

Planning, Design and Access Statement

9 Pepys Close, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 8ER Proposed Alterations to Front Roof Pitch, Dormers, and Entrance Porch

Introduction

This statement supports a planning application for 9 Pepys Close, Northfleet, following the partial implementation of planning approval reference 20240547. That approval granted permission for a loft conversion to create four bedrooms and a bathroom including front and rear dormers and a front porch.

Construction has progressed under this approval; however, practical constraints have made it impossible to realise the intended internal layout, specifically the formation of two usable front bedrooms. This application seeks a modest and sympathetic revision to the front roof design that addresses headroom limitations while remaining sensitive to the surrounding context.

A pre-application enquiry was submitted, reference PRE20140286 which was validated on the 12th November 2024.

Synergy submitted a pre-application enquiry showed a proposal to alter the roof between the two dormers to provide more headroom with a set back from the front of the dormers and matching roof tiles being used. The response didn't support that approach to resolving the limited headroom issue.

Site and Context

No 9 Pepys Close is a detached chalet bungalow located in a residential street characterised by architectural variety. The surrounding homes exhibit a mix of hipped roofs, front-facing gables, full and half-hipped roofs, window bay projections, and varied storey heights.

Pepys Close is accessed off Chaucer Road which comprises a wide variety of house types and styles as shown in a photograph later in this statement. The close is part of a much larger housing area, a very urban area comprising all types of houses of wide ranging styles.

The property includes a front driveway and a rear garden.

The approved works under 20240547 have been partially implemented, including the front and rear dormers and porch. However, site experience during construction revealed that the front bedrooms could not be constructed as intended due to insufficient headroom between dormers.

The need for this revision

Despite adherence to the previously approved layout, the physical reality of the roof pitch between front dormers and to either side of the existing dormers has created unworkable headroom. This space cannot accommodate even a single usable bedroom, let alone the two approved rooms.

A revised design is therefore necessary to achieve a layout that delivers four usable bedrooms as intended — a critical requirement to support the applicant's multi-generational household, including elderly parents with medical needs.



The above photograph clearly shows the lack of headroom. The wall on the left is the dividing wall between the front and rear bedrooms. The stairs rise on the far side of the photograph and clearly there is not enough room for the front bedrooms.



Works have stopped on site. This photograph shows the two approved front dormers, the roof pitch between the dormers which results in very limited internal headroom.

Proposed Development

The revised proposal introduces:

- A forward extension of the eaves across the bay windows, creating a steeper front pitch.
- Two front dormers, now with reduced projection and height relative to the previously approved version.
- External materials matching the existing house, including roof tiles and red brick.
- A revised porch design with facing brick up to window cill height and glazing above.

These changes are designed to minimise visual impact, preserve the character of the original property, and ensure consistency with neighbouring architectural forms.

Design Justification

This revision retains the chalet bungalow character and proportions, whilst improving internal usability with minimal external change.

Addressing Design Concerns:

- Visual Bulk: Dormers are now lower and less projecting than those previously approved.

- **Roof Slope Dominance:** The steeper front pitch is more consistent with neighbouring properties and reduces the need for intrusive dormer massing.
- **Blank Facades:** The design breaks up roof mass through dormer articulation, matching materials, and eaves projection to reduce any overbearing appearance.

The revised design is respectful of the varied roof forms and elevations seen throughout Pepys Close, which lacks uniformity in height, orientation, or frontage.

Streetscape and Contextual Integration

Visual evidence demonstrates that Pepys Close contains a broad range of roof types and façade treatments, including:

- Full-height front gables
- Varied eaves levels
- Half-hipped projections
- Front-facing dormers of varying sizes

The proposal fits comfortably within this context and does not introduce any form or feature alien to the street.





These images show the variation in designs, roof pitches, house layouts and settings in the street, storey heights within this close of houses.



The aerial photograph makes it clear the differences between the houses in the close. None are the same in terms of design, width, depth, setting and overall height. There is a two storey house at the end of the close with gable to the road next to a bungalow with hip to the road, next to a gable end to a pair of semi-detached houses etc.

The photograph below shows the variety of house design and roof pitches in the road from which Pepys Close is accessed. Below that are two images showing the wider variety of houses found in this large housing estate area.







Access

Access to the property remains unchanged. A single step leads to the front door. The location benefits from good access to public transport (bus services and Ebbsfleet station) and is within walking distance of shops and supermarkets.

Policy Compliance

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS19 – Development and Design Principles: The proposed design is high quality, uses matching materials, and is sympathetic to the local built environment.
- CS11 – Transport: No impact on parking or highway safety.
- CS01/CS02: Efficient use of land within the urban area.

NPPF (2024)

- Paragraph 135: Development is visually attractive, fits with the local character, and uses appropriate materials.
- Paragraph 139: The proposal avoids poor design by responding to site constraints without compromising streetscape quality.
- Section 11: Optimises the use of land to enable multi-generational living.
- Section 12: Promotes good design that meets functional needs while respecting context.

Householder Extensions Design Guide (2021)

While this guide discourages excessive bulk on front roof slopes, it allows dormers where a

precedent exists and where the design avoids overwhelming the host building. The revised proposal achieves this by reducing scale, using articulation, and setting back roof elements.

Sustainability

The revised design maintains nearly all the approved structure, minimising waste and reusing materials such as roof timbers and tiles. It avoids full demolition or more invasive changes, making it a sustainable and efficient solution.

Conclusion

This revised proposal:

- Represents a minor but necessary amendment to previously approved works;
- Resolves a genuine liveability and usability constraint without materially increasing visual impact;
- Is sympathetic to both the existing house and the broader character of Pepys Close;
- Complies with local and national planning policy, including Gravesham's Core Strategy, the 2021 Design Guide, and the NPPF.

We respectfully request that Gravesham Council consider the full context, the revised and more modest design approach, and the pressing need for the property to serve a multi-generational family. We are confident this proposal delivers a well-considered and policy-compliant solution.

END