



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240488

Location: 3 Church Cottages Church Street Higham Rochester

Description: Demolition of rear projection, erection of a single storey rear extension and alterations to the external facing materials of the existing dwelling.

Applicant: Mr J Stageman

Site Visit Date: 20.06.24 (from the street – photos provided as part of the application)

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form;
Supplementary Information – Flood Risk Assessment;
Supplementary Information – Design and Access Statement; and
Drawing No. BDS-CC-P01 – All Plans, Block Plans and Site Location Plan – Existing and Proposed.

Procedural Matters

During the course of the application assessment, it was noted that some external material changes were proposed to the existing dwelling, as set out within the Design, Access and Heritage Statement:

DESIGN - MATERIALS

A selection of high quality materials has been used in the design. These have been carefully selected to match the neighbouring property and will be finished to a high standard.

All front and rear elevations will have a render upgrade to match the neighbouring properties with cream render.

Brown plain tiles and white uPVC windows will be used in the extension to match the existing dwelling.



Unfortunately, this was not included within the original description (*Demolition of rear projection and erection of a single storey rear extension*). It was considered that the proposed external material changes to cream coloured render to match neighbouring properties (particularly if it were to match the render colour of No.2 Church Cottages), would be an improvement to the appearance of the existing dwelling and to the Conservation Area itself:

Existing photo as provided within application documents. No.2 is to the left of No.3 Church Cottages (pictured centre)



As indicated by the above photo, the proposed cream render would be an improvement on the existing situation. Additionally, no concerns have been raised regarding the character and appearance of the proposal during the consultation process and the alterations would not harm amenity. Therefore, the description has been altered to include the alterations to the external facing materials of the existing dwelling, and it is considered that re-consultation is not required in this instance. The agent confirmed and agreed to the description change on 22.07.24.

Relevant Planning History

No relevant history.

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
- CS20 - Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites
- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

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 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021);
- Design For Gravesham Design Code (2024);
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009);
- Rural Conservation Areas Management Plan (2016); and
- Church Street, Higham Conservation Area Appraisal (2017).

Section 72(1) of the Planning Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990 (as amended) requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Gravesham Conservation Officer

No response received

Higham Parish Council

No response received

Local Ward Councillors

No response received

Environment Agency

No response received

Internal Drainage District

The site is in the North Kent Marshes Internal Drainage Board's District. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has put forward reasonable measures to address flood risk appropriately, and as the nature and scale of the proposal do not represent a significant impact on the Board's interests, we have no comment to make. This response is based on the information provided as part of the planning application and is subject to the accuracy of that information.

Southern Water

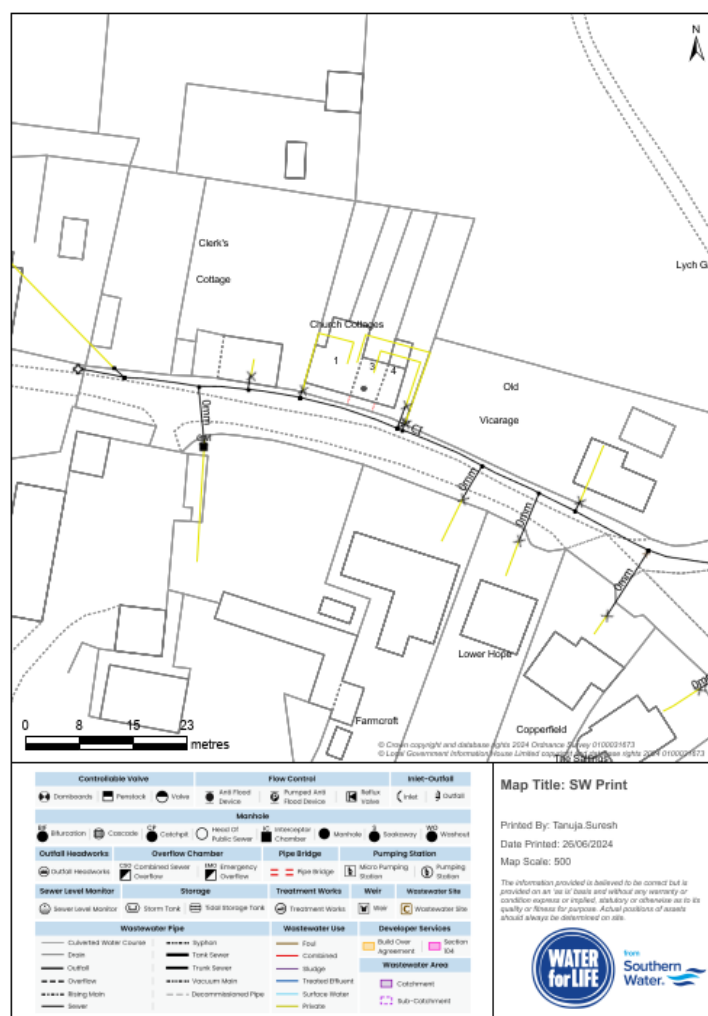
There are no public foul and surface water sewers in the area to serve this development. The applicant is advised to examine alternative means of foul and surface water disposal.

The Environment Agency should be consulted directly regarding the use of a private wastewater treatment works or septic tank drainage which disposes of effluent to sub-soil irrigation. The owner of the premises will need to empty and maintain the works or septic tank to ensure its long-term effectiveness.

It is possible that a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site. Therefore, should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site.

For further advice, please contact Southern Water, Southern House, Yeoman Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 3NX (Tel: 0330 303 0119).

Website: southernwater.co.uk or by email at: SouthernWaterPlanning@southernwater.co.uk



KCC Heritage Conservation

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential c.50m south of St Mary's church, which has early medieval origins and c.45m north-west of the site of a Roman burial.

The proposed development is relatively 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.

KCC Flood and Water Management

As Lead Local Flood Authority, Kent County Council are required to provide technical advice and guidance on the surface water drainage strategies, designs and maintenance arrangement put forward by developers to any new major development.

According to the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, major development is defined in planning as any development involving any one or more of the following:

- a) The winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;
- b) Waste development;
- c) The provision of dwelling houses where:
 - i. The number of dwelling houses to be provided is ten or more; or
 - ii. The development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (c) (i);
- d) The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
- e) Development carried out on a site having an area of one hectare or more.

The application under the above reference number therefore falls outside the definition of major development and also falls outside of KCC's remit as statutory consultee.

Notwithstanding the above, please feel free to contact us again if you consider there to be local flood risk issues on this site that may require further consideration.

Neighbouring properties

3 surrounding properties were consulted, a site notice was displayed on 20.06.24 and the application was publicised in the paper. No responses were received, and the overall consultation period expired on 12.07.24.

Preliminary Matters

The site lies within the Church Street, Higham Conservation area and is covered by Article 4 Direction Ar/10/3. Article 4 Directions were introduced to address unsympathetic alterations to dwellings that harm or erode the character of the area. This means planning permission is required for development that fronts the highway as specified within the Direction.

Furthermore, the property lies within the Green Belt.

Site Description

3 Church Cottages is a terraced property, situated to the north of the highway and south of St Mary's Church.

Site Photo



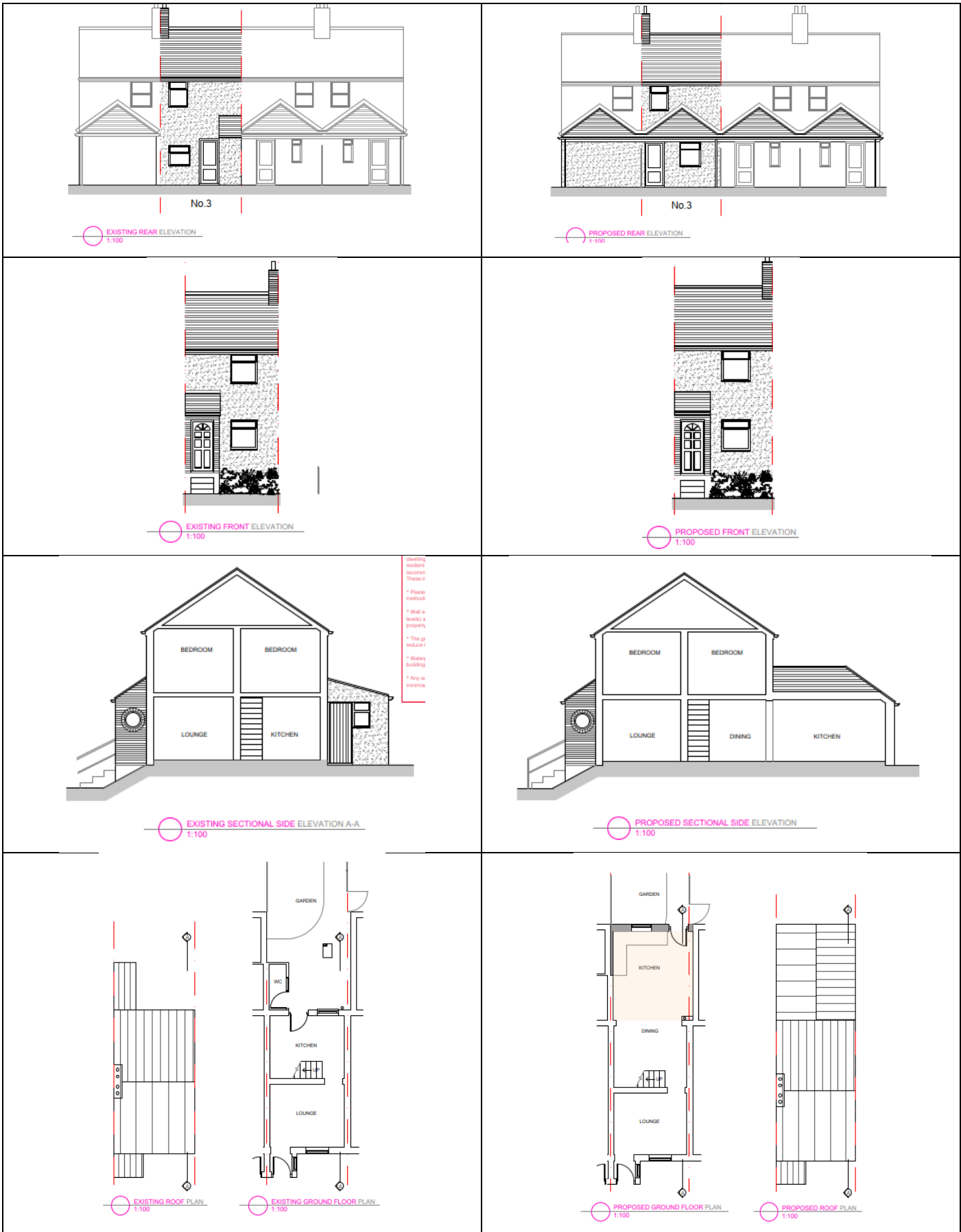
This application proposes the demolition of the existing rear projection, erection of a single storey rear extension, along with rendering the existing front and rear elevations with cream render.

Proposed Development

The development would include internal layout changes to facilitate a new dining room and would result in the loss of the WC.

The dimensions of the development would be as follows:

- Height 3.60m
- Depth 4.21m
- Width 3.60m



Application Photo showing the rear elevation



Officer's Analysis

Principle of Development

The development would be located in the rural area, within the Green Belt. Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) sets out that development in the urban area is prioritised as the sustainable location for development. In the rural area, Policy CS02 states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the policies map. Development outside those settlements, i.e. in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS (2014).

As such, the key considerations of this application are:

- Impact on the Green Belt
- Impact on the Conservation Area, the Landscape Character Area and, Design, Character and Appearance
- Amenity of Future Occupiers
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Highways and Parking
- Flood Risk
- Archaeology

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 152 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 goes on to say that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraph 154 states that, a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the below specified exceptions:

- 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.

The relevant exception to be considered for this proposal would be paragraph 154, exception (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;

It therefore needs to be considered whether the extension would constitute a disproportionate addition, when considering the original size of the dwelling.

Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (1994) 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 (2023), and greater weight should be given where the approach is consistent with Paragraphs 152-156 of the NPPF (2023).

“Original dwelling” for the purpose of Policy C13 means a building in permanent residential use at 1st July 1948 or subsequently erected as a permanent dwelling in accordance with planning permission in that behalf.

Although a first floor plan has not been provided as part of this application, the floor area can be estimated using the ground floor plans. The original floor area (minus the porch) is approximately 45.29sqm (23.62 GF plus 21.67 FF). The proposed is approximately 58.48sqm (36.81 GF plus 21.67 FF). This would result in a 29% increase, which would fall below the one third limit of the gross floor area (ground and first floors) of the dwelling, as set out by C13 of the LPFR (1994).

Whilst this calculation is useful, it forms only part of the assessment. The proposal must be assessed visually and spatially to be considered a proportionate addition. The extension is single storey, would match the form of neighbouring extensions, and is located to the rear of the rear of the property.

Overall, the extension is considered to be subservient to the scale of the main dwelling and plot and is not considered to be a disproportionate addition.

Green Belt Overall Balancing Exercise

The proposal is considered as an exception as set out in paragraph 154 (c) of the NPPF (2023) and is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy C13 of the LPFR (1994). Policy CS02 of the LPCS

(2014) states that development in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS (2014). As the proposal meets the criteria set out by paragraph 154 (c), the extension is not considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Impact on the Conservation Area, the Landscape Character Area and, Design, Character and Appearance

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Church Street, Higham Conservation Area and as such, a principle issue in determining this application is whether the proposed development will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Church Street, Higham Conservation Area. As such, Policies CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 are relevant as well as Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). These policies place a high priority on the preservation, protection and enhancement of the heritage and historic environment.

The site also lies within the Higham Arable Farmlands Character Area. This area is characterised by very gently undulating topography of open arable farmland with pockets of orchards and garden nurseries. The developments spread from the original Saxon settlement of Lower Higham in the North, to more contemporary developments in the South around main road networks. Policy CS12 (LPCS) (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. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF 2023 seeks to protect and enhance such valued landscapes.

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) states that new development will be visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area. Moreover, Section 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful places) of the NPPF (2023) sets out that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

The Design For Gravesham Design Code (2024) is a strategic document that sets out Gravesham's vision and expectation for quality place-making. Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021) states *it is important to ensure that any extensions or alterations to a home are well designed, well-built and sympathetic to their surroundings. By doing so we can ensure that there are no adverse effects on the original house, immediate neighbours, the local view of the street, as well as the character and appearance of the local area.*

3 Church Cottages is described in the Church Street, Higham Conservation Area Appraisal (2017) as follows:

Nos. 1-3 Church Cottages

The terrace is built on the site of the former village poorhouse which was sold to the parish in 1840 and demolished shortly thereafter. The present building appears on the 1842 tithe map. It was formerly a row of four narrow frontage two storey workers houses. Two of the units have been knocked into one. As originally built it was of brick and no doubt had a slated roof. Plans were handed, in this case arranged so that front doors of pairs of adjoining units came side by side with shared chimney stacks on the opposite party walls. Thus there are only two stacks, both centred on the roof-ridge. Single ground and first floor windows were one over the other, to left or right of respective front doors. Original windows were of the timber double hung sliding sash type, the openings very plainly detailed. One house retains the original design of window with eight over eight sashes; the others have suffered heavy modern alterations, damaging to character. The whole building is white rendered or whitened brickwork and the roof is of heavy modern concrete tiles. Two of the dwellings have modern fully closed-in projecting porches with modern 'sub-Georgian' front doors.

As per the appraisal, the modern alterations that have taken place are damaging to character. As such, it is important that any extensions and alterations do not cause further harm. As evidenced by the photos

provided with this application, the property has unfortunately had unsympathetic alterations carried out, including front porch, uPVC fenestration and rendering. The plans for this proposal would introduce a more uniform appearance across the row of terraced properties, incorporating a rear extension to match the other existing rear extensions of neighbouring properties, along with the proposed cream coloured render of the front and rear elevations. Fenestration changes are not proposed in the front elevation, which is unfortunate as traditional features could be reinstated to further improve the appearance of the dwelling and enhance the appearance of the conservation area. The extension itself, would be constructed using external materials to match the dwelling including, cream render, brown plain tiles and white uPVC windows. In this instance, the fenestration would be to the rear of the property and would match the existing dwelling, and as such is considered acceptable. Overall, the proposal is, on balance, considered to improve the appearance of the existing dwelling, street scene and therefore the conservation area. Furthermore, the modest development is not considered to be detrimental to the Landscape Character Area.

Therefore, the proposed development is considered to accord with Policies CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Sections 12 and 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023). Furthermore, the development is in accordance with statutory test 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), saved Policy TC3 (Development Affecting Conservation Areas) of Gravesham's Local Plan First Review (1994) as well as Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Gravesham's SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) (2020) sets out expected room sizes and garden space post development. The plans demonstrate the garden would have sufficient garden area and depth post development, in accordance with the RLG (2020). In addition, sufficient room area is provided, as part of this proposal.

Therefore, the proposed development would safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (NPPF) (2023).

Neighbouring Amenity

No neighbour responses were received as a result of the consultation carried out for the application.

The proposed extension is single storey and, in situ, avoids detrimentally impacting neighbouring amenity in terms of causing a sense of enclosure, loss of privacy, loss of outlook or loss of light.

Therefore, the proposal is considered to safeguard neighbouring amenity in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (NPPF) (2023).

Highways and Parking

There are no highways or parking concerns that arise as a result of this proposal.

Flood Risk

As per comments received from North Kent Marshes Internal Drainage Board, *the Flood Risk Assessment has put forward reasonable measures to address flood risk appropriately*, as such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy CS18 (LPCS) (2014).

Archaeology

As per comments received from KCC Heritage, *the site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential c.50m south of St Mary's church, which has early medieval origins and c.45m north-west of the site of a Roman burial*.

The proposed development is relatively 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.

As such, the agent was contacted to confirm agreement with the pre-commencement condition wording. This was confirmed on 22.07.24.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

Conclusion

The development is considered subservient to the existing dwelling and acceptable external materials shall be used. In addition, the uniformity of the development within the row of terraced houses is considered to improve the appearance of the host dwelling, street scene and the conservation area itself. The decision notice can include appropriate conditions to secure proposed external materials and to ensure the development would protect archaeological interest. Furthermore, the development would have no adverse impact on the Green Belt or the Landscape Character Area. Moreover, the development protects the amenity of future occupiers and neighbouring properties.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Lucy Hankin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	L Hankin	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	23rd July 2024	Dated:	24th July 2024

