

Delegated Report

Application No: 20240150

Location: The Manor House, Gravesend Road, Shorne, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 3JR

Description: Erection of a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and single storey oak frame extension to the front.

Applicant: Jo Simons

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Site location plan (1:1250)
- Drawing no. TMH/P1/1 – Existing elevations.
- Drawing no. TMH/P1/2 – Proposed elevations.
- Drawing no. TMH/P1/3 – Existing and proposed floor plans.
- Drawing no. TMH/P1/4 - Existing and proposed block plan.

Relevant Planning History

The planning history relating to this site is summarised below.

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Decision</u>
20050299	Outline application for the erection of a detached annexe in the garden.	Refused	01.06.2005
20020892	Erection of a conservatory at the rear and a link to the existing detached garage at the side and erection of a single storey side extension to form utility room.	Permitted	23.12.2002
19790527	Outline application for the erection of a bungalow	Refused	25.07.1979

Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Courts have held that it is a matter of planning judgement as to whether a proposal is in accordance with the development plan when 'read as a whole' and conflict with a particular policy or policies may not pass that threshold.

Where there are other material considerations, the development plan should be the starting point, and other material considerations should be taken into account in reaching a decision. One such consideration will be whether the plan policies are relevant and up to date.

In this instance the development plan for Gravesham currently comprises: -

- The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014);
- Remaining Saved Policies of the Local Plan First Review (1994); and
- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 - 2030 (2016, revised 2020).

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014)

- CS01 - Sustainable Development
- CS02 - Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 - Transport
- CS12 - Green Infrastructure
- CS19 - Design & Development Principles

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

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

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 First Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 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

- Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006).
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Shorne Parish Council

The Parish Council has **concerns about but overall no objection** to this application, subject to there not being any valid significant objections from neighbouring properties.

The house is sited in a large curtilage. It is set well back from the Gravesend Road, to which it is sideways on so the front elevation faces west. It was previously extended further to planning application 20050299 however since then the permitted rear conservatory has been replaced as an orangery, the previous link from there to the garage (which has itself been converted to residential space) has been roofed over and connected to the previous utility room.

The present proposals are all on the north side of the property.

The two-storey element does not show subsidiarity but matches the rest of the frontage.

The rear single storey extension is satisfactory.

The **area of concern** is with the proposed front extension, which is incongruous in design (having full height glazing on three sides, including two sets of widely opening glass doors, on the frontage) and location. This element should be either omitted or relocated to the rear (east side) of the property.

Neighbouring properties

Four surrounding properties were consulted. In addition, a site notice was displayed and a press notice published. No responses have been received.

Analysis

The application site lies to the south of Gravesend Road (A226). It comprises a substantial two-storey, detached dwelling set within extensive grounds. It has been previously extended (Gravesend planning reference 20020892 – see “Relevant Planning History” above).

This proposal involves the erection of a two storey side extension, a single storey rear extension and a single storey oak frame extension to the front. The application site is defined on the Policies Map of the Core Strategy as lying within the Green Belt and a rural area.

In the consideration of this application, Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 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 Local Plan Core Strategy.

The main planning considerations relating to this application are:

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt
3. Design and visual impact
4. Impact on landscape
5. Impacts on residential amenity
6. Highway issues
7. Very special circumstances

These issues are assessed below:

Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

National policies for protecting the Green Belt are set out in Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraphs 152 and 153 are particularly relevant in the consideration of planning applications within the Green Belt:

152. *Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.*
153. *When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. '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.*

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it comprises one of a number of excepted forms of development, including:

- c) *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;*

Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside is also relevant to this determination. 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 the NPPF.

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 in relation to the original building as they require looking at size in the round. As such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF and should be afforded weight.

The Manor House is a property which has previously been extended. In 2002 planning permission was granted for "erection of a conservatory at the rear and a link to the existing detached garage at the side and erection of a single storey side extension to form utility room" ((Gravesham planning reference 20020892 – see "Relevant Planning History" above). It would appear that this permission has been implemented.

The delegated planning report relating to application 20020892 provides details of the floor area of the original dwelling and the approved extensions as follows:

Original dwelling – 325.85m²

Approved extensions – 79.497m²

The extensions increased the floor area of the original dwelling by approximately 24%. In the assessment of application 20020892 it was considered that this met the tests set out in Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

Calculations show that the additional floor area resulting from the extensions currently proposed would measure approximately 118m². This would equate to approximately 197.2m²

when added to the floor area of the extensions approved under planning reference 20020892. This represents an increase of approximately 60% over and above the floor area of the original dwelling. This is considerably greater than the one third allowance prescribed in Policy C13.

In light of the above it must be concluded that the proposed development in conjunction with previous extensions that have taken place to the property would increase the footprint and add bulk predominantly to the north of the dwelling. Although this would not be unduly prominent from public viewpoints, it would nevertheless impact on the openness of the Green Belt which is considered in more detail below. This proposal when coupled with other extensions would considerably increase the size of the original dwelling.

There is no definition of the term “disproportionate additions” within the NPPF. However, Policy C13, which places an overall limit on extensions of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling, provides a useful guide. In this particular case, given the comments above and given that the proposed additional floor area resulting from previous extensions and the current proposal, would represent an increase of approximately 60% over and above the floor area of the original dwelling, this proposal must be considered to result in “disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling”. This development must therefore be defined as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF advises that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. This issue is explored later in this report.

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

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF 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.

The proposed extensions, by their nature as an additional form of built development at the property, would erode the openness of the Green Belt. They would diminish the openness to the north of the property by extending the footprint of the dwelling and adding further bulk. Whilst these changes would not be unduly prominent from public vantage points and notwithstanding that the land forms part of a domestic garden, this would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt.

Design and visual impact

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to “achieving well-designed and beautiful places” and sets out the Government’s requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 131 is particularly relevant:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

The aims set out in paragraph 131 of the NPPF are reflected in Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy. This requires new development to be “visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive” and to “conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment”. It also requires new development to “integrate well with the surrounding local area”. In addition, Policy CS19 requires the following:

“....the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings.”

The design and visual impact of the proposed extensions are considered to be acceptable. The two storey side extension would incorporate a pitched roof that would tie in to the pitched roof of the main dwelling. The detailed design of the extension, fenestration and materials would match those of the existing property. Similarly, the proposed single storey rear extension would replicate the design of the existing rear extension and as such would also be in-keeping with the character and appearance of the host property.

The concerns of Shorne Parish Council relating to the front extension have been noted. This extension would broadly complement the character of the main building. The pitch of the roof would match the pitch of the roof of the existing dwelling. The gable of the extension would also incorporate timber detailing which would complement the timber detailing on the existing two storey gable to the front of the property.

The submitted drawings provided very limited detail of the glazing. It is agreed that the proposed glazing within this extension differs from that on the main property. However, this building is not listed and not located within a conservation area. Furthermore, it is not subject to widespread public view. As such, it is considered that a reason for refusal based on the glazing would not be reasonable in this particular case. Notwithstanding this, if permission were to be granted, it would be possible to impose a condition requiring further detail of the design of the glazed areas.

The existing dwelling is set back significantly from the road frontage and substantially screened from public views by trees. As such the proposed extensions would not be subject to significant public view. They would not be visually prominent within this locality.

In light of the above considerations, the design and visual impact of this proposal must be considered acceptable. The development would meet the criteria set out in the NPPF and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy.

It is important to note that although the design of the proposed extensions is considered acceptable, this would not overcome the more fundamental concerns relating to Green Belt issues as set out above.

Impact on landscape

Section 15 of the NPPF highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 of Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes within the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that proposals will take account of the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment.

The site is located within the Shorne Woodlands Character Area. The key characteristics are defined in the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment as follows:

- *Undulating topography*
- *Chestnut coppice woodland*
- *Strong sense of enclosure*
- *Traditional village greens*
- *Varied building style and age*
- *Chequered brickwork and ornamental brickwork*
- *Few highways with busier roads along character area boundaries*

The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment aims to conserve areas in good condition and reinforce the distinctive features and elements of the landscape in the Shorne Woodlands

Character Area.

In light of the considerations set out above under the sub heading “design and visual impact” it is considered that this proposal would not conflict with the characteristics of the Shorne Woodlands Character Area as identified in the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment and would meet the tests set out in Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy.

Impacts on residential amenity

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to, *inter alia*, provide “a high standard of amenity for existing and future users”. In addition, Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to “safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land”.

Due to the design of the proposed extensions and their significant separation distance from the nearest residential properties, they would not have a detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers and would meet the tests set out in the NPPF and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy.

Highway issues

This proposal would not create a requirement for additional on-site parking. As such there would be no significant impacts in terms of highways safety.

Very special circumstances

As set out above, the proposal is considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In accordance with paragraph 152 of the NPPF such development “should not be approved except in very special circumstances”. Paragraph 153 advises that 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”.

A case of very special circumstances has not been submitted with this application and it is considered that there no other considerations that would outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. As such, this proposal must therefore be seen as contrary to existing Green Belt policy as set out in the NPPF and Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out in this report, this development would result in “disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building” and as such constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt. It would also impact on openness of the Green Belt. In the absence of a case of very special circumstances this proposal must therefore be seen as contrary to existing Green Belt policy as set out in the NPPF, Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy and Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994).

In all other respects the proposal is seen as acceptable. It has been shown to be appropriate in terms of its design and visual impact, its impact upon the Shorne Woodlands Character Area, its impact upon residential amenity and also in terms of highway safety.

Recommendation:

REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reasons:

1. This proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it would

result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling and would 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 is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Policy CS13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994).

INFORMATIVES:-

1 STATEMENT OF POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE APPROACH TO DECISION-TAKING

In accordance with Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(England) Order 2015 and paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Planning Authority has approached the assessment and determination of this application in a positive and proactive manner and, where appropriate, has worked with the applicant to secure a development that is sustainable and that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area, and that is in accordance with the Development Plan for the area. In this instance, the application is contrary to local and national policy.

2 DRAWINGS AND DOCUMENTS

For the avoidance of doubt the decision to refuse this application was taken in relation to the following plans and documents:

- Site location plan (1:1250)
- Drawing no. TMH/P1/1 – Existing elevations.
- Drawing no. TMH/P1/2 – Proposed elevations.
- Drawing no. TMH/P1/3 – Existing and proposed floor plans.
- Drawing no. TMH/P1/4 - Existing and proposed block plan.

Case Officer:	Mr Gary Edwards	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>G Edwards</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	6th June 2024	Dated:	6th June 2024