



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240495

Location: Purvil Wood Cottage Leywood Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of an orangery along with internal alterations.

Applicant: Mr Craig Main

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form (Updated on 7th August 2024)

001A – Location Plan, Existing and Proposed Block Plans

002A – Existing Elevations and Floor Plan

003B – Proposed Elevations and Floor Plan

Supplementary documents

Leywood Cottage Plans

Primrose Cottage Plans

Superseded Plans:

~~Application Form~~

~~003A – Proposed Elevations and Floor Plan~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20240155	Demolition of existing conservatory, toilet block and storage block to proposed a rear orangery and a single storey side extension along with internal alterations.	Refused	15.04.2024
20160955	Demolish existing conservatory and erection of a two storey extension to the south end of the building to form living and bedroom with en-suite at first floor level and addition of a new entrance door and open canopy to the west elevation.	Refused Dismissed on Appeal	24.08.2017 11.01.2018
20160025	Proposed demolition of existing conservatory and erection of two storey side extension.	Refused	07.03.2016
20010312	Erection of a detached double garage Permitted Extension to existing stable block to form two additional stables. Refused	Split Decision	20.06.2001
19980448	Erection of conservatory at the rear and single storey front extension to form study, utility room and hallway including canopy above front door.	Permitted	01.09.1998

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS13 – Green Space, Sport and Recreation
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- 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 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020).
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);
- Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Downs AONB Management Plan
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Meopham Parish Council

No comments received.

Kent Down National Landscape Unit

The Kent Downs National Landscape Team has seen a recent uplift in the number of consultations on planning applications. In accordance with the agreed Kent Downs Planning Protocol, which sets out that the

Kent Downs Landscape Team will only have a limited land use planning role and will prioritise its involvement in planning to planning policy matters, we will not normally provide bespoke comments on more minor applications such as this. This does not imply support for, or objection to, the proposal. If our input would be particularly valued in this instance, please get in touch and we endeavour to provide informal advice where our current planning capacity allows.

In determining the application, the local planning authority has a new statutory duty, as set out above, to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape. Further advice on the new duty is provided in Appendix 2 of this letter and in our Interim Advice Note for Local Planning Authorities. The Kent Downs National Landscape Team recommends that to help fulfil the new statutory duty, the Local Planning Authority should ensure that the decision is consistent with relevant national and local planning policy and takes into account the aims, objectives and principles set out in the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and its associated guidance documents. Further details of these are provided in Appendix 1.

KCC Heritage

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, based on existing Historic Environment Record data for the area and the relatively limited extent of the proposed works, I consider it unlikely that these proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Neighbouring properties

3no. surrounding properties were consulted and 0 comments were received from members of the public. A site notice was also placed near the site on 17th June 2024. The overall expiry for submission of comments was on 12.07.24.

Officer's Analysis

Principle of Development

It is noted that this application follows recent refusal under planning reference 20240155 for '*Demolition of existing conservatory, toilet block and storage block to proposed a rear orangery and a single storey side extension along with internal alterations.*'

The proposed scheme would need to overcome the refusal reasons for that scheme to be acceptable. The refusal reasons were:

1. The proposed development is considered to comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt by virtue of its disproportional appearance in terms of its scale, and causing detriment and greater harm to the openness of the Green Belt. It would therefore would not comply with paragraph 154(c) and 154(g) of the NPPF (2023) and, Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2014). No very special circumstances have been submitted which would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. As such, as per paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023), this inappropriate development should not be approved.
2. The proposed development would result in non-subservient extensions which would have an incongruent appearance in this rural setting as a result of its scale, design and form and would be harmful to the National Landscape. It would not comply with the requirements of Policy CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, and Section 12 and 15 of the NPPF (2023), in terms of design, character, appearance and landscape.

The changes made by this scheme would include:

- Removal of single storey side extension from the proposed scheme.
- Removal of roof overhang to proposed rear extension.

The refused and proposed plans are included below for information (Not to Scale):



Refused

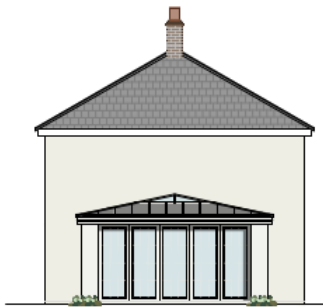
Proposed Elevations (1:100)



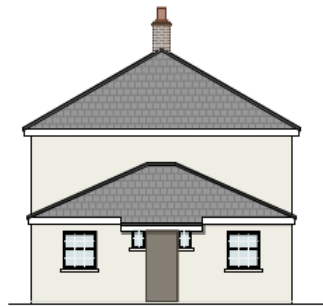
East Elevation



West Elevation

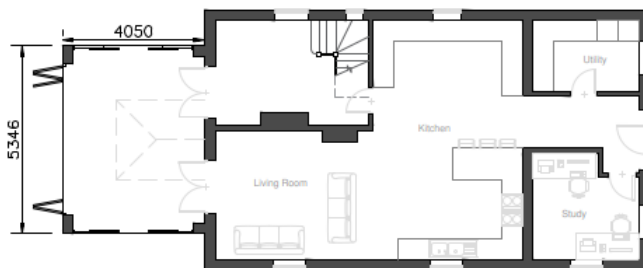


South Elevation



North Elevation

Proposed Floor Plan (1:100)



Proposed

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this scheme are as follows:

- Principle of development in the Green Belt;
- Impact on openness and the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Amenity of Future Occupiers
- Residential amenity;
- Highways.

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

The site is within the Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.
The site is within the Green Belt as defined on the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS)

policies map and this must be the starting point for determining this application.

It is therefore considered that the key issues in this case relating to the Green Belt are:

- Whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework and development plan policy, and
- Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (para. 142 of the NPPF 2023). Paragraph 147 of the NPPF 2023 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. '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.

The relevant exceptions to this policy are 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. Paragraph 154(g) identifies another exception as;

'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'*

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

Saved 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 paragraph 149 the NPPF 2023.

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

Planning approval 19980448 approved extensions to the dwellinghouse which were undertaken to the front and rear.

Purvil Wood Cottage has previously been extended with two separate extensions. A single storey front extension and a conservatory were approved under reference 19980448 at a 33% increase. Based on this

figure it is clear the property has already extended up to its limit in terms of Policy C13 which allows a one third increase. However, the current proposal involves the demolition of the existing conservatory. With the conservatory removed from the scheme, the property has only been increased by 18%. The proposed rear extension would be approximately 22m².

The following details the calculations for the increased floorspace:

Development Stage	Total
Original	139
Existing	184m ²
Proposed	186m ²
Change from original	47m ²
Change from existing	2m ²

TOTAL = 33.8% increase from original

This increase would be marginally larger than the one-third increase allowed and would only increase the existing building by 2m². This minor increase would not represent a significant increase to the scale of the dwellinghouse from its original conversion, in the Green Belt.

However, in considering whether the additions would be disproportionate to the existing dwellinghouse, a visual assessment is necessary in combination with the floorspace data.

Visually in terms of scale and bulk, the proposed extension would not appear substantially larger than the existing conservatory it would replace, with the main change being that it would have a 'rectangular' layout and instead of a pitched roof would have a flat roof with pyramid light above. Based on the visual appearance of the building alone, it would not be disproportional to the dwellinghouse. The proposed development would overcome refusal reason 1 of the previous refused application.

On balance, the rear extension would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building visually and would be in contradiction with paragraph 154 (c) and 154(g) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and Saved Policy C13 of Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994).

Impact on openness

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF (2023) states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Any new built form of development is likely to impact on the openness of the Green Belt, however it is important to establish the degree of harm.

The inspector made the following assessment on openness in the 2017 appeal decision:

'The CS notes that the AONB retains a downland character, and its woodlands are also highly valued. Within this wider landscape is the Harvel Wooded Downs Character Area, and one of its characteristics noted in the associated Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment 2009 is that of the haphazard mosaic of residential plots and small holdings set within the woodland. In the context of conserving these valued landscapes, the increased size and scale of the appeal property would detract from this setting and the rural character of the area.'

Given that the development would not be disproportionately large, it is considered that the increased size and scale of the appeal property would not detract from this setting and the rural character of the area and would contravene the provisions of paragraph 142 and 154 (G) of the NPPF (2023).

Design, Character and Appearance

Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2014 requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of surrounding area. It is noted that the Site in the National Landscape which feeds into the high quality character of the area. In such areas development would be expected to be of a high-quality, reflective of the design and character of the area. This application is located in a rural area. Whilst there are some areas of built form, such as this existing dwellinghouse, the landscape of the area is overwhelmingly rural and open, without built form. The dwellinghouses which form part of this cluster, are largely single storey and have limited footprints. The majority of these dwellinghouses have been converted over time from holiday chalets to become permanent residences, hence their small scale, more appropriate for the rural countryside. This site in particular forms part of the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

The Landscape Character Assessment described the modern development of the area as follows:

'In the mid 20th Century the land to the north of Harvel was divided into a multitude of small plots that has resulted in sporadic and piecemeal development. These plots are enclosed by a variety of boundaries including fencing, hedgerows and other materials, or defined by clearings in the woodland to create a haphazard mosaic of small-scale housing plots within the woodland. The style of properties is varied in terms of size, scale and style. Many plots accommodate derelict caravans adjacent to small brick bungalows. Security gates and fencing are dominant throughout the area. Many properties appear to have small adjoining paddocks accommodating a small amount of livestock and associated equipment.'

It continues to say:

'The uncharacteristic and sporadic settlement of small plots within coppice woodland is a dominant element within the area creating an incoherent landscape. There are many visual detractors, including derelict buildings and caravans, overgrown gardens, poor fencing, disjointed fencing materials and fly tipping. The visual unity is significantly interrupted, although the wooded nature of the area conceals much of the visual clutter from wider views.'

Given the harm caused to the landscape character from the areas of small plots such as the one referred to in this application, the condition of the landscape area is considered moderate and requiring a Conserve and Create approach, as noted in the Landscape Character Appraisal; 'The strong landscape elements within the Harvel Wooded Downs should be conserved, whilst design standards should be defined to halt the erosion of the area with inappropriate development.' Of particular relevance, the Landscape Character Assessment provides the following guidance to 'halt the erosion of the area with inappropriate development.'

- Conserve and maintain traditional and distinct buildings, materials and elements.
- Resist proposals that introduce inappropriate designs and materials.
- Improve and soften new development using characteristic landscape elements such as woodland blocks and hedgerows.
- Conserve enclosure of settlements within wooded areas.

In this instance, as has already been ascertained, the proposed development would not result in a significant increase in built form to this plot. Also, given the slowly changing character of the area, it is considered some non-traditional designs could be visually appropriate and proportional to the character of the area.

In this case, originally the scheme proposed a flat roof design which would not be viewed favourably as it is uncharacteristic for the rural area and subject dwellinghouse. A pitched addition would be more appropriate and following discussions with the planning agent and applicant, amendments were received which utilise a low form pitched roof. The appearance of the roof is particularly relevant to this building and would have greater impact than usual for a rear extension, as the rear extension is viewed openly from the road to the east of the dwellinghouse. The proposal would use rendered walls which would match the existing dwellinghouse. The windows would use a powder coated aluminium and standing seam metal roof.

It is also noted that The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023) public in December 2023, placed a new statutory duty was on all public bodies and statutory undertakers which requires that 'In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty in England, a relevant authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty'

As has been stated, the increase in built development, would not be inappropriate in design in this rural area would not harm the Landscape character of the area. The altered design of the scheme with reduction in scale and improvements to the roof design improved the visual impact and impact on the landscape. The scheme is therefore considered to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape (Previously AONB). Refusal reason 2 is therefore overcome by this proposed scheme.

On balance, the proposed development would comply with the requirements of Policy CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2023) in terms of design, character and appearance and impact on the Landscape.

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 alterations would introduce an orangery which would have an area of 18.5m². The Residential Layout Guidelines (2015), does not provide minimum space standards for orangery's. In any case the scale is similar to the extension it would replace. There would also be limited impact to external garden space. The proposed development would be compliant with the guidelines.

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, no objection to the proposal was received.

Given the expansive plot of approximately 3 hectares and the secluded nature of the dwellinghouse, there would be minimal impact on the residential amenity of neighbours.

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

Parking Provision

As the proposed dwellinghouse would not have any increase to number of bedrooms and the parking arrangements are not proposed to be changed, no concerns are raised regarding parking provision. This is subject to details provided in the full planning application.

Adequate vehicle and cycle parking provision is therefore available in accordance with paragraphs 110 to 113 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 subject to further details of cycle parking provision.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development as amended from the previous scheme, which was refused, has overcome both refusal reason 1 and 2 of 20240155. The proposed development complies with all relevant national and local planning policies. The recommendation is therefore to approve.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	7 th August 2024	Dated:	8th August 2024