

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240708

Location: 7 Hornfield Cottages, David Street Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of first floor side extension; erection of single storey rear extension with roof lights; loft conversion with rear dormer, solar panels to rear roof slope and roof lights to front roof slope; new front porch and formation of 2 car parking bays within front garden.

Applicant: Ms Danielle Regan

Site Visit Date: 20th August 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

Planning Application Form;
Drawing No. 24-16-01 A – Location Plan;
Drawing No. 24-16-02 D – Existing and proposed site layout plan;
Drawing No. 24-16-03 – Existing elevations and section;
Drawing No. 24-16-04 – Existing plans and section;
Drawing No. 24-16-05 A – Proposed plans and section;
Drawing No. 24-16-06 B – Proposed elevations; and
Design and Access and Planning Statement.

~~Drawing No. 24-16-02 A – Existing and proposed site layout plan;~~
~~Drawing No. 24-16-02 B – Existing and proposed site layout plan;~~
~~Drawing No. 24-16-05 – Proposed plans and section;~~
~~Drawing No. 24-16-06 A – Proposed elevations.~~

Relevant Planning History

None.

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
- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites.

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)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 – Conserving the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021);
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Other Relevant Guidance

- Kent County Council Vehicle Crossing: - Guidance and Self-Assessment (2018)
- Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance
- Front Driveway Guidance

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Meopham Parish Council

Due to the nature and content of the proposed change Meopham Parish Council objects to the application as the proposal is out of keeping with the adjacent properties in a greenbelt location.

We therefore object to this proposal.

The above comments were based on the initial submission with a gable end roof design. The proposal was revised to a hip roof to match the host and adjoining dwelling. Reconsultation was not undertaken, as it was considered to address the objection of design.

Neighbouring properties

Consultation was by way of the displaying of a site notice and individual letters sent to four surrounding properties, with an overall expiry date of 10th September 2024. No comments have been received.

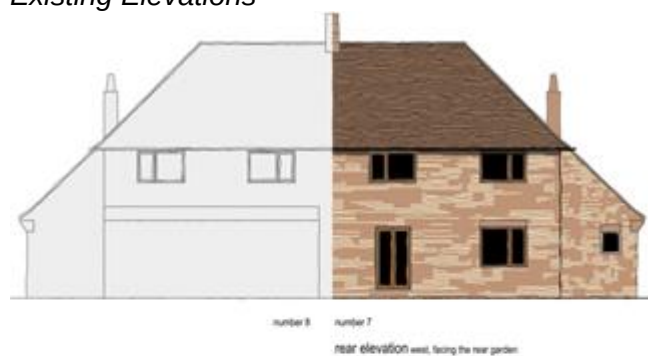
Officer's Analysis

The application property is a two storey semi-detached dwelling located to the west of David Street, Meopham. It is defined on the Policies Map of the Core Strategy as lying within the Green Belt and a rural

area. It also lies within an Area of Archaeological Potential.

There is no planning history for the property and it does not appear to have been extended previously.

Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations



Existing Floor Plans



Proposed Floor Plans



The proposal is for the erection of a first floor side extension; erection of single storey rear extension with roof lights; loft conversion with rear dormer, solar panels to rear roof slope and roof lights to front roof slope; new front porch and formation of 2 car parking bays within front garden.

The rear extension would be flat roof to match that of the adjoining dwellings extension, the rear dormer would be a small box dormer with two windows and the side extension would have a hip roof laying at the same angle of the main roof. The extensions would create a new living/dining area, snug, utility and shower room on the ground floor, relocation of one the existing bedrooms and the bathroom, and creation of additional toilet on the first floor and one bedroom with en-suite within the roofspace. The property would increase from three bedrooms to four overall.

In the consideration of this application, Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy is relevant. Development in the urban area is prioritised as the sustainable location for development. In the rural area, Policy CS02 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, i.e. in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy.

The application site is located within the Green Belt and outside any rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt.

The main planning considerations relating to this application are:

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt
3. Design and visual impact
4. Impact on landscape
5. Impacts on residential amenity
6. Highway issues
7. Archaeology

These issues are assessed below:

Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

National policies for protecting the Green Belt are set out in Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraphs 152 and 153 are particularly relevant in the consideration of planning applications within the Green Belt:

152. *Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.*

153. *When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it comprises one of a number of excepted forms of development, including:

- c) *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 which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside is also relevant to this determination. It sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully; with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with the NPPF.

In particular 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 in relation to the original building as they require looking at size in the round. As such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF and should be afforded weight.

The following calculations show set out the floor areas of the original dwelling, existing extensions and the proposed extension:

Original dwelling (as built)

Ground Floor: 55m²

First Floor: 51m²

Total: 106m²

Proposed extension

Ground floor: 98m²

First Floor: 58m²

Loft Space: 30m²

Total: 210.5m²

The total floor area of the extensions to the original dwelling would measure 80m².

The total percentage increase of the floor area of the original dwelling would be 75.47%. This is significantly greater than the one third allowance prescribed in Policy C13. In this respect this proposal would not meet the tests set out in Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

As well as floorspace there are other factors which play a part in assessing whether a proposal is a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. This includes assessing whether the massing, scale and form are appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.

The proposed side extension would incorporate the footprint of the existing side projection. The proposed new first floor element would result in an increase in massing and scale. However, due to the modest size of the resulting extension in comparison to the original dwelling it would remain subservient to the host property. As the extension would be set back from the principle front elevation and have a lower ridge height this would also ensure that it remains subservient.

The rear extension would result in a greater footprint to the rear which is where a large majority of the additional floorspace has resulted from. However the proposed extension has a modest 4m projection and is single storey with a flat roof. As such, it would not have a detrimental impact on bulk to the property.

Furthermore, the majority of the 30m² of additional floorspace created by the loft conversion would be within the existing/original roofspace, which makes up 28.30% of the floorspace increase over the original dwelling. The proposed dormer would be a modest addition to the rear roofslope.

Although there is no definition of the term “disproportionate additions” within the NPPF, Policy C13, provides a useful guide. It places an overall limit on extensions of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling and also requires the massing, scale and form of any extension to be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting. For the reasons set out above, this proposal would meet these tests and as such it is considered that this proposal would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt

The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF 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.

For the reasons set out above, the increase in the massing and scale of the proposed development would be modest compared to the existing dwelling. Furthermore, the proposal would only result in a marginal increase in the footprint of the existing side projection. The rear extension is a modest 4m projection and is single storey, similar to that of the adjacent dwelling. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Design and visual impact

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to “achieving well-designed and beautiful places” and sets out the Government’s requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 131 is particularly relevant:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

The aims set out in paragraph 131 of the NPPF are reflected in Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy. This requires new development to be “visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive” and to “conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment”. It also requires new development to “integrate well with the surrounding local area”. In addition, Policy CS19 requires the following:

“....the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings.”

The design and visual impact of the proposed extension is considered to be acceptable. The first floor addition would incorporate a hip roof which would lie at the same of the main roof line. The extension is set back from the principle front elevation and the ridge would be lower than that of the main dwelling which would ensure that it remains subservient. The detailed design of the extension, fenestration and materials would match those of the existing property. The front elevation of the extension presents central windows at ground and first floor that match the size and design of the existing.

The existing dwelling is set back from the road frontage and largely screened from public views by trees. As such the proposed extension would not be subject to significant public view and would not be visually prominent within this locality.

The replacement front porch is an open aspect timber and tiled design which would respect and enhance the front of the property.

The development also includes the formation of 2 car parking bays within the front garden. This would incorporate a new access with crossover with 2m vision splays and a block paved area measuring 5m x 5m. The remaining frontage would retain the soft verge and existing picket fence. The majority of the front garden would remain soft landscaped and as such it is considered that the proposed parking and access would not have a detrimental visual impact on the streetscene.

In light of the above considerations, the design and visual impact of this proposal must be considered acceptable. The development would meet the criteria set out in the NPPF and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on landscape

Section 15 of the NPPF highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 of Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes within the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that proposals will take account of the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment.

The site is located within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. The key characteristics are defined in the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment as follows:

- Varied topography with steep valley sides and plateaux
- Ancient woodland, chestnut coppice and small paddocks and pasture
- Traditional historic settlement of Harvel set around village green
- Occasional traditional farmsteads
- Haphazard mosaic of residential plots and small holdings set within the woodland

The condition is moderate and the guidelines are to conserve and create the key landscape elements.

Due to the modest size of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not conflict with the characteristics of the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area as identified in the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment and would meet the tests set out in Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy.

Impacts on residential amenity

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to, *inter alia*, provide “a high standard of amenity for existing and future users”. In addition, Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to “safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land”.

The main windows serving the extension are located within the front and rear elevations and would afford the same views as the existing windows. As such, these windows would not result in a loss of privacy to

neighbouring occupiers. Rooflights are proposed within the front roofslope. Due to the position of each of the additional windows, they would not result in window to window overlooking or a loss of privacy to the private amenity area of neighbouring properties.

As a result of this distance and the modest scale of the proposal, together with the mutual overlooking already experienced between the host and neighbouring properties, there would not be a significant impact on neighbouring occupiers in terms of loss of sunlight/daylight or outlook.

In light of these considerations, the proposed extension would not have a detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers and would meet the tests set out in the NPPF and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy.

Highway issues

This proposal would result in one additional bedroom, resulting in a four bedroom dwelling. The property benefits from a detached garage to the rear with additional parking in front. The proposal includes 2no. parking spaces to the front. As such there would be sufficient parking provision for a four bedroom property and due to the proposed 2m vision splays there would be no significant impacts in terms of highways safety.

The proposal is in accordance with Policy CS11 (Transport) (LPCS) and Policies T1 (Impact on Highway) and T5 (Access to Identified Highway Network) (LPFR).

Archaeology

The site is located in an Area of Archaeological Potential. However, given that the increase in the footprint of the resulting extension would be minimal compared to the existing, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant below-ground archaeological impact. In respect of archaeology the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy TC7 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out in this report, this development would not result in “disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building” and has been designed to have a subservient and appropriate appearance to the host dwelling. As such it would not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Furthermore, it would not impact the openness of the Green Belt.

In all other respects the proposal is also seen as acceptable. It has been shown to be appropriate in terms of its design and visual impact, its impact upon the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area and its impact upon residential amenity. It is also considered acceptable in terms of highway safety and archaeological issues.

Recommendation:

Permission.

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

Case Officer:	Ms Amanda Cue	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>A Cue</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	3 rd October 2024	Dated:	7th October 2024

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