



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240399

Location: Greenwood Carters Hill Lane Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of a single storey side extension and erection of two dormer windows to the first floor rear elevation.

Applicant: Mr Nick Brazys

Site Visit Date: 14.05.2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form
- Site Location Map
- Existing Block Plan
- Proposed Block Plan
- Drawing No: MAD-491-04 (Existing/Proposed Plans/Elevations)

Supplementary Documents

- Cover Letter

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230188	Erection of a single storey front extension to include 2 skylights and alterations to existing side extension to construct a bigger entrance hall.	Refused	02.05.2023
20000840	Alterations to increase height of roof and width of front gable to form open porch and allow conversion of roofspace to form 2 no. bedrooms and bedroom with ensuite shower room/w.c.	Permission	28.03.2001
19920347	Details pursuant to GR/91/636 for the erection of two detached bungalows with detached double garages at the front.	Permission	13.07.1992
19910636	Outline Application for the erection of 2no. bungalows.	Permission	23.10.1991

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure

- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

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

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 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 4 – Decision making
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 - 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);
- SPD4 - Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Meopham Parish Council

This application replaces one-20230188-which was turned down on appeal on grounds of disproportionate addition to the original property and would result in lack of openness of Green Belt. The Parish Council raised no objection to this original application and as the current one is for a much more modest side(rather than front and side)extension we see no grounds for objection.

Local Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by a site notice and individual neighbour letters to 8 properties with an overall consultation expiry date of 30.05.2024. No comments have been received.

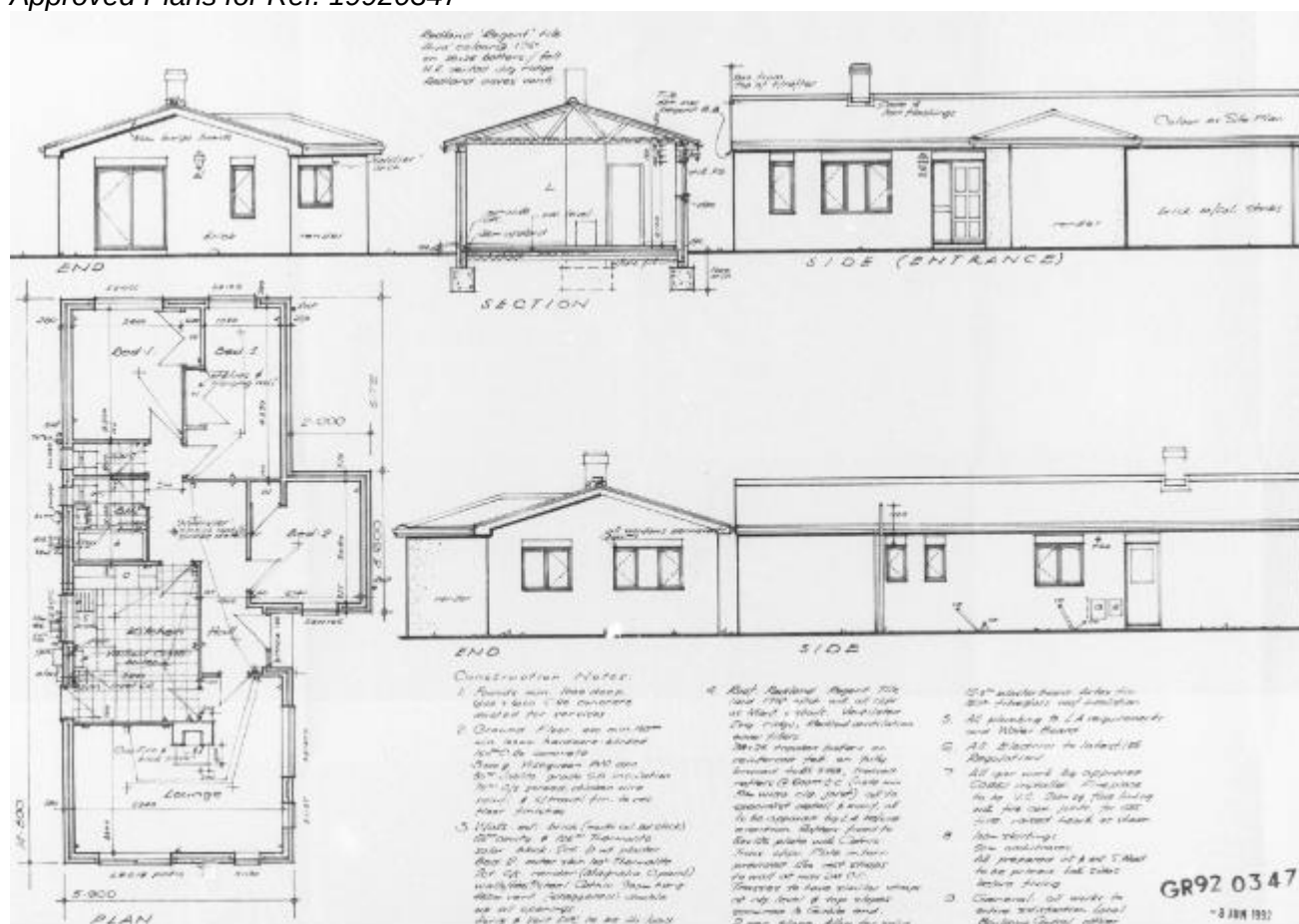
Officer's Analysis

Background

It would appear that the original dwelling was constructed some time after 1992, following outline planning permission dated 23rd October 1991 (Planning Ref. 19910636) and reserved matters approval dated 13th July 1992 (Planning Ref. 19920347). Looking at the planning history, it would appear that planning permission was approved for *alterations to increase height of roof and width of front gable to form open porch and allow conversion of roofspace to form 2 no. bedrooms and bedroom with ensuite shower room/w.c.* on 23rd March 2001 (Planning Ref. 20000840) and was implemented in its entirety. Therefore the property as it is today is not the 'original' dwelling.

The detached garage to the south of the property formed part of the 1992 reserved matters planning permission and was constructed at similar time to the original dwelling.

Approved Plans for Ref. 19920347



Approved Plans for Ref. 20000840



More recently an application was submitted under reference 20230188 and was refused on the below grounds:

The proposal represents a disproportionate addition and exceeds the one third limit to the original dwelling, which will harm the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), Policies CS01 (Sustainable Development), CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Sections 12 and 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

By virtue of the location and design, the proposed side extension is considered to be unacceptable, as it would be highly visible from public vantage points, that is considered to be detrimental to the character and appearance of the property itself. The development is therefore contrary to the requirements of Policies CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and paragraphs 130, 174 and 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

A subsequent appeal was lodged under reference 2023/00038/REF (Appendix 1) and dismissed, with the Inspectorate citing:

- *The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt which by definition is harmful. It would also result in a small loss of openness of the Green Belt. As per Paragraph 153 of the Framework, any harm to the Green Belt should be given substantial weight and inappropriate development*

should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is not just outweighed but clearly outweighed by other considerations.

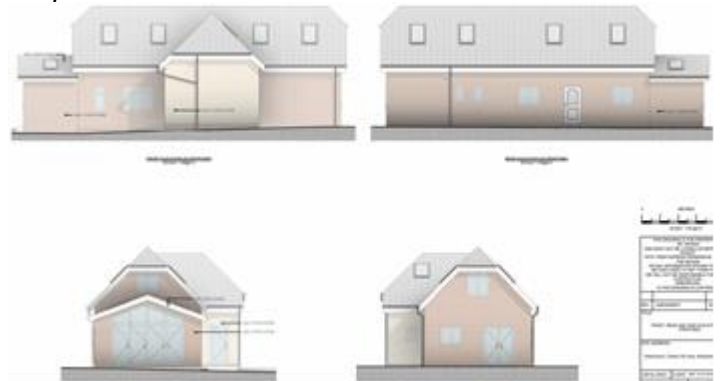
- The weight I could ascribe to those considerations in favour of the proposed development would be limited and insufficient to justify the proposed development, owing to the substantial weight that should be attached to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances do not therefore exist.

Below are the plans submitted under 20230188

Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations



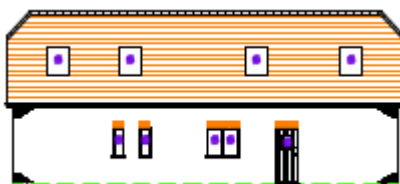
Proposal

The current proposal is a resubmission of 20230188 and is now described as “Erection of a single storey side extension and erection of two dormer windows to the first floor rear elevation”

Existing



Existing Front (West) Elevation 1:100



Existing Rear (East) Elevation 1:100



Existing Side (North) Elevation 1:100

Proposed



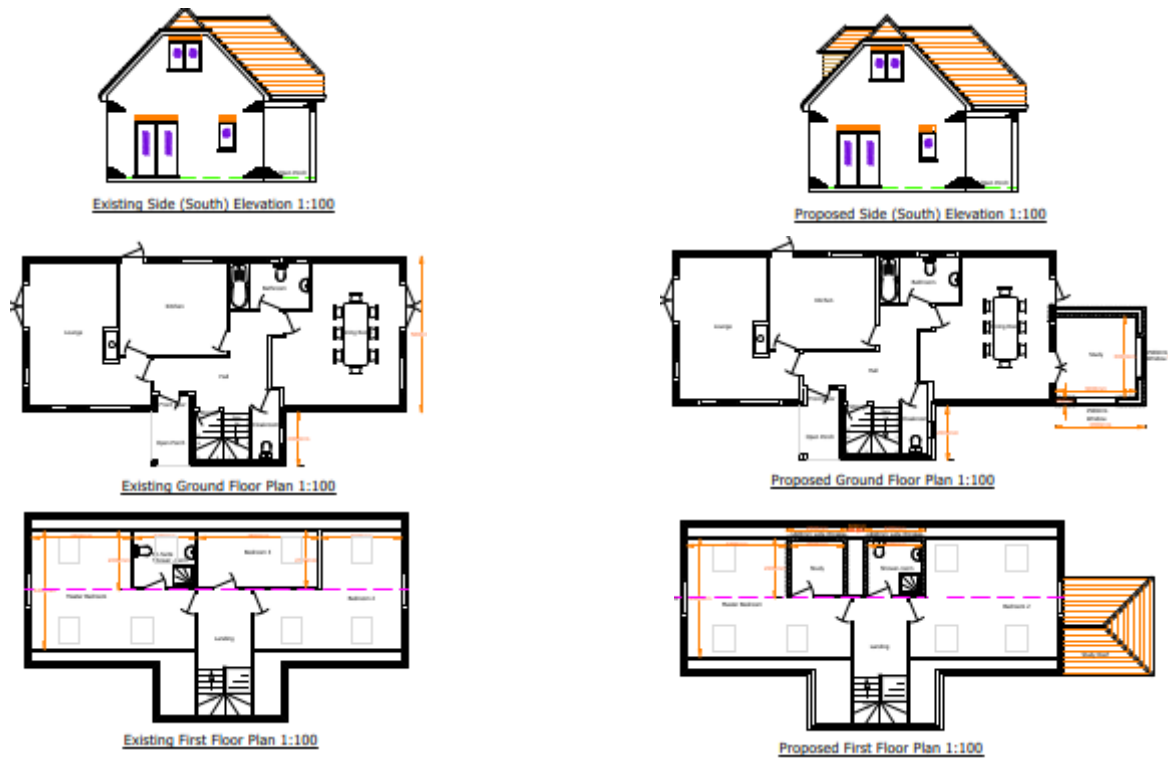
Proposed Front (West) Elevation 1:100



Proposed Rear (East) Elevation 1:100



Proposed Side (North) Elevation 1:100



Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located in the Green Belt and in the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area as defined on the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy policies map and this must be the starting point for determining this application.

The application site at Greenwood, Carters Hill is a detached dwelling, that has been extended to form a two storey dwelling and is set in a large plot with a detached double garage. The property is set back from the highway by approximately 32.23m, with entrance gates set in from the highway by 15m. The property benefits from a large detached double garage to the front and driveway providing road parking for more than three cars.



The key issues in the consideration of this application is;

- Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
- its effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land with it;
- the effect on character and appearance
- whether the proposal would impact the living conditions of future occupiers
- whether the proposal would impact on neighbouring properties;
- whether the proposal would result in any parking and highway safety issues;
- any other material considerations.

The appropriateness of the development within the Green Belt

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt is development that by definition, is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 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.

The NPPF (2023) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. At paragraph 143 the NPPF (2023) lists the 5 purposes which the Green Belt serves. Of particular relevance in this case is that it assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The NPPF (2023) makes it clear that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, with a small number of exceptions (paragraph 154). The listed exceptions include 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.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) (LPCS) prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it 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 (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in (LPCS).

Furthermore, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) (LPFR), which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF (2023), the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully; with greater weight being given where the approach is

consistent with paragraph 154 the NPPF (2023).

In particular Policy C13 (LPFR) 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 (2023) and should be afforded weight.

In determining proposals for residential extensions in the Green Belt an assessment will be made against the impact of the 'original' existing development. The original building is the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, however, for older homes constructed prior to July 1st, 1948, the 'original dwelling' refers to the floorspace of the dwelling as it was on this date. Any additions that have occurred since the 'original' dwelling date are considered cumulatively and will be counted as part of the overall increase in floorspace of the dwelling when new additions are being assessed. The reason for this is small reductions in openness, repeated many times, can have a cumulatively detrimental effect.

The existing dwelling in this case has been extended since its original construction, as laid out within the Background section. The following calculations show the dwelling as built, the existing extensions and the proposed.

Original dwelling (as built)

Ground Floor: 77.83m²

First Floor: N/A

Total: 77.83m²

Existing Dwelling (as extended)

Ground Floor: 77.83m²

First Floor: 69.67m²

Total floor space increase from dwelling as built: 69.67m²

Total Overall Floorspace: 147.5m²

Percentage increase over original dwelling: 89.51%

Proposed Extension

Ground Floor: 12.43m²

Total floor space proposed: **159.93m²**

Total floor space increase of existing and proposed extensions over original dwelling: **105.49%**

Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) provides the local interpretation of national policy and states there will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.

In this case the increased floorspace significantly exceeds the one third limit and therefore is not within the parameters set by Policy C13 (LPFR). Therefore, it will be necessary to assess the proposal on the overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling and whether it appears visually disproportionate.

The original dwelling was a modest single storey 3-bed detached dwelling. It has been extended a first floor level to create a spacious two storey detached dwelling. The proposed single storey side extension has an external footprint of 12.43m². The proposed extension has been reduced in scale to a part width extension

and has also been relocated to the right side of the dwelling so that it is situated away from the highway and is not visible from the main streetscene, the proposal has also introduced two pitched roof rear dormers. Despite attempts to reduce the visual impact of the development it still would result in an increase of external footprint and together with the first floor extension already approved would result in a detrimental cumulative impact when considering what the original property was. It is therefore considered that the proposed extension, in addition to exceeding the one third limit set out in Policy C13 (LPFR) when added to the existing extension, it would also result in an increase in the bulk and appearance of the dwelling. As such it is considered that the proposed development would result in a detrimental impact in terms of bulk or appearance of the dwelling.

In summary it is considered that this extension is contrary to local and national planning policy in terms of green belt.

Impact on openness and the purposes of the Green Belt

Having determined that the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is necessary to assess the effect on the openness and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The NPPF (2023) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

The proposed extension would project approx. 3.3m from the existing side elevation which is 0.3m more than what was previously refused, however it is noted that this extension would extend part width. Looking at the original property, which was a modest 3 bedroom single storey dwelling, prior to being extended, the proposed side extension would increase the external footprint by 6.81% above the existing (extended) property, and together with the first floor extension would result in material harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would represent encroachment into the countryside.

This also does not take into account the additional volume which will be introduced to the dwelling as a result of the two rear dormers. The dormers will add to the existing bulk of the roof and increase its massing.

Therefore, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy CS02 (LPCS) and Section 13 of the NPPF (2023).

Character and appearance

The application property is located on the western end of Carters Hill Lane within the Green Belt. The property is located is bounded by a high level brick wall and is set back generously from the highway.

The revised proposal has removed the enclosure of the front porch and has relocated the ground floor extension to the opposite side elevation thus obscuring it from the public highway. The current proposal has also reduced the extent of the extension so that it is part width with a more pronounced gable roof form. The proposal also seeks to introduce two pitched roof dormers in the rear elevation, these are also not visible from a public vantage point.

The proposed rear dormers would add additional bulk and massing to the existing roof however they would not result in detrimental harm to the character of the dwelling. On balance despite the extensions resulting in incremental increases to the original dwelling a refusal on this basis would not be balanced and so it is considered that the proposal would not result in detrimental harm to the character of the dwelling, nor the wider character of the area. The proposal therefore complies with CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

Impact on future occupiers

The revised NPPF (2023) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the living space of the main dwelling and as such accords with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Impact on neighbouring properties

The impact on neighbouring properties is considered with regard to criteria specified within Policy CS19, which states 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.

Given the separation distance between properties and the scale of the proposal, it is considered the proposal would not result in loss of light, privacy, outlook and increased overshadowing. No objections have been received. As such the development is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) in respect of the living conditions for neighbouring properties.

Parking and Highways

The proposal would result in a reduction of bedrooms with the existing garage and driveway providing adequate parking for the needs of the development and so the proposal would accord with KCC Vehicle Parking Standards, and the proposals would therefore comply with Saved Policy P3 of the Local Plan and Policy CS11 (LPCS).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Landscape Character Area

Section 15 of the NPPF (2023) highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced and the greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape and its setting.

The application site is located within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. The topography is gently undulating with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland. The area is characterised by neat pattern of small square fields in the south, broader irregular shaped fields to the north, with narrow lanes and road lined with hedgerows. The condition is good and the guidelines are to conserve and reinforce.

Due to the layout of the site, position of the proposed extension and surrounding built form, it is considered that there would be no direct impact on the landscape character area. As such the proposal would accord with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the NPPF (2023).

Conclusion & Recommendation

For the reasons given above, the proposed extensions would result in a detrimental impact on the Green Belt and is considered to be contrary to local or national planning policy and is therefore recommended for refusal.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Sharon Sahota	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	R Hart
Dated:	14 th June 2024	Dated:	14 th June 2024

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