



Architects

Extension to the side & front of existing building

at

**Home Acre
Melliker Lane
Meopham
Gravesend
KENT
DA13 0HY**

for

Marta Pochtowska

Design & Access Statement

28th March 2024

**DAC Architects
21 Stone Street
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This design & access statement has been prepared in support of an application for full planning approval for a first floor extension together with internal alterations at both ground floor and first floor levels, including the conversion of an existing attached garage which is no longer used for garaging motor vehicles.

Background

A planning application prepared by others under ref 2023/0792 for a first floor extension to the side and rear of Home Acre was refused on 13th October 2023.

A proposal for a large single storey rear extension to be constructed under Permitted Development rights was submitted in December 2023. The application reference for this rear extension is 2023/1267. Gravesham determined that prior approval was not required for this work, stipulating that the extension has a depth of 7.9m and a maximum height of 4m.

We now seek planning approval to form a first floor extension of a modified design to the one which was previously refused consent. This first floor extension will be instead of the rear 'permitted development' extension. If the Planning authority is minded to grant approval we invite the inclusion of a condition withdrawing the permitted development rights in respect of extensions.

For information other work is being carried out under permitted development, confirmed on the Certificate of Proposed Development ref 2023/1296 in respect of a shed, summer house, greenhouse and a car port with a drive-way extension which is not affected by this planning application.

In addition an application for a lawful development certificate has also been submitted under ref 2024/0057 for a wall and gates. This was refused on 18th March but a new application has now been made with the finials removed. This proposed work is not affected by this planning application and it is anticipated that if the work is deemed acceptable under permitted development rights the work will be started before this planning application is determined.

Reasons for Earlier Planning Refusal

The planning refusal 2023/0792 has two reasons for the decision as noted below:

1. The proposed first floor side and two storey front extensions by virtue of their floorspace, volume, scale, design, mass and height would be disproportionate additions to the original dwelling, which would harm the openness of the Green Belt. In the absence of any very special circumstances that clearly outweigh this harm, 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 (November 1994) and Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

2. The proposed first floor side and two storey front extensions by virtue of their design, scale, bulk and massing would be overly dominant additions which would create a larger and more prominent dwelling that would not respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area and would have an adverse impact on the landscape character of the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Impact on the Green Belt

The first step is to quantify the impact this proposal will have on the open-ness of the Green Belt and then to consider the very special circumstances which will apply.

Floor Area

Existing building plus recently approved rear extension

Gross internal floor area based on measured survey undertaken by others & shown on drawings as existing submitted in support of current planning application.

'Original' main house	104.5sqM
One third addition under Green Belt policy & GBC policy C13	34.5sqM
Theoretical extended floor area	139.0sqM

However the original main house has been extended many years ago bringing the *actual* floor area to a total which is much greater than this. These additions include the attached garage, front porch and small rear lobby and their total gross internal floor area is 47.0sqM. These additions have been in place for many years and so these in reality show the maximum floor area permissible under Green Belt and GBC policy.

Total gross internal floor area of existing building = 104.5+47=	151.5sqM
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To this total must also be added the gross internal floor area of the rear 'permitted development' extension.

Rear extension (not yet built)	56.0sqM
Revised total gross internal floor area <u>if</u> PD extension is built	207.5sqM

Proposal - Existing building plus side extension

Gross internal floor area of extended building	188.0sqM
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The above floor area allows for the demolition of part of the existing garage, the circular bay window on the front elevation and the small conservatory on the rear of the building. This amounts to a total of 11.0sqM.

Floor Area: Impact on Open-ness

So in terms of floor area the building which is proposed on this planning application will be smaller than that which would otherwise result from the construction of the rear extension which has already been approved. This will therefore reduce the impact the work will have on the open-ness of the Green Belt.

Footprint

Existing building plus recently approved rear extension

This is measured at ground floor level to include external walls.

Total footprint of existing building = 118.5sqM

Proposal - Existing building plus side extension

This is measured in the same way but also includes a larger footprint created by the proposed addition of external insulated render in order to improve the thermal performance of the building.

Total footprint of the proposed building = 112.0sqM

Footprint: Impact on Open-ness

In terms of the footprint the building which is proposed on this planning application will also be smaller than that which would otherwise result from the construction of the rear extension which has already been approved. This will therefore reduce the impact the work will have on the open-ness of the Green Belt.

Volume

Existing building plus recently approved rear extension

Total volume 767 cuM

Proposal - Existing building plus side extension

Total volume 706 cuM

Volume: Impact on Open-ness

In terms of the total volume the building which is proposed on this planning application will also be smaller than that which would otherwise result from the construction of the rear extension which has already been approved. This will therefore reduce the impact the work will have on the open-ness of the Green Belt.

Summary: Impact on the open-ness of the Green Belt

This analysis has amounted to a statistical analysis of the impact of the proposals on the open-ness of the Green Belt in terms of floor area, footprint and volume & this has established that the proposed development is significantly smaller than the existing dwelling with the existing approved rear extension.

In terms of its wider impact upon the open-ness of the Green belt it is noted:

- There no change of use proposed, it remains a single dwelling
- There is no intensification of use, the same number of bedrooms and habitable rooms are proposed.

It is therefore respectfully suggested that the impact of the current proposal on the open-ness of the Green Belt is less than the existing dwelling plus the rear extension and that this constitutes very special circumstances for allowing the proposal.

Design, scale, bulk and massing

Many of the reasons given above are also applicable here. The floor area, footprint and volume of the proposal are less than the existing building plus the already approved rear extension. The impact of scale, bulk and massing needs to be read against this context.

It is necessary however to discuss the current proposal in terms of design, scale, bulk and massing. This will involve firstly providing an explanation of the design decisions which have been taken and then describing the changes to the current design when compared with the design which was refused and how the new design responds to the reasons for refusal of the earlier application.

Design changes which have increased the perceived scale, bulk and massing have been minimised. The decision to provide rendered external wall insulation will have a significant impact on the appearance of the dwelling but this is entirely due to my clients wish to improve the thermal performance of their house. This will reduce carbon emissions from the dwelling in use and help contribute towards wider goals.

A rendered finish is not out of keeping and in fact is the same finish as 'Three Ways', which is the nearest house to Home Acre in addition to half a dozen houses at the end of Melliker Lane including the terrace of Melliker Cottages.

The proposed roof is entirely of a pitched hipped design using the same materials as existing and the flat roof elements of the existing building have been designed out.

Window and door opening locations have been carefully revised to produce more balanced elevations. The window frames themselves have been divided up into narrower casements. This makes the windows more conventional in appearance and the narrower module has the effect of reducing the apparent size of the dwelling.

The replacement windows will be double glazed, argon filled units set into high quality thermally broken frames to provide a much improved thermal performance and thus reduce the energy needed to heat the building.

A small lean-to roof has been indicated to provide the practical use of a wood store and also to balance the elevations and to provide visual relief and interest.

Conclusion

There are very special circumstances for allowing extension which is the subject of this planning application. Changes have been made to address the other issues which were raised on the refusal of the previous planning application.