

Roof Form Precedent Survey

Revision B — September 2026

Site	Land at Empress Road (former garage court adjacent to No. 33), Gravesend, Kent
Proposal	Demolition of disused garages and erection of a building of two storeys with accommodation within the roof, comprising 7 self-contained flats, with associated access, parking, cycle and refuse storage, amenity space and landscaping
Local Planning Authority	Gravesham Borough Council
Pre-application reference	PRE20240129 (advice dated 1 August 2024)
Document reference	EMP-RPS-001 Rev B
Status	Appendix A to the Design & Access Statement EMP-DAS-002 Rev B
Prepared by	Tudor Agencies
Date	September 2026

1. Status and purpose

1.1 What this document is

This is a survey of roof form in the streets immediately surrounding the application site. It records what is actually built within a three-minute walk of the site, photographs it, and sets out what that evidence establishes.

It is Appendix A to the Design and Access Statement EMP-DAS-002 Rev B and supplies the evidence base for Section 5.5 of that statement.

1.2 Why the evidence matters

The roof is the element of this proposal on which the application will turn. The scheme places its third level of accommodation inside the roof rather than in a third storey. That decision holds the eaves down to the height of the neighbouring two-storey grain, conceals the photovoltaic array behind the truncated upper slope, and delivers seven homes on a disused garage court without adding a full storey to the skyline.

The design merit of that decision does not depend on this survey. What the survey does is convert an argument about design into a finding of fact about the street. A local planning authority may reasonably disagree with an architect about whether a roof is well judged. It cannot reasonably disagree that a form already stands, permitted, two hundred metres away.

The short point

Every element of the proposed roof — three levels of accommodation, the uppermost within the roof, slate covering, flat-topped dormers in a regular rhythm, hiping to suppress height at the boundary — is present in built and permitted form within 250 metres of the site. One of those examples stands in the immediate setting of a Grade II* listed church. The application site is subject to no heritage designation whatever.

1.3 How this document should be used

The survey is drafted to be read on its own. A case officer who reads nothing but Sections 4, 5 and 6 will have the whole of the argument and the whole of the evidence for it.

2. Method

2.1 Catchment

The catchment adopted is a 400 metre walked radius from the site frontage on Empress Road, which corresponds to approximately five minutes on foot. Every example recorded falls comfortably inside it; the furthest is reached in about three minutes. The catchment is deliberately tight. Precedent drawn from the far side of a town carries little weight because it says nothing about the character of the receiving street. Precedent drawn from the streets a resident of the proposed building would walk down every day carries a great deal.

2.2 Selection

Buildings were selected on a single criterion: they accommodate three levels of use where the uppermost level is visually subordinate, whether by being contained within a roof or by being set back behind the principal elevation. Both devices are recorded, and the distinction between them is maintained throughout. Two of the six examples are set-back top storeys rather than roofs. They are included because they demonstrate the same planning principle — that this authority accepts a third level of accommodation on this frontage provided it is subordinated — and it would be misleading to present them as mansards when they are not.

2.3 What was recorded

The survey was carried out visually from the public highway. For each example it records: position, approximate distance and walking time from the site, number of storeys including any within the roof, roof form and covering, the type and rhythm of roof-level openings, walling material, and the specific respect in which the example bears on this proposal. Examples RPS-01 to RPS-06 are recorded as built fact. The decision precedent relied upon is the two applications at Section 7.2, both verified against the Council's own register.

2.4 Distances

Distances are desk-measured from Ordnance Survey based mapping. Straight-line distances are measured frontage to frontage. Walked distances follow the pedestrian route via Rochester Road and are rounded up to the nearest 25 metres. Walking times assume 1.3 metres per second and are rounded up to the nearest minute. All six examples return a walked time of three minutes or less.

3. Location

The site lies on the north-eastern side of Empress Road, a short residential street running north-east from Rochester Road (the A226). The A226 is the principal frontage in this part of Milton and carries the local shopping parade at East Milton Road some two hundred metres to the north-west, together with the Grade II* listed Church of St Peter and St Paul and its churchyard, which adjoins the western end of that parade.

The examples recorded at Section 4 lie in two groups: the East Milton Road parade to the north-west, and the Rochester Road frontage to the south, opposite the Gravesend Grammar School playing field.



Plate o — Location and survey catchment. The application site is outlined in red on Empress Road. The East Milton Road parade, containing precedents RPS-01 to RPS-03, is outlined in yellow to the north-west. The Rochester Road frontage containing RPS-04 to RPS-06 is annotated “A” to the south. Base imagery © 2026 Google, Airbus and Maxar Technologies; site and precedent annotation by Tudor Agencies Limited.

4. Schedule of roof-form precedents

Six examples, all within a three-minute walk. Read with the photographic record at Section 5.

Ref	Position	Distance and walk time	Levels and roof form	Openings and materials
RPS-01	1–2 East Milton Road, DA12 2JL. Flatted building over a ground-floor convenience store, on the corner with Elliott Street, immediately adjoining the churchyard of the Church of St Peter and St Paul.	200 m straight line 250 m walked 3 minutes	Three levels, the uppermost wholly within the roof. Mansard: steep lower slope in slate over a concealed shallow upper deck. The mansard returns around the curved corner to Elliott Street and is hipped down at each end.	Continuous run of flat-topped dormers at regular centres to both principal elevations, vertically proportioned and white-framed. Buff London stock brick with painted render cornice band, pilasters and cill course.
RPS-02	3 East Milton Road, DA12 2JL. Corner building immediately east of RPS-01.	195 m straight line 245 m walked 3 minutes	Two levels beneath a hipped plain-tile roof, hipped down on the exposed corner so that no gable is presented to the junction.	No openings to the front slope; the roof reads as a plain subordinate cap. Painted render over brick.
RPS-03	Terrace at approximately 5–14 East Milton Road, DA12 2JL, including the Premier store at the corner of Range Road.	175 m straight line 225 m walked 3 minutes	Three levels, the uppermost within the roof. Pitched slate and dark tile roof at approximately 40 to 45 degrees, continuous along the terrace.	Flat-topped dormers to the front slope at regular centres, supplemented by conservation-pattern rooflights — both devices used together on the same slope. Painted render and stock brick, mixed along the terrace.
RPS-04	Flatted block, east side of Rochester Road (A226) at approximately No. 31, opposite the Gravesend Grammar School playing field.	150 m straight line 200 m walked 3 minutes	Three levels, the uppermost within the roof. Steeply pitched dark tile roof carrying the top floor, hipped at the ends.	Box dormer to the front slope with rooflights to the flanks. Buff stock brick with red brick banding and cill detail.
RPS-05	Flatted block adjoining RPS-04 to the north, east side of Rochester Road (A226).	150 m straight line 200 m walked 3 minutes	Three levels, the uppermost set back. Flat-roofed recessive top storey, rendered white and held back behind the brickwork below so that it drops out of the near view.	Standard windows to the set-back storey; no roof-level openings. Buff stock brick and red brick below, white render to the recessive storey.

Ref	Position	Distance and walk time	Levels and roof form	Openings and materials
RPS-06	Flatted block, east side of Rochester Road (A226) at approximately No. 49, adjoining a single-storey bungalow to the south.	200 m straight line 260 m walked 3 minutes	Three levels, the uppermost set back. Flat-roofed recessive top storey, rendered white and set back on all visible elevations.	Standard windows to the set-back storey. Buff stock brick with red brick banding.

Note on RPS-05 and RPS-06

These two are recorded as set-back top storeys, not as mansards, and are not offered as roof-form comparators. They are offered as evidence that three levels of accommodation with a subordinate uppermost level is the accepted pattern on this frontage. The proposal adopts the alternative device — accommodation within a pitched roof — which reads as the more contextual of the two on a street of pitched roofs.

5. Photographic record

Street-level imagery captured July 2026, viewed and recorded 2 September 2026. Imagery © 2026 Google.



Plate 1 — RPS-01 in the setting of the Grade II* listed church. Looking along East Milton Road. The Church of St Peter and St Paul (NHLE 1341484, Grade II*) and its churchyard occupy the left of the frame; the war memorial within the churchyard is separately listed (NHLE 1441607). The three-storey mansard-roofed block at 1–2 East Milton Road stands on the same side of the street, immediately beyond the churchyard boundary, in the centre distance of the view. The Council granted permission for that mansard in a setting engaging the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The application site engages no such duty.



Plate 2 — RPS-01 and RPS-02, East Milton Road. The mansard at 1–2 East Milton Road, seen square on. The uppermost level of accommodation sits wholly within the slate mansard; the run of flat-topped dormers is regular, vertically

proportioned and set well back from the eaves line. The mansard returns around the curved corner and is hipped down at each end, so that the building presents its lowest apparent height where it meets the street junction. RPS-02, the rendered corner building to the right, uses the same hipping device.

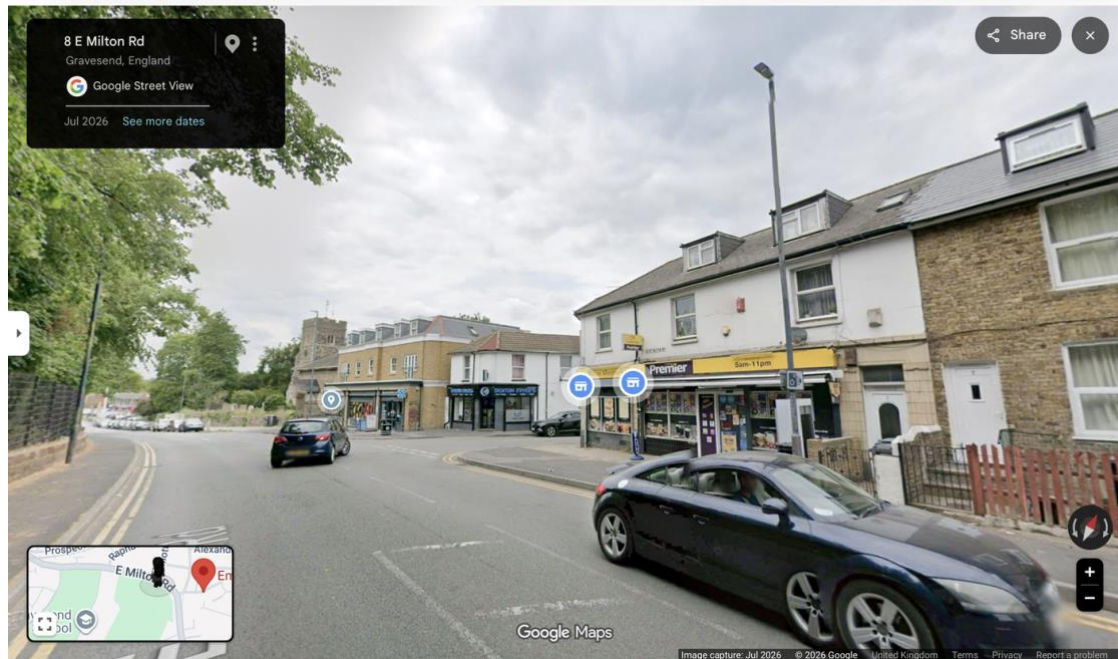


Plate 3 — RPS-03, the East Milton Road terrace. Looking west along East Milton Road towards the church, with the terrace at approximately 5–14 to the right of the frame. It carries a third level of accommodation within a pitched roof of approximately 40 to 45 degrees, lit by flat-topped front dormers and rooflights in combination on the same slope. This is the traditional local grain from which the proposed roof takes its pitch and its dormer proportion.

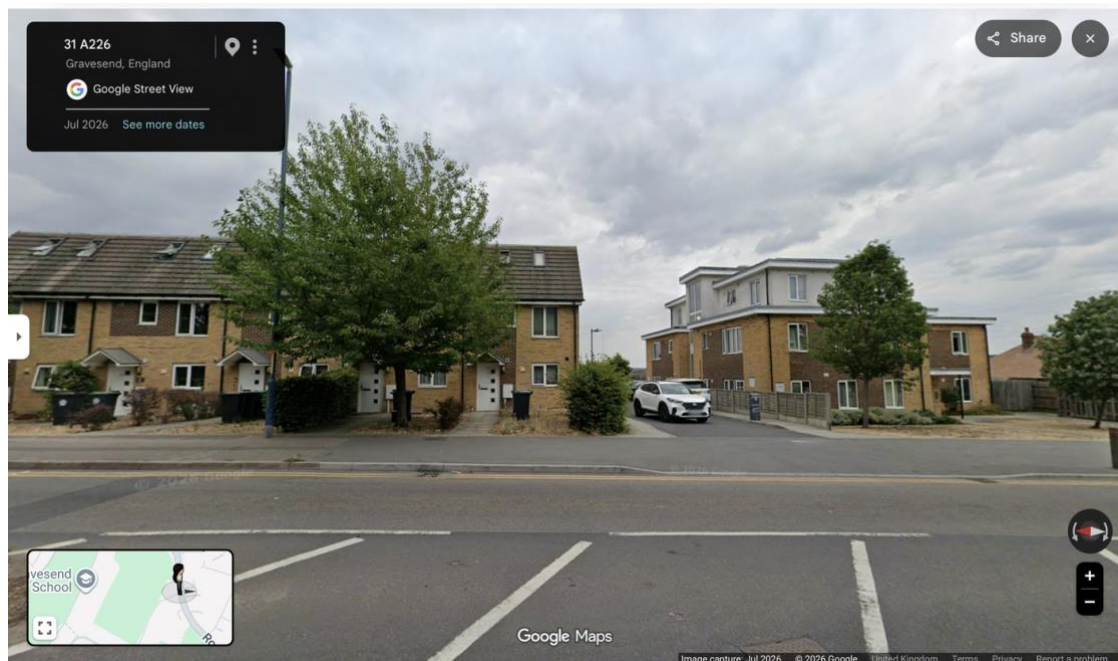


Plate 4 — RPS-04 and RPS-05, Rochester Road (A226). Two adjoining flatted blocks, both carrying three levels of accommodation. The block at left (RPS-04) contains its top floor within a steeply pitched tiled roof with a box dormer. The block at right (RPS-05) uses the alternative device of a rendered top storey set back behind the brickwork. Both are recent, both are in flatted residential use, and both stand within a three-minute walk of the application site.



Plate 5 — Rochester Road (A226) street context. The A226 frontage in the vicinity of RPS-04 and RPS-05, with the Gravesend Grammar School playing field and its tree belt to one side and the flatted blocks to the other. The established scale on this frontage is three levels, with the uppermost subordinated. The proposal does not introduce a new scale to this street; it adopts the prevailing one.



Plate 6 — RPS-06, Rochester Road (A226). A three-level flatted block with a rendered recessive top storey, standing immediately alongside a single-storey bungalow. The Council has accepted a three-level building directly abutting single-storey residential development on this frontage. The application site adjoins two-storey development.

6. What the survey establishes

Seven findings follow from the evidence at Sections 4 and 5. Each is stated so that it can be tested against the plates.

F1 Three levels of accommodation is the established scale, not an intensification of it

Five of the six examples carry three levels. They do so on the A226 frontage, on the shopping parade, and in flatted residential use. The proposal is not introducing a scale that this part of Milton does not already have. It is building at the scale the street is already built at.

F2 Where a third level occurs, it is subordinated — and the roof is the local way of doing it

In every example the uppermost level is handled so that it does not read as a full storey. Three of the six achieve that by containing the level within the roof; two by setting it back behind the elevation below. On a frontage of pitched roofs, containment within the roof is the more contextual of the two devices. The proposal adopts it.

F3 The mansard is a live modern device here, not a historic survival

RPS-01 is a modern flatted building of recent construction which uses a mansard to carry its top floor of residential accommodation over a commercial ground floor. That is the closest available typological match to the proposal, and it is two hundred metres away. The mansard cannot be characterised as alien to this context when the nearest comparable building type in the area is built with one.

F4 Local dormers are modest, vertically proportioned, regularly spaced and held back from the eaves

RPS-01 and RPS-03 both use a run of dormers at regular centres, set back from the eaves line and taller than they are wide; RPS-04 uses a single box dormer. Head shape varies across the catchment — flat-topped and box forms both occur — but proportion, rhythm and set-back are consistent throughout. The gabled dormers proposed share that proportion, that rhythm and that set-back. The design draws on the local pattern rather than on a preference imported from elsewhere.

F5 Hipping to suppress height at exposed edges is the normal local response

RPS-01 hips its mansard down at each end and turns it around the curved corner. RPS-02 hips its roof so that no gable is presented to the junction. The proposal hips the roof down towards the shared boundary for exactly this reason, and does so in a street that already reads hiping as the correct move at an exposed edge.

F6 The material palette is settled and the proposal sits within it

Roofs in the catchment are slate or dark plain tile without exception. Walling is buff London stock brick, in several cases with painted render dressings or red brick banding. The proposed palette is taken from the survey rather than proposed and then defended.

F7 The proposed pitch sits at the restrained end of the observed local range

This finding is worth stating plainly because it pre-empts the most likely design objection. The mansard lower slope at RPS-01 is materially steeper than the 45 degrees proposed. The traditional terrace roofs at RPS-03 sit at approximately 40 to 45 degrees. The proposal therefore falls at the

shallower, quieter end of the range already built in this catchment. It is not the most assertive roof on the street; it is among the least.

The finding that matters most

The proposal does not ask Gravesham Borough Council to accept anything it has not already accepted within a three-minute walk of this site — and in one case, within the setting of a Grade II* listed building. It asks the Council to be consistent with itself on a site carrying no designation at all.

7. Application to the proposal

7.1 National policy — the Framework of 17 August 2026

Policy L2 of the current Framework attaches substantial weight to the better use of underused land and to the delivery of additional homes within settlements, and names the physical devices it has in mind. Airspace, mansard roofs and gaps in the roofline are identified in terms. National policy now positively contemplates habitable roof storeys as a legitimate means of intensification within a settlement boundary. That is a materially stronger position than any previous Framework offered, and it applies directly to this roof.

The site lies within the settlement, so policy S4 governs the balance: permission should be granted unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by the adverse effects. The survey bears on both halves of that test. It supports the benefit — seven homes on a disused garage court, at the scale the street already carries. And it depresses the adverse effect, because a roof form already present in the receiving street cannot sensibly be characterised as harmful to its character.

Annex A directs that a development plan policy which is materially inconsistent with a national decision-making policy should be given very limited weight. Any local policy applied so as to resist roof-level accommodation in a settlement would sit uneasily against L2, and should be weighed accordingly.

7.2 Decision precedent — the Council’s own decisions

Two Gravesend decisions carry the point that this authority has already accepted accommodation within the roof, in locations more sensitive than this one.

Reference	Site	Decision	Why it bears on this application
20240019	11–13 Queen Street, Gravesend DA12 2EQ	Approved. Mansard roof extension creating four additional residential units at upper floors.	The site lies within a conservation area. The Conservation Officer raised no objection. The committee record notes that the mansard did not result in any significant increase in height and that the building would retain the low profile identified as a key feature in the conservation area appraisal. The principle that a mansard can add residential floorspace without adding perceived height has been accepted by this authority, in a designated area.
20220432	Former Police Station, 133 Windmill Street, Gravesend DA12 1DB	Approved 28 September 2022, subject to conditions and a section 106 agreement. 75 retirement apartments in a five-storey building including roof space.	The site lies within the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area and adjoins listed buildings. The Council accepted a building whose top level was expressly accommodated within the roof space. If accommodation within the roof was acceptable there, at that scale and with those constraints, it is acceptable here at seven units on unconstrained previously developed land.

7.3 The heritage point, and why it runs in the applicant’s favour

RPS-01 stands immediately alongside the churchyard of the Church of St Peter and St Paul, listed Grade II* (National Heritage List for England entry 1341484), and the war memorial within that churchyard, separately listed (entry 1441607). It shares a boundary with the churchyard rather than facing it across the street. A decision on that building engaged the duty at section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building.

That duty is not a light one. In *East Northamptonshire District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2014] EWCA Civ 137, the Barnwell Manor case, the Court of Appeal held that a decision-maker must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building, and that there is a strong presumption against granting permission where harm would result. In *Jones v Mordue* [2015] EWCA Civ 1243 the Court confirmed that a decision-maker who properly applies the Framework's heritage policies will ordinarily be taken to have discharged the section 66(1) duty; and in *Palmer v Herefordshire Council* [2016] EWCA Civ 1061 the Court addressed the assessment of setting and the treatment of mitigating features in reaching a judgment on harm.

The relevance here is straightforward and it is favourable. A mansard-roofed three-storey building was permitted in a setting where that heavy statutory duty applied. The application site is not listed, is not within the curtilage of a listed building, does not lie within a conservation area, and does not sit within the setting of any designated heritage asset. Section 66(1) is not engaged. Neither, on the current Framework, are the designated-asset provisions. The proposal is accordingly asking for less, on a less sensitive site, than the Council has already granted nearby.

7.4 Summary of the roof case

- **Height.** Hipping the roof down towards the shared boundary suppresses apparent height where it is most sensitive, following the local precedent at RPS-01 and RPS-02.
- **Massing.** Containing the third level within the roof avoids a third storey and holds the eaves at the height of the neighbouring two-storey grain (F1, F2).
- **Servicing.** The truncated upper slope conceals the photovoltaic array from the street.
- **Character.** A pitch of 45 degrees sits within, and at the restrained end of, the range built in this catchment (F7). Materials are taken from the survey (F6) and dormers follow the local rhythm (F4).
- **National policy.** Policy L2 expressly names mansard roofs as intensification carrying substantial weight; policy S4 governs the balance and is engaged in the applicant's favour.
- **Consistency.** The Council has approved the same strategy at 11–13 Queen Street and at 133 Windmill Street, both in conservation areas. This site carries no designation.

8. Sources

Item	Source
Street-level imagery, Plates 1 to 6	Google Street View, imagery captured July 2026. © 2026 Google. Viewed and recorded 2 September 2026.
Aerial base imagery, Plate o	Google Maps satellite view. Imagery © 2026 Airbus and Maxar Technologies; map data © 2026 Google. Site and precedent annotation by Tudor Agencies Limited.
Church of St Peter and St Paul, East Milton Road — Grade II*	National Heritage List for England, entry 1341484. Listed 23 January 1952.
Milton War Memorial, churchyard of St Peter and St Paul — listed	National Heritage List for England, entry 1441607.
Decision 20240019, 11–13 Queen Street	Gravesham Borough Council planning register and committee record.
Decision 20220432, 133 Windmill Street	Gravesham Borough Council planning register. Approved 28 September 2022.
National planning policy	National Planning Policy Framework published 17 August 2026, policies L2, S3 to S5 and Annex A.
Statutory duty and case law	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s.66(1). East Northamptonshire DC v SSCLG [2014] EWCA Civ 137; Jones v Mordue [2015] EWCA Civ 1243; Palmer v Herefordshire Council [2016] EWCA Civ 1061.
Distances and walking times	Desk-measured from Ordnance Survey based mapping; straight-line frontage to frontage, walked route via Rochester Road, rounded up to the nearest 25 m and the nearest minute.
Survey method	Visual survey of roof form from the public highway within a 400 m walked catchment of the site frontage, September 2026.

Tudor Agencies Limited

EMP-RPS-001 Rev B | September 2026