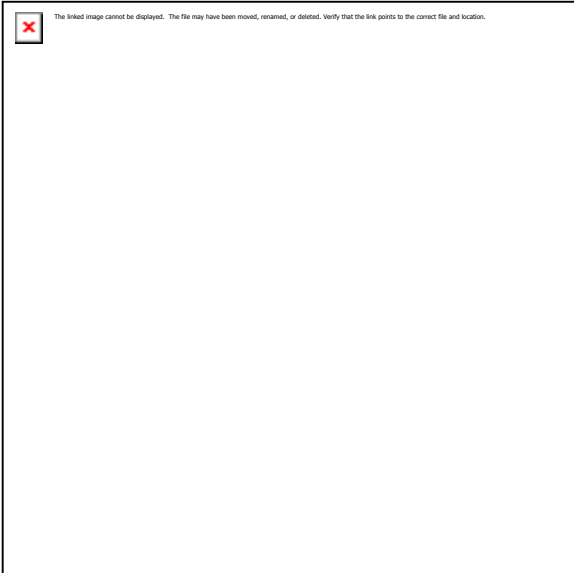




Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20220040

Location: Valley Side 53 Rhododendron Avenue Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of a single storey side extension, demolition of an existing rear gable end and erection of a rear dormer.

Applicant: Mrs Iveta Webester

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

Planning Application Form;
Drawing No. 3621.WD.02 – Existing Floor and Site Plans with Location Plan;
Drawing No. 3621.WD.02B – Proposed Floor and Site Plans;
Drawing No. 3621.WD.03 – Existing Elevations Front East and Side North;
Drawing No. 3621.WD.04 – Existing Elevations Rear West and Side South;
Drawing No. 3621.WD.05B – Proposed Elevations Front East and Side North; and
Drawing No. 3621.WD.06B – Proposed Elevations Rear West and Side South.

Relevant Planning History

There is quite extensive planning history on this site, however for the purposes of assessing this current application, the following entry is considered to be the most relevant in terms of the existing site.

Application Ref. No.	Description	Status	Date
20020157	Erection of two detached three bedroom dwellings with rooms in the roofspace, both with detached double garages and installation of one new cesspool.	Permission	17.06.2002

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

Meopham Parish Council

The Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds of inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

KCC - West Kent Public Rights Of Way Officer

Public Rights of Way NS293 lies to the east of the site and may be affected by the application and I therefore enclose a copy of the Public Rights of Way network map showing the definitive line of this path for your information.

It is important to advise the applicants that a public right of way must not be stopped up, diverted, obstructed or the surface disturbed and there must be no encroachment on the current width, at any time now or in future. This includes any building materials or waste generated during any of the construction phases. Please note that no furniture or fixtures may be erected on or across Public Rights of Way without the express consent of the Highways Authority.

KCC - Heritage Conservation (E & W)

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential.

I consider it unlikely, however, that these relatively limited proposals will have a significant archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by a site notice and individual neighbour letters to 5 properties with an overall consultation expiry date of 11th February 2022. No letters of representation have been received.

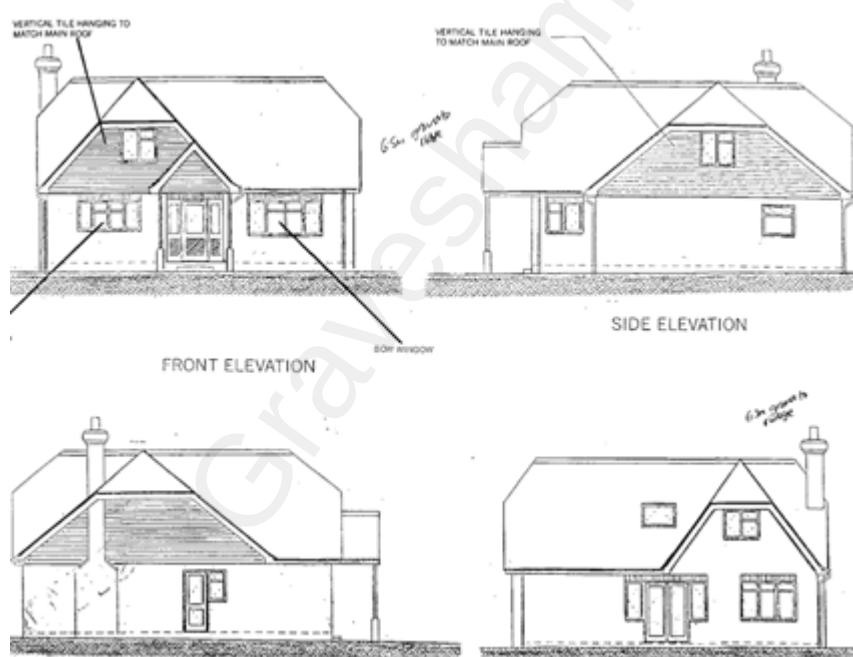
The Local Ward Councillors were also consulted and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Background

From the planning history, planning permission was granted in 2002 for the erection of two detached three bedroom dwellings with rooms in the roofspace, both with detached double garages and installation of one new cesspool (Ref. 20020157). It would appear from the plans available that the property that was constructed is in accordance with approved plans, and with the exception of the canopy to the side that is to be demolished as part of the current application, the property appears to be the original property.

Approved Plans for Doldela (Ref. 20020157)



There does not appear to be any history in relation to the canopy

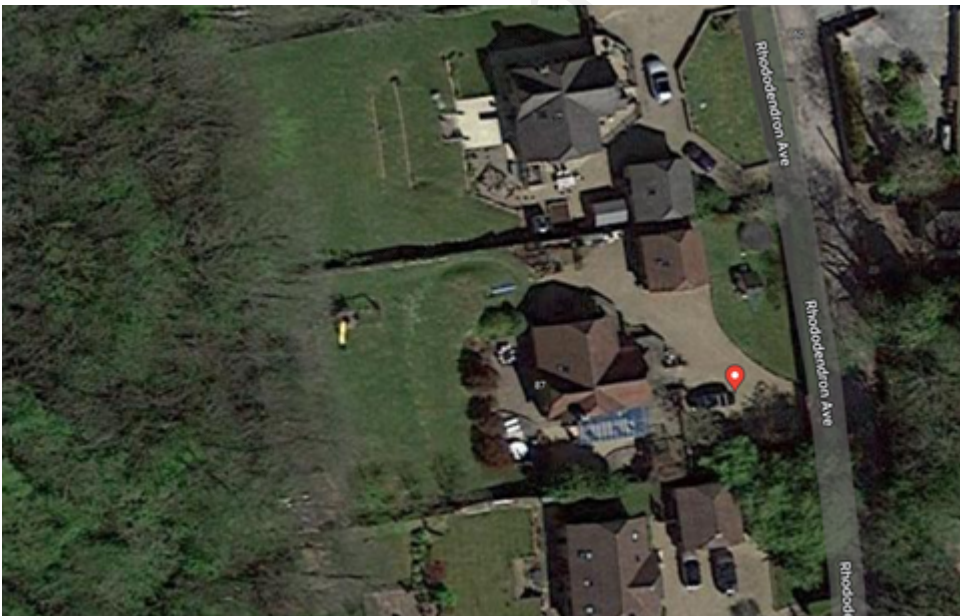
The key issues in consideration of this application is whether;

- the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if inappropriate its effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land with it;
- the proposal would impact on adjoining properties;
- the proposal would impact the living conditions of future occupiers
- the proposal would result in any parking and highway safety issues;
- the proposal would adversely impact on the landscape character of the site;

Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located in the Green Belt and in the Harvel Wooded Downs 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 application site at Valley Side, 53 Rhododendron Avenue is a detached chalet style bungalow set in a large plot. The property benefits from a large detached double garage to the front and off road parking to the front for more than three cars and two detached outbuildings to the rear.



The proposal is for the erection of a single storey side extension, demolition of an existing rear gable end and erection of a rear dormer.

Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



Existing Side (North) Elevation



Proposed Side (North) Elevation



Existing Side (South) Elevation



Proposed Side (South) Elevation



Existing Rear Elevation



Proposed Rear 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, with the exception of the canopy to the side.

Existing dwelling (as built)

Ground Floor 80.85m²

First Floor 68.02m²

Total floor space: 148.87m²

Proposed Extensions

Ground Floor 38m²

First Floor 6.75m²

Total floor space increase: 44.75m²

Total floor space proposed: **193.62m²**

Total Percentage Increase of Floorspace (over original dwelling): 30.05%

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 would be less than the one third limit and therefore is within the parameters set by Policy C13 (LPFR).

The original dwelling is a modest well-designed chalet style bungalow. The proposed side extension would replace the canopy to the side. The proposed single storey side extension would have a gable end to the front and rear with full height glazing. The roof would be pitch on both sides with 6no. roof lights on the south facing roofslope and would not join the side elevation or barn hip roof of the existing dwelling and would appear as disjointed and incongruous addition that does not relate well to the existing dwelling. The proposed front single dormer would be a gable style and would respect the host dwelling and therefore there is no objection in this regard. The rear dormer would be large box style dormer which would pan across the majority of the rear roofslope. A box dormer is not considered to either respect or enhance the host property and would result in a crude projection from the roofslope.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed extensions are within the one third limit increase over the original dwelling, they have not been designed to reflect the existing dwelling and do not incorporate features of the original property, that are not considered to be subservient to the original build.

The proposed extension and rear dormer would result in an incongruous and discordant additions to the existing dwelling that neither respect or enhance the property and the development is therefore contrary to Policy CS19 of the Local Plan Core Strategy.

Impact on the openness of the Green Belt

The NPPF (2021) makes it clear than 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 3-bed chalet style bungalow with detached double garage to the front. The proposed side extension would project 3.69m past the principle rear elevation and 4m from the principle side elevation, both of which are considered to be modest projections. The footprint of the extension itself is not considered to be excessive, however the design fails to respect the host dwelling.

Together with the above, the proposed extensions would result in a form of development that is not subservient to the existing dwelling. It is considered that the proposed extension by way of footprint would not result in an undesirable increased built form on the site, however it does fail on design.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed development by footprint alone, would not undermine the openness of the site and would preserve the character and appearance of the Green Belt and would accord with the NPPF (2021).

Very Special Circumstances

As indicated above, national planning advice states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Furthermore, it states 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 application does not include Very Special Circumstances within the supporting details.

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 a detached double garage and an existing driveway providing 4 parking spaces. The proposal would not result in an increase of bedrooms. 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 Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. The topography is varied with steep valley sides and plateaux. The area is characterised by ancient woodland, chestnut coppice and small paddocks of pasture. The condition is considered moderate and the guidelines are to conserve and create.

Due to the nature of this proposal with the proposed built form not being excessive in projection, 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).

Conclusion

The proposed side extension and rear dormer, by virtue of the design and relationship to the host dwelling, would harm the character and appearance of the application building and the character of the area. The proposal would result in an overall incongruous design which would fail to comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, and paragraphs 126 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Recommendation

Refusal

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Amanda Grout	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	<i>A Grout</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	11 th March 2022	Dated:	11 March 2022