works to front (east) and side (north) elevations including removal of existing paint finish and brickwork re-pointed with a lime based mortar and repair works to side (south) elevation including removal of render (not including recent rear extension) and application of a new lime based render.	Permitted	28.05.2024

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas

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 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Meopham Green Rural Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Management Plan Rural Conservation Area Appraisals Supplementary Planning Document (2016)

Emerging Local Plan as a Material Consideration

Paragraph 48 of the Framework makes it clear that planning applications can only be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. An emerging Local Plan, does not form part of the Development. The Framework, at Paragraph 49 allows local planning authorities to give weight to relevant policies in emerging Local Plans, according 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 consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the Framework, the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given to those policies.

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 (Paragraph 49) of the Framework.

The Council's emerging Local Plan, is in the process of being consulted upon (it has reached Regulation 19 stage), the Council is not yet aware of whether third parties will support or object to specific policies within the Plan, or whether they will consider the policies with the emerging Local Plan to be broadly sound and consistent with the NPPF (2024). 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

Consultees

No response from:

- GBC Conservation Officer

Neighbouring properties

11 surrounding properties were consulted plus site and press notices- overall consultation expiry date was 10.04.2026 – no responses received.

Officer's Analysis

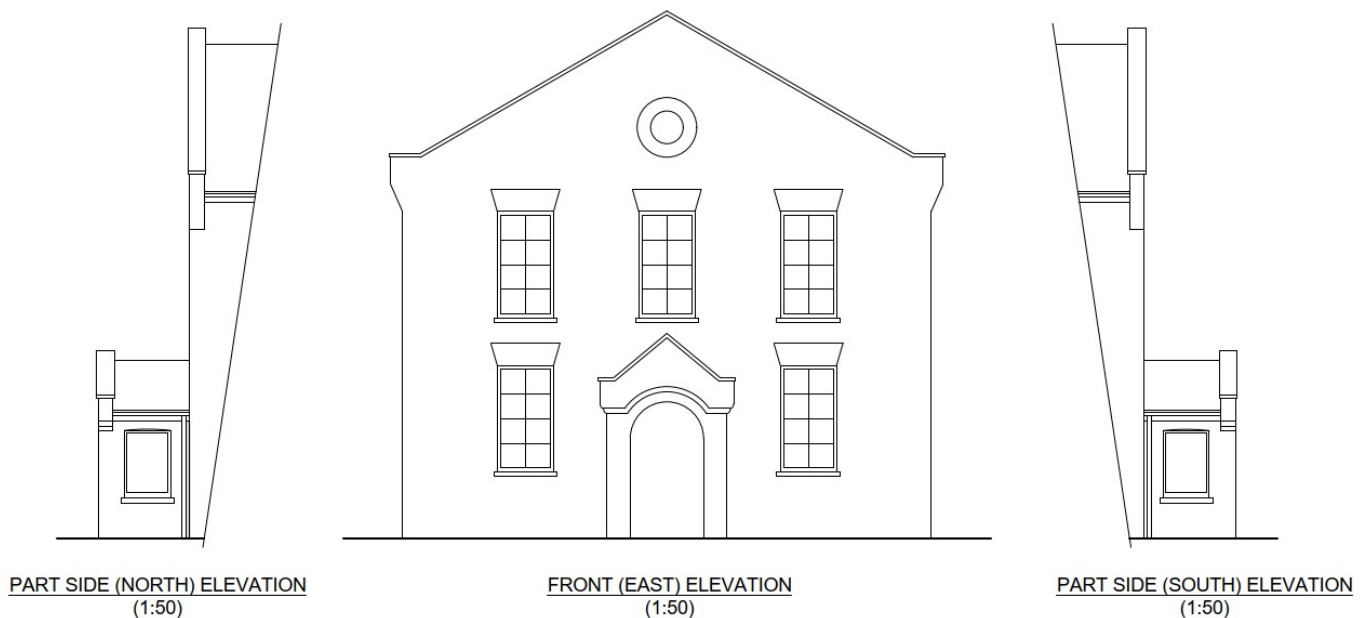
The application site consists of a detached building on the eastern side of Wrotham Road just south of Meopham Green which is a Baptist Church. The site is located in the Meopham Green Conservation Area.

Previous application ref. 20240302 was for 'repair works to front (east) and side (north) elevations including removal of existing paint finish and brickwork re-pointed with a lime based mortar and repair works to side (south) elevation including removal of render (not including recent rear extension) and application of a new lime based render' and which was approved on 28.05.2024. The planning conditions regarding details of the mortar mix and pointing finish, a method statement on how the render shall be removed and details of the mix for the lime render were approved under application ref. 20240933.

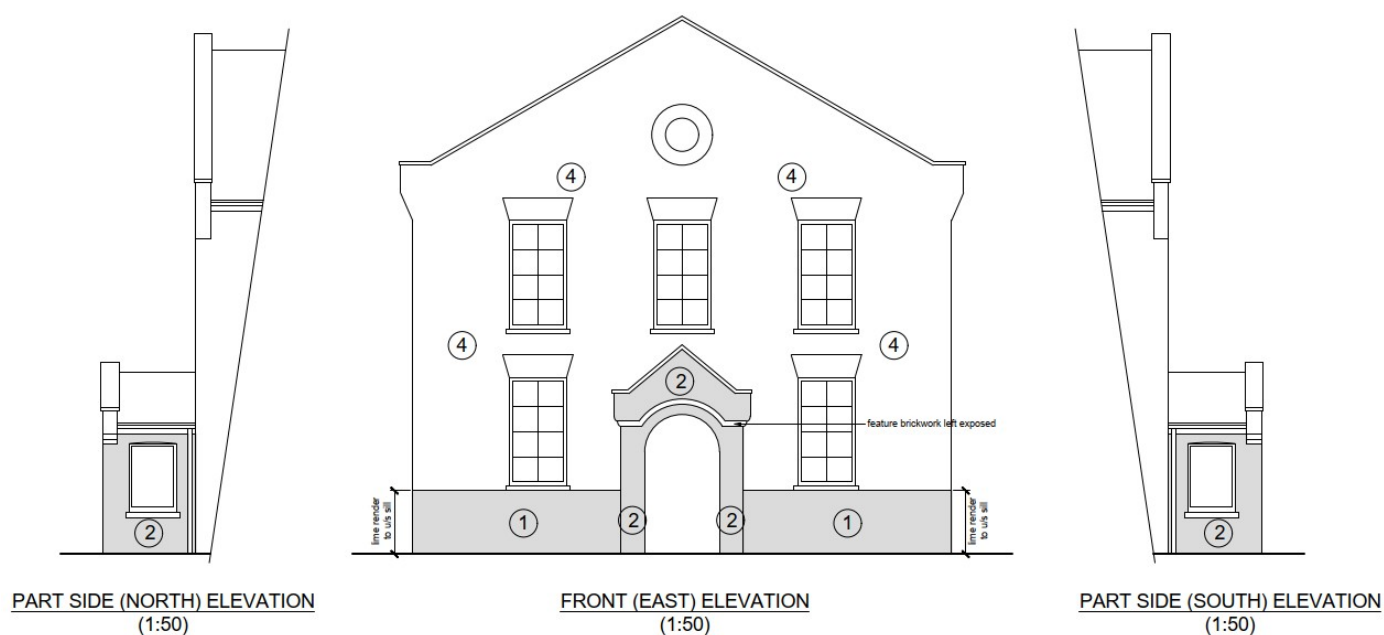
This current proposal is for 'application of lime render and paint finish to lower facade of front elevation and to entrance porch.

For ease of reference the existing and proposed elevations are as follows:

Existing



Proposed



The principle consideration in the assessment of the application is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Meopham Green Conservation Area.

Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the Conservation Area

In respect of the planning approval ref. 20240302, the paint has been removed from the front (east) elevation and the brickwork re-pointed in a lime-based mortar; this is yet to be carried out on the side (north) elevation.

The previous painted front elevation and the current front elevation with the paint removed can be seen below:

Before:



After:



It

is



explained in the submission that after removing the paint, there are previous finishes such as bitumen paints still visible on the bottom part of the front elevation and all of the walls of the porch. This is seen below:





The applicant would therefore like to apply a lime-based render over the lower parts of the front elevation (from underneath the ground floor cill level) and the walls of the porch which it is said would be identical to the lime render already approved on the south side elevation under application ref. 20240302.

The removal of the paint on the front elevation has been a great success as it has restored it back to what the front elevation of the building would have originally looked like which is welcome. It can be seen that there are certain areas, particularly the porch, which have not fared as well as some of the previous layers of paint have not been able to be removed and the porch therefore takes on a completely different colour tone than the rest of the front elevation. The application of a lime render to cover this up so that the porch would have a uniform finish overall, albeit different to the rest of the front elevation, is a positive solution and a sympathetic, historic finish. The decorative detail around the door arch would be left as exposed brickwork which again is welcome.

Similarly, with the bottom part of the front elevation, whilst not as visible a difference as the porch, it can be seen that there are areas of previous paints visible. The application of a lime render underneath the ground floor cill level would appear as a 'plinth' type detail and it is considered it would therefore not appear as an incongruous feature on the front elevation.

It is said that the lime render would be the same as approved under approval of details application ref. 20240933. This was the Duro lime green two coat system product which is a self-coloured external lime render which needs mixing with just water. This was considered acceptable as it was said that it is free from cement, gypsum and polymer for high breathability and is ideal for old stone and brick walls. The colour is to be white painted finish which is considered acceptable. As such the same lime render mix and finish is acceptable here on the porch (excluding the detailing) and the bottom part of the front elevation also.

Overall therefore it is considered that the application of a lime render on the porch and bottom part of the front elevation would be acceptable not harm the character or appearance of the building or the Meopham Green Conservation Area, which would be preserved. As such in respect of this matter the proposal is compliant with Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS), saved Policy TC3 (LPFR) and sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF (2024).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

Conclusion

The proposal would protect the character and appearance of this church and the character and appearance of the Meopham Green Conservation Area, which would be preserved. The proposal is therefore compliant with local and national planning policy.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	27th April 2026	Dated:	28th April 2026