

Planning, Design and Access Statement

35 Perry Street, Northfleet, Gravesend

Proposed first floor extension to create two flats with minor ground floor alterations.





Introduction

The property was formerly used by Lloyds Bank and is now in use as the offices of a solicitors' practice. The building is single storey brick and render construction with a flat roof and is set back from the rear edger of the pavement having a ramp and also steps that lead to the entrance door. There are two shop front windows.

It's a matter of personal opinion, however, we consider that the proposed first floor alteration will improve the appearance and function of this characterless building.

Externally on the east side there is a public path which leads to houses in Alfred Place, a road with both vehicular access and pedestrian access from Wycliffe Row. The footpath seems to be little used.

Also on the east side is The Crown public house and to the west, a row of two storey terraced houses. The nearest house is No 39 Perry Street, which is an investment property rented out on short term lets. This house has windows to the front and rear elevations as well as to the east side and rear of the rear single storey outrigger which forms the kitchen. Behind the house there is a long garden which is of a length whereby it runs down the side of the block of flats built to the south of the application property.

The Crown has outside seating at the front of the pub and within the rear garden. The rear garden is securely fenced and enclosed with a close boarded fence running around the garden boundary, There is a hedge for part of the boundary, directly opposite the application property.

During our visits to this property in connection with this application and before this over the years when visiting Lloyds Bank, when the property had this role, we observed customers using the seating to the front of the pub, but not using the seating in the rear garden.

In accordance with the Pre-application response letter dated 30th April a noise survey has been undertaken over a weekend in order that it picked up noise from all sources with road noise being the most prevalent. The noise report recommendations will be adopted by the applicant.

As the ground floor commercial use operates during the normal working week and office hours only, there is no one around to give a presence on site at other times, hence the side of the building has attracted unwanted paint spraying, tagging and other vandalism previously. Under the submitted proposal, with two flats in use over the commercial premises there will be better natural surveillance over the footpath and the residents will be aware of activity around the property.

The proposal, design and layout.

This application is for approval to construct a first floor extension to create two new flats with a pitched roof rather than a flat roof to improve the appearance of the building. Access to the first floor will be via a new staircase accessed from mid-point along the depth of the building with an entrance door from the footpath on the east side of the building. The two flats will good sized one bedroom flats of 55 and nearly 57 square metres with en-suite bathrooms, separate cloakroom and modern lounge, dining and kitchen area. One of the flats, the one at the front, will also have a balcony of over 18 square metres. The balcony will have an 1100mm wall around the balcony and a 2 metre high wall on the west side of the balcony providing screening.

The ground floor is to be divided internally in order to create two shop/office units with improved shop fronts.

Cycle storage will be provided internally at the base of the stairs to the flats.

Waste storage is to be provided within a waste store area created to the rear of the building by demolition of a small section of the ground floor of the building. Waste from the commercial shops/offices will be stores within a shared 1100 litre wheeled bin and waste and recycling bins for the two flats also provided within this area.

The addition of a first floor with a pitched roof and balcony to the front will improve the appearance of this building considerably as well as providing business space for two businesses and two new homes. Having people living here and using the path to the side to get to the flat entrance door will create resident activity and natural surveillance over the public path.

In order to ensure there's not an undue impact on the adjacent terraced house, the new wall on the west side for the first floor extension is to be set in from the alignment of the exterior wall.

The revised bin store arrangement is an improvement over the current situation whereby the commercial waste bin is left next to the building on the path.

The exterior walls will be finished in render in an off-white finish with the rear section to the side elevation being finished is white fibre cement weatherboarding. Brick detailing will be retained around the front elevation.

This area is very well provided for in terms of convenience shopping with both a Tesco Express and Co-Op store close by. Within Perry Street there are other service providers close by that include a dentist's surgery, veterinary surgery, hairdressers, cafes, public houses and takeaways. Within a short walk there is a Post Office, small grocers and butchers shop on the corner of Old Road West.

The Noise Report provides a list of recommendations which include that all external windows should be double glazed with 6 mm external glass, a 20 mm air gap and 4mm internal glass without trickle vents to the window frames. The report says that mechanical ventilation is required due to the external noise level and suggests various types of mechanical ventilation systems. The applicant will use Brink Climate Systems Air 70 (plus) wall mounted ventilators.

The noise report mentions that noise levels on the balcony to the front will be higher than the recommended level which has an upper guideline of 55 dbL. However, as the report mentions, it's still preferable to provide external amenity space than not to provide it.

The noise report includes calculations for noise created by people sitting outside the public house, The Crown and basis these figures on 25 people. The report also notes that at the time of setting up and removing the noise monitoring equipment, no customers were seen outside the pub.

During the pre-application site meeting and as mentioned in the pre-application response, it was considered that having side windows to both the ground and first floor is preferable to the appearance and functional in terms of providing daylight to the flats as well as the natural surveillance benefits. However, with windows in the side elevation there is the potential for overlooking towards The Crown so it is proposed that the lower section of the window is obscure glazed to alleviate this issue.

Cygnet Leisure Centre provides a gym, squash courts, weight room and swimming pool. Mid-Kent Golf Club and the Cyclopark are close by. The Town Centre is within walking distance with a wider range of leisure and shopping facilities.

Access

Access to the new flats will be via a new door opening to the side of the building via a staircase to the first floor. There is good access by public footpaths to local shopping facilities.

Along both the north and south sides of Perry Street there are numerous bus stops, the nearest being a short distance the road within a very short distance with services from these stops to a wide range of locations which include New Ash Green via Istead Rise, Vigo, Ebbsfleet, Blue Water and Gravesend Town Centre to list a small number of the locations.

The mainline train station at Gravesend is 1280 metres as the crow flies which would take someone walking at an average walking speed about 15-20 minutes.

Planning.

As mentioned a pre-application enquiry was submitted with a site meeting held on the 22nd April and written response received dated 30th April.

The written response mentioned that in principle the development of residential units over the current commercial building is acceptable and raised other matters that had been discussed on site. The preference being that there should be windows to the ground floor side elevation to the east side rather than window blanks in order that windows and the side door from the flats create an active frontage as well as improving the natural surveillance.

The flats would need to meet the minimum space standards for a 1 bedroom, two person flat.

Waste storage needs to be provided and separate commercial waste storage from the residential waste storage.

Noise impact needs to be considered with a noise survey being needed to record noise from traffic and from the nearby public house. This survey has been undertaken. The survey shows that the main contributor to noise here is traffic noise and that mechanical ventilators are required which will provide ventilation to the flats whilst controlling the internal noise level. There are a number of possible ventilation systems shown in the noise report.

Consideration is required to the potential impact on the neighbouring house as well as loss of light. In order to reduce the impact from extending the building upwards, the first floor extension walls are set in from the alignment of the ground floor on the west side. A sunlight track is shown on the proposed plan to show how the sun rises and sets. As the rear of the houses faces to the south there is minimal impact from adding a first floor on light to the house as the sun travels across the sky to the rear of the house.

There is no off-road parking provided with this property. The pre-app response says this is not considered to be a problem as the location is very sustainable with good access to public transport and local shopping facilities close by. The location is sustainable.

A SAMMS tariff will need to be paid towards the protection of nesting birds on the North Kent Marshes.

The pre-application summary concludes that whilst the proposal to add a floor to the building and to provide two flats is in principle acceptable, the issues raised regarding the potential impact on neighbour amenity need to be addressed.

Since the pre-application response has been received, a noise survey has been undertaken and the results are submitted with this application. The report proposes various methods of controlling internal noise levels using mechanical ventilation. The applicant preference is to use Brink Air 70 (Plus) wall units installed into the external wall so fresh air is brought into each habitable room.

The first floor external wall has been re-designed so it is set back from the line of the ground floor wall by 1200mm and considerable more distance where the ground floor projects towards the west at the rear of the building. By using a Velux rooflight, there are now no windows along the west wall at first floor level.

The advice raised in the pre-application has been carefully considered and the design details reflect this advice.

The Local Plan Core Strategy identifies that 6170 new homes are required in the period 2011 to 2028. In order to provide this number of additional homes a review of the Green Belt boundaries

around existing settlements is necessary. Inevitably any new homes built on the edge of an existing village to the south of the A2 will be less sustainable than the development of new dwellings in this urban, established retail location with very good public transport links. In this case two new dwellings can be provided and approval should be supported.

Gravesham hasn't an up to-date Local Plan so broad planning policies contained within The Local Plan Core Strategy includes three relevant strategic objectives.

3.2 Strategic Objectives 3.2.1 Location and Amount of Development

- SO1 Make the most efficient use of land by concentrating development on underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area of Gravesend and Northfleet, (in particular former industrial sites along the Thames Riverside) and in Gravesend town centre.
- SO2 Provide sufficient new homes to meet the future objectively assessed needs of the Borough's population, to include provision of affordable homes, homes for smaller households and older people, and sites for travellers within the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt.
- SO3 Ensure that the right amount, size and type of employment sites are available in Gravesend and Northfleet to diversify and strengthen the local economy and reduce out commuting.

This proposal complies with all of these strategic objectives above and with CS01, Sustainable Development below.

This is a very sustainable development in terms of location, availability of local services and shopping needs and availability of public transport. In addition, this is a roof top site so there is no impact on bio-diversity from the development of this rooftop location.

Policy CS01: Sustainable Development

Planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan for Gravesham will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and in this Core Strategy. It will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted at Ebbsfleet.

Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development. The development strategy for the Borough is to retain and improve the existing stock of housing and suitable employment land and to make provision for the Borough's objectively assessed need for at least 6,170 new dwellings

delivered at a variable rate as follows; at least 325 dwellings per year for 2011/2012 – 2018/2019, at least 363 dwellings per year for 2019/2020 – 2023/2024, at least 438 dwellings per year 2024/2025 – 2027/2028, and at least 186,490 sq m gross employment floorspace (within use classes B1, B2 and B8) during the plan period. Development will be distributed throughout the Borough as follows: around 3,890 new dwellings and around 186,490 sq m gross employment floorspace (within use classes B1, B2 and B8) will be provided in the Opportunity Areas at Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East; Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend; Ebbsfleet (Gravesham) and Gravesend Town Centre and on land at the Coldharbour Road Key Site; around 2,280 new dwellings will be provided on other sites in the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt. The strategy prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. This will be achieved by:

- Promoting regeneration by prioritising the redevelopment and recycling of underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area. This will be principally through redevelopment of former industrial sites in the Opportunity Areas of Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East, and Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend to create new residential neighbourhoods and employment areas;
- The continued development of a new sustainable mixed use community in the Ebbsfleet (Gravesham) Opportunity Area, which will include the provision of high quality employment floorspace;
- Revitalising the Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area as a focal point for retail, leisure, cultural and tourism facilities and small scale office provision to serve the needs of the Borough whilst preserving and enhancing its character as a riverside heritage town; and
- Bringing forward a range of suitable sites in other parts of the urban area for residential and employment • development, including Land at Coldharbour Road Key Site.

In the rural area, development will be supported within those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements, including affordable housing and proposals to maintain and diversify the rural economy, will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan. The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. A strategic Green Belt boundary review will be undertaken Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Adopted September 2014 35 to identify additional land to meet the housing needs up to 2028 and to safeguard areas of land to meet development needs beyond the plan period, while maintaining the national and local planning purposes of the Green Belt.

Should minor amendments be required to the design, we request that there is the opportunity to make these adjustments in order that the provision of two new dwellings can be achieved within the next 18 months.

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