

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240130

Location: Hillside Foxendown Lane Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of a single storey side extension and installation of a balcony.

Applicant: Mr Jeremy Buller

Site Visit Date: 14th March 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form
- Existing Block Plan
- Proposed Block Plan
- Site Location Map
- Existing Plans and Elevations
- Proposed Plans and Elevations

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Outcome	Decision Date
19960013	Removal of condition (v) of planning permission ref no. GR/93/644W to allow erection of garage extension to attach existing garage to main dwelling house.	Approval of Details	06.03.1996
19930644	Erection of two storey rear extension to form enlarged kitchen with bedroom over.	Permitted	15.12.1993
19930414	Erection of a two storey rear extension to form enlarged kitchen with bedroom over, single storey side extension to form enlarged garage.	Refused	11.10.1993
19770732	Erection of porch to back door	Permitted	25.10.1977
TH6/63/138	Erection of car part	Permitted	06.06.1963
TH6/62/446	Enclosure of veranda to form sun-lounge with bathroom/w.c conversion	Permitted	06.02.1963

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

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

- C13 – Extensions to dwellings in the countryside

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) sets out those 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 The review 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 a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) general conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 - Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPD4 - Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Local Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Meopham Parish Council

Following discussion by our Planning Applications Working Group; the Council wishes to provide the following response:

We raise no objection to this application subject to the criteria within the Householder extensions/Alterations Design Guide being met and that GBC are satisfied that the balcony will not cause neighbouring properties to be overlooked.

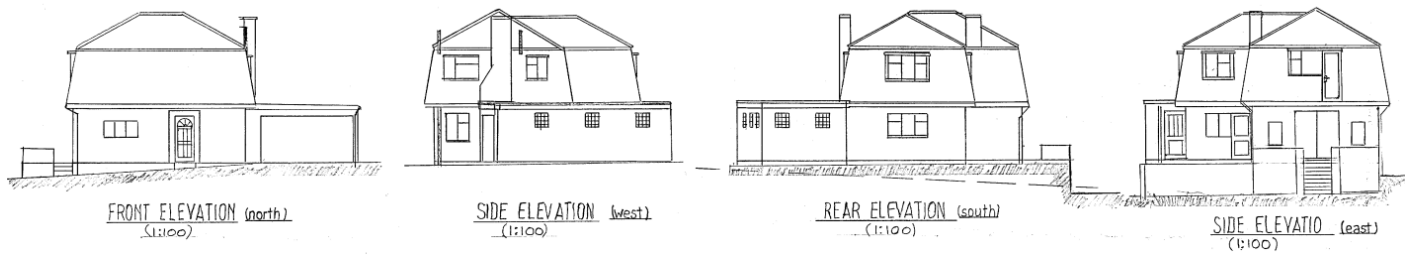
Neighbouring properties

The application was advertised by way of site notice and letters to two surrounding properties. The consultation period expired on 05.04.2024 and no comments were received.

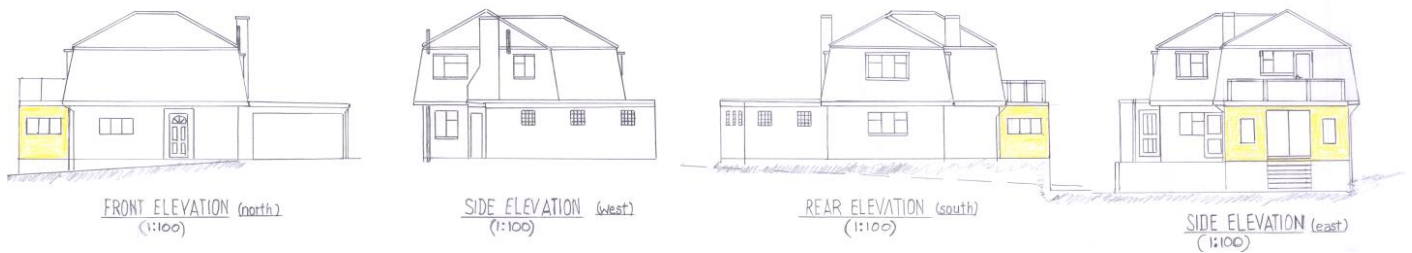
Proposal

The proposed development seeks to erect a single storey side extension with a balcony to the first floor.

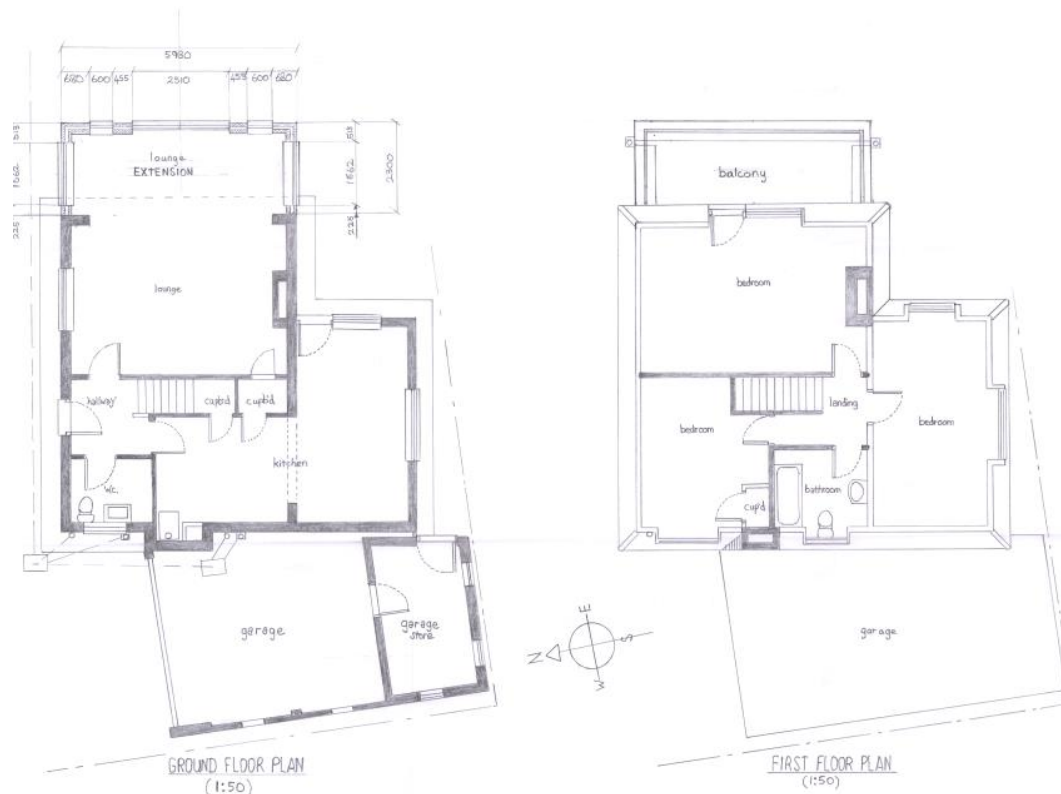
Existing



Proposed



Proposed Plans



Analysis

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

The site is within the Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (para. 142 of the NPPF 2023). Paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other

harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The relevant exceptions to this policy are as follows:

Paragraph 154(c) identifies ‘the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in *‘disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building’*, as an exception to this policy.

Paragraph 154(g) identifies another exception as;

‘limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
- *not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority’*

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

Policy CS02 sets out where development should be distributed in the borough. Preference is given to those urbanised areas as sustainable locations. Outside urbanised areas, those rural settlements which are inset from the Green Belt would also be considered acceptable in principle. This site is in a rural area, in the Greenbelt **NOT** forming part of settlement inset from the Greenbelt. In this context the policy states that developments; *‘will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan.’*

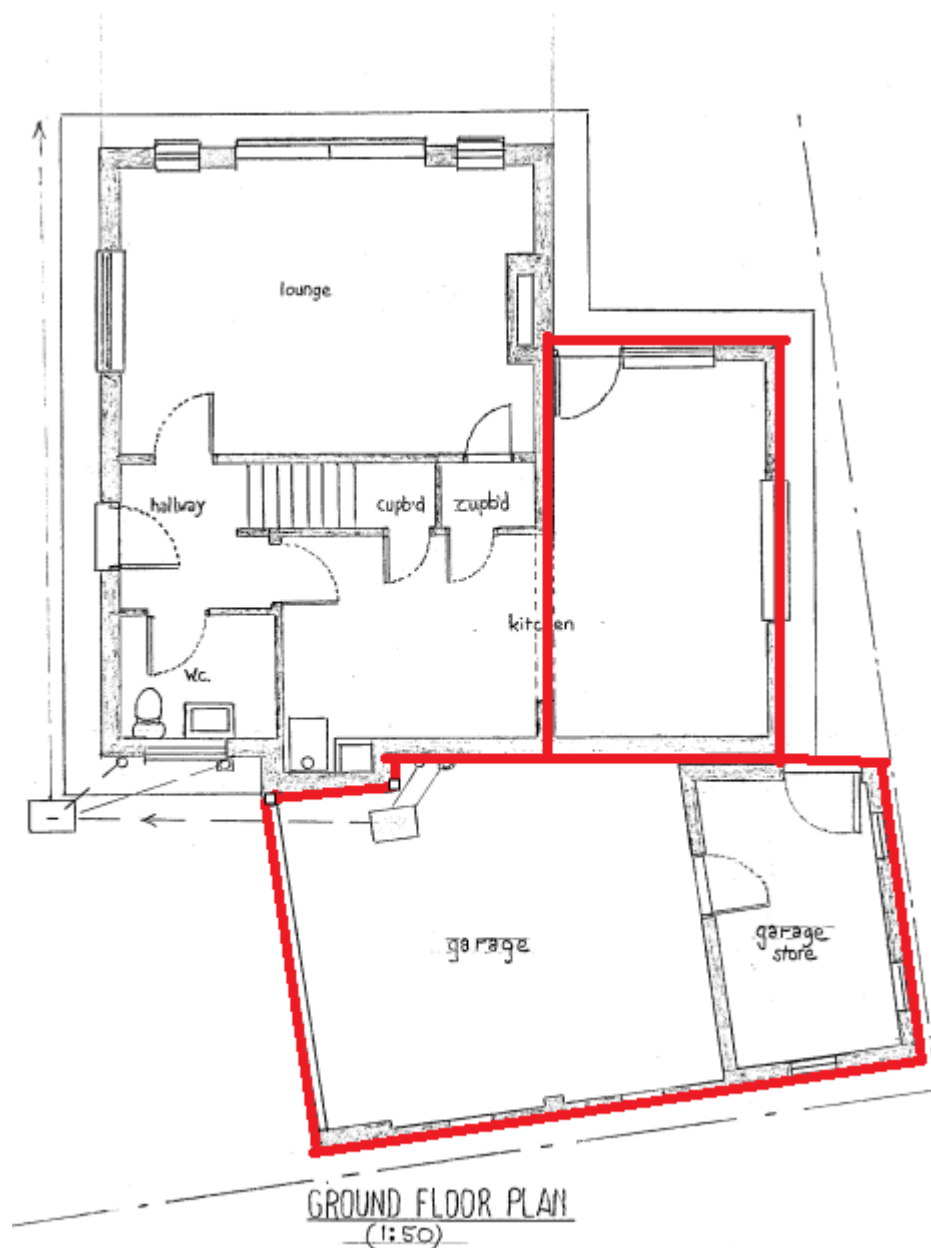
Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

Saved Policy C13 sets out the requirements for extensions to dwellings. Of particular consideration and to assist in assessing whether the addition would be disproportionate, this policy limits the increased floorspace to one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling. However, this policy does pre-date the NPPF, and greater weight should be given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2023).

“Original dwelling” for the purpose of Saved Policy C13 means the building in permanent residential use at 1st July 1948.

Greenbelt

Consent for a sunlounge with a bathroom/w.c conversion and car port were granted in 1963, a porch was granted permission in 1977. Then in 1993 permission was granted for a two storey rear extension on the basis that the sun lounge was demolished and a further planning permission allowed for the removal to condition which allowed for the garage to be attached to the main dwelling in 1996. The following floor plan taken from the approved details of that application shows the areas which were extended:



No other extensions appear to have taken place since this. The floor space of the original house and the previous extensions can therefore be ascertained from the existing plans provided as part of the current application. The original dwellinghouse therefore had a floorspace of 94.605m². The two storey rear extensions total 32.635m², the garage would be considered a domestic adjunct and so should be included in the calculation of residential floorspace, this adds a further 36.96m².

The following details the calculations for the increased footprint:

Development Stage	Footprint
Original	94.605 m ²
Current	174.305 m ²
Proposed	35.175 m ²
Total increase post development from original dwelling	209.48m ²
	Total Increase: 94.605 m ² / 209.48m ² = 45.16%

This assessment incorporates the floorspace of the garage as this section of the building is attached to the dwelling and was extended as part of planning consent reference; 19930414. Whilst the garage is physically attached, it is a separate feature of the dwellinghouse as there are no internal accesses from the garage to the dwellinghouse at present, however this does still form part of the total floor space as the garage constitutes as domestic adjunct. The extension proposed would result in increased floorspace of 35.175m². The residential floorspace as a result of the extension, would increase by a further 20% resulting in a total increase of **45.16%** in total from the original internal residential floorspace.

This is 12% greater than the 1/3 increase prescribed by saved Policy CS13 and above the allowance. The proposed development would result in increase to the scale of the dwellinghouse from its original conversion, in the Green Belt.

However, in considering whether the additions would be disproportionate to the existing dwellinghouse, a visual assessment is necessary in combination with the floorspace data. From the front elevation, there would be a visual change in bulk as the side projection proposed will have a projection of 2.3m and a raised height of 3.2m from the natural ground level, it will be situated in a prominent position thus having a visual impact. These visual changes would result in the house having a more elongated appearance.

Consideration must also be given to the historic planning consents in particular 19930644, whereby planning consent for the two storey rear extension was granted on the basis of the sunlounge being demolished. The condition imposed as part of this permission stated:

(iii) Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced on site, the existing sun lounge shall be demolished and all materials arising therefrom shall be removed from the site.
Cont/d.....

Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced on site, a sample of the bricks and tiles to be used shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the District Planning Authority.

This planning consent also imposed a condition stating:

(v) The garage and store shall remain physically detached from the main dwelling house at all times.

However this condition was removed under 19960013. The garage is now attached to the main dwelling house and constructed in line with the principal elevation which increases its visual prominence. This must now be considered in conjunction with the proposed development with their combined visual impact. It was felt necessary to impose the above conditions in order to preserve the open character of the greenbelt and ensure that the dwellinghouse did not have any disproportionate additions. When considered against the original main dwelling house the garage has already resulted in a large addition and when considering an additional side projection on the opposite flank elevation, this will elongate the principle elevation of Hillside.

It is considered the proposed development will result in an incremental increase and when considered in conjunction with the adjoining of the garage to the main dwelling results in a disproportionate addition in terms of its scale and therefore would not comply with paragraph 154(c) of the NPPF (2023) and, policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policy CS02 of the Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

No very special circumstances have been submitted which would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. As such, as per paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023), this inappropriate development should not be approved.

Character and Design

The application property is situated within a greenbelt area and is a detached home on a fairly generous plot. The dwelling is located on the south western boundaries and therefore has its garden situated to the side. The proposed balcony formed part of the dwelling some years ago however it was demolished to allow for a two storey development to the rear which meant the dwelling did not exceed the 1/3 allowance in the Greenbelt.

In terms of design the proposed development would result in a further incremental increase to what was originally a modest dwelling. When considering the two storey rear extension in conjunction with the attachment of the garage to the host dwelling, the property has undergone a significant amount of development however when considered in isolation without the issue of greenbelt this extension is modest, of appropriate design and appearance and would be largely acceptable.

The balcony would however be situated in a prominent position and would be visible from the main streetscene, the wider area does not have these as a feature so it would introduce an out of character addition.

However on balance it is considered that this feature would not be so harmful to warrant a refusal, the side extension is modest and acceptable in design. The proposal is therefore compliant with CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and SPD4 – Householder Alterations and Extensions Guidance (2021).

Neighbouring Amenity

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. Following a period of consultation with neighbouring properties, no objection to the proposal was received.

The siting of the balcony would face in the direction of The Whitehouse which is situated to the east and some 30m away from the proposed balcony. It is noted that there are some trees between these properties which offer further screening.



Due to the proximity between the dwellings, it is considered the proposal would not have any adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and is compliant with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy

2014.

Amenity of future occupiers

Post development there will be adequate amenity space and the proposal will provide additional living space and so there are no concerns relating to existing and future occupant amenity. The proposal therefore complies with CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020).

Landscape Character Area

Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of surrounding area. This application is located in a rural area. Whilst there are some areas of built form, such as this existing dwellinghouse, the landscape of the area is overwhelmingly rural and open, without built form. The dwellinghouses which form part of this cluster have been extended over time however their scale is sympathetic to the rural countryside. This site in particular forms part of the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

The Landscape Character Assessment described the modern development of the area as follows:

'In the mid 20th Century the land to the north of Harvel was divided into a multitude of small plots that has resulted in sporadic and piecemeal development. These plots are enclosed by a variety of boundaries including fencing, hedgerows and other materials, or defined by clearings in the woodland to create a haphazard mosaic of small-scale housing plots within the woodland. The style of properties is varied in terms of size, scale and style. Many plots accommodate derelict caravans adjacent to small brick bungalows. Security gates and fencing are dominant throughout the area. Many properties appear to have small adjoining paddocks accommodating a small amount of livestock and associated equipment.'

It continues to say:

'The uncharacteristic and sporadic settlement of small plots within coppice woodland is a dominant element within the area creating an incoherent landscape. There are many visual detractors, including derelict buildings and caravans, overgrown gardens, poor fencing, disjointed fencing materials and fly tipping. The visual unity is significantly interrupted, although the wooded nature of the area conceals much of the visual clutter from wider views.'

Given the harm caused to the landscape character from the areas of small plots such as the one referred to in this application, the condition of the landscape area is considered moderate and requiring a Conserve and Create approach, as noted in the Landscape Character Appraisal; 'The strong landscape elements within the Harvel Wooded Downs should be conserved, whilst design standards should be defined to halt the erosion of the area with inappropriate development.' Of particular relevance, the Landscape Character Assessment provides the following guidance to 'halt the erosion of the area with inappropriate development.':

- Conserve and maintain traditional and distinct buildings, materials and elements.
- Resist proposals that introduce inappropriate designs and materials.
- Improve and soften new development using characteristic landscape elements such as woodland blocks and hedgerows.
- Conserve enclosure of settlements within wooded areas.

In this instance, as has already been ascertained, the proposed development would result in the increase in built form to this plot. However, given its design and wider context, it is considered visually appropriate and proportional to the character of the area.

Overall and on this basis, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and Section 13 of the NPPF (2023).

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposal is recommended for refusal owing to the below ground:

The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt by virtue of its disproportional appearance in terms of its scale, and causing detriment and harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It would therefore would not comply with paragraph 154(c) of the NPPF (2023) and, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2014). No very special circumstances have been submitted which would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. As such, as per paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023), this inappropriate development should not be approved.

(For detailed reasons for refusal, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Sharon Sahota	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	30.04.2024	Dated:	8th May 2024