

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20251230

Location: Farmcroft Church Street Higham Rochester

Description: Erection of a detached garden building for use as a hobby room and garden storage.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Graham and Karen Wellspring

Site Visit Date: Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
PP25/2137/01 – Site Location Plan, Existing and Proposed Block Plans
Proposed Plans
Planning, Design and Access Statement (Incorporating Heritage Statement)
Appendix A – Aerial Photograph of Site
Appendix B – Photographs of Site
Appendix C – Proposed External Finish to Elevations
Appendix D – Conservation Area Appraisal
Appendix E – Conservation Area Appraisal
Appendix F – Conservation Area Appraisal

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20161158	Conversion of existing garage to form kitchen and erection of a orangery.	Permitted	10.02.2017
19830806	Erection of single storey rear extension to form enlarged lounge	Permitted	11.01.1984
19770819	Erection of private garage and porch at side	Permitted	15.02.1978

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Policy for Listed Buildings
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Area

- C13 – Policy for Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Church Street, Higham Conservation Area Statement

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Higham Parish Council

No comments received.

Ward Councillors

No comments received.

GBC Conservation Officer

No comments received.

GBC Environmental Protection

We have no comments with regards to this application.

KCC Heritage

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential c.120m south of St Mary's church, which has early medieval origins and c.30m south-east of the site of a Roman burial and c.35m east of a Roman kiln site with associated burials.

The proposed development is limited in extent but groundworks associated with the proposed development may impact on below-ground archaeological remains at the site and I recommend that if planning permission is granted the following condition is applied to any forthcoming consent:

To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded during development works:

- A) Prior to any development works the applicant (or their agents or successors in title) shall secure an archaeological watching brief so that excavations and other development works are observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority and in accordance with a written programme and specification, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- B) The archaeological watching brief, recording, post excavation assessment, analysis and reporting shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed specification and timetable.
- C) Within 6 months of the completion of the watching brief a Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with national and local planning policy.

Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board

The application has been reviewed, and the Board has no comment.

Natural England

No comments received.

Dickens Country Protection Society

The Society was unable to establish the proposed location of the building. The Society has no objection to the proposed building in principle providing it is sited in the rear garden. Taking into account that the site is in an area in which Green Belt Policies apply, if consent is granted, the Society would suggest that conditions are imposed to control any potential residential use.

Neighbouring properties

A site notice was placed on site and an advertisement placed in the Gravesend Messenger. 8no. surrounding properties were consulted and 0 comments were received. The final date for comments to be submitted ended on 9th January 2026.

Officer's Analysis

Principle of Development

The development would be located in the rural area, in the Green Belt. In such areas, Policy CS02 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), states that development will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan.

Therefore, whether the development is acceptable in principle will be dependent on the assessment of all material planning considerations. In this instance the following considerations will be made:

- Impact on the Green Belt
- Design, Character and Appearance
- Impact on the Conservation Area
- Impact on Listed Buildings
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Flood Risk

Impact on the Green Belt

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 152-156 of the NPPF address proposals which would affect the Green Belt. It seeks to ensure that inappropriate development in the Green Belt would not be approved except in very special circumstances. No special circumstances have been submitted with the application as justification.

Paragraph 154 states that: 'A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt.'

The relevant exception to this policy is as follows:

Paragraph 154 (c) identifies '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', as an exception to this policy.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

Core Policy CS02 sets out where development should be distributed in the borough. Preference is given to those urbanised areas as sustainable locations. Outside urbanised areas, those rural settlements which are inset from the Green Belt would also be considered acceptable in principle. This site is in a rural area, in the Greenbelt NOT forming part of settlement inset from the Greenbelt. In this context the policy states that developments; 'will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan.'

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

Policy C13 sets out the requirements for extensions to dwellings. Of particular consideration and to assist in assessing whether the addition would be disproportionate, this policy limits the increased floorspace to one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling. However, this policy does pre-date the NPPF, and greater weight should be given where the approach is consistent with Paragraphs 152-156 of the NPPF.

"Original dwelling" for the purpose of Policy C13 means the building in permanent residential use at 1st July 1948.

In this instance, the proposals would not result in an increase in external footprint to the main dwellinghouse. However, the outbuilding would be considered a domestic adjunct and so should be included in the calculation of residential floorspace. The outbuilding would have a floorspace of 28m².

In the delegated report for planning reference 20161158, the officer concluded that prior to the approved application, the building had already been extended by 73% and that approval would increase this to 94% from the original dwellings floor space of 73.5m². The proposed outbuilding in conjunction with the previous extensions to the dwellinghouse would result in a total increase of 123.7%.

The outbuilding would therefore exceed the one third floorspace allowance of policy C13. Whilst this calculation is useful as a guide, a visual assessment of the appearance of the building would also be necessary to ascertain whether the addition would be disproportionate in appearance. The following section will therefore cover the design, character and appearance of the building.

Design, Character and Appearance, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

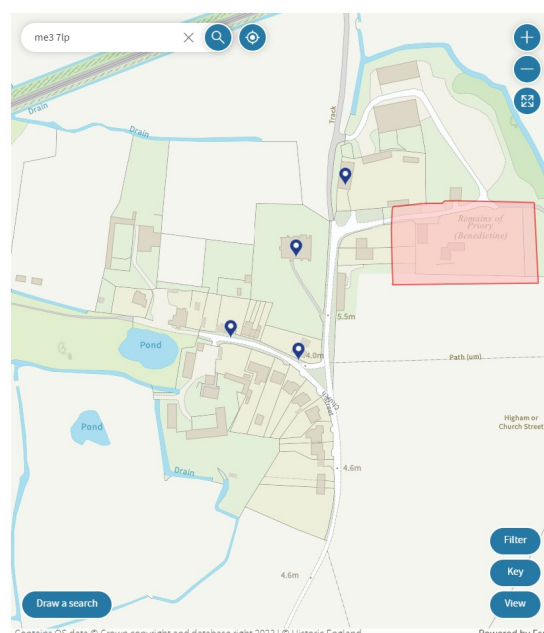
The site is in the Church Street, Higham Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes the area as follows:

'Located at the road's end, Church Street, Higham, to the east of Gravesend, is sited at the limit of raised land at the edge of the reclaimed marshes that fringe the Thames estuary in this part of Kent. It is an old established and today very small settlement with its known roots in Saxon times. Its later development centred around medieval Higham Priory, now largely disappeared but with a few remnants still visible above ground. It clusters to east, south and west of its church whose north flank faces the marshes. The church is its dominating building with a spire and roofs visible from the surrounding countryside. The conservation area is of particular significance for its collection of historic buildings, its local character and its archaeological interest and potential.'



Figure 9 from the Conservation Area appraisal shows the building as having a neutral impact on the character of the Conservation Area. However, the 'L' shaped building to its rear and west side (associated with Giles Farm, has a positive contribution.

As the below mapping image shows (taken from Historic England's website), there are also a number of nearby listed buildings.



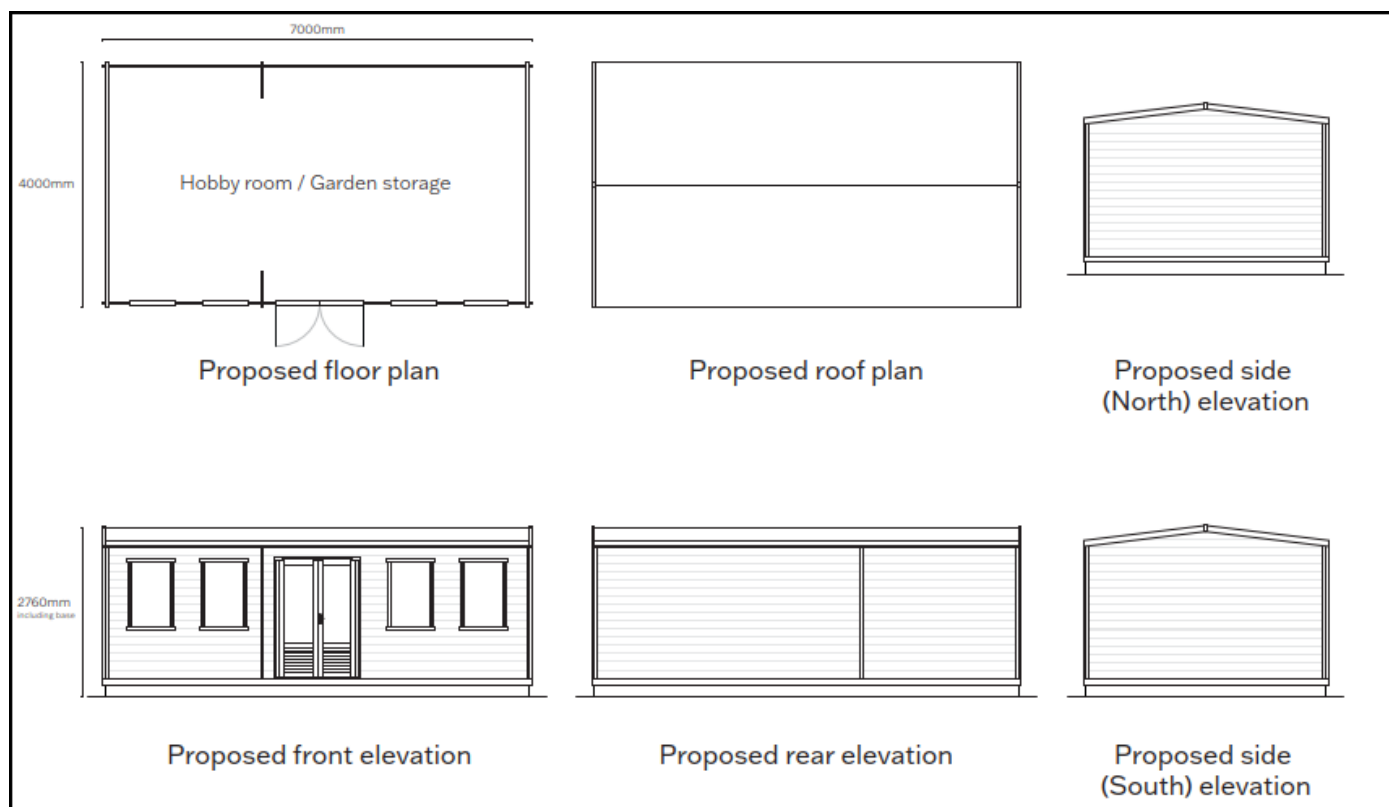
The proposed building would be located where the existing mesh hen enclosure to the left of the image below:



Image taken from Appendix B

In this instance the site is fronted by dense hedging fronting the area where the single storey building is proposed. Therefore, it is likely that the building would have reduced visibility from the street scene. The

erection of a domestic outbuilding on a residential plot, is not in itself objectionable as uncharacteristic in its nature. It is also noted that the building proposed is a significant distance from the local Designated buildings and so would have no impact on their fabric. However, the design of such a building should be appropriate to the area and reflective of the traditional form and design, characteristic of the Listed buildings nearby to ensure that the development would maintain the setting of the Listed Building.



Proposed Plans (Not to Scale)

The proposed building would be reasonable in scale for its proposed use and would be subservient to the main dwellinghouse, given its position, floor area and low-form height. The outbuilding should have limited domestic features and in this case, it appears to have a door and four windows which would face into the shared garden. No windows would be present on either side or rear elevations. Plain windows, with a simple low-pitched roof would be acceptable in this instance. The Design and Access Statement confirms that the proposed outbuilding would be constructed of horizontal timber cladding painted in Wedgewood (grey/blue) under a charcoal grey felt shingle roof. Timber outbuildings are appropriate in a rural setting and in particular in the Conservation Area with local Listed Buildings.

Green Belt

The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt by definition. However, the outbuilding would have a small-scale footprint, ridge height and depth when compared to the existing dwellinghouse. The sensitive design of the building would result in a clearly subordinate ancillary structure which reads as a traditional rural outbuilding. The spatial and visual impact on openness is therefore materially limited

The proposed development would not result in a disproportionate addition by reason of its scale, form and clearly subordinate appearance when assessed against the host building. It would therefore comply with paragraph 154(c) of the NPPF (2024) and, Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2014).

Character and Design/Conservation Area

The proposed outbuilding reflects a traditional rural form appropriate to the character of the site. Its

proportions, roof form and ancillary relationship to the main building ensure that it does not appear visually intrusive. Materials and detailing are integral to the acceptability of the scheme and would reflect traditional timber construction consistent with the character and appearance of the dwellinghouse, the Conservation Area and its setting.

The proposed development would have an appropriate appearance within this rural setting and against the backdrop of the Conservation Area, and nearby Listed Buildings, as a result of its reduced scale, improved design and the proposed materials. It would comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, Saved Policy TC3 of the Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2024), in terms of design, character and appearance.

Impact on Listed Building

The proposal has been assessed having regard to the significance of the nearby Listed Buildings in the locality, and the contribution made by its setting. The scale, traditional form and siting of the proposed outbuilding, would ensure that the proposal preserves the setting of the Listed Buildings. Officers consider that the proposal would result in no harm to the significance of the heritage assets, in accordance with Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposed development would be sympathetic to the local Listed Buildings due to its massing, visual scale, appearance and materials and therefore would comply with Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS), saved Policies TC2 of the Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994) and section 16 of the NPPF (2024) in terms of the character and setting of this Grade II Listed Building.

Neighbouring Amenity

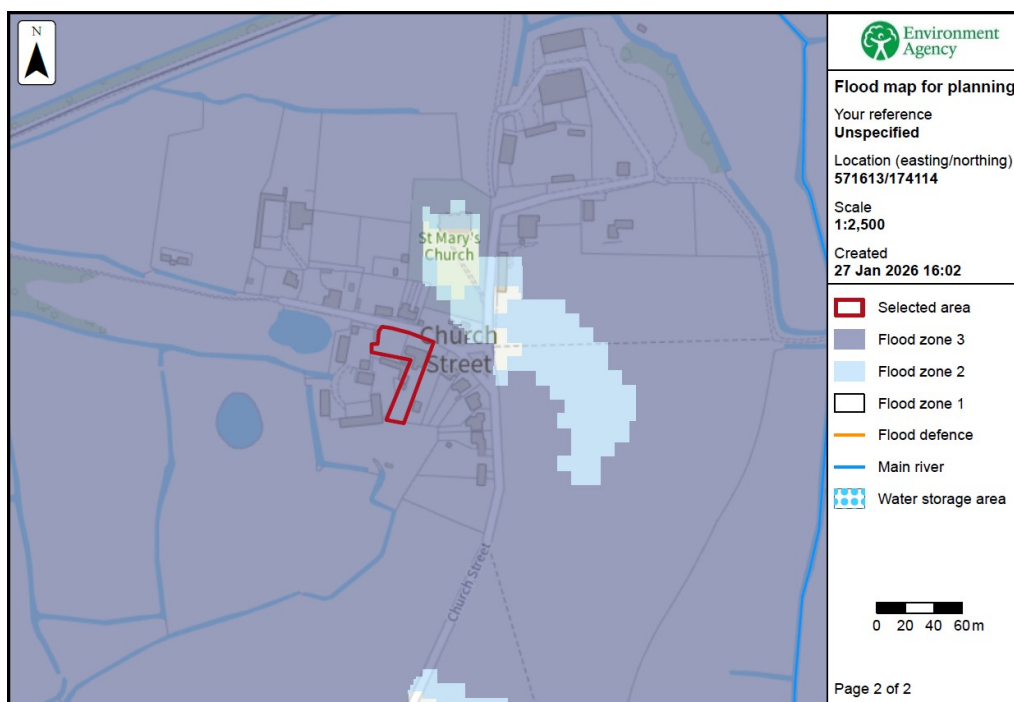
The NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land. Following a period of consultation with neighbouring properties, no objection to the proposal was received.

In this case, the plot is large and enclosed by planting. The building would be discreetly located, minor, in scale and height and would not result in overlooking. The development would not result in overshadowing or overlooking of the neighbouring plots.

The proposal is considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in compliance with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Flood Risk

As the below map shows, this sit is in a Flood Zone 3.



The Environment Agency provides standing advice for Flood Risk for minor extensions which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-standing-advice#advice-for-minor-extensions>

Essentially it recommends that floor levels are set at 600mm above the estimated flood level or reduced to 300mm if there is a high level of certainty about the estimated flood level. In this instance based on the foundation height and door position the internal floor level would be 300mm. Also it is relevant that the proposal is for a hobby/garden storage room. These are not habitable uses. Therefore, it is considered not necessary to require the 600mm internal floor level in this instance, which will be further secured by condition.

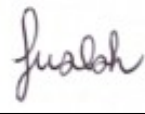
Conclusion

The proposed development would be acceptable when considered against all relevant national and local planning policies.

Recommendation

The recommendation is to approve.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	21st January 2026	Dated:	28 January 2026