



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240412

Location: 34 The Braes Higham Rochester Kent

Description: Installation of side dormer to create an ensuite bathroom.

Applicant: Mr Stuart Burles

Site Visit Date: As per most recent application

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form

34-THE-BRAES-FF-01 B – Existing Floor Plans, Block Plan and Roof Plan

34-THE-BRAES-FF-02 B – Existing Elevations

34-THE-BRAES-FF-03 B – Proposed Floor Plans, Block Plan and Roof Plan

34-THE-BRAES-FF-04 B – Proposed Elevations

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20240074	Raising of existing side roof.	Refused	21.03.2024
20110611	Erection of single storey rear extension to form an enlarged kitchen/dining room and a conservatory.	Permitted	07.09.2011

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 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;
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Higham Parish Council

No comments received.

Neighbouring properties

6no. surrounding properties were consulted, and 0 comments were received from members of the public. The final date to submit comments was 6th June 2024.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application follows previous refusal under planning reference 20240074 for 'Raising of existing side roof.'. Whilst this proposal is for alternative description 'Installation of side dormer to create an ensuite bathroom.', the result would be similar to that previously proposed. As the below snipped proposed elevations (Not to Scale) show, the position and intent of the works would be similar.

Plans refused under 20240074



Proposed Plans



Principle of Development

This application is located in a Rural Settlement inset from the Green Belt, where alterations and extensions to residential buildings are generally acceptable in principle as per Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development.

However, all other relevant matters should be considered. In this instance, the main points to consider would be the potential impact on; Visual Amenity (Design, Character and Appearance), Amenity of Future Occupiers, Residential Amenity of neighbours and Landscape Character Area.

Given the similarity between this proposal and the most recently refused scheme, the proposed development would need to demonstrate that it overcomes the refusal reasons. The refusal reasons were:

1. *The proposed development by virtue of its scale, bulk, massing and design would be an overly dominant and incongruous form of development which would not be sympathetic to or in keeping with the immediate streetscene it is situated in. The positive contribution that the existing dwelling makes to the streetscene would be replaced with a development that would cause harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene. In this respect the proposal is contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).*
2. *The proposed dwelling by virtue of its scale, bulk, massing, design and proximity to neighbouring dwellings would cause overshadowing, be overbearing and be unneighbourly form of development which would be harmful to the amenity and privacy of neighbouring properties. In this respect the proposal is contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).*

For consistency, parts of this assessment may reflect the previous one but the application has been assessed on its own merits and repeated elements are only included where still relevant.

Design, Character and Appearance

As shown in the below image, this application relates to a two-storey detached dwellinghouse, in a residential area.



Image taken from Google Earth (2019)

The dwellinghouses on this section of the street, have similar appearances from the streetscene with similar, layout, form, design and setback on 30, 32, 34 and 36 The Braes. The topography of the road increases from north to south and the height relationship between the dwellinghouses reflect this. Whilst there is variation in design in the wider street setting, this is sectional with dwellinghouses of similar designs clustered together, result in a harmonious appearance and more subtle change in designs. As the below image indicates, the subject dwellinghouse is located in a cluster of similarly designed dwellinghouses and so changes visible from the front, would be more apparent in the streetscene.



There is currently a pitched roof side projection, set back from the front elevation, which has a lower eave height than the main part of the dwellinghouse, setting it apart from the main bulk as subordinate.

Given the nature and appearance of this side projection, paragraph 10.8 of the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD, on Side Roof Extensions is useful in assessing how such elements of a building should be designed. The first part of paragraph 10.5 is included below with relevant sections highlighted.

Roof Extensions

Side roof extensions

10.8 The use of loft space to provide additional accommodation can often provide more space for relatively little cost, using natural light through the use of skylights. Roof extensions, such as dormer windows or box extensions which project out from the roof slope, should be used where there is a need to enlarge the useable floor space within a loft or where they are more characteristic of the area. Extensions and alterations to roofs should be set away from the gables, hips, eaves and ridge of a property and follow the guidance below:

- **Height:** Should be lower than the existing ridge-line.
- **Massing:** Should not wrap around two-sides of a hipped roof unless in special circumstances where it can be justified; this will be judged on a case by case basis. Dormers should not overwhelm the roof slope within which they are to be placed, being sited well clear of the roof edges and eaves.
- **Alignment of Windows:** Should include window position and design which reflects the position, design and character of windows to the lower levels of the host building.
- **Detail:** Large blank facades on dormers can have an overbearing appearance and will not generally be acceptable.
- **Unbalancing:** If proposing a hip to gable roof extension, this should not interrupt or unbalance the pattern of roof form visible from the street.



Hip-to-gable extensions that impact the symmetry of houses and the character of the street will be refused.



A dormer with a flat roof which extends from eaves to the ridge of the roof is not considered good design and is likely to be rejected.

The proposed dormer would be lower than the existing ridge line and would be set above the eaves and in from the sides. On balance it would be a small increase in terms of built form and bulk.

Paragraph 9.3, discusses roof design guidance specifically.

9.3 Matching roof styles and pitches should be used in new extensions and new extensions should normally not be larger, higher or forward of the existing dwelling unless they echo an existing characteristic in the local area. It is usually preferable for an extension to have a lower roofline and be set back behind the front building line. In most cases a flat-roofed extension to the front or side, or where clearly visible from the street, will not be supported (unless the original house main roof is flat).

The only exception identified for flat roofs is where the original house main roof is flat. That is not the case in this instance and there is no existing character of flat roof designs in the wider area.

The existing dwellinghouse is reflective of the wider character of the area and the neighbouring properties on either side of the same design and form. The roof extension would be to the side projection which is setback and uses a similar pitch which slopes down from the eaves of the main part of the dwellinghouse, creating a somewhat reflective and subservient appearance. This appearance is cohesive with the wider setting and streetscene from which the side projection is visible. The proposed roof extension would remove the reflective pitch and replace this with a flat roof dormer extension, which would have a harsh and incongruent appearance, contrasting the sloping roof of the main dwelling and those dwellings in the wider area. However, given the minor scale of the proposed addition, and its setback from the front elevation, its visibility would be reduced. Whilst it is unfortunate that the proposed addition would impact the symmetry and cohesiveness of the row of dwellings, the proposed dormer would likely meet permitted development

requirements for a side dormer in terms of scale and position. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to refuse this application based on the design element. Refusal reason 1 has been overcome by this proposal.

On balance, the proposed development would comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2023) in terms of design, character and appearance.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The NPPF (2023) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, which states that new development 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. The impact on neighbours will be assessed in the next section of the report.

The proposed roof extension would create an ensuite, attached to bedroom. The ensuite would be 4.3m². Bedroom 1 would have spacing of 20.9m². It is noted this would be partially height restrictive but the location of the proposed ensuite would be in the existing restricted height roof and so useable bedroom space would be unimpacted.

Both these rooms would meet the internal space standards required by the SPG 2 Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020. No changes are proposed which would impact the actual external amenity space or the required external amenity space.

Neighbouring Amenity

As outlined above, it is important that any development safeguards the amenity of neighbouring properties and land. Following a period of consultation with neighbouring properties, one objection to the proposal was received.

There are two adjoining properties;

36 The Braes

This neighbour is located to the south whilst the changes proposed to the roof would be to the north of the roof slope. The changes would not change the appearance of the building from the perspective of this neighbour's position and the potential impacts to this neighbour would therefore be minimal.

32 The Braes

This neighbour is located to the north of the dwellinghouse. The proposed roof extension would be to the north side of the dwellinghouse and so the changes would be apparent from this neighbour's perspective. There is 1.3m between these dwellinghouses and the subject building sits by the shared boundary. There would be no changes to width or depth and so the distances would be retained. However, there would be a 1.4m height increase at the closest point (From the eaves). So, there would be potential for impacts associated with overshadowing and so further assessment on potential overshadowing would be necessary.

The below 25-degree test shows the approximate central point of neighbouring windows in orange, based on the distance between the dwellinghouse and the height disparity. The yellow lines represent a 25 degree projection from the central point of the neighbouring windows.



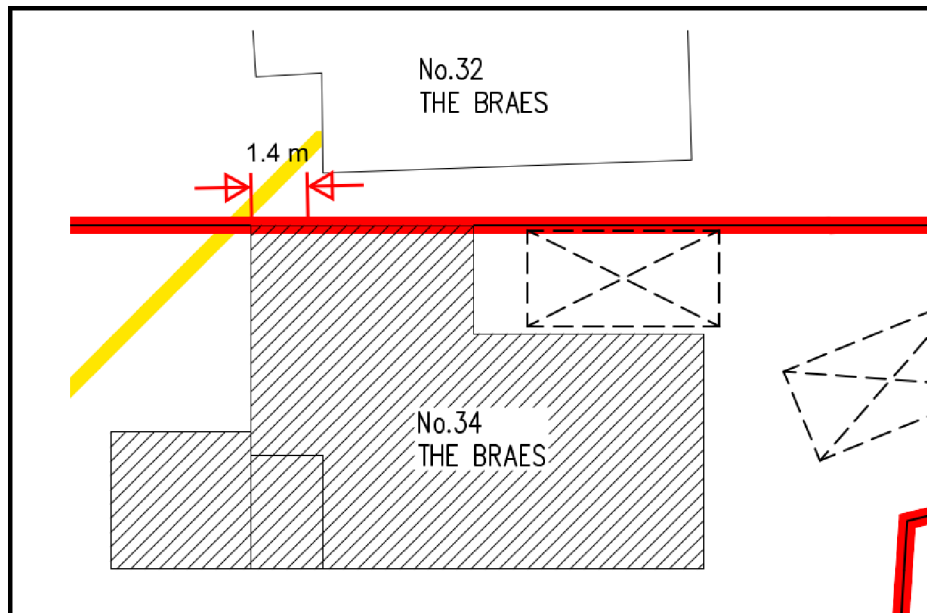
As can be seen the proposed flat roof dormer could overshadow the neighbour's windows. It is clear that the roofline currently overshadows the ground floor neighbour's windows to the side. However, this is a WC window and staircase window and so non habitable.

The window serving dining room at ground floor and bedroom at first floor could be impacted based on the image below. The neighbour property no.32 is shown in the left, with the application property to the right. The red box outlines where the extension will occur;



From this image it is clear to see why this section of the roof was designed with a catslide roof in the first instance, to minimise impact on the neighbouring property. The proposal roof alteration could result in an unneighbourly form of development, reducing light to the rear elevation of 32 The Braes.

However, unlike the previous application, this proposed extension would be set in by 1.4m from the rear elevation. As the below drawing shows, when set back by 1.4m it is unlikely that the proposed roof extension would overshadow the windows on the rear elevation. This is further demonstrated by the 45 degree test, shown in yellow from the position of the window.



There would be no windows facing this property resulting from the scheme and so no overlooking concerns arise. Refusal reason 2 would be overcome by this proposed scheme.

The proposal is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties contrary to policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Landscape Character Area

The application site is located within the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by very gently undulating topography and open arable farmland. There is the original Saxon village of Lower Higham and more recent development to the south with marsh side hamlets and settlements.

Policy CS12 of Gravesham Core Strategy (2014) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

The proposal is for alterations to an existing property which is located in a built up rural settlement inset from the Green Belt. Although the proposed development would increase the size of the property marginally, it would still be maintained as an open site due to the size of the plot and the surrounding garden and as such the proposed development would not be detrimental to the open, rural landscape character of the surrounding area.

In respect of landscape character, the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Conclusion & Recommendation

On balance, the proposed development complies with all relevant national and local planning policies, and

likely to be permissible as permitted development. Refusal reason 1 and 2 are both overcome by the proposed development through a reduction in scale and massing. The recommendation is therefore to approve.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	27th June 2024	Dated:	27 June 2024