



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Replacement Dwelling
AT
232 Singlewell Road,
Gravesend DA11 7RE

Reference:
232SR-2390

Date:
11 March 2024

1. Introduction

- a. This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Just Planning on behalf of Karran Singh Dulai to support a full planning application for the demolition of a house at 232 Singlewell Road, in Gravesend, and its replacement with a new dwelling.
- b. Following a description of the site and surrounding area, the report will consider the planning history, provide an overview of relevant planning policy and outline the case for the applicant.
- c. It will be demonstrated that the development is appropriate in planning terms and that full planning permission should be granted.

2. Site Description

- a. The application property is a bungalow located on the eastern side of Singlewell Road. It has rendered elevations and two front gables with bay windows and mock-Tudor detailing. It has a single-storey rear extension with an additional conservatory extension. There is a garage with flat roof attached to the northern flank elevation. There is an extension to the rear of the garage. The house has large front and rear gardens and off-street parking access by a crossover. The property is shown in the image in figure 1, below.



Figure 1: View of the application site.

- b. Immediately to the north of the site is an L-shaped bungalow (number 230) with the part closer to the appeal property set well back from the street. Number 234, to the south, is a wide, two-storey house with front dormers.
- c. The area is residential and suburban in character, mostly made up of detached houses of various sizes and designs on uneven building lines.
- d. The site is sustainably located in a built-up area to the south of Gravesend. There are no listed buildings on the site, and it is not located in a designated conservation area.

3. Planning History & Application Proposal

- a. On 30 November 2023, the council refused planning permission for a similar proposal with the following description (reference: 20231001):

Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two storey dwelling with rooms in the roofspace, erection of outbuilding in rear of garden to form a gym, erection of bin store to front, alteration of existing frontage to create hard standing for parking, new boundary including existing access.

- b. The application was refused for the following reasons:

- 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, overlooking, be overbearing and generally be an extremely 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 130(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).*

- c. In response to the council's concerns, the applicant revised his proposal, reducing the height, width and depth of the new dwelling and omitting proposed front dormers.
- d. On 6 February 2024, the council refused the revised submission (reference: 20231268), for the same reasons that were given for the refusal of the earlier scheme.
- e. The current proposal sets the new dwelling back further from the street frontage. It also reduces the depth of the building, which also reduces the area of flat roof. It omits the first-floor rear balcony. The overall height of the

house is reduced from 8.3m to 8m. An area of lawned garden is provided to the front of the house.

- f. The proposal is for the replacement of the existing bungalow with a new, two-storey house. The house has a central front gable feature with a porch and a picture window on the first floor. It has a hipped, tiled roof with an area of crown roof. There is an integrated garage.
- g. To the rear, there is a ground floor projection with a flat roof and roof lanterns, a central rear projection with a hipped roof and two small rear dormers with dual-pitched roofs.
- h. On the ground floor, the new house is laid out with a kitchen/dining room, living room, utility room, laundry room, prayer room, WC and en-suite bedroom. On the first floor, there are three en-suite bedrooms, a bathroom and two studies. In the roofspace, there is a bedroom, an entertainment room, a cinema, a study and a shower room.
- i. It is proposed that the house be rendered and that the roof be tiled to match the existing bungalow.
- j. A detached outbuilding is proposed for the rear garden. It would be used as a gym. It has a gross internal area of 90sqm and would have an eaves height of 2.7m and a maximum height of 3.9m. It is rendered with a dual-pitched roof.
- k. The house will have front and rear gardens and off-street parking for up to three cars. The hard standing is made with permeable paving and a new front boundary wall is proposed.
- l. The plans make provision for the storage of refuse, recycling and bicycles.

4. Planning Policy

- a. Planning law states that applications should be assessed in accordance with the local development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant parts of the development plan are the Core Strategy, adopted in 2014, and the saved policies of the Local Plan First Review, adopted in 1994.
- b. The previous applications at this site were refused on the basis of policy CS19 of the Core Strategy and chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF, 2023).

- c. Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) states that:

"New development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards."

- d. It also states that:

"New development will be located, designed and constructed to ... safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land"

- e. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), adopted on 19 December 2023, sets out the government's national planning policies and how these policies should be applied. It identifies a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development is sustainable when it meets the economic, social and environmental needs of a community.

- f. According to paragraph 38:

"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."

- g. Chapter 11 encourages developers and local planning authorities to "*make effective use of land*". Part (d) of paragraph 124 promotes "*the development of under-utilised land and buildings*".
- h. Chapter 12 requires good design. Paragraph 131 describes the "*creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places*" as "*fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve*".
- i. Paragraph 129 requires that densities be maximised, to "*ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site*".
- j. According to paragraph 135, developments must "*function well add to the overall quality of the area*", be "*visually attractive as a result of good architecture*", be "*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment*" and provide "*a high standard of amenity for existing and future users*".

5. Assessment

- a. The council does not object in principle to the demolition of the bungalow at this site and its replacement with a new, larger dwelling. The officer's report for 20231268 commented that:

"The site is within the urban boundary of Gravesend which is covered by Policy CS02 (LPCS) which prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In summary therefore, it is considered that there is support for the principle of the development"

- b. In the previous applications, the council was satisfied that the new house would provide future residents with a high quality of internal and external living accommodation and that there would not be any unacceptable harm in terms of highway safety, flooding, contaminated land or biodiversity. It has no objection to the proposed outbuilding.
- c. The main issues in this application are whether the new house represents good design and respects the character and appearance of the area, and whether it causes any unacceptable harm to neighbours' living conditions.
- d. The key development plan policy is CS19 of the Core Strategy, which requires that all development is well designed and integrates with the character of the surrounding area. This is underpinned by the high design aspirations of the NPPF. The policy also requires that development does harm neighbouring amenity through a loss of light, privacy or outlook.
- e. The applicant notes that the existing bungalow at the site is architecturally undistinguished and does not make a positive contribution to the streetscene. It does not resemble any of its neighbours in terms of its detailed design. Unlike the current proposal, it abuts the northern boundary, appearing cramped. The application proposal represents an opportunity to improve the character and appearance of the area.
- f. The design of the proposal has evolved through the two previous applications (20231001 and 20231268). The width of the dwelling was substantially reduced, setting it further away from the boundary with number 230, and the ridge height was lowered to help it fit in with other roof heights along the street. The depth was also reduced.
- g. The current proposal further reduces the height and depth of the new house, with the result that it sits more comfortably on the site and integrates better with the surrounding built form.

- h. The officer's report for 20231268 accepted that a two-storey house is appropriate for this site and also notes that:

"The dwellings in Singlewell Road do differ significantly in design to the point where the street scene could reasonably be described as 'mixed'".

- i. The council did not object to the detailed architectural design of the proposal but argued that the lowered roof height in 20231268 was still too tall, rising above both of the neighbouring houses. In the current revised plan, the height of the ridge is reduced by a further 300mm to a total height of 8m. At this height, it rises above the height of the bungalow at number 230, which is inevitable for a two-storey house, but is similar in height to the house at number 234, to the south.
- j. This reduction in height will ensure that the house does not appear oversized relative to its neighbours and will not appear excessively prominent on the streetscene, as is illustrated in the proposed streetscene drawing, reproduced as figure 2, below.



Figure 2: Excerpt from the proposed street elevation drawing.

- k. The house is set away from both boundaries and has a balanced, symmetrical appearance. It uses traditional materials and has a sympathetic roof form. The central gable with its picture window and porch adds architectural interest.
- l. The council objects to the area of crown roof, though this has been reduced substantially in the current proposal. The crown roof will not be visible from the street – it will be concealed by the areas of pitched roof surrounding it. The applicant also notes that the neighbour at number 234 has a deep roof form, with a series of 5 rear gables, as shown in the satellite image in figure 3, below.



Figure 3: A large roof area at 234 Singlewell Road, next door to the application site.

- m. The applicant also points out that crown roofs are a feature of other houses along the street, such as numbers 264 and 275, as shown in the satellite image in figure 4, below.



Figure 4: Examples of nearby crown roofs.

- n. The current proposal improves on the previous schemes by incorporated a landscaped front garden, reducing the areas of hardstanding.
- o. Overall, the applicant considers that the house will fit in with a varied streetscene. Although it increases the size of the existing bungalow, there are a number of larger houses along Singlewell Road, including, for example, number 251, located opposite and a couple of doors up from the application site and shown in the satellite image in figure 5, below.



Figure 5: Number 251 Singlewell Road.

- p. There are also houses with a similar depth to the application proposal, such as numbers 246 and 250, shown in figure 6, below.



Figure 6: Numbers 246 and 250 Singlewell Road.

- q. The council's second reason for refusing the earlier applications at the site was the possible impact on neighbours' living conditions.
- r. In respect of the neighbour at number 230, the council concluded in its assessment of 20231268 that there would be no breach of the 45-degree to 25-degree rules and therefore no harm to this neighbour in terms of a loss of light. The council was concerned however that the development would nevertheless be overbearing upon number 230.
- s. The L-shaped design of number 230 means that there is an open area of front garden at that property which would be to the side of the proposed new dwelling. However, the proposal sets the new house well away from the neighbour's front garden. The demolition of the existing garage at the applicant's bungalow reduces built form along the boundary. Finally, the revised proposal sets the new house further back from the front of number 230, further mitigating against any harm.
- t. In respect of the other neighbour, number 234, the council's assessment determined that there would be a breach of the 45-degree and 25-degree rules, but only affecting a non-habitable window. It was satisfied that the development would not cause any harm to habitable rooms.

- u. In 20231268, the council was also concerned about possible overlooking and a loss of privacy from the proposed rear balcony. The current proposal omits the balcony.

6. Conclusions

- a. The NPPF and local policies seek to make the best use of previously developed sites in sustainable, built-up areas.
- b. The existing bungalow does not make a positive contribution to the streetscene and there is no objection to its demolition.
- c. The new building has been reduced in height, width and depth across the three applications. The result is a house that integrates well with its surroundings in terms of its overall size and scale. The council has not objection to its detailed architectural design.
- d. The council was concerned that the development would be overbearing on an area to the front and side of the neighbour at number 230. The revised proposal sets the house back from the street frontage. It is also set well away from the shared boundary with number 230.
- e. For these reasons, the applicant contends that the proposal represents sustainable development and respectfully requests that planning permission be granted.



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