



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230893

Location: 36 South Hill Road Gravesend Kent DA12 1JX

Description: Changes to front elevation only consisting of re-instating the bay window to its original appearance and replacing existing upvc windows with masonry and traditional wood framed sash windows; upper floor upvc windows to be replaced with traditional wood framed sash windows.

Applicant: Mr David Watson

Site Visit Date: 31st August 2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
1001-PL-A – Location and Existing Site Plan
1002-PL – Existing Elevations
4001-PL – Proposed Window Elevations
GRABEX Builders Specification
Photo of Property
Heritage Statement

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20170489	Application for the approval of conditions 3, 4 and 6 attached to planning permission ref. no. 20170207 relating details of the external finish on the external faces of the building, windows, doors and rainwater goods and wc/utility room window on the rear elevation.	Approval of Details	21.07.2017
20170207	Erection of single storey rear extension to form enlarged kitchen and w.c.	Permitted	26.04.2017
19970280	Application for Conservation Area consent for the demolition of the existing garage at the rear in connection with its replacement.	Permitted	01.08.1997
19970279	Erection of a replacement detached garage at the rear fronting Constitution Hill with an external staircase to a balcony over.	Permitted	23.07.1997
19880978	Erection of a detached double garage at the rear fronting Constitution Hill, surmounted by a 1.4 metre brick wall.	Permitted	20.01.1989

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
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-designed Places
- 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);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021);
- Conservation Area Maintenance/Replacement Windows and Doors Guidance
- Windmill Hill Conservation Area Appraisal
- Management Plan – 19th Century Suburban Conservation Areas

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors: No response received.

Conservation Officer: No response received.

Neighbouring properties

A site notice was placed on 31st August 2023 and an advert placed in the Gravesend Messenger on 29th September 2023. 4no. surrounding properties were consulted, and 2 responses were received from members of the public. The overall expiry date for submission of comments ended on 20/10/23.

Both comments received were in support and are summarised as follows:

- Reinstating the bay window to the front will restore the original Georgian design and benefit the Conservation Area.
- The resultant property will match neighbouring properties.
- The current façade with UPVC windows and low bay roofing are at odds with the Conservation Plan for the area.

- The proposal will be environmentally sound, in view of increased costs of keeping homes warm.
- Neighbours at 37 South Hill Road have, with planning permission, recently reinstated their bay and windows in the same Georgian style which has enhanced the property and the visual aspect in this conservation area.

Officer's Analysis

Principle of Development

This application is located inside the Urban Boundary, where alterations and extensions to residential buildings are generally acceptable in principle as per Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development.

However, all other relevant matters should be considered. In this instance, the main points to consider would be the potential impact on; Visual Amenity (Design, Character and Appearance), Conservation Area, Amenity of Future Occupiers and Residential Amenity of neighbours.

Design, Character, Appearance and Conservation Area

The principal issue in the determination of this application is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Windmill Hill Conservation Area.

The Windmill Hill Conservation Area Appraisal highlights that the loss of original architectural features, such as doors and windows is a principal negative feature in the Conservation Area. Under the section on 'Issues' in the Conservation Area it states that it is evident that well-intentioned, but unsympathetic changes, especially to doors, windows and roofs, have begun to have a cumulative effect, causing loss of original architectural features that is damaging to the character of the conservation area.

An Article 4 Direction was introduced in 2008 (Windmill Hill, CA South - Ar/07/3) as the Council were concerned that unsympathetic alterations to houses that harm or erode the character and appearance of the area had been carried out. The aim of the Direction is to prevent harmful changes encouraging the careful repair of original or period features, and where they have already been lost, ensure that the replacement of any modern windows and doors results in the reinstatement of an appropriately traditional type. Therefore, planning permission is required to replace any windows and doors in any elevation that fronts a highway as set out in the Direction; this includes South Hill Road. As such, planning permission is only required to replace the windows in the front elevation of the property.

In this instance all windows to the front elevation would be replaced with timber sash double glazed windows. The rendering frame around the bay window will also be altered to reflect the historical appearance of the bay and neighbouring properties.

This particular building is a three storey, semi-detached building. The high-quality traditional detailing, such as sash windows, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This has been lost in this building with the modern upvc windows previously introduced and the windows appear incongruent with neighbouring properties. The below image taken on site evidences this loss of characteristic features.



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

Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset, in this case the Conservation Area.

Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy states that proposals will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough's heritage assets, their setting and their interpretation and enjoyment.

Saved Policy TC3 (Development Affecting Conservation Areas) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 expects proposals to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy expects development to be visually attractive and conserve and enhance the character of the local built historic and natural environment.

As the above assessment evidences, the upvc windows currently used on the property have a visually apparent, modern and out-of-character material to the existing largely coherent historic appearance of the property. The flat, machine-made surface of uPVC windows is quite different in character to painted wood. They contrast significantly in appearance to the existing traditional sash windows and do not replicate their distinctive character and quality.

There has been a loss of original fabric, replaced with an alien and inauthentic material which reflects nothing of the 19th century character of the building. This has eroded the original character and appearance of the existing windows as a distinctive feature and the authenticity and integrity of no. 36 as an important heritage asset, undermined. Furthermore, the double glazing has resulted in a double reflection and even chunkier proportions for the window frames in order to take the weight and thickness of the double glazing.

The proposed reintroduction of the bay projection and replacement with timber sash windows would therefore undoubtedly be an improvement. Whilst it is somewhat disappointing that the windows would still be double glazed, as this would be uncharacteristic. On balance, in this instance given the poor appearance of the existing windows the proposal would result in an improvement to the appearance of the

dwellinghouse and Conservation Area, despite the double glazed windowpanes. In this way the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be enhanced.

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposal would enhance the character and appearance of the Windmill Hill Conservation Area. As such the proposal is compliant with Policies CS19 (Development and Design Principles) and CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) of the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Adopted Version (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC3 (Development Affecting Conservation Areas) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994. The development also complies with Section 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places and Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The NPPF (2023) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land. The impact on neighbours will be assessed in the next section of the report.

The proposed development would not alter the internal or external space allowances and so would not impact the amenity of future occupiers.

Neighbouring Amenity

As outlined above, it is important that any development safeguards the amenity of neighbouring properties and land. Following a period of consultation with neighbouring properties, no objection to the proposal was received.

The proposed development would not result in any increased bulk, overshadowing or overlooking of neighbours as a result of the development.

The proposal is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in compliance with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development complies with all relevant national and local planning policies. The recommendation is to approve.

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

Case Officer:	Ms Lisa Williams	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	R Hart
Dated:	23rd October 2023	Dated:	23 rd October 2023