



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20230551
Location:	3 Reynolds Cottages, Henley Street, Luddesdown, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0XB
Description:	**REVISED DESCRIPTION** Erection of a single storey rear extension and a two storey side extension to create a five bedroom house.
Applicant:	Ms Natalie Saunders
Site Visit:	N/A Desktop Assessment

Procedural Issues

The application description states that the development would utilise the “current garage footprint to extend upwards”, however this is incorrect as the plans highlight an two storey extension to the front of the existing garage and a first floor extension above the existing garage. As such, the Local Planning Authority have revised the description to read as follows:

****REVISED DESCRIPTION****

Erection of a single storey rear extension and a two storey side extension to create a five bedroom house.

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Application Form - dated 19/05/2023;
- Ordnance Survey Site Location Plan (scale - 1:1250);
- Drawing no. 2023/04/000 - Rev. A - Existing Ground Floor Plan;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/001 - Rev. A - Proposed Ground Floor Plan;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/002 - Rev. A - Existing First Floor Plan;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/003 - Rev. A - Proposed First Floor Plan;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/004 - Rev. A - Existing Front Elevation;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/005 - Rev. A - Proposed Front Elevation;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/006 - Rev. A - Existing Rear Elevation;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/007 - Rev. A - Proposed Rear Elevation;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/008 - Rev. A - Existing Side Elevation (East);
- Drawing no. 2023/04/009 - Rev. A - Proposed Side Elevation (East);
- Drawing no. 2023/04/010 - Rev. A - Existing Side Elevation (West);
- Drawing no. 2023/04/011 - Rev. A - Proposed Side Elevation (West);
- Drawing no. 2023/04/012 - Rev. A - Existing Roof Plan;

- Drawing no. 2023/04/013 - Rev. A - Proposed Roof Plan;
- Drawing no. 2023/04/014 - Rev. A - Existing Block Plan (scale - 1:200);
- Drawing no. 2023/04/015 - Rev. A - Proposed Block Plan (scale - 1:200);
- Drawing no. 2023/04/016 - Rev. A - West Elevation of Neighbour (no.2 Reynolds Cottages).

Plan Note

The plans submitted are erroneous and do not show the front gable projections on either the existing or proposed elevations. The screenshots below show the existing front gable, along with the flank elevations (existing and proposed) with the gable projections missing.



The Local Planning Authority would have requested revised plans if permission were forthcoming, however the development is contrary to policy and as such was determined as submitted with consideration given to the front gable proposed.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19900672	Erection of single storey side extension to form a garage.	PERMITTED	16.10.1990

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (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 (LPFR) (November 1994):

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards
- C13 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework (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 (LPFR) (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (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)
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Internal consultees

GBC Highways Officer - I have no objections the driveway provides more than adequate car parking provision and the remaining store/(garage) is suitable for the storage of five cycles to meet the needs of SPG4 issued by Kent County Council.

Local Ward Councillors - No comment received.

External consultees

Luddesdown Parish Council - No comment received.

Neighbouring properties

A notice was displayed on site 19th June 2023.

In addition, two surrounding properties were consulted and one representation was received. The comment raised concerns with the proposed extensions impacting on amenity through loss of light into habitable rooms. This is a material planning consideration and will be assessed in later sections of this report.

The consultation period expired 14th July 2023.

Analysis

Site Description

3 Reynolds Cottages is a two storey semi-detached property located on the northern side of Henley Street.



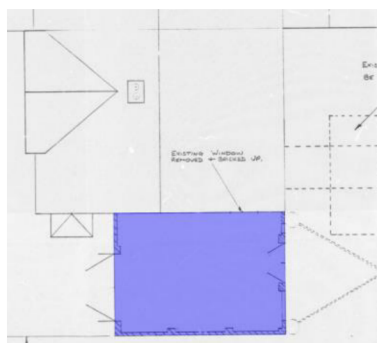
Google Street View (Jan 2021)

The property is characterised by a two storey front gable projection and a porch entrance on the flank elevation. It benefits from a large driveway and landscaped frontage, with an attached single storey garage. To the rear is a conservatory and a generous garden.

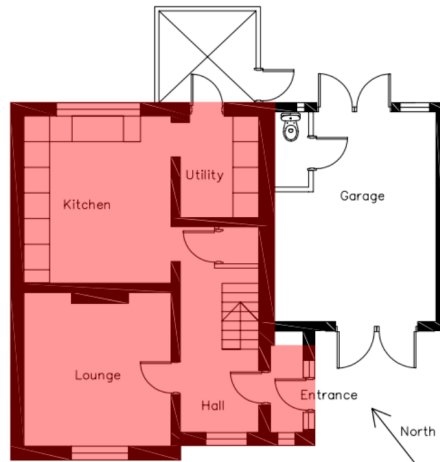
Original Dwelling

The property has been extended previously at the side and at the rear. The side extension to form a garage was permitted by the Local Planning Authority in 1990 (ref. 19900672), however there is no planning history for the conservatory or the porch enlargement.

The images below are taken from the 1990 application (ref. 19900672) and demonstrate that the new garage was separate from the porch and that there was no conservatory at the rear at that time.



Therefore, the footprint of the original cottage is considered to be 53.2m² and is highlighted in red in the screenshot below.



Proposed Development

This application proposes to demolish the conservatory and erect a single storey rear extension, as well as construct a two storey front infill extension to the front of the garage and first floor extension above.

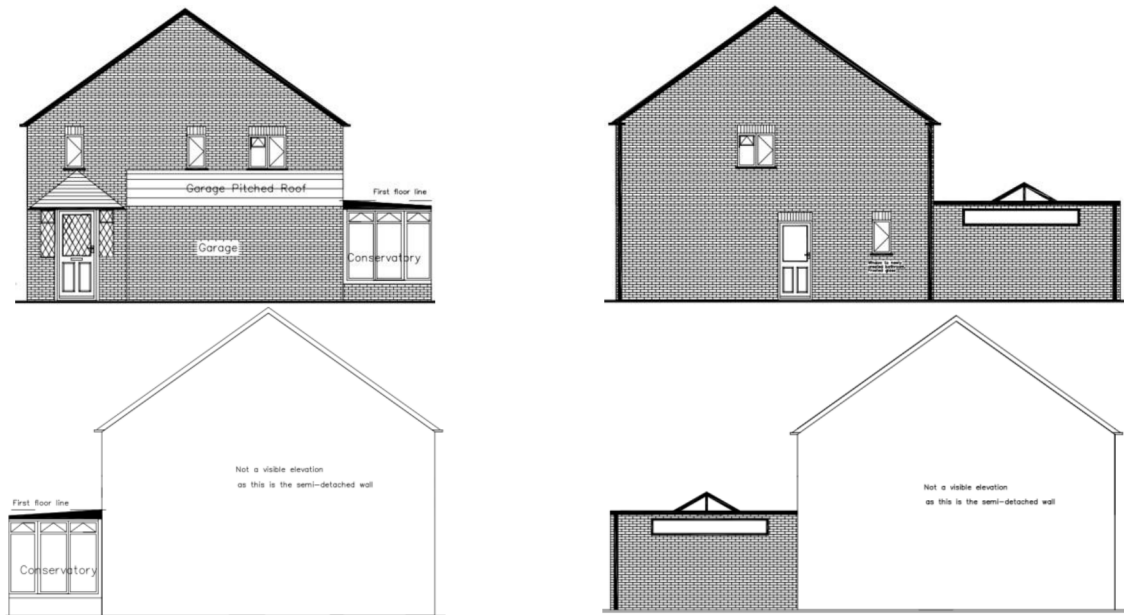
The rear extension would have a flat roof at a height of 2.7m and would have a depth of 5m and a width of 10.27m. The two storey front infill to the front of the garage would have a depth of 2.68m and a width of 3.16m. The first floor extension above the garage would have an overall width of 4.2m and a depth of 5.8m. The extension would match the ridge height of the main dwelling (7.35m) and have an eave height of 4.85m. The extension would have a front gable feature, with a gable ended roof.

Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations





The extensions would create space on ground floor for a new open plan kitchen/living/dining area and a new open entrance into the property. At first floor space would be created for two additional bedrooms and a new bathroom.

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. Any very special circumstances?
4. Impact on the Landscape;
5. The effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
6. Other matters.

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

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 147 of the 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 (2021), 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 (2021).

In particular Policy C13 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 (2021) and should be afforded due weight.

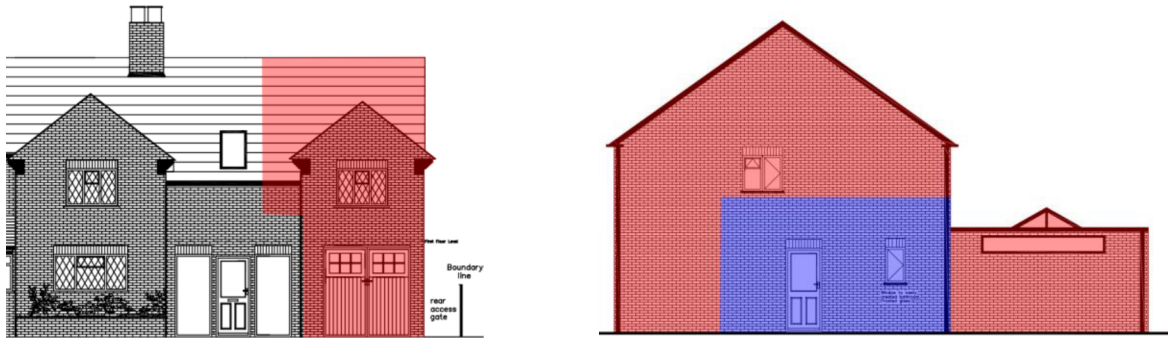
	Original Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	% increase above original
Footprint (m²)	53.2m ²	137.7m ²	158.8%
Internal Floorspace Area (m²)	85.6m ²	198.2m ²	131.5%
Volume	-	-	-

The calculations demonstrate that the proposed additions to the dwellinghouse exceed the one third limit set out in saved policy C13. Therefore in purely numerical terms, the extension is contrary to the local plan Green Belt policy, potentially representing a disproportionate increase over the original floor area of the building. The volume calculations of the extensions, over the original dwelling, have not been calculated in this application and will instead be visually assessed.

However the numerical calculation forms only a part of the overall assessment. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021) 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. It does not provide a figure.

The proposed extensions to the property are considered to be disproportionate additions, over and above the original dwelling and add significant bulk. The two storey side extension add increases the width of the property at first floor level and noticeably increases perceived bulk, which is exacerbated by the lack of subservience or subordination, and would be constructed in front of the established front building line. This is evidenced by the screenshots below, which clearly demonstrate that the proposed extensions will significantly, and disproportionately, increase the scale, bulk and massing of the property, and therefore the cumulative built development is inappropriate.

As aforementioned in this report, the elevation drawings are missing the front gable projections. The proposed front gable projection would be constructed forward of the front elevation and would add more visual bulk than is shown in the screenshots below. This further reinforces that the development is inappropriate development.



The rear extension is also large at full width of the extended dwelling and is not set-in from the flank elevations of the main dwelling. This results in a lack of distinction between extension and dwelling, creating a more bulky and disproportionate addition.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would result in a disproportionate addition to the property and as such the proposal would be inappropriate development which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is therefore contrary to Policy CS02 (LPCS), Policy C13 (LPFR) and to paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021).

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

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF (2021) 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. Openness of the Green Belt has both a spatial and visual aspect.

The development will enlarge the dwelling substantially, with the side extension increasing the width of the existing property at first floor level by approx. 41%. As discussed above, the development will add significant bulk and has been poorly designed without subservience, which substantially adds to the overall mass of the extensions. The rear extension has a flat roof and would be full width and be constructed flush with the flank walls of the property, with the lack of set-in adding to the massing of the development. Therefore, the significant increase in bulk and massing will have a harmful impact on the spatial openness of the Green Belt.

In visual terms, the property is set back from the highway and is somewhat screened by planting but remains highly visible. The two storey extension would be constructed up to the edge of the existing garage, which would enclose the visual open character of the site, build closer to the flank wall with the neighbour/boundary and erode the openness of the Green Belt (as demonstrated in the screenshots below).



As a result of these factors, the proposed development, specifically the dominant dormer windows, would cause considerable harm to the visual openness of the Green Belt.

Therefore, the proposed development is considered to cause an unacceptable degree of harm to the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt.

Reference back to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF (2021) 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. Very special circumstances

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

4. Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by gently undulating topography with a mix of arable and pasture farmland, three large settlements located along the A227 and traditional architecture surrounding village greens providing local vernacular.

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.

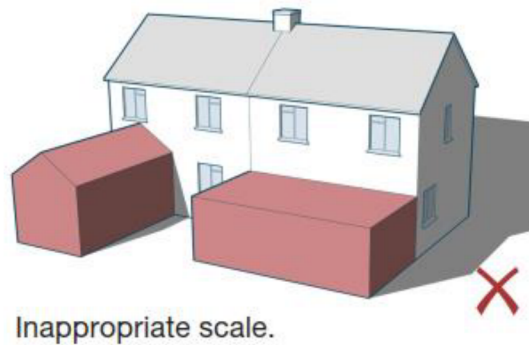
Although the proposed property would be bulky and poor design, it would not be considered to harm the character of the landscape by virtue of being on a residential section of Henley Street characterised by varied properties.

5. 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. Moreover, Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the NPPF (2021) sets out that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Gravesham's newly published Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for developments. Generally, the SPD highlights the importance of new development complementing and corresponding to existing character and the wider context. In this case, the rural character of the area and other surrounding dwellings should be considered.

The design guide goes on to address single storey rear and two storey side extensions. For a single storey rear extension, the SPD states that these should not dominate the original property, with care taken to their heights and widths. The image below is taken from the SPD as an example of an inappropriate rear extension:



The single storey rear extension is large at a depth of 5m and matches the full width of the extended dwelling at 10.27m. This is considered to dominate the original property and the lack of set-in at the edges adds significant bulk. The rear extension hereby proposed is identical to the example of an inappropriately scaled extension within the SPD and is poor design.

According to the SPD a two storey side extension should appear subservient to the host building and be set behind the front building line, should not exceed half the width of the host dwelling and should not interrupt the rhythm of the street or impact symmetry of semi-detached or terraced dwellings.

The side extension is poor design by virtue of the lack subservience and being constructed in front of the existing building line. Although not exceeding half of the width of the host dwelling, it does add substantial bulk and extend the building line at two storey closer to the boundary with the neighbour. Nevertheless, the bulky and dominant side extension would be an incongruous addition which lack subservient or subordination and is contrary to the key principle set out in Gravesham's design SPD.

Overall, the proposed extensions are bulky and incongruous additions to the property, introduce incongruous flat roofs and are poor design contrary to Gravesham's Design Guidance SPD (2021), Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

6. Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires that all development should be 'fit for purpose' and be 'adaptable to allow changes to meet the need of users'. The proposed development would provide no.5 double bedrooms, however a number of these rooms fall below the minimum standards set out in Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) (2020). Although these bedrooms are undersized and would be detrimental to future occupier amenity, they do comply with the requirements of single bedrooms in the RLG. As such this would not be sufficient grounds to refuse the application and if permission were forthcoming the Local Planning Authority would have sought amended plans to show single bedrooms.

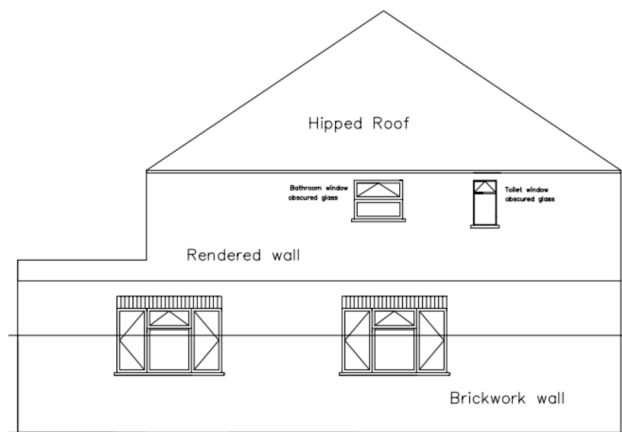
Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires new development to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land and paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2021) requires development to have a high standard of amenity for existing users (in this case surrounding properties).

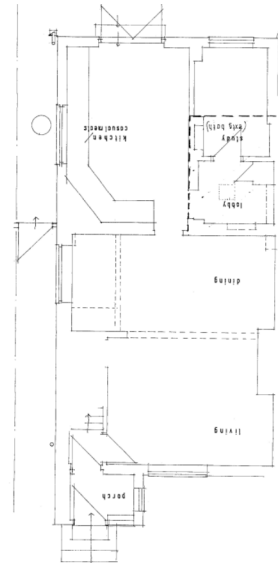
The development is not considered to have any detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of privacy. Although introducing a flank window at first floor level facing no.2

Reynolds Cottages, this would serve a bathroom and in the event of permission being forthcoming would be conditioned to ensure obscure glazing.

However, the proposed side extension would introduce substantial development at an increased height closer to the boundary of the neighbour (no.2 Reynolds Cottages). The side extension would be 1m from the shared boundary. The neighbour has two flank windows at ground floor and two at first floor level facing west towards the application property. The ground floor windows serve the kitchen and a dining room (according to the plans from planning permission ref. 20050916), with the first floor windows serving a bathroom and landing. As part of the plans submitted an elevation of the neighbour has been provided and the floor plan below is from the approved drawings for ref. 20050916.



Western Elevation of no.2 Reynolds Cottages



*Approved Floor Plan of no.2 Reynolds Cottages
(ref. 20050916)*

A representation was received not objecting to the development as such but expressing concerns with potential impact in terms of loss of light into the flank windows. The comment stated that the forward flank window served the living room. Notwithstanding this, both a dining room and living room are habitable spaces and should receive adequate natural light. Moreover, this is considered to be a primary window serving this room due to the distance from the front window.

The application property is located to the west of the neighbour (no.2 Reynolds Cottages) and the proposed development would introduce a two storey gable feature, constructed forward of the existing front elevation. The extensions would significantly increase the height of built form approx. 2m from the neighbours' window. This is considered to have a detrimental impact on the window in terms of overshadowing and would create an unacceptable sense of enclosure and result in poor outlook. As such the proposal is an unneighbourly form of development and would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers contrary to Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

Parking and Highways

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

Conclusion:

The application has been fully considered and is contrary to local and national planning policy.

The proposed extensions significantly exceed the one third limit set out in saved policy C13 (LPFR) and is inappropriate development by virtue of being bulky and disproportionate additions over and above the original dwelling, also resulting in spatial and visual erosion of the openness of the Green Belt. The extensions are designed with a lack of subservience and subordination, are incongruous additions and are contrary to local and national design policies.

As such, it is recommended that this application is refused on the following grounds:

1. The proposal, by virtue of its proposed size, scale, massing and form, would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it would result in disproportionate, dominant and bulky additions over and above the size of the original dwelling and harm the openness of the Green Belt. In the absence of any very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and to Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).
2. The proposed development will add significant and disproportionate bulk to the property, by virtue of extensions that are not subordinate or subservient, dominating the original property and are harmful to its character. As such the proposal is considered incongruous and poor design that is contrary Policy CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Gravesham's Householder Design Guidance SPD (2021) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).
3. The proposed side extension is an unneighbourly form of development that would result in material harm to the amenity of adjoining occupiers, which by virtue of its scale and height close to the boundary and ground floor flank windows on the neighbouring property would create an unacceptable sense of enclosure, poor outlook and unacceptable overshadowing of a habitable room. As such, the development is harmful to the amenity of the adjoining neighbour and is contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Recommendation:

Refusal

(For detailed reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mr Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	7 th August 2023	Dated:	07 August 2023