



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230365

Location: Ashlea Horns Oak Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of part single storey and part two storey rear extension; erection of new pitched roof incorporating two gables in the rear roof slope and two dormers and a gable in the front roof slope; erection of single storey front extension; demolition of rear outbuilding and formation of two vehicle parking spaces in the front garden.

Applicant: Harleen Mattu

Site Visit Date: 07 February and 03 May 2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Planning Application form;
Drawing no. 3445 – 001 Rev. E Existing and proposed layouts, permitted development extent, site location and existing block plans;
Drawing no. 3445 – 002 Rev. C Existing elevations and proposed street scene;
Drawing no. 3445 – 004 Rev. A Proposed elevations and section;
Drawing no. 3445 – 005 Proposed block plan;
Covering letter dated 11 April 2023; and
Design and Access Statement April 2023.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19800181	Erection of single storey rear extension to form utility room and enlarged kitchen erection of front porch	Permitted	12.05.1980
19760385	Formation of bathroom and bedroom extension in existing roof space and erection of extension at first floor level to form two additional bedrooms	Permitted	13.08.1976
19550165	Erection of a detached bungalow (TH/6/55/143A)	Permitted	08.08.1956
19550164	Erection of a detached bungalow (TH/6/55/143A)	Permitted	24.08.1955

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
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- C13 – Extensions to dwellings in the countryside
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

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)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 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)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2021-2026

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

GBC Highways Officer

Whilst in principle I have no objections to the proposal, I doubt the proposed car parking is viable and requires revision.

The applicant should check the viability of the parking and turning shown, by swept path/tracked drawings for a BMW Series 5 or similar car and adjust the layout accordingly. All drawings to be submitted.

Secure and covered cycle parking should be added at the rate of one cycle per additional bedroom.

KCC Biodiversity Officer

We have reviewed the information submitted in support of this planning application and advise that the proposed development is unlikely to result in a significant ecological impact.

We have taken this view because photos show that the building to be converted looks in good condition

with few places (such as gaps/cracks) for bats to roost. Plus, there will be no change to the building footprint which already exists on hardstanding and holds a low ecological value. We are satisfied from the small-scale works proposed that the nearby local wildlife sites will not be impacted.

Bat lightings

Lighting can negatively impact nocturnal species, like bats, that could be foraging and commuting on site and in the surrounding habitat. Currently there is no lighting plan or information submitted. Therefore, if bats are present foraging/commuting within the area, there is a risk that any lighting may have a negative impact.

To mitigate against potential adverse effects on bats, and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, we suggest that the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting' is consulted in the lighting design of the development. We advise that the incorporation of sensitive lighting design for bats is submitted to the local planning authority and secured via an attached condition with any planning permission.

Lighting - Suggested Wording:

Prior to occupation, a lighting plan demonstrating it has been designed to avoid impacts on roosting, foraging, and commuting bats will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The lighting will be designed to follow the recommendations within the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting' and the plan will confirm the type and locations of external lighting. All external lighting will be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the plan and will be maintained thereafter.

Ecological Enhancements

One of the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework is that "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity".

We note that the site has a hedgerow consisting of large trees on the eastern side of the boundary that have the potential for breeding birds to be nesting in. The Design and Access statement says that there are already native wildflowers to the rear of the garden to benefit birds and other species on the applicant's land. We recommend that enhancements for (nesting) birds are incorporated into the site, such as bird boxes to support the local populations, along with integrated bat bricks/boxes. We advise that this should be conditioned should planning permission be granted.

Ecological Enhancement Condition – Suggested Wording

Within six months of works commencement a plan detailing how the development will enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include the installation of bat and bird bricks/boxes. The approved measures will be implemented and retained thereafter.

Meopham Parish Council

No objections.

Kent Downs AONB Management Unit

No response received.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by a site notice and to two neighbouring properties by letter. One representation has been received and is summarised as follows;

- The application is supported.

Officer's Analysis

The application site lies within the Green Belt. Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) 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 the Local Plan Core Strategy.

Therefore the principle issues in the determination of this application are;

- Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
- Effect on the openness of the Green Belt
- Effect on the character and appearance of the area - including landscape character
- Other matters
- Very Special Circumstances

Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

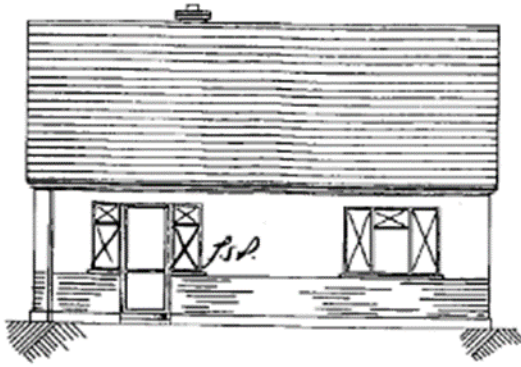
Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF 2021) sets out that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence and paragraph 138 lists the five purposes that the Green Belt serves. At the application site, the Green Belt assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. 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 149 of the NPPF 2021 states that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt but lists certain exceptions. These exceptions are set out in sub-paragraphs 149(a) to 149(g). Sub-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.

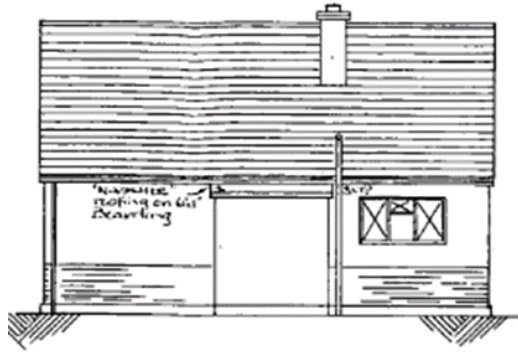
Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside. It sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF 2021, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully; with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 the NPPF 2021.

In particular Saved 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 weight.

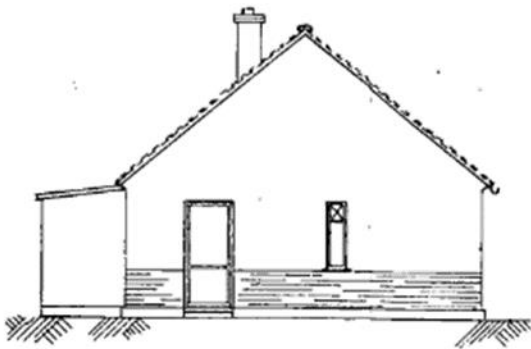
The original building, for the purposes of assessing whether the proposed development is a disproportionate addition or not, was granted outline planning permission in September 1955 (TH/6/55/143) and the details were approved in August 1956 (TH/6/55/143A). The following are extracts from the approved plans for TH/6/55/143A and an annotated version of the submitted existing ground floor layout plan;



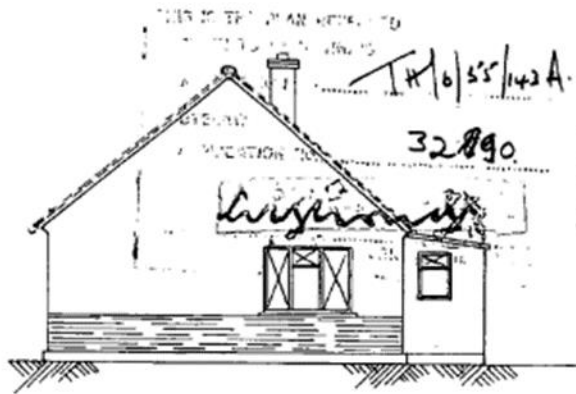
~ FRONT ELEVATION ~



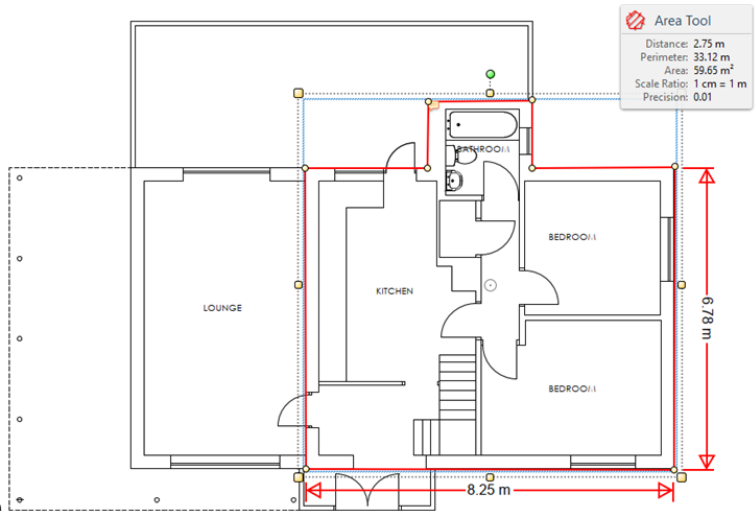
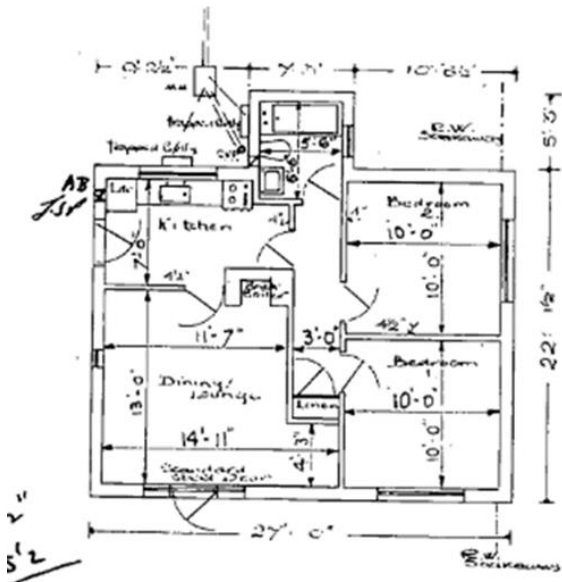
~ REAR ELEVATION ~



~ SIDE ELEVATION (WEST) ~



~ SIDE ELEVATION (EAST) ~



The original building had a floor area of 60 square metres, a height of 5.7 metres and was a bungalow with a simple gable ended roof and a rectangular footprint.

Although planning permissions were granted at the application site in 1976 and 1980, these do not appear to have been implemented. However, the submitted plans for 19760385 show that sometime before their submission, the building had been extended to provide a lounge, conservatory, porch, car port (front/side open area under canopy) and with front and rear dormers. Appendix 1 contains details of planning permissions 19760385 and 19800181 for reference.

The additions to the building provided 96 square metres of new floor space and represent a 160% increase above the size of the original building. It should be noted that, as the car port area is open it does not provide habitable floor space, it has not been included in the 96 square metre figure.

The proposed development would add front and rear extensions to the building; a new roof incorporating front dormers and front and rear gables and provide extended habitable accommodation within the new roof space. It would increase the floor area of the building to 242 square metres (403% above the size of the original building).

As a general rule in the Green Belt, the Borough Council considers that extensions which exceed the overall floor area of an original building by one third (33%) or more, are likely to be disproportionate additions. However, in coming to a conclusion on this issue, the Council will have regard to a range of factors including footprint, floorspace, volume, height and any other changes in built form. In addition, the proportion of the site that is developed/undeveloped and the distribution of development/hard standing and open space across the site will be considered.

The increase in floor area proposed would be significantly in excess of the one third limit set out in Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994. In terms of bulk and massing, it is considered that the proposed development would add significantly to the appearance of the building. The first floor of the building would be elongated and the roof would be much taller and bulkier. The building would have an overall height of some 8.2 metres, which when compared to the original roof height of 5.7 metres is a significant increase.

It is noted that the proposed development would include the removal of the existing car port area (24 square metres area) and a rear outbuilding (33 square metres area). The car port removal would reduce the width of the dwelling but as it is only single storey and open in character, the benefit would not offset the significant proposed increase in size and bulk of the proposed dwelling. Similarly, the removal of the outbuilding would reduce the amount of built development in the rear garden but as a single storey structure, with a relatively small footprint, this would not offset the significant proposed increase in size and bulk of the proposed dwelling.

Whilst it is noted that the design of the proposal has been amended since a pre-application submission and this has slightly reduced the overall bulk of the proposed building, this amended design approach would not mitigate the harm caused by the proposed increase in built development overall.

Cumulatively the floor area, bulk and mass of the property would be significantly increased by the proposed development. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would result in disproportionate additions to the original building. As such, the proposal would be inappropriate development, which would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and contrary to Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and paragraph 149(c) of the NPPF 2021.

Effect 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. Paragraph 001 of the Planning Practice Guidance on Green Belts looks to assess the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt by taking into account the spatial and visual aspects of a development, its duration and remediability, and the degree of activity levels generated (Reference ID: 64-001-20190722).

There is no specific definition of "openness" in the NPPF, and the concept of what is considered as openness has only really emerged from case law. Effectively, 'openness' is epitomised by the absence of built development (i.e. land that is not built on) and it follows therefore that any new built development is likely to have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt, but whether that impact is greater or lesser on sites where there is already built development will be dependent on an assessment on a case by

case basis. It is a different concept to “visual impact”. Although openness may be considered in a visual sense, the visual impact of a development in the Green Belt may be harmful through the siting, design and materials used. The presence of landscaping or screening may serve to mitigate the visual impact of a development including built development but there might still be an impact on openness.

The development, by its nature, would involve a form of inappropriate development at the application site that would erode the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal would result in building which is significantly larger and bulkier than the original dwelling, consolidating and extending the level of built development at the application site, to an unacceptable level. Whilst the site is partially screened by mature vegetation, the proposed building would be visible from the site entrance on Horns Oak Road;



Overall, the proposed development would significantly and harmfully impact on the openness of the application site and the Green Belt within which it sits. The proposal is contrary to paragraph 137 of the NPPF 2021 by its impact on openness, and would also conflict with point (c) of paragraph 138 of the NPPF 2021, which seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. Clearly, this proposal would represent an encroachment of development into the countryside, as the site lies outside any settlement boundary.

Effect on the character and appearance of the area

The application site is located in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area (LCA) and as such, Policy CS12 of the Local Plan Core Strategy is relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications.

The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan sets out that the local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, siting, landscaping and materials of new development (Principle SD2). That development should conserve and enhance the character and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB rather than detracting from it (Principle SD3). Furthermore, the Plan will ensure that proposals do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the Kent Downs AONB (Principle SD8).

The Harvel Wooded Downs LCA is characterised by varied topography with steep valley sides and plateaux. Ancient woodland, chestnut coppice and small paddocks and pastures can be found. Views both within and out of the character area are limited because of the combined effect of topography and the heavily wooded character of the landscape.

It is noted that there would be no loss of vegetation and that the residential nature of the application site would be retained. The proposed development would result in a significant increase in the size and bulk of the application property, which would consolidate and extend the level of built development on the plot and in the wider area. However, the alterations would not be harmful to overall landscape quality. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to landscape character.

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding local area. In particular the design of new development should be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area.

The area surrounding the application site has a variety of dwellings in different types and styles. Located immediately to the west, is a two storey dwelling and immediately to the east, is a bungalow with habitable accommodation in the roof. Surrounding properties have been subject to numerous extensions and alterations. The existing building has a mixture of external facing materials and has been extended in a piecemeal fashion, which has resulted in a dwelling with an uninspiring appearance.

The design of the proposed development would be modern and the proposed external facing materials would add interest and texture. Whilst out of character with the existing building, the proposal would not look out of place in its surroundings, as it would have a similar height to the neighbouring buildings and the design approach would result in a more consolidated and regular building shape. As such, the proposed design has a number of positive features.

The proposed development would result in a significant increase in the size and bulk of the application property. However, the changed appearance of the dwelling would not be harmful to the character of the street scene.

As the proposal only provides examples of proposed external facing materials, any planning permission granted should be conditioned to require the submission and approval of these details.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to the character or appearance of the surrounding area and would be in line with Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and to avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air, odour and light pollution.

The proposed development would provide good living conditions for future occupiers (with a total floor area and bedroom sizes that comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards 2015) and sufficient garden would be retained to comply with the Borough Council's Residential Layout Guidelines 2020.

In order to prevent a loss of privacy for future occupiers, any proposed bathroom/w.c./en-suite windows should be conditioned to be permanently obscure glazed.

Overall, the proposal would not be detrimental to residential amenity and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014, the Nationally Described Space Standards 2015 and the Residential Layout Guidelines 2020.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to the

located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of neighbouring occupiers and to avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air, odour and light pollution.

The closest residential properties to the application site are Parsley Cottage, Horns Oak Road (located to the west) and Beam End, Horns Oak Road (located to the east). Agricultural land is located to the north and south.

Apart from a first floor bathroom window facing the side elevation of Beam End, there would be no windows or openings in the proposed side elevations.

Due to the design of the proposed development, to the screening provided by boundary treatments and to the location, layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings.

In order to prevent any future loss of privacy to neighbours, any planning permission granted should be conditioned to preclude the insertion of any windows or openings in the side elevations of the proposed development and to ensure that the proposed first floor bathroom window is obscure glazed.

Overall, the proposed development would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Parking and Highways

Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 require new development to mitigate its impact on the highway and public transport networks and to provide sufficient parking in accordance with adopted parking standards.

The application property has four bedrooms and on-site parking for three/four vehicles (in a car port and frontage parking area). The proposed development would not alter the number of bedrooms and would provide an amended frontage parking layout. The GBC Highways Officer has not raised an objection to the proposal but queries the viability of the parking and turning area and requires the provision of four secure and covered cycle parking spaces.

There is sufficient space at the site to provide the required vehicle and cycle parking and therefore if planning permission is granted, conditions should be included to require the submission and approval of these details.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would make sufficient provision for the parking of cars within the site in accordance with the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards and would be in line with Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

Biodiversity

The application site is located in a Biodiversity Opportunity Area and as such, Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 is especially relevant. It states that there will be no net loss of biodiversity in Gravesham and that opportunities to enhance, restore, recreate and maintain habitats will be sought, particularly within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

The applicant has set out that there would be no loss of existing vegetation and new glazing will be tinted to control light spillage. The KCC Biodiversity Officer has highlighted the potential for adverse light impacts to bats and the need for ecological enhancement at the application site. These issues can be addressed by the inclusion of conditions on any planning permission granted.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to biodiversity and would

be in line with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Climate change

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to take advantage of opportunities to build in resilience to the effects of climate change.

The applicant refers to the current use of an electric charging point at the application site but it is not clear if one would be included as part of the proposal. Nonetheless, the new building would remove poorly constructed extensions and alterations to the building and utilise modern building techniques, which should result in reduced energy consumption.

To ensure that climate change resilience forms part of the proposed development, a planning condition can be included to this effect, on any planning permission granted. As such, the proposed development would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The application site is located within an area of multi-period archaeological potential and Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. However, as the proposed development is within the confines of an existing residential garden and only a relatively small amount of groundworks would occur, then it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts to groundwater or archaeology. As such, the proposal would be in line with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC7 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

The applicant has provided a number of misleading figures in the Design and Access Statement. These are outlined and commented on as follows;

- The existing floor area of the building is 137 square metres - it should be noted that this figure is taken from an internal measurement of the ground and first floor areas. The actual existing floor area is 155 square metres (measured externally from the submitted drawing). Furthermore, to assess whether the proposal is a disproportionate addition to the building, it is the original floor area that is relevant (paragraph 149(c) of the NPPF 2021) and all measurements are taken externally (Policy C13 (ii) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994)).
- The total area of built development is 246 square metres (137+27+32+50) – it should be noted that this figure includes an internal floor area measurement, an area of open, non-habitable accommodation (car port), an outbuilding and a hypothetical permitted development extension of 50 square metres. The actual total area of existing built development is only 188 square metres (when measured from the submitted drawings). This includes the existing ground floor (115 square metres) and first floor (40 square metres) of the dwelling and an existing outbuilding (33 square metres).
- The proposed floor area would be 210 square metres – it should be noted that this is an internal measurement. To assess whether the proposal is a disproportionate addition to the building, only the external measurements are relevant. The actual proposed floor area would be 242 square metres.

Special Circumstances

Referring to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF 2021, 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.

The applicant has identified a number of issues which he considers to amount to very special circumstances. These are summarised and commented on as follows;

- Design revisions following a pre-application enquiry have reduced the scale and bulk of the proposal.

This is useful background information but the application has to be determined with reference to the submitted details only.

- The building could be extended by 50 square metres using permitted development (PD) rights.

Case law has identified that, in order to provide a material fallback position, a PD proposal must be a realistic prospect. In this instance, there has been no lawful development certificate submission for a single storey rear extension. Furthermore, in both a pre-application enquiry and in this proposal, the applicant has sought two storey and roof alterations to the building, not a single storey extension. As such, it is considered that there is no realistic prospect of this PD extension. In addition, it is considered that a large single storey rear extension would be less visually intrusive and less detrimental to openness than the proposed two storey development.

- The proposed dwelling would be taller than the existing building but narrower and less in scale (due to the loss of the car port and dormers).

The narrowed building footprint would be a positive feature of the proposal, as the building would be set further away from the site boundary, reducing the spread of built development across the plot. However, the size and bulk of the proposed roof and the increased height of the building would significantly increase the amount of built development at the application site, to the detriment of openness. It is considered that the narrowed building footprint would not offset the increase in built form overall.

- Removal of an outbuilding would reduce the built development.

The removal of the outbuilding would be a positive feature of the proposal, as the amount of built development at the rear of the building would be reduced. However as the building is relatively small and single storey in nature, this would only provide a small improvement in openness and would not offset the increased size and bulk of the proposed dwelling. Furthermore, when considering the normal demands of domestic life, it is likely that a replacement outbuilding would be required in future, to accommodate garden equipment etc.

- Example provided of a similar scheme at The Orchard, Priestwood Road (20210089).

Details of application 20210089 are contained in Appendix 2. The Orchard, Priestwood Road is located some 270 metres to the south east of the application site. The proposed development there comprised of a much smaller extension to an existing building that was already of significant size. Therefore, that proposal is not directly comparable to the current proposed development. Furthermore, it should be noted that each planning application must be considered on its own merits, with reference to the individual circumstances, as well as to the development plan policy framework and to any other material planning considerations. As such, the citing of cases of existing developments is unlikely to be the determining factor in any planning decision.

Overall it is considered that the applicants' justifications for the proposal either individually or cumulatively do not amount to the very special circumstances that would set aside the objection to the development on grounds of being inappropriate development.

Conclusion & Balancing Exercise

The above analysis sets out that the proposed development would be detrimental to the openness of the Green Belt and contrary to one of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, namely protecting the countryside from encroachment. The development would be a disproportionate addition to the building, consolidate and extend the level of built development at the application site to an unacceptable

level and be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

No very special circumstances have been advanced pursuant to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF 2021 sufficient to overcome the presumption against such inappropriate development.

The proposed development would provide a good standard of living for future occupiers, would not be detrimental to the surrounding landscape, biodiversity, residential amenity or highway safety and would not adversely affect groundwater or archaeology. All of which weigh in support of the proposal.

However, the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which would be detrimental to openness. As such, the proposal would be contrary to section 13 of the NPPF 2021, to Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 and to Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994).

On balance, it is considered that the benefits of the proposal are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Recommendation

Refusal on the following ground;

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 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 September 2014, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and to Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

(For detailed informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>K Joyce</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	31st May 2023	Dated:	1 st June 2023