

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250667

Location: Blandings, Crutches Lane, Higham, Kent ME2 3UH

Description: Erection of a first floor extension and roof alterations with part ground floor utility and garage extension.

Applicant: Mr K Alflatt

Site Visit Date: 22/09/2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Forms

Site Location Plan

Plan no BDS-BL-P01 – Existing Plans, Elevations, Section and Block Plan

Plan no BDS-BL-P02 Rev A – Proposed Plans, Elevations, Section and Block Plan

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20171303	Erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions and conversion of the existing and proposed roof space with new driveway layout	Permitted	26/04/2018
20170895	Erection of single storey front, side and rear extensions and conversion of the existing and proposed roof space with new driveway layout	Refused	24/10/2017
19840746	Construction of dormer in the front and rear roofslopes to form bathroom and bedroom	Permitted	16/10/1984

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (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 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

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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors

None received.

Neighbouring properties

3 no. surrounding properties were consulted and the application was advertised by means of a site notice. No comments from members of the public have been received.

Officer's Analysis

Site Description

The application site comprises a detached dwelling in the rural settlement of Higham, inset from the Green Belt.

The street scene comprises detached dwellings and bungalows of a variety of sizes and scales, including two storey dwellings and chalet bungalows, set back a variety of distances in their plots. The majority of the front boundaries of the properties are open such that the dwellings themselves are clearly evident in the street scene.

While many of the neighbouring and nearby dwellings are single storey or chalet bungalows, the two

dwelling to the north of the site are two storey with pitched roofs. There are a number of two storey dwellings to the south of the application site too, though further from the application site, and a few two storey dwellings on the opposite side of the road, though these are largely concealed behind front boundary hedges.



Blandings is the middle dwelling in the above image.



The principal considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- Principle of Development
- Design, Character and Appearance
- Amenity of Future Occupiers
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Parking and Highways

Principle of Development

The application site is located in a rural settlement within the Green Belt where alterations and extensions to residential buildings are acceptable in principle subject to the requirements of the relevant local plan and national policy considerations, and in particular, Policy CS02 of the LPSC (Scale and Distribution of Development). However, all other relevant planning matters need to be assessed too.

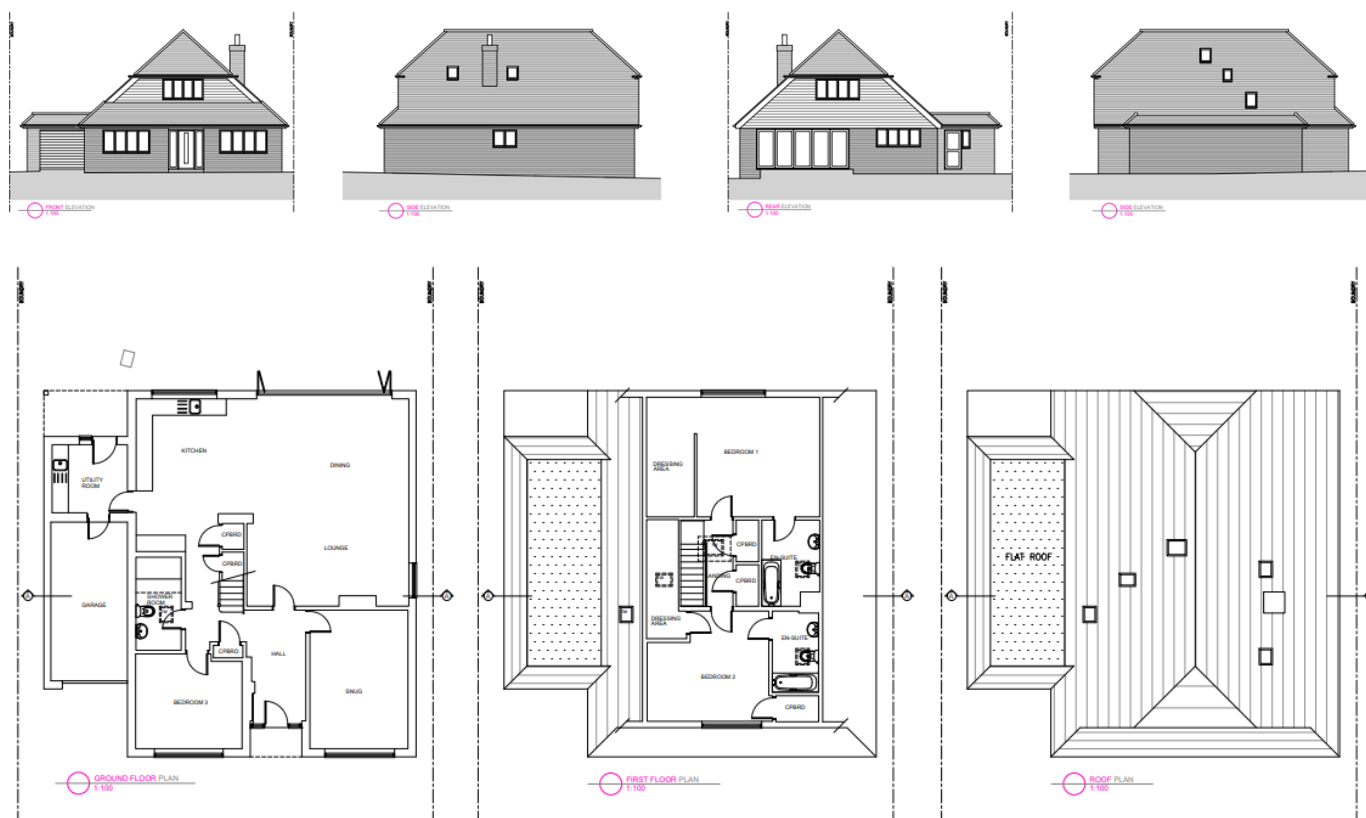
Design, Character and Appearance

The Council's Householder Extensions/ Alterations Desing Guide (2021) states any extensions to a house should respect its original character and complement and correspond with the character of the neighbouring properties and the local area. This guidance is supported by Policy CS19 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; 2024)

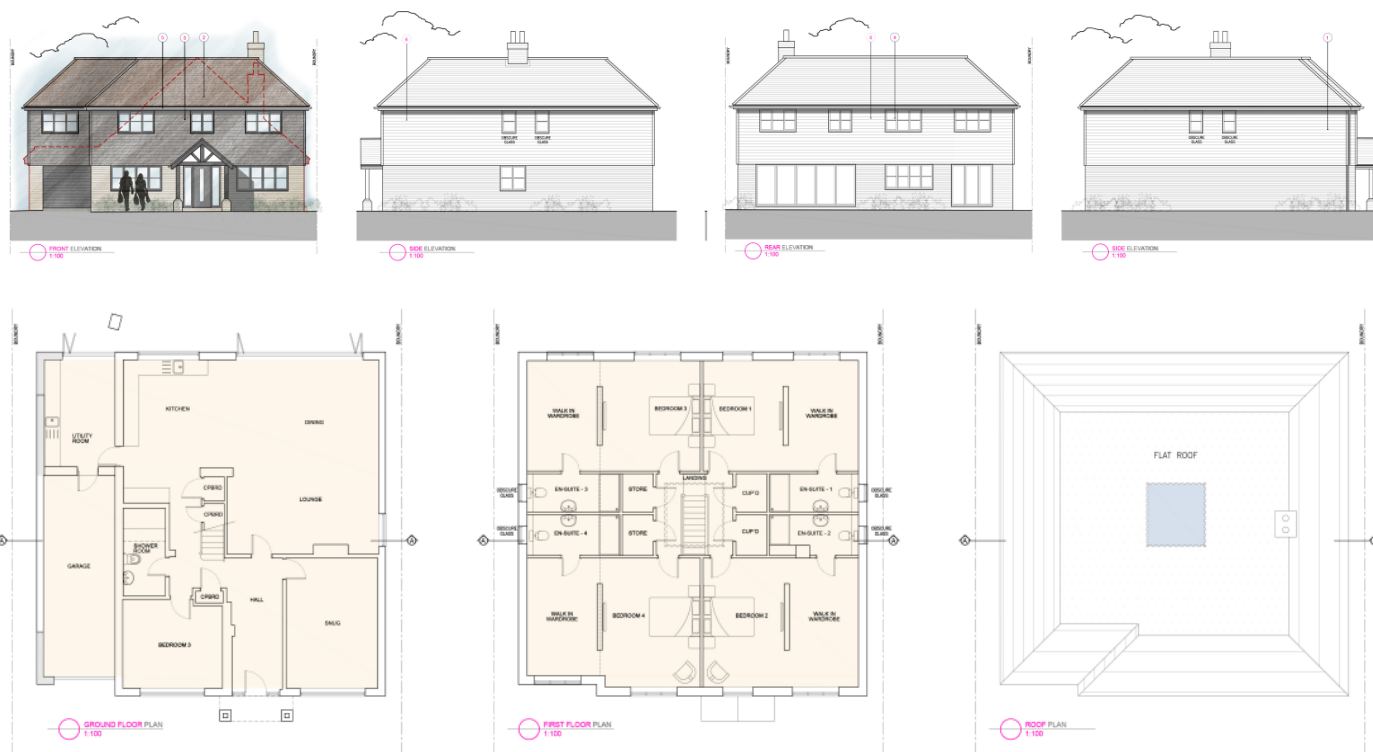
As may be seen in the above photographs, the street scene comprises a variety of size and style dwellings. The application site itself contains a detached bungalow. Given the nature of the street and the presence of a number of two storey dwellings along it, a two storey dwelling on the application site would not be out of keeping, subject to its design, which would need to be compatible with the wider setting in order for it to be acceptable.

Street scene

The existing and proposed elevations are shown below for information;



Existing



Proposed

The proposed ground floor elements of the extension would represent limited additions to the dwelling from which no adverse character impacts would arise.

The proposed first floor extension would, however, represent a significant addition to the dwelling which would considerably change its bulk, massing, style and character. From a bungalow, the dwelling would become a sizeable two storey dwelling with a large crown roof. The development would fail to respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. The development would also have a corresponding impact upon the street scene, as the dwelling is prominent within it, with only low front and flank boundary treatments.

The impact upon the street scene would be harmful as, due to the existing dwelling's filling the full width of the plot, the resultant dwelling would appear cramped in the plot and within the street scene. While there are a number of single storey dwellings that are built from flank boundary to flank boundary within the vicinity of the application site, as single storey dwellings, they maintain a feel of spaciousness in their plots and do not appear cramped within them. The nearby two storey dwellings are sited reasonably spaciouly within their plots as they have reasonably sized gaps to either one or both flank boundaries. There are two, two storey dwellings of matching design at the southern end of Crutches Lane (that back onto the car park of the adjacent Three Crutches Public House) that are built closely to either one or both of their flank boundaries, and a number of two storey dwellings with single storey side projections that are built close to both their flank boundaries along Crutches Lane. However, the resultant two storey dwelling at Blandings would be to both flank boundaries at ground and first floor levels. There would be no or very little space between it and its flank boundaries and it would accordingly appear cramped in its plot and within the street scene. The proposed development is accordingly contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), the design guidance in the Council's Householder Extensions/ Alterations Design Guide (2021) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). The construction of the extension with matching materials would not be sufficient to render the impact upon the street scene acceptable.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users of a site. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria in Policy CS19 which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, privacy, sunlight and daylight of its occupants and those of the neighbouring properties and

land. The impact upon neighbours will be assessed in the next section of this report.

The proposed extension would result in an enhanced standard of living for the occupiers of the dwelling by providing additional living accommodation.

Neighbouring Amenity

It is important that any new development safeguards the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with the guidance contained in the Council's Householder Extensions/ Alterations Design Guide (2021), Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and the amenity guidance in the NPPF (2024).

Both of the neighbouring properties would be affected by the proposed extension as they both have windows in their flank elevations, facing the application site. They appear to be secondary. The property to the south is a bungalow – Bay Tree Lodge. The extended application dwelling would project to the rear of this dwelling by less a metre and given that the dwellings are separated by around 2.5m, it is not considered that the proposed development would have a harmful impact upon the amenities of the occupiers of this bungalow. Harmful overshadowing would not arise for this property.

The dwelling to the north of the application site – Gateacre – is two storey with flank windows at ground and first floor levels (and a door at ground floor level) facing the application property. It is separated from the application dwelling by around 3m with its rear elevation aligned with that of the application dwelling. Though the proposed extension would have a greater impact upon this dwelling than Bay Tree Lodge (as the application site is to the south), the impact would nevertheless be acceptable. The extended dwelling would have a certain visual impact when viewed from the flank openings in Gateacre as it would be built up to the boundary between the properties, however this would, on balance, be acceptable as the impact would be from secondary windows/ openings. Similarly, the impact upon the light levels reaching those openings would be acceptable, considering the siting of the dwellings in relation to each other.

None of the other neighbouring or surrounding dwellings would be adversely affected by the proposed extension due to the distances involved.

It is therefore considered that the proposed extension would accord with the guidance contained in the Council's Householder Extensions/ Alterations Design Guide (2021), Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and the NPPF (2024) with regard to amenity.

Parking and Highways

The proposed development would result in there being four bedrooms at the property. However, space for the parking of at least five cars exists and would remain within the curtilage of the dwelling, thereby maintaining compliance with the Kent County Council Car Parking Standards. Harm to highway safety would not arise from the proposal, therefore.

KCC Biodiversity

Biodiversity Net Gain

Under the Environment Act 2021 and supporting statutory instruments, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory for most developments. The legislation requires a minimum 10% gain in biodiversity from acceptable development, either on- site, off- site or a combination of both. BNG provided under the mandatory requirements off- site and significant BNG on- site must be secured by a legal agreement for 30 years under an approved Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

There are strict requirements in terms of what an application must contain in relation to BNG before it can be accepted as valid, as set out in Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Net Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This requires a completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development biodiversity value of the on- site habitats on the date of the application, and other information.

However, there are a number of exemptions from the BNG regulations;

- householder development, as defined in Article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015;
- development granted planning permission by a development order under section 59. This includes permitted development rights;
- development subject to the de minimis exemption – development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 sqm of habitat, or 5m of a linear habitat such as a hedgerow;
- self- build and custom- build development – development that comprises
 - no more than nine dwellings; and
 - is carried out on a site that is no larger than 0.5 hectares in size; and
 - consists exclusively of dwellings which are self- build or custom- build, as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2105.

As a householder application, the proposal is not subject to the BNG requirements.

Conclusion

The proposed extension would represent a significant addition to the dwelling which would fail to respect its character and appearance and would, by virtue of its cramped appearance within the plot and the street scene, would have an adverse impact upon the street scene.

The impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring occupiers would however be satisfactory while parking issues and harm to highway safety would not arise from the proposal.

The proposed development is therefore contrary to the Householder Extensions/ Alterations Design Guide (2021), Policy CS19 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Recommendation

The recommendation is to refuse this application.

(For detailed reasons for approval and informatives, see draft Decision

Case Officer:	Mr Tom Gabriel	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	TM Gabriel	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	26 th September 2025	Dated:	29th September 2025