

Delegated Report

Application No: 20240540

Location: White Lodge Nash Street Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 9AA

Description: Erection of a two storey side extension with roof lights to front and rear slopes and alterations to fenestration.

Applicant: Mr John Stevenson

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Site location plan (1:1250).
- Drawing no. WL Site Plan - Existing site plan.
- Drawing no. WL PA EX01 - Existing floor plans.
- Drawing no. WL PA EX02 - Existing front & rear elevations.
- Drawing no. WL PA EX03 – Existing side elevations and roof plan.
- Drawing no. WL PA GA01 – Proposed floor plans.
- Drawing no. WL PA GA02 - Proposed front & rear elevations.
- Drawing no. WL PA GA03 - Proposed side elevations and roof plan.

Relevant Planning History

The planning history relating to this site is summarised below.

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Decision</u>
20240541	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed extension to the width of the existing rear dormer and single storey side extension.	Granted	08 August 2024
20220882	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed construction of part single storey part two storey rear extension.	Refused Appeal dismissed	06 October 2022 15 March 2024
20220876	Remodel of the front entrance, front dormers, windows, and replacement of the roof tiles with demolition of the front and side porch.	Permitted	05 October 2022

20220553	Erection of part single-storey rear extension, part double-storey rear extension, remodel of front entrance, front dormer and windows.	Refused	20 July 2022
20220400	Creation of vehicular access onto Wrotham Road with access over grass verge, increase in area of hardstanding, installation of new wall, fence and hedge to infill existing access and erection of new 2.4m high fence to northern boundary	Permitted	26 July 2022
20050544	Erection of single storey extension on north west side elevation to form a replacement garden room and erection of a porch at the front.	Permitted	12 August 2005
19960852	Erection of detached garage at front.	Refused	03 April 1997

Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Courts have held that it is a matter of planning judgement as to whether a proposal is in accordance with the development plan when 'read as a whole' and conflict with a particular policy or policies may not pass that threshold.

Where there are other material considerations, the development plan should be the starting point, and other material considerations should be taken into account in reaching a decision. One such consideration will be whether the plan policies are relevant and up to date.

In this instance the development plan for Gravesham currently comprises: -

- The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014);
- Remaining Saved Policies of the Local Plan First Review (1994); and
- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 - 2030 (2016, revised 2020).

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014)

- CS01 - Sustainable Development.
- CS02 - Scale & Distribution of Development.
- CS11 – Transport.
- CS12 - Green Infrastructure.
- CS19 - Design & Development Principles.
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment.

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994)

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards.
- C13 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside.
- TC2 – Policy for Listed Buildings.
- 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 First Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 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 and enhancing the historic environment.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006).
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Neighbouring properties

Four surrounding properties were consulted. In addition, a site notice was displayed. No responses have been received. The overall consultation expired on 29 July 2024.

Analysis

The application site lies to the north of Nash Street and comprises a two storey, detached dwelling. 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.

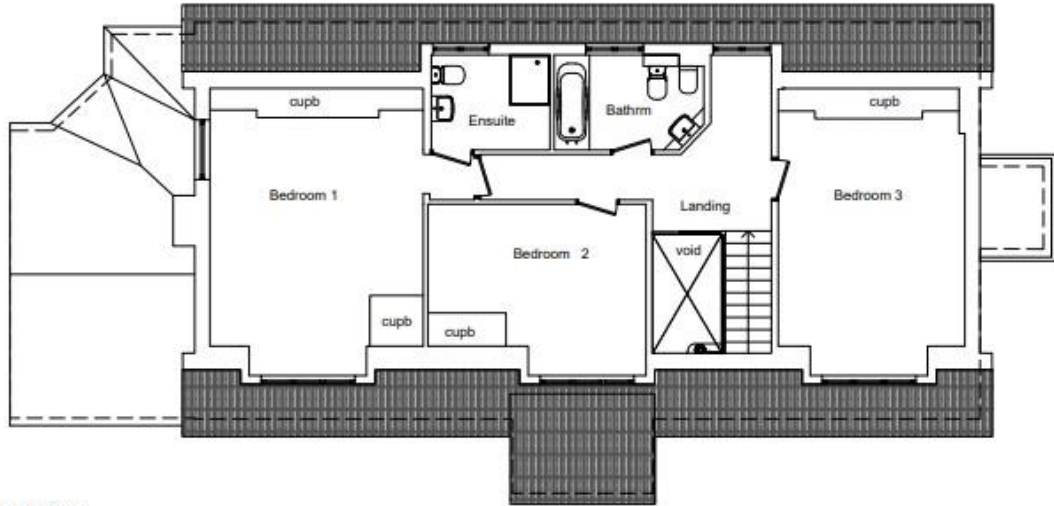
The property has been previously extended. In 2005 planning permission was granted for “erection of single storey extension on north west side elevation to form a replacement garden room and erection of a porch at the front” (Gravesham planning reference 20050544). This has been implemented.

The description of the current proposal as provided on the submitted application form is:

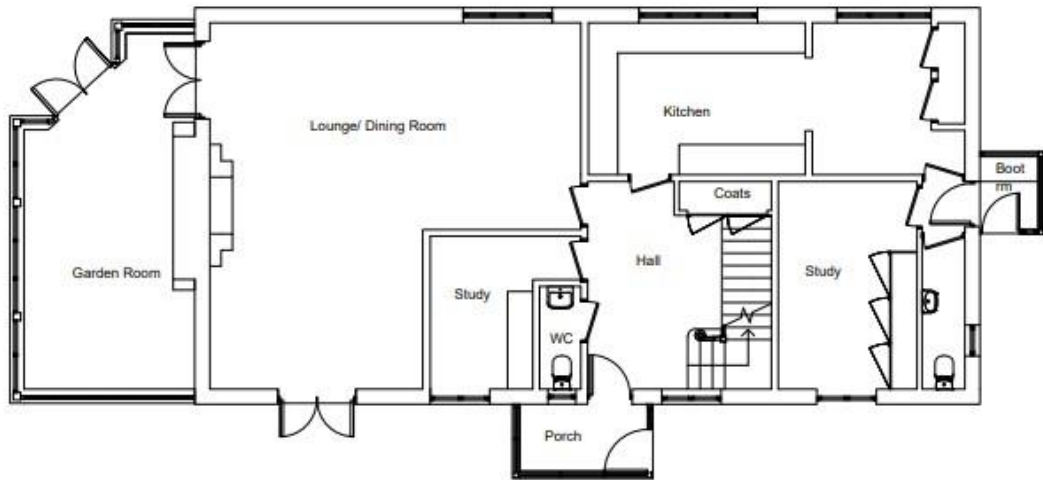
First floor extension on top of existing side extension with roof lights to front and rear slopes.

In essence this application would involve “squaring off” the existing extension and extending upwards to provide a first floor. This is clearly shown on the existing and proposed floor plans:

Existing Floor Plans



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

Proposed Floor Plans



The extension would incorporate a pitched roof with a ridge height that would be lower than the ridge height of the main dwelling. A rooflight would be provided within each of the front and rear roofslopes. The extension would accommodate a garden room at ground floor level and a dressing room at first floor level.

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: 109.48m²

First Floor: 85.17m²

Total: 194.65m²

Existing Extensions

Garden Room (approved under planning reference 20050544): 20.85m²

Porch (approved under planning reference 20050544): 3.28m²

Minor additions (approved under planning reference 20220876): 3.39m²

Proposed extension

Ground floor: 22.75m² (represent an increase of only 2m² due to existing extension being squared off)

First Floor: 8.25m²

Total: 31.0m²

As the proposed extension would incorporate the existing garden room, the total floor area of the extensions to the original dwelling would measure 37.67m².

The total percentage increase of the floor area of the original dwelling would be 19.35%. This is significantly less than the one third allowance prescribed in Policy C13. In this respect this proposal would 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 extension would incorporate the majority of the footprint of the existing extension. 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 have a lower ridge height this would also ensure that it remains subservient.

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 extension. 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 pitched roof. 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 a blank façade which could be improved by incorporating a window to match the windows on the front elevation of the existing property. However, this in itself is not considered sufficient to justify a reason for refusing the application.

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 application property is adjacent to Tudor Cottage, a Grade II Listed Building. The impact of the proposal on the setting of this listed building must therefore be considered. Tudor Cottage is located to the west and is separated by mature hedging. The properties are set approximately 31m apart. Due to this separation distance and the screening provided by the existing planting it is considered that there would not be a significant impact upon the setting of this listed building.

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 Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. The key characteristics are defined in the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment as follows:

- Gently undulating topography with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland
- Neat pattern of small square fields in the south
- Broader irregular shaped fields to the north
- Narrow lanes and roads lined with hedgerows
- Three large settlements located along A227 running east and west
- Traditional architecture surrounding village greens provide local vernacular

The condition is good and the guidelines are to conserve and reinforce 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 at ground floor level. These windows would not result in a loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers. No windows are proposed at first floor level although individual rooflights are proposed within each of the front and rear roofslopes. Due to the position of each of these within the roofslope, they would not result in window to window overlooking or a loss of privacy to the private amenity area of neighbouring properties.

There would be a significant separation distance between the proposed extension and the nearest residential property. As a result of this distance and the modest scale of the proposal, 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 not create a requirement for additional on-site parking. As such there would be no significant impacts in terms of highways safety.

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 as such 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 Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area and its impact upon residential amenity. It is also considered acceptable in terms of highway safety and archaeological issues.

Recommendation:

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to conditions:

Case Officer: Gary Edwards	Team Leader: Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed: Gary Edwards	Signed: 
Dated: 12 August 2024	Dated: 12 August 2024