

Planning Department
 Gravesham Borough Council

12 December 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

MEADOW COTTAGE, SCHOOL LANE, HIGHAM, KENT ME3 7JG
PLANNING PORTAL REFERENCE PP- 11762402

This planning application seeks a first floor, rear extension at Meadow Cottage, School Lane, Higham. This letter outlines the relevant planning history, planning policy and supporting information.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks a first floor, extension, projecting over an existing flat roof to the rear of the property. The proposal would be clad in painted timber boarding, to match the existing house and have slate roof tiles to match. The proposal would accommodate an additional bedroom with shower room.

Planning History

The following planning history for the site is relevant:

Reference	Proposal	Decision
20140906	Change of use of ancillary outbuilding to a two bedroom dwelling with home office, parking, landscaping and separate curtilage to Home Farm Cottage	Granted 27/11/14
20141170	Revision to application 20140906 which sought the following amendments to the approved scheme: • The addition of a chimney flue; a rotary clothes dryer; a sky dish; and a television aerial; • The rewording of conditions 6 and 9 and the removal of conditions 10 and 11; • Removal of the existing greenhouse and its replacement with a shed.	Granted 23/03/15
20151151	Application for removal of condition 10 of planning permission reference no. 20141170 for change of use of ancillary outbuilding to an independent two bedroom dwelling with home office, parking, landscaping and a separate curtilage to Home Farm Cottage; to reinstate permitted development rights	Refused 10/02/16 Appeal allowed 26/01/17
20180043	Erection of single storey side and rear extensions	Granted 05/03/18

Planning Policy

In accordance with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, any application at the site should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

The Development Plan comprises the Gravesham Borough Local Plan (1st Review 1994, saved policies 2007) and the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014.

The following policy of the Local Plan saved policies 2007 is relevant:

Policy C13 outlines that extensions to dwellings will be considered on their merits but the Borough Council will expect the following criteria to be satisfied:-

- (i) The existing dwelling must be an “original dwelling”* in permanent use as a dwelling.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Those extensions which provide essential basic amenities such as a bathroom, toilet or kitchen, which are currently not available or are clearly inadequate, will normally be permitted.
- (iv) The extension shall not be in a form which would facilitate the future formation of a separate residential curtilage.
- (v) The dwelling to be enlarged must have sufficient curtilage to accommodate the extension without undue visual intrusion into the open countryside.
- (vi) The appearance, massing, scale, form and materials of any extension shall be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.
- (vii) Proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.

* “Original dwelling” for the purpose of policy C13 means a building in permanent residential use at 1st July 1948 or subsequently erected as a permanent dwelling in accordance with planning permission in that behalf
In such cases the modest enlargement should not in any case be greater than one third of the floorspace of the existing dwelling excluding garage(s) and outbuildings and the replacement of bungalows by dwellings of two or more storeys will be resisted.

The Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 Proposals Map (extract at Figure 1) illustrates that the site is located within the Green Belt (green shading) and that the settlement confines of Lower Higham lie to the west of the site (yellow line). School Lane is identified as being a local distributor route.



Figure 1: Extract from Gravesham Borough Local Plan Core Strategy Proposals Map

Local Plan Core Strategy **policy CS19** outlines design principles for new development including ensuring new development safeguards the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and that account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings. Account will also be taken of the wider site context.

Material Considerations

Development Management Policies DPD (Regulation 18 consultation)

The Development Management Policies DPD Regulation 18 consultation document included **policy DM 6** relating in part to extensions to existing buildings in the Green Belt. This policy outlines that proposals for extensions to an original building in the Green Belt will only be allowed where the extension will not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building unless justified by very special circumstances that clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.

The following will be taken into account in determining whether the proposal is proportionate: a) its footprint, floorspace and volume compared to the original building and b) whether its scale, mass and height is subservient to the original building. In addition to the above, Core Strategy Policy CS19 will be applied to determine whether the design of any proposed extension is appropriate, having regard to the presence of any existing extensions and outbuildings, prominence and visual impact of the proposal.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Paragraph 149 of the **NPPF** outlines that the extension of a building in the Green Belt comprises 'appropriate development', for which very special circumstances do not need to be demonstrated, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

The Government's **NPPG** outlines the factors that can be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt.

Main Planning Considerations

The main planning considerations in relation to the application relate to the scale of development and any impact on the Green Belt, design principles and residential amenities. These matters are addressed below.

Scale of Development and The Green Belt

The proposed extension is modest in scale and subservient in size relative to the host dwelling, Meadow Cottage and does not increase built footprint.

In response to saved Local Plan **policy C13**, the following points are made:

1. The existing dwelling is a permanent dwelling in accordance with a planning permission.
2. The proposed extension is sympathetic in scale to the host dwelling and would be hidden from public viewpoints.
3. The extensions would not facilitate the future formation of a separate residential curtilage.
4. The dwelling has sufficient curtilage to accommodate the extensions without undue visual intrusion into the open countryside.

5. The appearance, massing, scale, form and materials of the extension are appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.

Given the date of the Local Plan (1994), the NPPF policies, as well as the more recent Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 policies are considered to be the most up to date and relevant considerations in the determination of any application at the site. Local Plan policy C13's overall 'limit' for extensions of a third of the overall gross floor area of the original dwelling should be given very limited weight, since the policy wording it is not consistent with the thrust of the NPPF.

In relation to the more up to date **NPPF** policy at **paragraph 149** (and Development Management Plan DPD consultation document policy **DM6**), it is submitted that the extensions are entirely 'proportionate' in size relative to the original building and thus the proposal is in accordance with the NPPF and the proposal comprises 'appropriate development'. The proposed extension is of an appropriate scale and height relative to Meadow Cottage and is subservient in scale to the host dwelling.

Given the location of the proposed extension, it would be mostly hidden by outbuildings at Home Farm Cottage to the west, Meadow Cottage to the south and a landscaped buffer to the north. The proposal would thus not be prominent or cause any visual harm.

The proposal would not impact upon the NPPF's stated purposes of Green Belts for the following reasons:

- The proposal would not lead to the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- The proposal would not lead to neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- The proposal would not encroach upon the countryside;
- The proposal would not impact the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- The site comprises residential curtilage so would not prevent urban regeneration.

The proposal thus accords with Development Plan policies as well as the NPPF.

Design Principles and Residential Amenities

The design of the extension is appropriate, incorporating simple and complimentary low roof profile and matching materials to Meadow Cottage (see figure 2). The elevations are simple and sympathetic to the original building. The layout is appropriate, constituting an extension above an existing flat roof.



Figure 2: Meadow Cottage

The proposal would not impact upon the amenities of the occupiers of Home Farm Cottage to the west, being sufficient distance away and also being separated by outbuildings existing along the eastern boundary of Home Farm Cottage.

The proposal is thus in compliance with Local Plan Core Strategy policy CS19 as well as the NPPF and NPPG.

Conclusion

This letter has set out that the proposed first floor rear extension is proportionate in scale relative to Meadow Cottage and compliant with the NPPF. The design is appropriate, being subservient to the host dwelling, with matching materials and having a low roof profile.

The proposed extension would protect the amenities of the occupiers of Home Farm Cottage. It has also been demonstrated that the proposal accords with Local Plan, Local Plan Core Strategy policies as well as the NPPF and NPPG.

It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for the proposed development.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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