

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250529

Location: 3 Struttons Avenue Northfleet Gravesend Kent

Description: Change of use from Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) to Class C2 (Residential Institutions).

Applicant: Mr Jag Singh

Site Visit Date: **Desktop Assessment**

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form Dated 26/05/2025;
Supplementary Information – Planning Statement;
Drawing Number 01 (Floor Plans and Elevations – Existing and Proposed);
Drawing Number 02 (Site Location Plan); and
Drawing Number 03 (Block Plan – Existing and Proposed).

Relevant Planning History

No relevant history

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS07 – Economy, Employment and Skills
- CS11 - Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS14 – Housing Type and Size
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- H5 – Increasing Housing Stock by Conversion of existing Buildings
- H6 – Provision to Meet Special Housing Needs

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 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors – No comments received

Kent Police Designing Out Crime Officer

We have reviewed this application in regard to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Applicants/agents should consult us as Designing out Crime Officers (DOCO's) to address CPTED and incorporate Secured By Design (SBD) as appropriate. We use details of the site, relevant crime levels/type and intelligence information to help design out the opportunity for Crime, Fear of Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Nuisance and Conflict.

There is a carbon cost for crime and new developments give an opportunity to address it. Using CPTED along with attaining an SBD award using SBD guidance, policies and academic research would be evidence of the applicants' efforts to design out the opportunity for crime.

We recommend SBD guidance is utilised to address designing out crime to show a clear audit trail for Designing Out Crime, Crime Prevention and Community Safety and to meet our Local Authority statutory duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The points below identify my recommendations for the layout and design of this scheme.

1. Due to the proposed use of the site, we would recommend the applicant review current site security and boundary treatments. We advise boundary treatments to be 1.8m in height with support beams facing inwards, any gates to a rear/ side access must also be securely lockable from both sides. It is essential that there is no unauthorised access to the rear of the site either via the side

access route or via neighbouring premises.

2. We recommend CCTV be installed at the main entrance doors to monitor the movements of the occupiers. In some circumstances, it can be advisable for staff carry personal attack alarms and in some instances BWV cameras for safety purposes.

3. We recommend lighting to cover entrances and the parking area to aid in natural surveillance.

4. If new external doors and windows are proposed, we strongly recommend these to meet PAS 24: 2022 UKAS certified standard, STS 201 or LPS 2081 Security Rating B+. Existing rear doors and windows that are not being replaced may require limiters/ restrictors to help maintain security.

If approved, site security is required for the construction phase. There is a duty for the principle contractor "to take reasonable steps to prevent access by unauthorised persons to the construction site" under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007. The site security should incorporate plant, machinery, supplies, tools and other vehicles and be site specific to geography and site requirements

We welcome a discussion with the applicant/agent about site specific designing out crime. If the points above are not addressed, they can affect the development and local policing.

This information is provided by Kent Police DOCO's and refers to situational crime prevention. This advice focuses on CPTED and Community Safety with regard to this specific planning application

Neighbouring properties

Three surrounding properties were consulted and no responses were received. The consultation period ended on 23rd June 2025

Officer's Analysis

Principle of Development

3 Struttons Avenue is a terraced house located within the urban area of Gravesham.



The application proposes the change of use of the existing application property from a dwellinghouse (Class C3) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) to a children's home for two children (Class C2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)).

The children's home would accommodate a maximum of 2 children and there would be no more than 2 or 3 members of staff, working shift patterns 24/7.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) sets out the development strategy for the Borough and highlights the objectively assessed need for housing over the Plan period (up to the year 2028) as being over 6,000 new dwellings. The policy seeks to retain and improve the existing stock of housing and prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location.

Policy CS14 (LPCS) seeks to protect the mix of housing in the existing stock and to restrict the conversion of family sized units into smaller properties. It also requires new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes, taking into account local character and housing need.

Saved Policy H6(iii) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (1994) states that "with regard to proposals for residential hostels and homes, whether by new build or by conversion, the Borough Council will take particular care to ensure that these do not cluster together and harm the overall character of the area". The preamble to this policy refers to the importance of controlling the concentration of residential institutional accommodation to ensure that the properties themselves are suitable and that the intensification of use in residential areas will not change the character of the area, nor involve a loss of amenity to residents because of the potential noise and disturbance it could create outside normal working hours.

In assessing the impact of the overall character of the area, it is necessary to consider whether the new use would be considered to be a material change from the existing use of the building as a single family dwelling (Class C3 (a) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)). In this regard, it is important to take into account that Class C3 (b) of the use class order allows the use of a dwellinghouse by not more than six residents living together as a single household where care is provided for residents. The home would be for 2 children and the supporting information states that 2 or 3 member of staff would be on site. There has been debate on whether the carers should be counted as residents as they would not permanently reside at the property as their main home, with appeal decisions favouring both arguments. However, even if three carers were included in this calculation, the proposal would still be within in the threshold of the Class C3 (b) use.

It is noted that a Class C2 use (for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care) is an entirely separate use class from Class C3 (b). It is considered that this distinction reflects the different nature of the two uses. A C3 (b) use is a type of dwellinghouse which implies that the occupants form a single household. Whereas a C2 use is a type of residential institution, which implies that the occupants reside on a more individual basis. For the proposed development, it is considered that the fact that the staff would permanently occupy the property (with a minimum of 2 carers on site at all times), this would suggest that the staff would form part of a single household and as such, they would be part of a dwellinghouse. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal would be more accurately described as a residential institution and a Class C2 use and as such planning permission would be required for a material change of use.

It is noted that the proposed development would involve no built development and it is considered that the day-to-day operation of the children's home would be very similar in character to a family dwelling (despite the use class distinction set out above). In particular the external aspects of the use, such as

the use of the garden and access/parking area would be domestic in nature. However, in general it is likely that the number of vehicle movements would be higher than a typical dwelling, reflecting the comings and goings of the staff. There would be a requirement for 2 off-street parking spaces to accord with Gravesham's adopted parking standards (SPG4), however the information provided states that staff would not drive to work and as such would create no additional traffic or parking requirements.

Kent Police raise no objections to the proposal but provide comments regarding design features such as fencing, CCTV, lighting etc. which could be added as an informative for the benefit of the applicant should permission be forthcoming.

Overall, it is considered that the change of use of 3 Struttons Avenue to a residential children's home would not result in a clustering of similar uses in the surrounding area, no new built development and no change to the character of the surrounding area. As such, the proposal would be compliant with Policies CS02 and CS14 (LPCS) and Saved Policy H6(iii) (LPFR).

Having established that the principle of the development is acceptable, it is now necessary to consider all other matters.

Design, Character and Appearance

This application does not propose any external alterations or extensions to the building. Therefore, the proposed change of use and conversion of the property will have no impact on the character or appearance of the building with Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The dwelling is a three bedroom property and the proposal does not look to increase the number of bedrooms.

Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines state that a three bedroom property should have a minimum of 60 sq. m garden area and minimum depth from rear wall of house of 10m.

Post development the garden would have an area of approx. 91.35 sq. m and a depth of 13.3m, both in accordance with the above guidelines.

Furthermore, whilst there are no proposed changes to the existing floor plans, all room sizes are in accordance with those set out in the residential guidelines.

Overall it is considered that the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers and therefore is compliant with Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

Neighbouring Amenity

The application property is a terraced dwelling in a residential street. There are properties to the east and west and north.

As set out above, the proposed use would be very similar to that of a single family dwellinghouse and therefore it is unlikely that there would be any significant noise/disturbance impacts to neighbours.

GBC Environmental Protection raise no objections to the proposal on the basis of noise or disturbance instead advising that conditions are recommended to provide a noise management plan to detail measures to deal with noise breakout from both inside the house and also use of the external areas as well as procedures for dealing with any complaints.

Overall it is considered that the proposed development subject to conditions would have no significant adverse impacts to neighbouring amenity and therefore is compliant Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

Parking and Highways

It is stated in the Planning Statement that the property has two off road parking spaces. These would be located to the front of the property. However, whilst the front of the property has been block paved, no dropped kerb is in place. As stated in the planning statement, staff do not drive to work and as such will not increase the volume of traffic or parked vehicles. Whilst it is also stated that the manager will arrive by car up twice a day, it is considered that there is sufficient on-street parking in the road.

As such the proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy CS11 (LPCS) and saved Policy P3 (LPFR).

Conclusion

The proposed development would provide a specialist form of housing for children in a safe urban environment. It would be acceptable in regard to the appropriateness of the proposed development in principle, occupier amenity, neighbouring amenity and parking and highway safety.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Nina Goodbody	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>N Goodbody</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	16 th July 2025	Dated:	16th July 2025