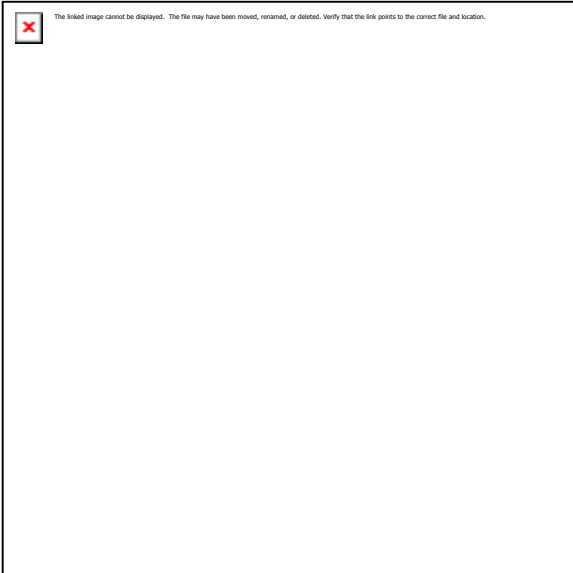




Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20220044

Location: The Barn Jeskyns Road Cobham Gravesend

Description: Erection of a single storey side extension to existing dwelling and extension of residential curtilage to include surrounding adjacent land including existing stable block. Existing stable block to be used for residential storage

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Nicholls

Site Visit Date: 25th January 2022

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

Planning Application Form;
Design and Access Statement;
Drawing No. 2114_101 Rev B – Proposed Red Line & Site Location Plan;
Drawing No. 2114_001 Rev A – Existing Red Line & Site Location Plan;
Drawing No. 2114_002 – Existing Ground Floor Plan;
Drawing No. 2114_003 – Existing Roof Plan;
Drawing No. 2114_004 – Existing NE & SE Elevations;
Drawing No. 2114_005 – Existing NW, SE & SW Elevations;
Drawing No. 2114_110 Rev C – Proposed Option B Ground Floor Plan;
Drawing No. 2114_111 Rev C – Proposed Roof Plan;
Drawing No. 2114_120 Rev C – Proposed NE, SE & SW Elevations; and
Drawing No. 2114_121 Rev B – Proposed SE (NEIGHBOURS SIDE) & NW Elevations.

Relevant Planning History

Application Ref. No.	Description	Status	Date
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20210865	Application for change of use of	Refused	
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existing stables to residential use ancillary to the main dwelling, including demolition of stables and erection of a single storey extension which would connect to and form part of the main dwelling.

20180385	Application for the approval of condition 1(c) attached to prior approval reference no. 20150263 relating to the details of a closure report.	Approval of Details	13.06.2018
20170459	Conversion of existing barn a two storey residential dwelling and change of the land to residential within the curtilage.	Withdrawn	10.07.2017
20160906	***REVISED DESCRIPTION*** Application for the approval of condition 1 part (a) only attached to prior approval reference no. 20150263 relating to the written report and results of soil chemical analysis.	Withdrawn	08.05.2017
20160208	Prior notification for a change of use of a building from storage or distribution (Class B8) to a dwellinghouse (Class C3).	Refused	12.05.2016
20150263	Application for determination as to whether prior approval is required for the proposed change of use of an agricultural building for the storage of agricultural vehicles to a one bedroom single dwellinghouse (Class Q(a)).	Prior Approval is required and Granted	22.04.2015

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network

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)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 4 – Decision making
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- 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;
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards (2015) (NDSS)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD, October 2021

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Cobham Parish Council

No comments received.

KCC Biodiversity

No ecological information has been submitted with this application. As a result of reviewing the data we have available to us (including aerial photos and biological records), photos provided by the planning officer and the information submitted with the planning application, we advise that the proposed development has limited potential to result in ecological impacts and as such we are satisfied that there is no requirement for an ecological survey to be carried out at this time.

We have taken this view because the photos provided by the planning officer indicate that the buildings have low suitability to be used by roosting bats. The stables are open sided and therefore the building will be draughty and high levels of natural lighting limiting the suitability of the building to be used by roosting bats and the existing dwelling is relatively new and in good condition reducing the likelihood of features being present which are used by roosting bats.

Breeding Birds

The buildings may be used by breeding birds. All breeding birds and their young are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and therefore we advise that the following informative is included:

Breeding Birds Informative – suggested wording:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. Trees, scrub, hedgerows and buildings are likely to contain nesting birds between 1st March and 31st August inclusive. Buildings are present on the application site and are to be assumed to contain nesting birds

between the above dates, unless a recent survey has been undertaken by a competent ecologist to assess the nesting bird activity on site during this period and has shown it is absolutely certain that nesting birds are not present.

Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society has no objection to the proposed extension but is concerned at the proposal to extend the residential curtilage within the Green Belt.

GBC – Highways Officer

I have no objections to this proposal, there is adequate on site car parking and no requirements to alter any cycle parking provision as the number of bedrooms remains the same.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by a site notice and individual neighbour letters to 6 properties with an overall consultation expiry date of 18th February 2022. No letters of representation have been received.

The Local Ward Councillors were also consulted and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Background

As the planning history shows, prior approval was granted for the change of use of the existing barn (Ref. 20150263). Therefore as the existing barn does not require prior approval for the change of use to residential, this part of the proposal has already been assessed previously and deemed to be acceptable.

Therefore the principle of the existing barn being use for residential purposes is acceptable. However, the prior approval was for the change of use of the existing stables to a single separate dwelling.

A previous application was submitted in 2021 (Ref. 20210865) for the '*change of use of existing stables to residential use ancillary to the main dwelling, including demolition of stables and erection of a single storey extension which would connect to and form part of the main dwelling*', was refused in October 2021 for the following reason;

- 1. The proposed extension, by virtue of the resultant additional bulk, scale and massing, will result in a disproportionate addition that fails to complement the form of the existing dwelling. The proposal represents a disproportionate addition and exceeds the one third limit to the original dwelling, which will harm the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt is contrary to saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), Policies CS01 (Sustainable Development) and CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

This current proposal seeks permission for the erection of a single storey side extension to existing dwelling and extension of residential curtilage to include surrounding adjacent land including existing stable block and for the stable block to be used for residential storage only and not as residential accommodation. As such, this part of the proposal will be assessed on its own merits.

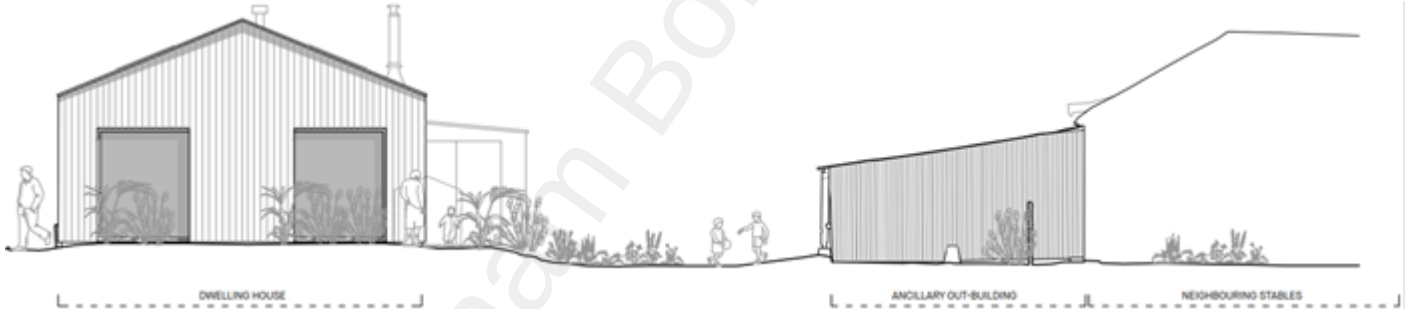
Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located in the Green Belt and in the Istead Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area as defined on the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy policies map and this must be the starting point for determining this application.

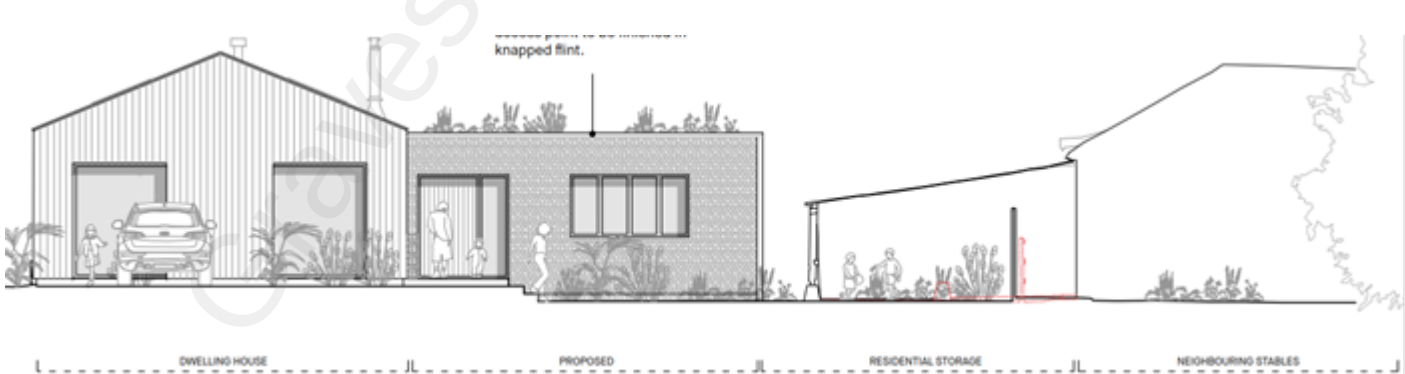


The proposal is for the erection of a single storey side extension to existing dwelling and extension of residential curtilage to include surrounding adjacent land including existing stable block. Existing stable block to be used for residential storage. The proposal also includes minor elevational changes to the existing south-east elevation and the inclusion of solar panels on the north-west facing roofslope of the existing property.

Existing North-East Elevation



Proposed North-East Elevation



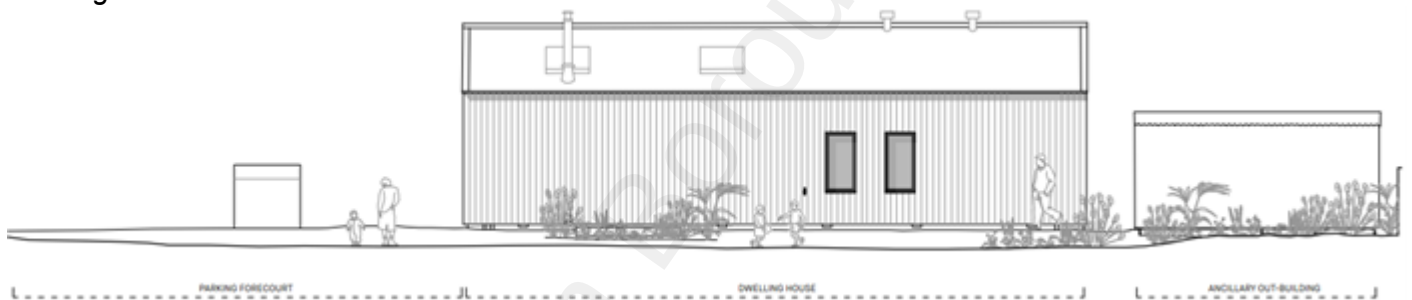
Existing South-East Elevation



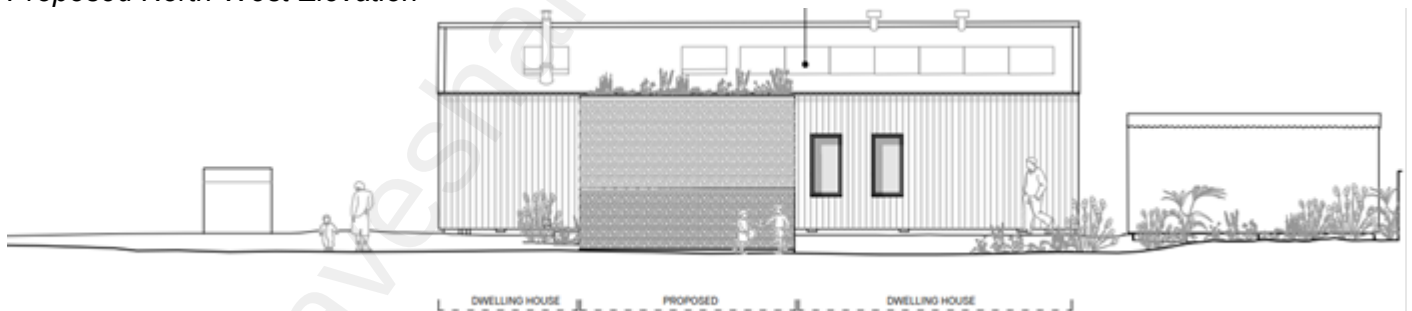
Proposed South-East Elevation



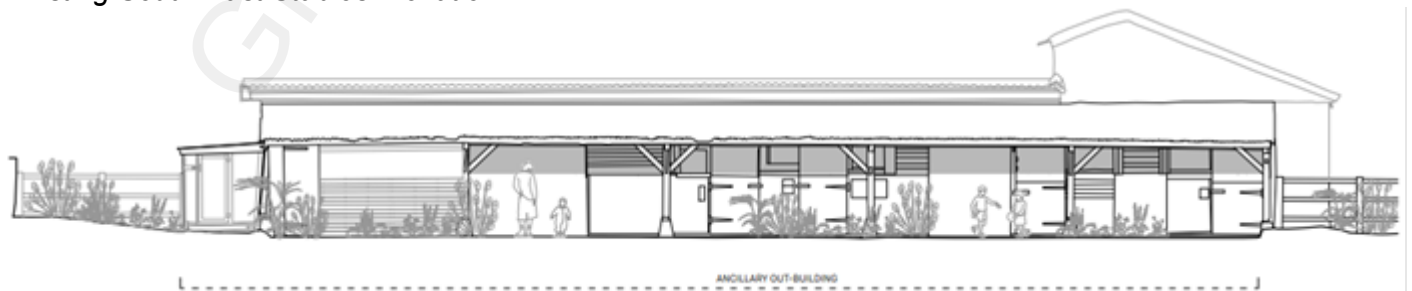
Existing North-West Elevation



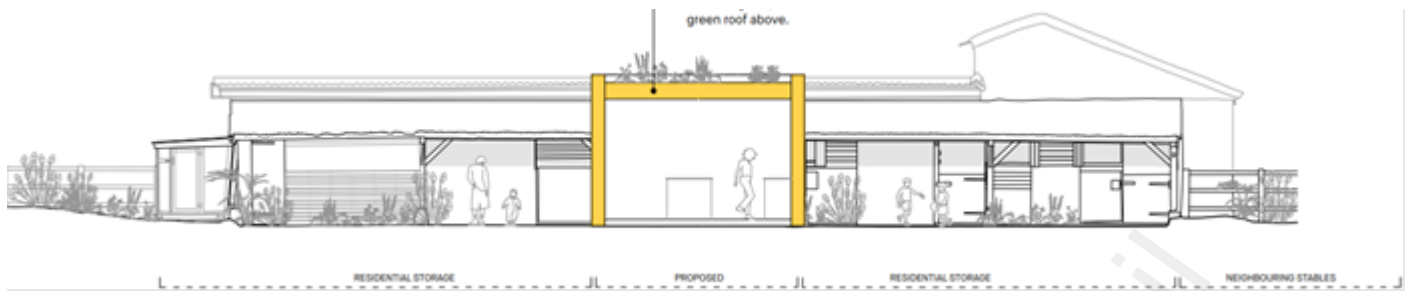
Proposed North-West Elevation



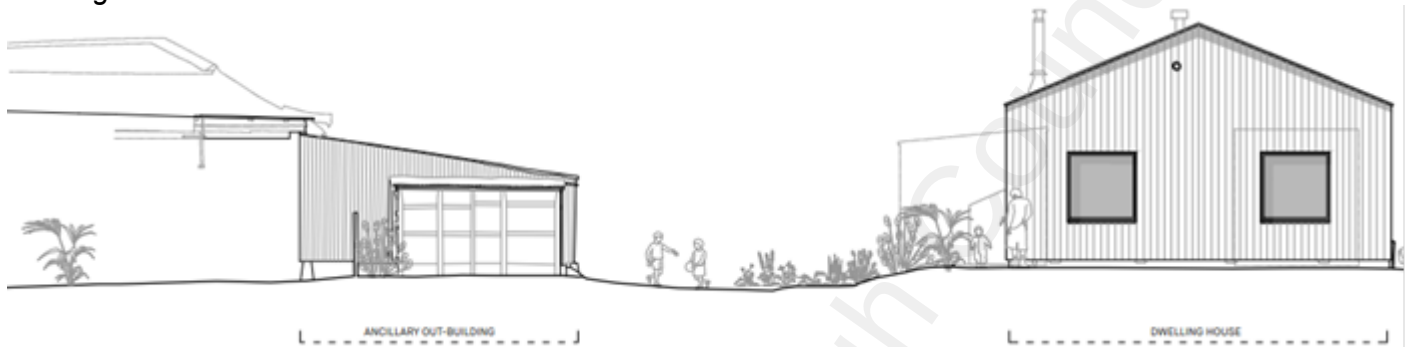
Existing South-East Stables Elevation



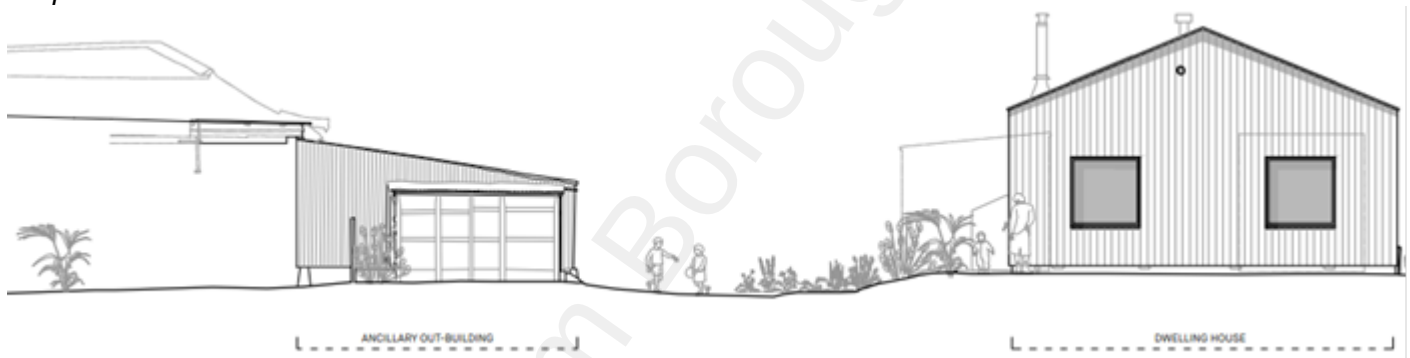
Proposed South-East Stables Elevation



Existing South-West Elevation



Proposed South-West Elevation



The appropriateness of the development within the Green Belt

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt is development that by definition, is 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.

The NPPF (2021) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. At paragraph 138 the NPPF (2021) lists the 5 purposes which the Green Belt serves. Of particular relevance in this case is that it assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The NPPF (2021) makes it clear that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, with a small number of exceptions (paragraph 149). The listed exceptions include 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.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) (LPCS) prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it 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 (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in (LPCS).

Furthermore, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) (LPFR), which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, 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 the NPPF (2021).

In particular Policy C13 (LPFR) 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 weight.

In determining proposals for residential extensions in the Green Belt an assessment will be made against the impact of the 'original' existing development. The original building is the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, however, for older homes constructed prior to July 1st, 1948, the 'original dwelling' refers to the floorspace of the dwelling as it was on this date. Any additions that have occurred since the 'original' dwelling date are considered cumulatively and will be counted as part of the overall increase in floorspace of the dwelling when new additions are being assessed. The reason for this is small reductions in openness, repeated many times, can have a cumulatively detrimental effect.

The existing dwelling in this case does not appear to have been extended since its original construction.

Whilst the existing stables does add to a cumulative footprint, it is not within residential use and although the description includes the change of use, previously the residential use for habitable space was deemed unacceptable and therefore this has been revised to be used for storage only and a smaller extension to the existing property has been proposed to overcome the previous refusal reason. Therefore in essence the proposal is for new extension to the existing residential dwelling only and shall be treated as such. The use of the stable block for storage will be assessed as a separate issue.

Existing dwelling (as built)

Ground Floor 89.52m²

Total floor space: 89.52m²

Proposed Extensions

Ground Floor 29.6m²

Total floor space proposed: **119.12m²**

Total Percentage Increase of Floorspace (over original dwelling): 33.06%

Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) provides the local interpretation of national policy and states there will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.

In this case the increased floorspace does not exceed the one third limit and therefore is within the parameters set by Policy C13 (LPFR).

The original dwelling is a modest well-designed single storey dwelling. The proposed extension would be a modest flat roof extension on the north-west facing elevation between the host dwelling and the existing stables. It would not be highly visible from public vantage points due to the existing built form and would not extend past the footprints of the existing property or stable block. Whilst flat roof design is not in keeping with the existing pitch roof of the property, the height would sit below the existing eaves and would

not dominant the existing dwelling. As such, the proposed development is considered to be a modest addition to the original build.

The proposed extension is within the one third limit set out in Saved Policy C13 of Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and therefore in accordance with this policy. It is also considered to be a proportionate increase above the original dwelling as defined in the NPPF (2021).

Impact on the openness of the Green Belt

The NPPF (2021) makes it clear that an essential characteristic of Green Belt is their openness. Open means the absence of development irrespective of the degree of visibility of the land in question or from public vantage points.

This stance is reflected in Saved Policy C13 of Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) which seeks to protect the openness of the countryside and ensure that extensions are not excessive in size which may lead to harm to the openness.

The existing dwelling is a modest 2-bed dwelling with the stable block located to the north-west. The proposal seeks to retain the existing stable block and use as residential storage and for the erection of a modest single storey extension to the existing property to provide a new entrance and kitchen area. The proposed extension would result in an increase footprint of 29.6m² to the existing dwelling. Further, the extension would be set between the host dwelling and the stable block and would not project beyond the existing built form.

It is therefore considered that the proposed extension would be an acceptable and subservient addition to the host dwelling that would not result in detrimental bulk or massing. It is considered that the proposed extension would not result in an undesirable increased built form on the site.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed development would not undermine the openness of the site and would preserve the character and appearance of the Green Belt and would be in accordance with the NPPF (2021).

Character and appearance

The application property is located along Jeskyns Road and is set approximately 6.99m from the front boundary with post and rail fencing and soft landscaping surrounding the property, it is noted that there is no uniformity of property design within the local area. The property is a single storey modest property that was converted from a barn. Due to the orientation of the road, together with the landscaping on site, the majority of the views of the proposed extension would be obscured. The proposed whilst being flat roof, would not dominant the existing built form and would sit below the existing eaves. The proposed materials have been chosen to respect the existing materials and the use of knapped flint, sedum roof and matching doors and windows would be acceptable in this location and as such it is considered that the impact of the proposed extension on the streetscene is minimal. Overall it is considered that the extension is a modest addition to the dwelling that would not detract or result in a detrimental impact on the host property.

Stable Use

In terms of the existing stables, there are no external alterations proposed and therefore there is no impact. The stables do not appear to be being used for the housing of animals and it is unlikely that it would be in the future due to the proximity of the host dwelling. To bring the use of the stables into domestic storage would encourage its retention and maintenance and therefore use of domestic storage is not considered to be unacceptable subject to a condition ensuring that it is not used as habitable space in the future.

Residential Curtilage

In terms of increasing the residential curtilage of the property, it is not considered that increasing the residential curtilage to the north-west in line with the existing post and rail fencing would result in a detrimental impact on the Green Belt or Landscape Character Area. A condition removing permitted development rights for outbuildings will be imposed in order to protect the openness of the site.

In conclusion it is considered that this current application has overcome the previous refusal reason and the proposal would not result in a harmful effect to the Green Belt or surrounding area. The proposal would in accordance with Policies CS02 and CS19 of the Local Plan Core Strategy, Saved Policy C13 of Gravesham Local Plan First Review and the Section 13 of the NPPF (2021).

Impact on adjacent properties.

Development should not cause demonstrable harm to the amenity of any existing residents or property such that it will materially harm their living conditions. 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 130 of the NPPF (2021) which requires the amenity of existing residents to be protected.

Given the sufficient distance to the neighbouring properties, it is considered that the proposed development would not adversely affect the neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, privacy, outlook and increased overshadowing. As such, the proposal would comply with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and the NPPF (2021).

Parking and Highways

The property benefits from an existing driveway providing 4 parking spaces. The proposal would not result in an increase of bedrooms and would not result in a detrimental impact due to the existing parking provision. There is no objection on the grounds of highway safety. The proposal complies with Policies CS11 and CS19 (LPCS) and Saved Policy P3 (LPFR).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Landscape Character Area

Section 15 of the NPPF (2021) highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced and the greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting.

The application site is located within the Istead Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. The topography is gently undulating with open arable fields. The area is characterised by fields divided by tracks, roads and occasional hedgerows with orchards to the east. The condition is considered poor and the guidelines are to restore and create.

Due to the nature of this proposal with the proposed built form not projecting further to the north-east or south-west than the existing, there will be no direct impact on the landscape character area. As such the proposal would accord with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the NPPF (2021).

Biodiversity & Ecology

The existing north-west side of the property has extensive hardstanding due to the presence of the stable block and the previous use of the dwelling as a barn for the housing of agricultural vehicles and as such it is considered that the proposed extension would not result in a biodiversity net loss. The stables are open sided and therefore the building will be draughty and high levels of natural lighting limiting the suitability of the building to be used by roosting bats and the existing dwelling is relatively new and in good condition reducing the likelihood of features being present which are used by roosting bats.

In terms of breeding birds, it is possible the existing buildings may be used by breeding birds. All breeding birds and their young are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and therefore an informative will be added to the decision notice.

Conclusion

The proposal is a sustainable form of development that accords with local and national planning policy including policies pertaining to Green Belt, heritage assets, Landscape Character and design. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation

Permission subject to conditions

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Amanda Grout	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>A Grout</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	11 th March 2022	Dated:	11th March 2023