

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No: 20220670

Location: 1 & 3 Bull Lane, Higham, Rochester, Kent, ME3 7LT

Description: Erection of a single storey front and first floor rear with ground floor rear extensions to numbers 1 & 3 Bull Lane.

Applicant: Mr Sam Roberts

Site Visit: N/A Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form - dated 21/06/2022;
Supplementary Information - Planning Statement;
Supplementary Information - Site Photographs (1-4)
Ordnance Survey Site Location Plan (scale 1:1250);
Existing Block Plan - (scale 1:200);
Proposed Block Plan - (scale 1:200);
Drawing no. 3/49/1 - Existing Floor Plans;
Drawing no. 3/49/2 - Existing Elevations;
Drawing no. 3/49/3 - Proposed Floor Plans;
Drawing no. 3/49/4 - Proposed Elevations;
Drawing no. 3/49/5 - Existing and Proposed Roof Plans.

Relevant Planning History

1 Bull Lane

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20220098	Erection of a single storey front extension, part two storey part single storey rear extension and single storey side extension	REFUSED	08.04.2022

3 Bull Lane

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20220099	Erection of a part two storey part single story rear extension.	REFUSED	08.04.2022

19940406	Application for the approval of the brick and tile samples as required by condition (ii) of planning permission ref. no. GR/94/293.	APPROVAL OF DETAILS	26.07.1994
19940293	Erection of a front porch.	PERMITTED	16.06.1994

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.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Internal consultees

Local Ward Councillors - No comment received.

External consultees

Higham Parish Council - No comment received.

Neighbouring properties

A notice was displayed on site 28th July 2022.

In addition, ten surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 19th August 2022.

Preliminary Matters

This is a joint application following separate refusals for extensions to nos. 1 and 3 Bull Lane (20220098 / 20220099). The two applications were refused by the Local Planning Authority for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposed development significantly enlarges the property, introduces disproportionate features and is poor design. These additions result in increased bulk and incongruous appearance which is both inappropriate development within and harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, and fails to preserve the character or appearance of the host dwelling. Therefore, the development hereby proposed is contrary to Policies CS02 (Scale & Distribution of Development), CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), saved Policy C13 (Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside) of Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021), as well as Sections 12, 13 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*
- 2. The extensions by virtue of depth and height on the site boundary results in an oppressive, unneighbourly form of development, which results in overshadowing, an unacceptable sense of enclosure and poor outlook, thus failing to safeguard neighbouring amenity contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan: Core Strategy (2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

In order to receive a favourable decision, this joint application must be considered to overcome the two reasons for refusal attached to the previous applications.

Analysis

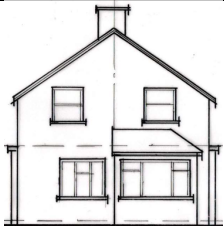
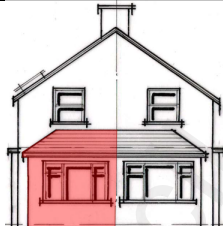
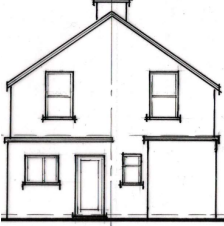
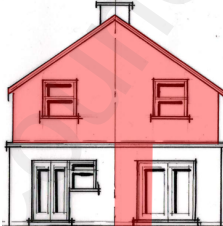
1 and 3 Bull Lane are a pair of two storey semi-detached properties located on the northern side of the highway. No. 1 Bull Lane benefits from a driveway to the side and has not previously been extended, but has a part-width rear projection with a flat roof. No. 3 Bull Lane does not benefit from any off-street parking, but has been extended at the front with a porch and an infill at the rear.



Proposed Development

This joint application proposes the erection of a two storey rear extension to both no. 1 and 3 Bull Lane, with an infill rear extension and front porch extension to no. 1 Bull Lane. The screenshots

below demonstrate the changes proposed to the dwelling:

Existing Elevations	Proposed Elevations
	
	
	
	

The two storey rear extension will have a depth of 3.3m and a width (3.55m), ridge (7.15m) and eave height (4.75m) that match the main dwelling. The extensions will have a gable end roof design which will match the front of the properties. There is no increase in the overall depth of the properties at ground floor, however the application proposes a single storey rear infill extension to no.1 Bull Lane that will have a flat roof with a height of 2.8m, a depth of 2.35m and a width of 1.25m. Lastly, there is a porch extension proposes to the front of no.1 Bull Lane that will match the porch on no. 3, with a depth of 1.2m, a width of 3.05m, a maximum height of 3.55m and an eave height of 2.75m.

The extensions will create space on ground floor for an enlarged lounge and kitchen, as well as a wc. At first floor there will be a new bathroom and both bedrooms will be enlarged. The development will introduce a new flank window at both ground and first floor onto 1 Bull Lane. There will be a roof light on both properties serving the upstairs bathrooms and there will be patio doors providing access to the garden from the kitchens.

Extension to Dwelling

The application site is located in the Green Belt and as such Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) 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 LPCS.

There are five principle issues in determining this application;

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
3. The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
4. Other matters; and
5. Any very special circumstances?
6. Impact on the Landscape.

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework (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 148 goes on to say that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the specified exceptions. The relevant exception to consider for this application is part c of paragraph 149 of the NPPF, which states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

In determining this proposal account will be taken of Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (1994) which 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, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully, with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 of 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 and as such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF and should be afforded due weight.

The calculations for the extensions have been separated for the properties and are shown in the tables below:

1 Bull Lane

	Original Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	% increase above original
Footprint (m²)	40.3m ²	48.7m ²	20.8%
Internal Floorspace Area (m²)	54.55m ²	72m ²	32%

2 Bull Lane

	Original Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	% increase above original
Footprint (m²)	40.3m ²	48.7m ²	20.8%
Internal Floorspace Area (m²)	54.55m ²	72m ²	32%

The calculations demonstrate that the proposed additions to the dwellinghouse are below the one third limit set out in saved policy C13. Therefore in purely numerical terms, the extensions are not contrary to the local plan Green Belt policy, and does not represent a disproportionate increase over the original floor area of the building. The volume calculations of the extensions, over the original dwelling, have not been calculated in this application and will instead be visually assessed.

However the numerical calculation forms only a part of the overall assessment. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It does not provide a figure.

The proposed extensions are not excessive in size and have been designed to match the character of the dwellinghouses. Although increasing the depth of the properties at first floor level, the extensions have been reduced in size, bulk and massing from those previously refused and are more proportionate to the scale of the host dwellings.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in a disproportionate addition to the property and as such the proposal would not be inappropriate development which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It therefore complies to Policy CS02 (LPCS), Policy C13 (LPFR) and to paragraph 149 (NPPF).

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

Paragraph 137 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.

Any new built form of development is likely to impact on the openness of the Green Belt, however it is important to establish the degree of harm caused. As aforementioned above, the extensions are more proportionate to the scale of the host dwellings, and although they will elongate the property at first floor level are not considered to result in unacceptable harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The properties are located on a relatively well-developed street which serves to further reduce the impact. Therefore, the extensions proposed are considered to preserve the open character of the Green Belt.

Reference back to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF informs us that 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. Whether the development causes any other harm and whether there are any other relevant considerations to balance the overall planning argument, should now be considered.

3. The effect on the character and appearance of the area

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) 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. This SPD highlights the importance of extensions being subordinate to the host building, that compliment and correspond with the character of the dwelling and wider context. The SPD breaks down key considerations for different types of extensions to residential properties.

According to the design guidance, a rear extension should not dominate the original property, which could create the appearance of overdevelopment and for a two storey extension the roof design should incorporate similar design to reflect and tie in with the property. The proposed extensions have been reduced in size and scale to be more proportionate to the dwellings, and the roof design has been amended to reflect the gable design of the main roof. Although the extensions are not subservient to the main dwelling, which is contrary to the design guidance SPD (2021), this is not considered to be detrimental to the appearance of the proposed properties and will not be visible from any public vantage point.

The front extension and rear infill extension to no. 1 Bull Lane will have a minimal depth and will match the existing extension on the adjoining property. There are no objections to the design of these elements.

Overall, the proposed extensions are considered to be appropriately designed, are not excessive in size and are proportionate to the dwellings. The extensions will be finished in matching materials and will have no impact on the character of the street scene. Therefore, the application is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) (NPPF).

4. Other matters

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

The proposed extensions will not result in any harm to the amenity of adjoining properties by virtue of loss of light, overlooking, sense of enclosure or outlook.

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highway issues related to this proposal. The extensions will not impact on any of the existing parking provision at either property. No. 1 Bull Lane benefits from a driveway and no. 3 does not benefit from any off-street parking provision, as such there is nil detriment and the development is considered acceptable.

5. *Very special circumstances*

No specific arguments have been put forward by the applicant in relation to the assessment of 'very special circumstances'.

6. *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.

Conclusion

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

The proposed extensions have been reduced in scale, bulk and massing, are designed to integrate well with the main dwellings and will be finished in matching materials. The changes in design and scale reduce any potential impact on the Green Belt and will not impact on the street scene. There will be no impact on the amenity of future occupiers or neighbouring properties, no parking or highway issues will result and the character of the Higham Arable Farmlands will be preserved.

Therefore the application is considered to have overcome the previous reasons for refusal and it is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	5 th September 2022	Dated:	6 th September 2022