

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20220460

Location: Southleigh Gravesend Road Higham Rochester

Description: Erection of single storey rear extension.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Terry Bearman

Site Visit Date: 17.05.22

Preliminary Matters

The agent was contacted 27.05.22 to query the number of bedrooms the property has and to request revised Block Plans as the drawing was incorrectly annotated. A response and a revised plan was received on 30.05.22.

Submitted Documents/Plans

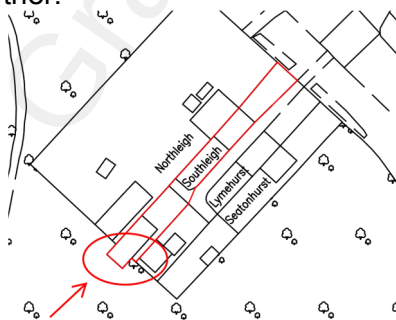
Application Form;
Drawing No. HHL/675-1 – Floor Plans and Elevations – Existing and Proposed with OS Plan;
Drawing No. HHL/675-2 REV A – REVISED Block Plans – Existing and Proposed;
Drawing No. HHL/675-3 – Supplementary Information – Construction Notes; and
Supplementary Information – Email from agent (received 30.05.22) confirming Southleigh has three bedrooms.

Superseded Plans

~~Drawing No. HHL/675-2 – Block Plans – Existing and Proposed.~~

Plan Note

The red line boundary provided on the site location plan is not indicative of the residential curtilage according to our maps, however when looking at google earth it shows that development does go back further.



As this application is dealing with the erection of a single storey rear extension, this discrepancy does not affect this application.

Relevant Planning History

No relevant history.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 - Sustainable Development
- CS02 - Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 - Green Infrastructure
- CS18 - Climate Change
- CS19 - Design & Development Principles

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- C13 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) 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 (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- 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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Internal consultees

The application site spans across two wards and two parishes, therefore Councillors and Parishes for both were consulted.

Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Shorne Parish Council

The Parish Council has NO OBJECTION to this proposal, subject to their not being any valid objections from neighbours.

Higham parish Council

No comments received.

External consultees

No external consultees were consulted for this application.

Neighbouring properties

A site notice was displayed on 17.05.22, six neighbouring properties were consulted and no representations were received. The overall consultation period expired 01.06.22.

Analysis

Southleigh is one of a pair of semi-detached two storey dwellings located on Gravesend Road, on the southern side of the highway. A shared paved access road serves both Southleigh and neighbouring property Lymehurst and leads to respective detached garages located to the rear of the properties.



Proposed Development

The application proposes the demolition of the existing conservatory and erection of a single storey rear extension with two rooflights installed. It is noted that the plans show the existing door in the side elevation is to be replaced with a window. As this is to serve a toilet/utility room this window will be conditioned to be obscure glazed.

The proposed external materials of the extension will match the existing as stated on the application form. Walls will be pebble dash rendered brickwork and the windows will be white UPVC. The roof will be tile hung to match the neighbouring property 'Northleigh.'

Extension to Dwelling

The application site is located in the Green Belt and as such Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) is relevant. Development in the urban area is prioritised as the sustainable location for development. In the rural area, Policy CS02 states that development will

be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the policies map. Development outside those settlements, i.e. in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS.

There are five principle issues in determining this application;

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
3. The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
4. Other matters; and
5. Any very special circumstances?
6. Impact on the Landscape.

1. *Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?*

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 goes on to say that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the specified exceptions. The relevant exception to consider for this application is part c of paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021), which states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

In determining this proposal account will be taken of Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (1994) which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside. It sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully, with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 of the NPPF.

In particular Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) (1994) places an overall limit on extensions of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling unless the increased floor space has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling (criteria ii). It also requires the massing, scale and form of any extension to be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting (criteria vi). It is considered that these factors are relevant in determining whether the size of an extension is proportionate and as such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF and should be afforded due weight.

	Original Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	% increase above original
Footprint (m²)	49.3m ²	67.95m ²	37.8%

The calculations demonstrate that the proposed extension is over the one third limit set out in saved policy C13. In purely numerical terms, the extension is contrary to the local plan Green Belt policy and can be considered a disproportionate increase of the original building footprint. The volume calculation of the extension to the original dwelling, has not been calculated in this application and will be assessed visually instead.

The numerical calculation only forms part of the overall assessment. In paragraph 149 of the

NPPF (c), it states the extension or alteration of a building may be acceptable, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

The footprint of the extension will only be 3-4% over the one third limit set out in saved policy C13. Furthermore the extension is single storey, will be located to the rear of the property and as such will not be an incongruous addition causing the property to appear excessive in bulk and mass. In addition to this, under permitted development rights through a prior approval householder application, a semi-detached property could extend beyond the rear wall of the dwellinghouse by 6.00m as long as it does not exceed 4.00m in height. The proposed extension is smaller than what could be built under permitted development and it is to extend beyond the existing rear wall of the dwellinghouse by 3.28m which will match the depth of the extension at neighbouring property Northleigh.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in a disproportionate addition to the property and as such the proposal would not be inappropriate development which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It therefore complies with Policy CS02 (LPCS), Policy C13 (LPFR) and to paragraph 149 (NPPF).

2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 137 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Any new built form of development is likely to impact on the openness of the Green Belt, however it is important to establish the degree of harm. The extension is single storey, subservient to the main dwelling and does not considerably project from the existing rear wall. It is therefore not considered to result in significant harm to the openness.

Reference back to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF informs us that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Whether the development causes any other harm and whether there are any other relevant considerations to balance the overall planning argument, should now be considered.

3. The effect on the character and appearance of the area

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) states that new development will be visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area.

The Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021) states single storey rear extensions should be designed to ensure that appropriate materials are used, they are not overly dominant, and they should not rise above window sill level of any first floor window. The proposed extension will be located to the rear of the property and will be single storey. The door in the side elevation will be replaced with a window and, as aforementioned in this report, will be conditioned to be obscure glazed. The external materials will match the existing; walls will be pebble dash rendered brickwork, windows will be white UPVC and the pitched roof will be tile hung to match the neighbouring property 'Northleigh.' The extension is to be 3.40m high, 3.28m deep and will span the width of the existing dwellinghouse at 6.15m.

As the proposed development is to the rear and side of the property, and the site is set back from the road, this will have a minimal impact of the street scene.

Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

4. Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposal will safeguard the amenity of future occupiers. At approximately 14.00m deep and 83.5sqm, the resultant private garden area exceeds the minimum garden area and depth as set out by Gravesham's SPG 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement (RLG 2020), for a 3 bedroomed property. The rooms proposed are in accordance with the RLG (2020) recommendation for floorspace, and will receive sufficient natural light. The new window to serve the WC in the flank elevation will be conditioned to be obscure glazed to protect privacy. As such, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed development will have no impact on neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, loss of outlook or create any sense of enclosure. This is because the extension is single storey, there is already an existing extension at Northleigh and also there is some distance between Southleigh and neighbouring property Lymehurst.

Privacy is not considered to pose an issue, as the new window to serve the WC/utility room will be conditioned to be obscure glazed and is replacing an existing door.

The proposed development is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highway issues related to this proposal.

5. Very special circumstances

No specific arguments have been put forward by the applicant in relation to the assessment of 'very special circumstances'.

6. Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Shorne Woodlands Landscape Character Area - This area is characterised by an undulating topography, chestnut coppice woodland and a strong sense of enclosure. The developments are often located around traditional village greens, are buildings have varying styles and ages with chequered brickwork and ornamental brickwork.

Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

The proposed development is not considered to impact on the landscape, the single storey rear extension projects a minimal amount from the rear wall of the existing dwellinghouse. As such, the development is in accordance with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Conclusion

The proposed single storey rear extension is 3-4% over the one third limit set out in saved policy C13 (LPFR), however it has been designed to be subservient to the existing dwelling, the proposed bulk and massing is acceptable, it will use appropriate materials to match the existing external materials and will not significantly project from the rear wall of the existing dwellinghouse. A prior approval larger homes extension application could permit a similar extension with a greater depth of 6.00m as long as it would not exceed 4.00m in height. Therefore, the proposed extension is considered to be a proportionate addition that is appropriately scaled within the green belt setting and not harmful to its open character. The fenestration change will be conditioned to ensure privacy and there will be no impact on future occupiers or neighbouring properties. No harm will be caused to the character of the landscape.

As such it is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs L Hankin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	L Hankin	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	27 th June 2022	Dated:	27th June 2022