



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20230485
Location:	Fleethouse, Beechwood Drive, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0TX
Description:	Demolition of conservatory and erection of rear extension and extension to side garage.
Applicant:	Mr Darius Pinsk
Site Visit:	N/A Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Application Form - dated 09/05/2023;
- Drawing no. FH2001 - Existing Plans and Elevations;
- Drawing no. FH2002 - Proposed Plans and Elevations;
- Drawing no. FH2003 - Existing and Proposed Site Location Plans (scale - 1:1250);
- Drawing no. FH2004 - Existing and Proposed Block Plans (scale - 1:500).

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20200361	Installation of a car port to the side of the existing garage incorporating space for storage.	PERMITTED	16.07.2020
20080856	Retention of the conservatory at the rear.	REFUSED	20.10.2008
19740161	The erection of a replacement bungalow with double garage.	PERMITTED	31.07.1974

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (September 2014):

- CS01 - Sustainable Development
- CS02 - Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 - Green Infrastructure
- CS18 - Climate Change
- CS19 - Design & Development Principles

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

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards

- C13 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework (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 (LPFR) (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (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

Meopham Parish Council - Following discussion by Meopham Parish Council's Planning Applications Working Group; the Council wishes to provide the following response:

- Meopham Parish Council raises no objections to this planning application.
- Meopham Parish Council would like it noted that GBC Enforcement should have pursued the building of the conservatory but don't appear to have done so. The conservatory in question has been in existence for over 15 years and is in reality, probably in need of updating.

External consultees

Local Ward Councillors - No comment received.

Neighbouring properties

Four surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 14th June 2023.

Analysis

Site Description

Fleethouse is a detached residential dwelling located within the Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. The surrounding area is rural in nature and is characterised by small pockets of development.



The application property has been extended previously with a conservatory at the rear, without the benefit of planning consent following the refused application in 2008 (ref. 2008056). A granny annexe outbuilding was constructed at some point after 2015. An application was approved in 2020 (ref. 20200361) for a covered carport between the garage and annexe.

Proposed Development

This application proposes the demolition of the existing conservatory and replacement with a brick built rear extension, as well as a side extension to the integral garage. The extensions would have the following dimensions:

Single Storey Rear Extension:

- Depth - 3.95m
- Width - 5.2m
- Height (max) - 4m
- Height (eave) - 2.8m

Single Storey Side Extension (Garage):

- Depth - 10.1m
- Width - 2.25m
- Height (max) - 4.85m
- Height (eave) - 3.7m



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. Any very special circumstances?
4. Impact on the Landscape;
5. The effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
6. Other matters.

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

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 147 of the 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 (2021), 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 (2021), 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 (2021).

In particular saved 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 (2021) and should be afforded due weight.

	Original Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	% increase above original
Footprint (m²)	187.1m ²	232.8m ²	24.4%
Internal Floorspace Area (m²)	170.3m ²	191.2m ²	25.7%
Volume	-	-	-

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 extension is 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 (2021) 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.

It is considered that the proposed extensions to the dwelling (the rear extension and garage extension) would not result in a disproportionate addition to the property. The proposed rear extension essentially replaces the existing conservatory in terms of footprint and is not excessive in size or bulk, and it is subservient to the main dwelling. Similarly, the garage extension is minimal in scale and although not subservient to the existing garage, does not disproportionately elongate the dwelling and is set away from the detached outbuilding.

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), saved Policy C13 (LPFR) and to paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021).

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

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF (2021) 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. As aforementioned in this report, the rear extension would replace the existing conservatory and is not excessive in size or bulk. It would occupy the same footprint and although constructed using brick would not have any significant impact on the visual or spatial openness of the Green Belt. The side extension to the garage could be considered to have more of an impact on the openness by elongating the property, however it is not excessive in size and would not connect with the detached garage and have limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

As such, although introducing additional built form of development into the Green Belt, the extensions have been designed appropriately and at an acceptable scale and are therefore not considered to result in any significant harm to the openness.

Reference back to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF (2021) 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. Very special circumstances

No specific arguments have been put forward by the applicant in relation to the assessment of 'very special circumstances'. However, the proposed extensions are not inappropriate development and as such no very special circumstances are required.

4. Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by varied topography, ancient wood and haphazard mosaic resident plots and small holdings.

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 extensions are not considered to not impact on the character of the landscape.

5. 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. Moreover, Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the 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.

Gravesham's newly published Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for developments. Generally, the SPD highlights the importance of new development complimenting and corresponding to existing character and the wider context. In this case, the rural character of the area and other surrounding dwellings should be considered.

The extensions are not excessive in size or height, are proportionate to and do not dominate the original property. The rear extension is subservient to the dwelling and has a similar footprint to the conservatory that it would replace. The side garage extension would match the height of the existing garage and is therefore not subservient, however any difference in height to the existing garage would appear incongruous and therefore the proposed extension is considered to be appropriate design.

Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable design and will be finished in matching materials to the main dwelling and would not be visible from any visible public vantage point thus not impacting the street scene. As such, the proposed extension is considered to be acceptable in design terms and in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

6. Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires that all development should be 'fit for purpose' and be 'adaptable to allow changes to meet the need of users'. The proposed development will safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

Neighbouring

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires new development to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land and paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2021) requires development to have a high standard of amenity for existing users (in this case surrounding properties).

There is not considered to be any detrimental impact on the amenity of surrounding properties in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy, loss of outlook or sense of enclosure. As such, the proposed

development is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highways issues related to this proposal.

Conclusion:

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

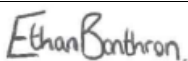
The proposed extensions are appropriately designed and respond to the character of the host building. They are not excessive in size or bulk and would not have any significant impact on the open character of the Green Belt. The extension and garage extension will be finished in matching materials, are not directly visible from any public vantage points and will have no impact on the street scene. There will be no impact on the amenity of future occupiers or neighbouring properties, there is sufficient space available for off-street parking and there will be no harm caused to the character of the landscape.

As such 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:	4 th July 2023	Dated:	4th July 2023