

Planning Statement

Little Westwood, Thong Lane, Shorne,
Kent DA12 4AD

Erection of a single story rear extension
and a two storey side extension.

FEBRUARY 2024

GRAHAM SIMPKIN PLANNING

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Project reference: PR4001



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a householder planning application for the following development at Little Westwood, Shorne DA12 4AD (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'):

"Erection of a single storey rear extension and a two-storey side extension"

- 1.2 This is a resubmission of a previously refused proposal for a similar development, under reference 20220523. This application was refused for the following reasons:

1. 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, contrary to saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), Policies CS01 (Sustainable Development), CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Sections 12 and 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

2. By virtue of the size, scale and design, the proposed side extension is considered to be unacceptable, as it is a bulky, dominant and un-subservient addition to the application property, that is considered to be detrimental to the character and appearance of the property itself. The development would fail to protect or enhance the Thong Conservation Area and the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. The development is therefore contrary to the requirements of paragraphs 130, 174, 179 and 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Policies CS12, CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD, October 2021, and the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment 2009.

- 1.3 The reasons for refusal have been addressed in this resubmission. The size, scale and bulk of the extension has been reduced. The applicant has also established a case of Very Special Circumstances to address the Green Belt concerns.
- 1.4 The property benefits from Permitted Development Rights, however this proposal would not fall within the criteria set out in the GPDO, and therefore permission is required.

- 1.5 The purpose of this development is to provide more space inside the dwelling to allow for a larger open plan living/dining area with a separate kitchen in the side extension. On the first floor it is proposed to change the layout to remove a small box bedroom and provide a new double bedroom with an en-suite and family bathroom.
- 1.6 The following Land Registry title is affected by the proposed development.

Land Registry Title	Description
K366537	Little West Wood, Thong Lane, Shorne, Gravesend DA12 4AD



2 Site Context

- 2.1 The site is located on the west side of Thong Lane, just before the junction with Shorne Ifield Road. The property itself is semi-detached and is one of the historic "Homes for Heroes" which were built in the 1920's.
- 2.2 The dwelling sits within a large plot, comprising a detached barn and off-road parking area to the north and a private garden to the rear of the property.
- 2.3 To the north of the property there are another pair of semi-detached dwellings, Nos. 37 and 38. These both also have sizeable outbuildings and off-road parking. No 37 has been extended to the side and rear, and No. 38 benefits from a conservatory which extends out to the rear.
- 2.4 To the south and west of the site is the property known as "Westwood Farm". The dwelling that occupies this site is attached to the application dwelling, and benefits from a conservatory to the side. Westwood Farm also occupies a large plot of land to the rear of the properties along this part of Thong Lane, which is used for agricultural / equestrian purposes. There are lots of buildings on this plot of land, together with grazing land and a paddock. Further to the south are the properties known as "Sakho Farmhouse" and "Dreams" both of which benefit from two storey side extensions.
- 2.5 To the east of the site is a large open field used as grazing land.
- 2.6 The dwelling itself is a modest dwelling of brick construction with concrete roof tiles. It has a pitch roof and gable roof design at the front and a catslide roof to the rear with partial dormer. The property is currently in a poor state of repair, and the applicant who recently purchased the property is keen to renovate it to a high standard so that he can live there with his family.
- 2.7 The property is located within the Green Belt and within the Thong Village Conservation Area.

3 Planning History

- 3.1 Prior to the applicants purchasing the property, no applications for redevelopment had been submitted. It has been established that the existing property is “original” except for the small conservatory to the rear.
- 3.2 The following planning history is listed on the Councils website, which includes a refused application for an earlier variation of this proposal, and two applications for Lawful Development Certificates for an outbuilding and rear extensions:
- Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed erection of two single storey rear extensions and an outbuilding. Ref. No: 20231241 | Received: Tue 05 Dec 2023 | Validated: Wed 06 Dec 2023 | Status: Certificate Granted.
 - Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed erection of two single storey rear extensions and an outbuilding. Ref. No: 20231003 | Received: Thu 28 Sep 2023 | Validated: Thu 28 Sep 2023 | Status: Certificate Refused.
 - Demolition of existing rear single storey extension, and erection of a two-storey side extension and single storey rear extension. Ref. No: 20220523 | Received: Tue 17 May 2022 | Validated: Thu 19 May 2022 | Status: Application Refused.

4 The Proposal

4.1 The proposal comprises the following elements:

- A two-storey side extension; and
- A single storey rear extension.

4.2 With regards to the two-storey element, this has been designed to match the host dwelling in terms of the pitch roof and has been set back from the principal front and the rear building line. The width of the projection from the original side wall is 3.2m. The width of the original dwelling is 7.4m, which is well below the set standard of “half the width of the original dwelling”.

4.3 Internally, the two-storey element will allow for the creation of a new kitchen on the ground floor, and a new double bedroom with en-suite bathroom on the first floor.

4.4 The single-storey rear element will facilitate the opening up of the ground floor area, to create a much more usable space for the occupants. It will project out from the original rear wall by 4.5m and will have a set of bi-folding doors to allow maximum sunlight into the ground floor of the property. The existing catslide roof is to be retained and has been incorporated into the design of the rear extension.

4.5 The extract below from the proposed block plan shows the proposed location of these elements:



5 Planning Policy

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Court of Appeal has clarified that for a decision maker this means establishing whether a proposal is in accordance with the development plan as a whole. The question of compliance with one policy should not dictate the outcome of a proposal in the absence of considering compliance with all other relevant policies. Decision makers are therefore tasked with identifying and understanding all relevant policies and material considerations in order to reach a properly informed planning judgment on a proposal, and to avoid an irrational or vulnerable decision that may be subject to criticism in a public law challenge.
- 5.2 Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') reiterates what is said in Section 38(6), whilst paragraph 12 of the Framework is clear that the development plan is the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.3 Paragraph 38 of the Framework encourages local planning authorities to approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. It also encourages working proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area, adding that decision-makers should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 5.4 Annex 1 of the Framework confirms that for the purposes of decision-taking, the policies in the plan should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of the Framework. It adds that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the Framework, with greater weight being given to those policies that are closer to the policies in the Framework.

Development Plan

5.5 It is understood that the Development Plan for the area within which the Site is located comprises the following documents:

- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies Map, September 2014
- Saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review, November 1994
- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 - 2030 (July 2016, revised 2020)

5.6 The relevant policies for this proposal are as follows:

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014:

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure Gravesham Borough Council
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 2014:

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

Other Material Considerations:

- Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD, October 2021
- Thong Rural Conservation Area Appraisal (2017)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

6 Planning Assessment

Key Issues

6.1 The key issues in this case are considered to be:

- The Green Belt;
- The impact on adjoining properties;
- The impact on the living conditions of future occupiers;
- Parking and highway safety issues;
- The landscape character of the site;

The Green Belt:

6.2 Policy CS12 and C13 seek to resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as set out in the NPPF. The policies restrict 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. It also requires the massing, scale and form of any extension to be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.

6.3 The NPPF at paragraphs 137 and 138 clearly sets out the purposes of the Green Belt.

“The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. 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 their permanence.

138. Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.’*

6.4 In terms of the impact of the currently proposed development on the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF, it is clear that the proposed development will not be contrary to the stated purposes of the Green Belt: It will not add to the sprawl

of a large built up area; It will not result in neighbouring towns merging into one another; It will have no impact on the countryside in terms of encroachment; The proposed development will not extend development into open countryside; It will not have any impact on the setting and special character of a historic town; It will not have any impact on urban regeneration.

- 6.5 It is also necessary to consider whether the proposal constitutes “appropriate development” in line with the advice of the NPPF and therefore whether it is necessary to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances if they are considered to be inappropriate development. Para 149 sets out that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate. Certain exceptions to this are then detailed:

149. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

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;

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

e) limited infilling in villages;

f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or – not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

- 6.6 Para 149C is relevant in this case. This proposal is for the extension of an existing building which does not result in “disproportionate additions” over and above the original building.
- 6.7 The applicant considers that the proposal has a negligible effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling and that the massing, scale, and form of the extensions are appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting. Although the proposals do exceed the one third allowance set out in Policy C13 (see table at para 6.9), the proposal is still therefore considered to be in accordance with the relevant Green Belt policies.

Very Special Circumstances

- 6.8 Without prejudice to the above, if the Council do not agree that this proposal is in accordance with the relevant Green Belt policies and is therefore inappropriate development, in line with para 152 of the NPPF, the applicant would set out the following case of Very Special Circumstances.
- 6.9 The dwelling benefits from full Permitted Development Rights. A Lawful Development Certificate has been obtained for a domestic outbuilding and two single storey rear extensions. A comparison table is set out below, which sets out the floor area, footprint and volume calculations for the existing dwelling, the additional created by the Permitted Development scheme, and the addition created by this preferred scheme:

	Internal Floor Area	External Footprint	Volume
Existing dwelling	81.47m ²	54.3m ²	521.85m ³
Approved LDC (Measurements for additional gained with the outbuilding and extensions)	75.93m ²	89.6m ²	293.63m ³

This proposal (Measurements gained with both proposed extensions)	54.06m2	48.54m2	192.98m3
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- 6.10 In terms of floor area, the LDC scheme would create an increase of **93%** over the existing dwelling. This proposal would represent an increase of **66%**.
- 6.11 In terms of footprint, the LDC scheme would create an increase of **165%** over the existing dwelling. This proposal would represent an increase of **89%**.
- 6.12 In terms of volume, the LDC scheme would create an increase of **56%** over the existing dwelling. This proposal would represent an increase of **37%**.
- 6.13 The LDC scheme can be built without any further consent from the Council. The applicant can provide this extra space for his family to benefit from but would much prefer to build the scheme which is the subject of this planning application. If permission cannot be obtained, he fully intends to implement the LDC scheme. The family wish to live at the property, but they need additional space, which may have to be achieved through the Permitted Development route.
- 6.14 The calculations above demonstrate that in all areas, the LDC scheme is much larger than this proposal and therefore has a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.15 In addition to the floor area, footprint and volume created by the LDC scheme being larger and therefore more harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, it is also well established that buildings that are further away from each other create a more harmful effect than extensions to existing buildings.
- 6.16 If permission is granted for this preferred scheme, the Council would be able to control any additional development at the site by applying restrictive conditions to the permission, removing Permitted Development Rights for any further outbuildings or extensions. This would protect the Green Belt from any further potential development.

- 6.17 In addition to the above, it is also evident that this preferred scheme is more attractive and fits in well with the surrounding area, due to it not being restricted by the PD criteria. The applicant has proposed to reflect the design of the original dwelling such as the pitch of the roof and has also retained prominent features such as the catslide roof to the rear.
- 6.17 The applicant is also aware that the two properties to the north of the site have been Compulsory Purchased by the Council to allow for the construction of the Lower Thames Crossing project. While the project has not yet begun, it is acknowledged that the area and landscape is likely to change significantly in the near future. This large-scale infrastructure project will minimise any effect of this small-scale householder improvement project on the Green Belt.
- 6.18 The applicant therefore considers that the benefits to the Green Belt for this scheme clearly outweigh the harm, and that a robust case of Very Special Circumstances has been provided.

The impact on adjoining properties:

- 6.19 The impact of this proposal on the neighbouring properties is considered against the criteria specified within Policy CS19. This sets out that new developments should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land.
- 6.20 Due to the separation distance between the dwelling and the adjoining properties and the scale of the proposal, it is considered the proposal would not result in loss of light, privacy, outlook, and increased overshadowing. As such the development is in accordance with the development plan policy in respect of the neighbouring properties.

The impact on the living conditions of future occupiers:

- 6.21 The NPPF sets out that proposals should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the living space of the main dwelling and as such accords with the relevant development plan policy.

Parking and highway safety issues:

- 6.22 The proposal will facilitate the rearrangement of the first floor of the dwelling. The small box room will be expanded to make it into a double bedroom. No additional bedrooms are being created. Therefore, there will be no impact on parking or highway safety issues, as there will be no additional vehicular movements.
- 6.23 In any event, the existing garage and driveway provide parking for more than three vehicles and therefore the development would accord with KCC Vehicle Parking Standards, and the proposals would therefore comply with Saved Policy P3 of the Local Plan and Policy CS11.

The landscape character of the site:

- 6.24 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.
- 6.25 The proposed side extension has been designed in a way that will not detract from the natural environment or the surrounding landscape. The property is not a single detached dwelling, isolated from other buildings. It is one of a pair of semi-detached properties, lining the west side of the road, with several other dwellings of similar appearance. As described in paras 2.3 – 2.4 several of these properties have been extended and altered over the years, with boundary treatments and frontages of varying size and finish. All these properties have detached outbuildings, and many of them have additional buildings that have been provided over the years.
- 6.26 The proposed development will reflect how some of the other properties have been altered, and even though it will be visible from the street and the opposite field, it will have a negligible impact when taking the wider context into account. The property has fallen into a poor state of repair over the years, and the applicant is proposing to renovate and restore the site, which will have a beneficial impact to the landscape and street scene.

- 6.27 The proposed single storey rear extension has a depth and width relative to the existing dwelling and its design reflects that of the surrounding character. The extensions will not interfere with neighbours in terms of their light/outlook and will not overlook into neighboring properties.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 This proposal will allow for the expansion and improvement of the property and the quality of life for the applicants and their family, who wish to renovate and live in the property for the foreseeable future.
- 7.2 The site is located within the Green Belt and is also within the Conservation Area. The property benefits from full Permitted Development Rights, and a recent Lawful Development Certificate has established that the property can be extended, and a domestic outbuilding can be provided without planning permission.
- 7.3 The applicant considers that the proposal is in accordance with the aspirations of both National and Local Green Belt policies, but has also provided a case of Very Special Circumstances to demonstrate that the benefits of this proposal clearly outweigh the potential harm.
- 7.3 The principle of the development is acceptable, and the design, character, and appearance will fit in well with the surround area and is in line with the guidance set out in the Councils documents. There will be a negligible visual impact on the landscape, in the context of the wider area, and there will be no harm to the amenity of the future occupiers or the neighboring properties. This development proposal is sustainable and in line with the adopted policy aspirations.
- 7.4 In consideration of all relevant development plan policies and material considerations, this application should be viewed positively by the authority, and it is respectfully requested that this submission is approved.