



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20220771
Location:	41 Walmers Avenue, Higham, Rochester, Kent, ME3 7EH
Description:	Partial demolition of existing dwelling and rebuild including a first floor roof extension.
Applicant:	Mr P Jones
Site Visit:	N/A Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form - dated 13/07/2022;
Drawing no. 873/01B - Existing Location Plans, Floor Plans and Elevations;
Drawing no. 873/20 - Proposed Floor Plans;
Drawing no. 873/21 - Proposed Site Plans, Roof Plan and Sections;
Drawing no. 873/22 - Proposed Elevations.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20210583	Partial demolition of existing dwelling and erection of three storey front extension, a first floor rear extension and single storey side extension. Conversion of existing garage to home office and erection of new garage with associated works including new drive and cross over.	Withdrawn	02/08/2021
TH6/69/22	Erection of double garage	Conditional Approval	13/11/1969
TH6/63/153	Erection of 2 pairs of semi-detached houses	Permission	03/07/1963
TH6/61/86	Site for erection of 2 pairs of semi-detached bungalows and garages	Conditional Approval	19/04/1961

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards

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 Well-Designed Places

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)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Higham Parish Council - No comment received.

Shorne Parish Council - No comment received.

Local Ward Councillors - No comment received.

Neighbouring properties

Seven surrounding properties were consulted and one representation was received. The representation registered objection to the proposed development raising concerns with loss of privacy and loss of light which will be assessed later in the report.

The consultation period expired 16th August 2022.

Officer's Analysis

41 Walmers Avenue is a detached 1.5 storey property located on the northern side of the highway. The property is elevated above the highway and has a long single driveway up to an attached garage.



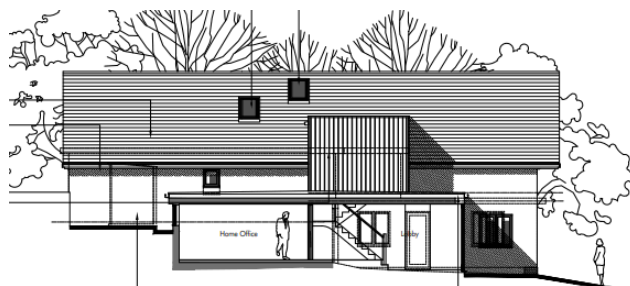
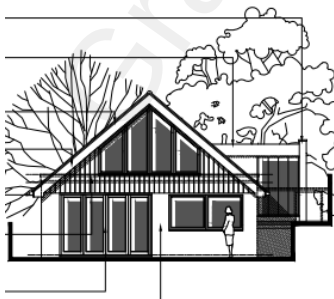
The property is characterised by flat roof elements, which have staggered heights that are elevated at the rear above the lower front level.



Proposed Development

This application has been submitted following the withdrawal of a larger scheme from last year that the Council was not able to support. Following the withdrawal, pre-application discussions were held in order to negotiate a more acceptable proposal.

This application proposes the partial demolition of the existing property and rebuild to create an additional storey. The proposal would involve a forward extension to the existing property at first floor level and will create a three storey living space, under a new pitched roof. There will be a small flat roof section on the east of the main dwelling serving the stairwell. The extended dwelling will have a maximum height of 7.55m, an eave height of 4.55m, with a depth of 16.85m and a width of 9.55m.



The extended property will create space for three bedrooms and a bathrooms at lower ground floor level. The main living space will be contained on upper ground floor containing the living room, kitchen, dining

room, garden room, tv room and wc. The ensuite master bedroom will be within the loft (first floor), with three velux window on the roof and large apex windows facing rearward.

Design, Character and Appearance

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) states that new development will be visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area. Gravesham's newly published Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for new developments, and highlights the importance of new developments complimenting and corresponding with the character of the dwelling and wider context. Moreover, Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) sets out that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

The local context for Walmers Avenue is highly distinctive, with properties on the southern side situated on an upward slope of the hill with varying character and elevations above street level. It is evident that there have been alterations to other properties along the street, which provides an eclectic mix of high pitched and flat roof buildings on the existing streetscape. The neighbouring properties on both sides feature pitch roofs, where it is considered that the buildings to the east formally had flat roofs. The partial demolition of the property will remove the original 1960s flat roof, with the proposed pitched roof mirroring additions to the neighbouring properties. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling includes a flat roof section for the stairwell which retains some of the property's original characteristics.

Therefore, the proposed extensions are similar to other extensions within the street scene, such as those on the neighbouring properties to the east. The pitched roof design corresponds with the upward extensions within the street and will not be a dominant feature, with the design serving to reduce perceived bulk and massing. The height of the proposed ridge is set-down from the neighbour to the east, following the established stepping down of ridges that characterises the street scene. Moreover, the new dwelling will include a flat roof section that references and acknowledges the properties original 1960s character. Therefore, the proposed dwelling is considered to respect the form and character of the area and landscape, respond to original characteristics of the property and will integrate well within the street scene.

It is worth noting that the Local Planning Authority do not generally support proposals that seek to introduce flat roofs above single storey, however in this case the flat roof responds to the original property and there are multiple other flat roofs at first floor or above within the street scene. In addition, the flat roof section is a subordinate feature that is dominated by the main pitched roof of the proposed dwelling.

The new property will be finished in a modern material palate of pre-coloured render, timber cladding and facing brickwork plinths, with artificial roof slates and powder coated aluminium windows. Although different to the materiality within the street scene, it is not considered to be harmful to the character of the area by virtue of the varied and eclectic designs of properties on Walmers Avenue.

Overall, the proposed extensions are not disproportionate additions to the dwelling, have been appropriately designed to integrate with the surrounding street scene and respond to original features. The materials proposed are modern, but are not considered to impact on the character of the area. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposal will safeguard the amenity of future occupiers. The garden is large and will not be significantly reduced as part of this development. The rooms proposed are in accordance with Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines (2020) and will receive sufficient natural light. Therefore, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Neighbouring Amenity

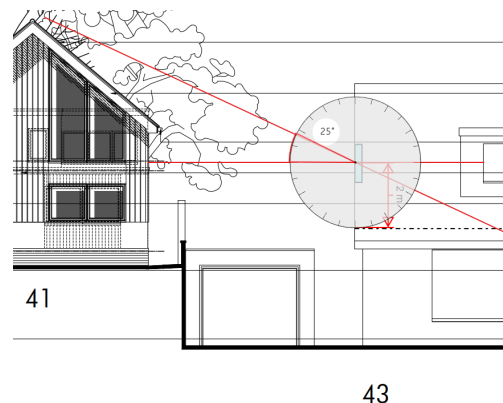
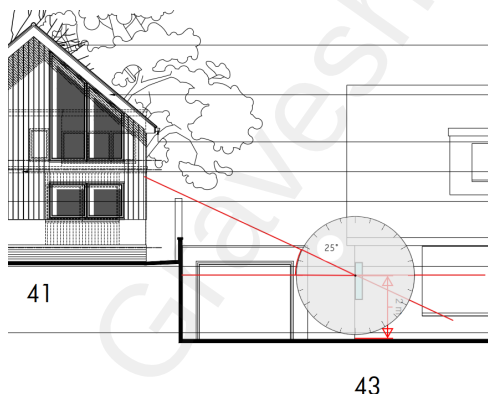
The proposed extensions will not result in any harm to the amenity of adjoining properties by virtue of sense of enclosure or outlook. A representation was received from a neighbouring resident expressing concern with loss of light and overshadowing.

Although there are three flank windows facing westwards towards the neighbour (no. 43), these are existing and will not be changed as part of the development and therefore the amenity of the neighbours at no. 43 will not be altered as part of this development. There is a new flank window proposed on the eastern elevation (facing no. 39 Walmers Avenue) serving the utility room which will be conditioned to ensure that it is obscure glazed. In addition, there are two velux windows on the roof slope facing no. 39 Walmers Avenue, these windows serve an ensuite bathroom and a staircase. The velux window serving the staircase would not result in overlooking by virtue of floor levels, and similarly the velux serving the ensuite is at a height of approx. 1.7m above floor levels and will at this height is not considered to result in overlooking. As such, the proposed dwelling is not considered to result in any additional impact on the private amenity of neighbouring properties.

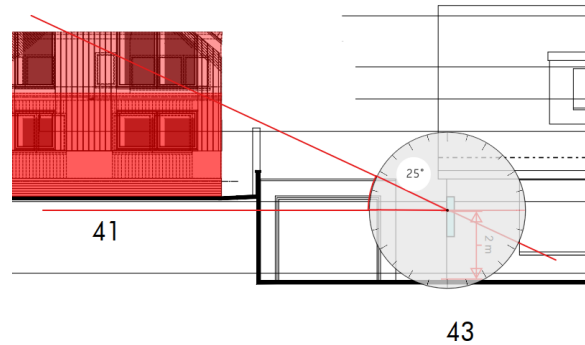
In regards to overshadowing, the orientation of the properties means that the application site and neighbours have south facing gardens and rear windows which receive higher levels of sunlight. However, due to the topography of Walmers Avenue and the increase in height proposed in this application, careful consideration must be given to the potential impact of overshadowing onto the neighbours.

No. 43 Walmers Avenue is located to the east of the application site, and is set forward of the application property and at a lower ground level. The neighbour has three flank windows and a door facing the application property, with a part width dormer window on the rear roof slope. Due to the lower ground level there is a concern that the proposed dwelling would result in overshadowing. The dormer has a large window serving a bedroom and is approx. 9.25m from the boundary and 10.35m from the proposed dwelling. Although the neighbour is set forward of the application site the distance between the proposed dwelling and dormer window is considered sufficient to mitigate against overshadowing. However, the flank windows are northward of the proposed dwelling and should be assessed against the BRE daylight sunlight tests.

The annotated images below show the position of the flank windows on the neighbour to the north (no. 43), which lies at a lower ground level than the application property. The BRE sunlight test for these windows is drawn onto the screenshots above, for this specific test if any of the proposed building subtends the line at an angle less than 25°, the harmful overshadowing would result.



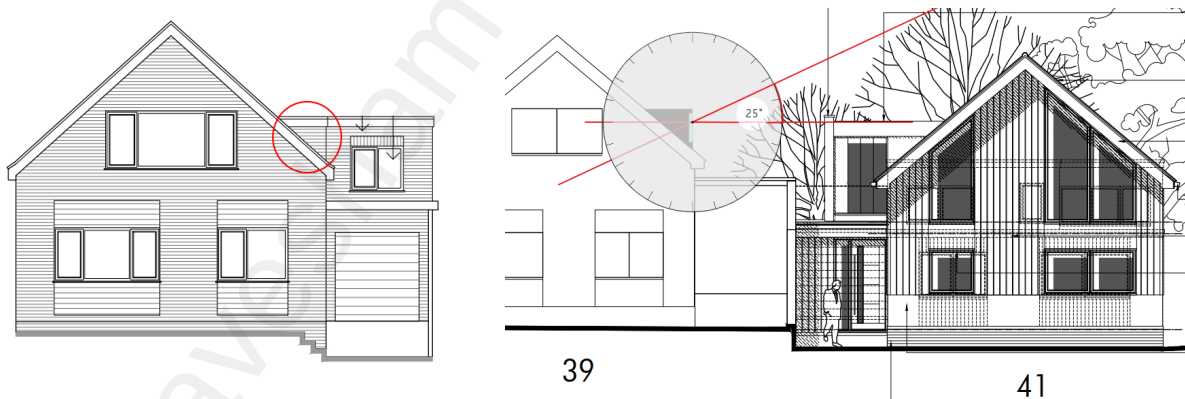
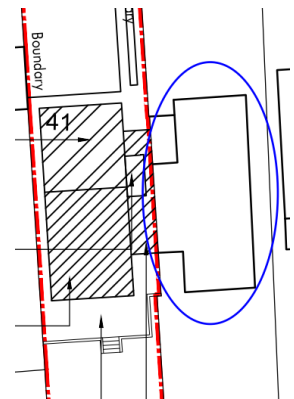
As demonstrated above the first floor window, which is the sole window serving bedroom 2 at no. 43 Walmers Avenue, would pass the assessment and would not be impacted. However, the ground floor flank door/window serving the kitchen and bathroom would fail the assessment with the 25° line intersecting the house. While this fails the assessment, due to the land levels the line is low and therefore an assessment was undertaken using the outline of the existing property:



This shows that the ground floor flank windows would already fail the 25 test and would already be unacceptably overshadowed by the existing property. Moreover, the kitchen/bathroom are not habitable rooms and being overshadowed would not be sufficient grounds to refuse the application. Furthermore, it is noted from Google Street View that a covered canopy has been erected on the side of no. 43, which is likely to be over the kitchen door and between the garage, and would create shadowing over the door of the kitchen.

To the western side of the application properties is no. 39 Walmers Avenue, which is at an elevated position above the application site. Both properties have similar footprints and depth, which is considered to reduce the potential impact of overshadowing to windows at the front or rear of the neighbour, whereby no part of the proposed dwelling will project beyond that of no. 39.

However, there is a flank window facing the new dwelling that serves a kitchen. The plans provided fail to show the flat roof section where the kitchen is located on the neighbouring property, however this has been found on plans from the 2014 application (ref. 20140743) and then annotated onto the drawings to undertake the BRE 25° test.



The annotated screenshots above demonstrate that the proposed dwelling will comply with the BRE 25° test and will not result in unacceptable levels of overshadowing to the flank window of no. 39 Walmers Avenue.

Overall, the proposed dwelling is considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highway issues related to this proposal. Although the garage will be converted into a habitable room (home office), there is adequate space on the driveway to accommodate two vehicles in

accordance with Gravesham's adopted parking standards (SPG 4) (2006).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Impact on the Landscape - In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by very gently undulating topography of open arable farmland with pockets of orchards and garden nurseries. The developments spread from the original Saxon settlement of Lower Higham in the North, with more contemporary developments in the South around main road networks.

Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

The proposed development is not considered to cause any detrimental harm to the character of the Higham Arable Farmlands, due to the location properties within a residential street and relatively developed area.

Contamination - Due to the age of the property and the proposed partial demolition, a condition will be attached to the decision notice to ensure that a watching brief is undertaken and if any contamination is discovered that work stops on site.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

The proposed partial demolition and rebuild of the dwelling with the introduction of a pitched roof, which is not disproportionate additions to the dwelling, have been appropriately designed to integrate with the surrounding street scene and respond to original features. The proposed dwelling will safeguard the amenity of future occupiers and will not materially impact on the amenity of adjoining properties, the parking provision accords with guidance and there will be no harm caused to the landscape.

Therefore it is recommended that permission is granted, subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mr Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	6 th September 2022	Dated:	07 September 2022