



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230219

Location: 2 Abbey Farm Cottages Church Street Higham Rochester

Description: Erection of a single storey rear extension and front porch

Applicant: Mr David Smith

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
001A – Block Plan and Location Plan
002A – Existing Plans and Elevations
003A – Proposed Plans and Elevations
Cover Letter

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19560083	Erection of a pair of agricultural cottages	PER	25.06.1956

Relevant Neighbouring Planning History

1 Abbey Farm Cottages:

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20120612	Erection of single storey rear extension to form a living room, utility room and shower room/wc.	PER	13.09.12

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
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas

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.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving sustainable development and 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);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Church Street, Higham Conservation Area Appraisal

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

A site notice was placed on site by 14th March and an Advert published in the Gravesend Messenger on 24th March. The final date for comments to be received ended on 14th April 2023.

Consultees

Parish Council: No response received.

Ward Councillors: No response received.

Historic England: No response received.

GBC Conservation Officer: No response received.

Neighbouring properties

3 surrounding properties were consulted and no comments were received from members of the public.

Officer's Analysis

Principle of Development

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 147-151 of the NPPF address proposals which would affect the Green Belt. It seeks to ensure that inappropriate development in the Green Belt would not be approved except in very special circumstance.

The relevant exceptions to this policy are as follows:

Paragraph 149(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 149(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

Core Policy CS02 sets out where development should be distributed in the borough. Preference is given to those urbanised area 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

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 149 the NPPF 2021.

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

Planning consent for this dwellinghouse has not been obtained for any works since the dwellinghouse was built following consent in 1956. There was no evidence during the site visit which would indicate otherwise. Therefore, the dwellinghouse as it exists is considered to be of the same extent as originally built.

The calculations for this assessment are as follows:

Original/Existing

GF	61m ²
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FF	57m ²
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Total	118m ²
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Proposed

GF	36m ²
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FF	No increase
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Total built form Proposed *	154m ²
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Difference	36m ²
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Percentage increase from original (this proposal)	30.5%
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The proposal would therefore be within the limitation of a 1/3 increase in floorspace. However, the design, scale and visual bulk of the addition should also be appropriately subservient. Where this is the case, it would not be considered on balance to contradict the purposes of these policies.

Design, Character and Appearance and Heritage

Design and Character:

The proposed extension would be a single storey, pitched roof rear addition which would appear similar in footprint and appearance to the neighbouring extension. The proposed extension would use a grey timber cladding which whilst not matching the existing dwellinghouse, is common rural material and would have a subservient appearance to the main dwellinghouse. It is noted that grey upvc windows would also be used. UPVC windows are generally not characteristic of conservation areas, particularly those in rural farmstead and lean away from the historical character of such areas and timber or aluminium windows would be preferable. However, the existing dwellinghouse uses thick framed upvc windows and so it would be unreasonable to require the new extension to not use upvc windows. Details of the proposed roof tiles have not been provided. To ensure a high quality of materials to be used in the conservation Area and to clarify the materials used for the roof whilst also providing the opportunity to consider alternative options for materials used on openings, an appropriate condition should be included.

Conservation Area and Heritage

Although the Conservation Officer did not comment on these proposals, they did make relevant comments on the similar neighbouring application in 2012 under reference 20120612. In that application they stated:

'The site lies within a sensitive area archaeologically. It is only c.20m from the Scheduled Monument of St Mary's Abbey, a medieval Benedictine priory. Medieval structural remains are still surviving within the building of Abbey Farm and buried structural remains are likely to survive in the surrounding area. There is high potential for occupation remains and structural remains to survive within the area of proposed extension. In addition, the HER records this place as being a Roman ford and medieval ferry point. Roman burials and an industrial site are known to the southwest indicating a level of Roman activity.'

In view of the amount of known archaeology in this area and the proximity of the Abbey Scheduled site, there is a need to undertake archaeological investigations in the area of the extension. The following condition is recommended for any forthcoming consent:

"No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority."

"To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded."

Given that these statements are both still relevant in present day and to this neighbouring site, a similar condition should be applied here.

On balance, subject to details of materials and Archaeological details reserved by condition, the proposed development would comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, Save Policy TC3 of the Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994) and Sections 2, 12 and 15 of the NPPF (2021) in terms of design, character and appearance.

Landscape Character Area

The proposal is for extensions and alterations to an existing property which is located in an area of residential built form, in the Green Belt. Although the proposed development would increase the size of the property, it would still retain as a very open site due to the size of the plot and the surrounding garden and as such the proposed development would not be detrimental to the open, rural landscape character of the surrounding area. In respect of landscape character the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The rooms meet the required minimum space standards and would continue to have adequate rear garden depth and area as per SPG2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020.

Neighbouring Amenity

There is a certain level of open views between dwellinghouses, given the limited boundary treatment and arrangement of the buildings. And so careful consideration of the impact of built form is required for householder development. In this case, the proposed extension would not incorporate side facing openings and so there would be no direct overlook. It would be single storey and would not significantly project beyond the adjoining neighbours rear elevation and so the position, scale and bulk would not lead to an overbearing, enclosing impact on the adjoining neighbour. N balance, it is considered that the proposed extension would not result in significant harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

The proposal is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in compliance with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development would (subject to details reserved by condition), comply with all relevant national and local planning policies. The recommendation is to approve.

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

Case Officer:	Ms Lisa Williams	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	26th April 2023	Dated:	27th April 2023