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PLANNING STATEMENT

**Land at Lomas,
Sole Street, Cobham, Gravesend, DA12 3AX**

Outline planning application for the demolition of an existing building and the erection of a detached dwelling and bungalow with car parking and shared vehicular access

November 2024

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared to support the Outline planning application to demolish the existing bungalow and erect a detached house and bungalow with off road car parking and shared vehicular access.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to explain how the proposal complies with the relevant planning policies contained within the Development Plan, which in this case comprises the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023), and the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 20214), and the Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994). Poole Local Plan (2018).
- 1.3 The author of this planning statement is Darryl Howells BTP, BA(Hons), MRTPI who has over 25 years post qualification experience, 17 of those years working as a senior planning officer and team leader in a Local Planning Authority. Since 2017 I worked in the private sector aiding my clients secure planning permissions for various housing projects and now manage my own planning consultancy.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

- 2.1 The application site is currently occupied by a detached building that has little architectural merit to the character and appearance of the street scene.

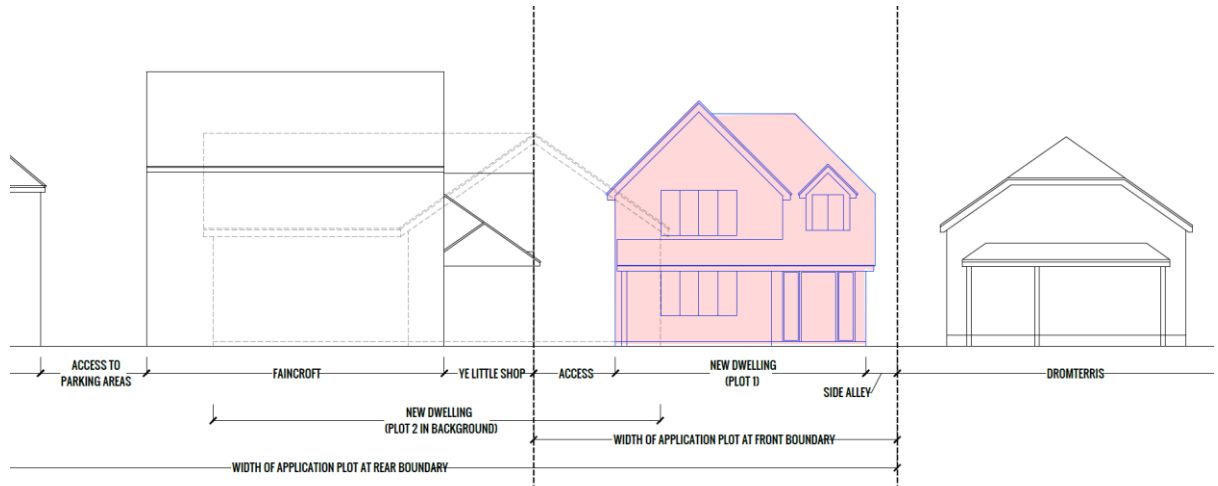


Existing house and street scene (Source: Google Earth)

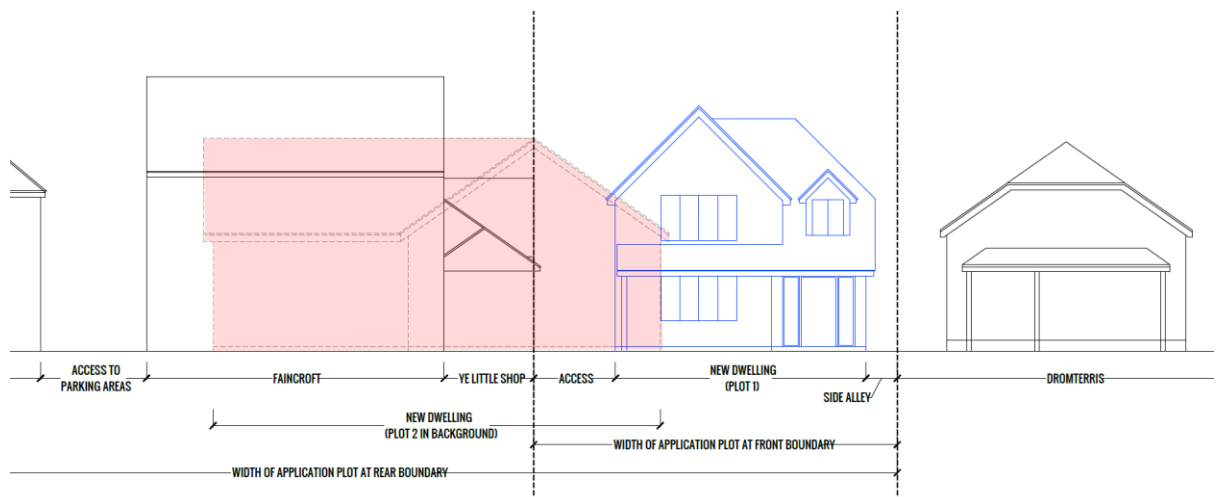
- 2.2 There is no prevailing pattern of development in the area, and architectural features, massing, height and scale vary from building to building in the immediate area of the application site.

RELEVANT DECISIONS

- 3.1 An outline planning application for the demolition of the dwelling and the erection of 2no. new self build detached dwellings was refused in mid 2024, under decision 20240331.
- 3.2 The proposed dwellign positioned towards the rear of the site was a chalet bungalow and comparable of eaves and ridge heights to that of neighbouring development at Dromterris (fronting the roadside).



Proposed street scene drawing, with front dwelling highlighted for identification purposes



Proposed street scene drawing, with rearward chalet bungalow highlighted for identification purposes

- 3.3 Reasons for refusal nos. 1 & 2 were aimed specifically at the rearward dwelling, other than no.3 which was lack of mitigation for the whole development failing to be secured:
1. The principal of the backland siting of the proposal, accentuated by the bulk, height and scale of the rear dwelling would appear as an incongruous and comparatively cramped form of development that would result in overdevelopment of the site. It would be uncharacteristic of the development in this part of Cobham, and would fail to integrate into its surroundings or enhance the quality of the area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the requirements of Policies CS14, CS15, and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and paragraphs 127, 128, 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
 2. The location and layout of the proposed rear dwelling would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of existing and future occupiers in terms of substandard garden amenity space, overlooking and overshadowing, as well as an unneighbourly form of development and the proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of the SPG2 Residential Layout Guidelines (2020), Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2023.
 3. The proposal fails to secure a contribution towards strategic mitigation measures within the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar Sites to resolve disturbance issues to wintering birds, and in the absence of this contribution or any evidence to inform an appropriate assessment, the development fails to comply with the requirements of the Habitat Regulations and paragraphs 180 and 184 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 and Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

THE PROPOSAL'S COMPLIANCE WITH PLANNING POLICIES

- 4.1 The applicant has taken on board the concerns of the Local Planning Authority and amended the scheme to reduce the size and height of the rearward building from a larger chalet bungalow to a bungalow. The site layout remains the same as previously considered as does the design of the forward positioned dwelling abutting the roadside.
- 4.2 As confirmed by the planning officer in the previous application,

“there is no objection to the broad principle of residential development on this site, and particularly with regards to a frontage development due to the presence of an existing dwelling in that location, subject to the proposal being appropriate in terms of other planning issues”.
- 4.3 The wording of paragraph 135 of the NPPF is positive and supports intensification of housing development in appropriate locations. The wording discusses, overall quality, good architecture, local character, attractive places, and amenity for existing and proposed occupiers. In particular, I would highlight,

“b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)”.

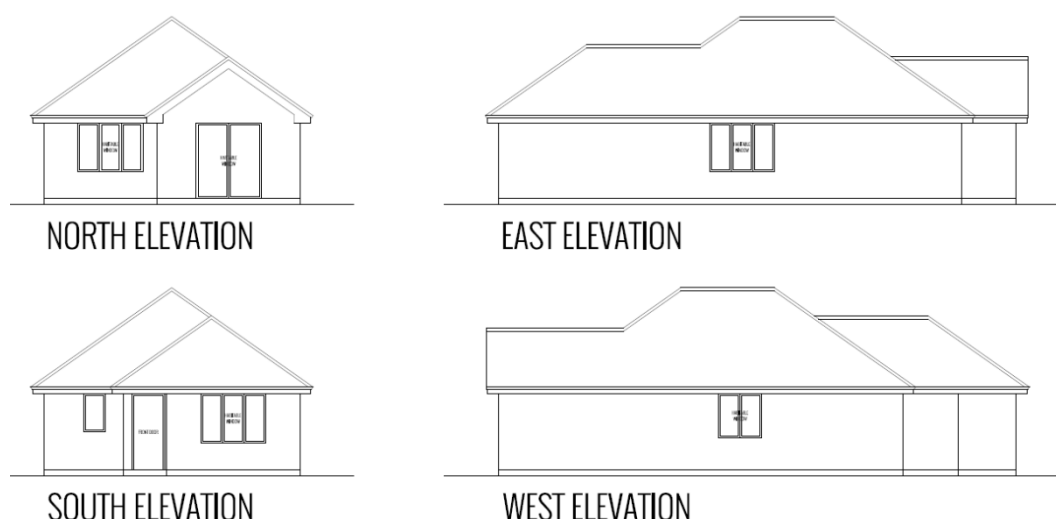
- 4.4 Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy 2014 encourages a mix of house types and sizes, to reflect the established character of housing nearby. The proposed forward positioned dwelling accords with the pattern of development which fronts this section of Sole Street, and will occupy a space similar to that of the existing dwelling. The garden size of serving the new dwelling shall be 123m² which is sufficient to meet the reasonable recreational needs of the intended occupiers.
- 4.5 The proposed bungalow is located towards the rear of the site, and offer a garden size of 114m². The revised design of the building to become a bungalow will overcome the objections that lead to the refusal of the previous scheme, and contribute positively to the type of housing in this area.
- 4.6 In the previous officer’s report concern was raised regarding the size of the gardens created compared to the existing. A review of the adopted planning policies indicates there is no specific minimum size of garden to be adhere to, only an expectation that a garden is provided where C3 uses (not flats) are created. The garden sizes are indeed adequate and shall benefit from lengthy periods of direct sunlight due to their orientation and devoid of taller neighbouring buildings. The size of the plot serving plot 1 (forward positioned house) will offer a garden size that is comparable to the neighbouring garden at Temperly (theirs being less at 108m²), and on the same orientation.
- 4.8 It is acknowledged that the proposed density (28dph) is lower than the preferred density for residential development in the rural area of 30dph, however density is simply a mathematical calculation, and does not portray the physical impact of the development on site. In this instance the density is consistent with neighbouring developments and offers spacing between and around buildings to meet the needs of the occupiers, and accord with the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.9 In design terms, the planning officer has already accepted the replacement dwelling on plot 1, as the officer concluded,

“With regards to the design of the front property, whilst this would replace a modest bungalow, the design and bulk and massing of the property would not look at odds in the street scene, considering the two storey buildings on either side. The siting and size would allow adequate spacing between the adjacent buildings and would not appear cramped. As such, it is considered that the front property would respect its setting and would not appear at odds within the street scene”.

- 4.10 The concern of the previous scheme related predominantly to the proposed house positioned on plot 2 (rearward location). In the officer's opinion,

"The indicative plans of the proposed backland house show a height of 6.76m of a single storey dwelling, which would be clearly visible over a general 2m high garden boundary. In fact, this is only 1m less in height than the replacement property to the front of the site. This arrangement would be exacerbated if the design were altered, under any reserved matters, to include rooms in the roof space or a two storey property. The proposed hip and gable roof arrangement would add to the bulkiness of the design of the dwelling, and its scale is not considered to be appropriate in relation to its backland location, where more generally in such a location at the bottom of a garden, outbuildings would be the more common form of development".

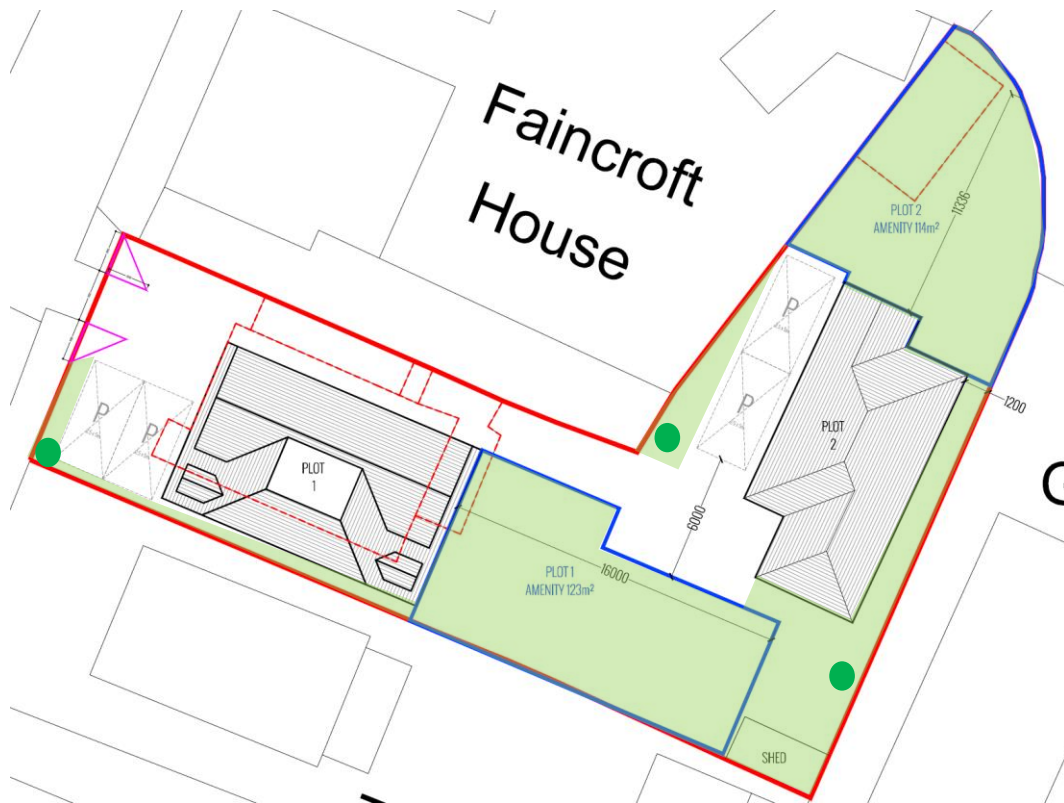
- 4.11 In response the applicant now proposed a bungalow to be positioned in the rearward plot. The height of the building has been dropped from 6.76m to 5.16m, and the proportions of the bungalow are now typical of this form of development. The roof form has been simplified offering hipped roofs and only a small gable over the patio doors, leading into the rear garden.



Proposed elevations of the bungalow to be positioned on plot 2 (rearward location)

- 4.12 Being single storey there will be no opportunities for overlooking to neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, there will be limited impact to natural light levels enjoyed by the occupiers of the neighbouring chalet bungalow known as The Gables.
- 4.13 The layout of the site is functional and will offer to each proposed dwelling, provision of 2 no. car parking spaces and provision for on site, for vehicular manoeuvring to avoid vehicles reversing out onto Sole Street, as they do now without adequate visibility splays offered.

- 4.14 The area of hardstanding (excluding built form) is 213m² which is only 29% of the total site area, which is not high. Mindful that the Core Strategy lacks minimum or maximum areas or site coverage requirements, the highway benefits of the scheme will likely outweigh the hand standing area concern. Landscaping is a reserved matter, and the Local Planning Authority has the opportunity to influence that landscaping to enhance visual amenity along the following illustrated idea:



Illustrative layout of the site to include greater landscaping
(secured by Reserved Matters)

- 4.15 The proposed plans will have regard to the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) 2015 however unless the LPA has a policy that specifically references the standards, then the Ministerial Statement that accompanied the Standards advised that the LPA can not refuse an application with an adopted policy, so the Standards can only be used as a 'yard-stick'.
- 4.16 The applicant will pay the mitigation towards the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/ Ramsar Sites, in accordance with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy.

CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The NPPF confirms that sustainable development should be afforded the presumption in favour of development. Local Plan Policy PP1 refers to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This proposal meets the 3 roles of sustainable development and as such should be afforded the presumption in favour of development.
- 5.2 The development will make more efficient use of this site, delivering 2no. homes to increase the choice, mix and supply of residential accommodation within the area, and meet the needs of families looking to live in a location within easy access of shops, services, schools and other recreational facilities.
- 5.3 It has been demonstrated in this statement that the proposed development also complies with all other relevant adopted planning policies, and therefore I would request that planning permission is **approved**.