



Pre Application Response Letter

Reference	PRE20250105
Site	73 - 75 West Street Gravesend Kent DA11 0BS
Proposed Development	Erection of a second-floor extension above existing offices to provide; 1 single occupancy, 1 bedroom flat and 1 double occupancy, 1 bedroom flat. Additional works to include erection of a cycle and bin store.
Case Officer	Gary Edwards
Date of Advice	29 October 2025

I am writing with reference to your request for pre-application advice at the above site.

In September 2024 planning permission was refused for the following proposal (Gravesham planning reference 20240549):

Erection of a second-floor extension above existing offices to provide; 1 single occupancy, 1 bedroom flat and 1 double occupancy, 1 bedroom flat. Additional works to include erection of a cycle and bin store.

This application and the reasons for refusal are discussed in more detail later in this advice. You have now submitted information which seeks to address the reasons for refusal. I have had an opportunity to assess this information and can offer the following comments:

Site Description

The site lies on the northern side of West Street and comprises a two-storey office building. It lies within Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area and in proximity to the High Street Conservation Area. The building can be seen in the following photograph:



Proposal

In July 2024 a planning application was submitted to Gravesham Borough Council seeking permission for the following (Gravesham planning reference 20240549):

Erection of a second-floor extension above existing offices to provide; 1 single occupancy, 1 bedroom flat and 1 double occupancy, 1 bedroom flat. Additional works to include erection of a cycle and bin store.

This application was refused on 24 September 2024 for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal would result in harm to the living environments of occupants of neighbouring properties. Specifically, it would result in significant overshadowing of habitable windows serving 1-15 and 16-47 Marriotts Wharf and direct overlooking of the south elevation of 16-47 Marriotts Wharf, with window to window distances below the required minimum privacy distance of habitable windows. The scale, proximity and design of the scheme would as whole, be an unneighbourly form of development which would result in overbearing bulk, severely limiting the allowance of light to south facing windows of 16-47 Marriotts Wharf. The proposal would therefore fail to provide a high standard of amenity for neighbouring's sites which conflicts with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, SPG2 Residential Layout Guidelines (2020) and paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.*
- 2. The development would result in undersized bedroom space, and undersized privacy distance from 16-47 Marriotts Wharf to the hallway of flat 2 of the proposed development which would result in direct and harmful overlooking from the neighbouring site. The proposal fails to provide high quality amenity space and will result in poor living standards for future occupants and as such would be contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 which states that new development shall be designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity of its occupants and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and SPG2 Residential Layout Guidelines (2020).*
- 3. The proposal fails to safeguard biodiversity and fails to secure a contribution towards strategic mitigation measures within Special Protection Areas, and in the absence of this contribution or adequate information to inform an Appropriate Assessment. Therefore, the development fails to comply with the requirements of the Habitat Regulations but fails to offset biodiversity loss contrary to Section 15 (specifically paragraphs 185 and 188) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and Policy CS12 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).*
- 4. Insufficient detail has been submitted to allow the full impacts of the proposed development to be accurately assessed in terms of Noise Impact, given the location of the proposed flats on a busy road and fronting a car park in close proximity. The documents provided with the application do not include a Noise Impact Assessment. As such, it is not possible to make a determination as to the impacts of the proposal on residential amenity. The proposal is contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 and Section 12 of the Nation Planning Policy Framework (2024).*

5. *Insufficient detail has been submitted to allow the full impacts of the proposed development to be accurately assessed in terms of Ecological Impact. The documents provided with the application do not include an Ecological Impact Assessment or a Bat Survey. As such, it is not possible to make a determination as to the impacts of the proposal on ecology and biodiversity. The proposal is contrary to Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).*

Your request for pre-application advice provides information which seeks to address these reasons for refusal. This advice considers whether the information provided is sufficient to overcome the above concerns.

The information accompanying your submission comprises the following plans and documents:

- Supporting email sent 29 April 2025.
- Decision notice relating to planning application 20240549.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/01A@A3 Rev A – Existing Block and Site Location Plan.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/02A@A3 Rev A – Existing Floor Plans.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/03A@A3 Rev A – Existing Elevations.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/04A@A3 Rev A – Proposed Block and Site Location Plan.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/05A@A3 Rev A – Proposed Floor Plans.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/05C@A3 Rev C – Proposed Floor Plans.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/06A@A2 Rev A – Proposed Elevations.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/06B@A2 Rev B – Proposed Elevations Option 2.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/06B@A2 Rev B – Proposed Elevations Option 1
- Drawing no. 2023/37/07@A2 Rev A – Existing and Proposed Street View Elevations Option 2.
- Drawing no. 2023/37/07A@A2 Rev A - Existing and Proposed Street View Elevations Option 1.
- Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment (7 February 2025).
- Bat Scoping Survey – Preliminary Roost Appraisal (12 March 2005).
- Noise Impact Assessment (April 2025).

Relevant Planning History

The planning history relating to this site is summarised below:

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Decision</u>
20240549	Erection of a second-floor extension above existing offices to provide; 1 single occupancy, 1 bedroom flat and 1 double occupancy, 1 bedroom flat. Additional works to include erection of a cycle and bin store.	Refused	24.09.2024
20140368	Display of fascia sign and hanging sign on existing bracket.	Consent granted	06.06.2014
20080618	Change of use from a ship's chandlers to a live/work unit with sculpture studio on ground floor and residential above involving	Withdrawn	09.09.2010

	replacement of two rear windows at first floor level with french doors and balcony.		
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Development Plan and other related Planning Policies and Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Borough Council to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are other material considerations, the development plan should be the starting point, and other material considerations should be taken into account in reaching a decision. One such consideration will be whether the plan policies are relevant and up to date.

The Development Plan for Gravesham currently comprises:

- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies Map, September 2014; and
- Saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review, November 1994.

The relevant policies for your proposal are as follows:

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014:

- Policy CS01 – Sustainable Development.
- Policy CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development.
- Policy CS05 – Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area.
- Policy CS07 – Economy, Employment and Skills.
- Policy CS10 – Physical and Social Infrastructure.
- Policy CS11 – Transport.
- Policy CS12 – Green Infrastructure.
- Policy CS14 – Housing Type and Size.
- Policy CS15 – Housing Density.
- Policy CS18 – Climate Change.
- Policy CS19 – Design & Development Principles.
- Policy CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment.

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994:

- H5 – Increasing the Housing Stock by the Conversion of Existing Buildings.
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards.
- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network.
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024:

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development.
- Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes.
- Section 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres.
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport.
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land.
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places.
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historical environment.

Other Material Considerations

Supplementary Planning Guidance and other Documents:

The Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents, Development Briefs and Conservation Area Appraisals. These elaborate on saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and policies in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and are material considerations in determining planning applications.

In addition, the Council has adopted a number of documents that have been produced by Kent County Council also as Supplementary Guidance.

<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/supplementary-planning-guidance/supplementary-planning-guidance>

The following documents are relevant to the consideration of this enquiry:

- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006).
- Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020.
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015).
- Design for Gravesham (2024).
- Hight Street & Queen Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009).

Officer's Analysis

This pre-application advice considers whether the information provided is sufficient to overcome the reasons for refusal relating to planning application 20240549. The information submitted in relation to each reason for refusal is considered below:

Reason for refusal 1

The first reason for refusal raises the following concerns:

- overshadowing of habitable windows serving 1-15 and 16-47 Marriotts Wharf.
- direct overlooking of the south elevation of 16-47 Marriotts Wharf.
- the development would result in overbearing bulk, severely limiting the allowance of light to south facing windows of 16-47 Marriotts Wharf.

These issues are discussed below:

In order to address issues relating to loss of sunlight/daylight, a 'Daylight, Sunlight, and Overshadowing Assessment' prepared by Elmstead Energy Assessments and Building Services has been submitted. It appears that the drawings in Figure 3 of this assessment correspond with the drawings you have submitted relating to Option 1 (although it is noted that the number of window openings on the proposed rear elevation does not correspond with the number of window openings shown on the proposed floor plan).

The document confirms that the following daylight, sunlight, and overshadowing assessments were carried out:

- Vertical Sky Component (VSC)
- Annual and Winter Probable Sunlight Hours
- Overshadowing Assessment

These were carried out in relation to the properties at nos. 1 - 15 Marriott's Wharf and nos. 16 - 47 Marriott's Wharf. The assessment provides the following conclusions:

The VSC results show that the nearby surrounding windows would all only receive a negligible impact. This is because their VSC values under the proposed scheme are either greater than 27% or greater than 0.80 times their former values, satisfying the BRE Guidelines in regard to daylight.

The sunlight results show that the surrounding windows would either still be receiving at least 25% annual and 5% winter sunlight hours under the proposed scheme, their values under the proposed scheme would be within 0.80 times their former values, or their reduction in sunlight received over the whole year is not greater than 4%. The overall impact on these windows would therefore be negligible and the BRE Guidelines regarding sunlight would be satisfied.

A review of the site highlighted that there are no external garden amenity areas that need to be assessed for overshadowing.

For these reasons we believe that the proposed development located at 73-75 West Street, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0BS should be considered as acceptable overall in regard to its neighbourly impact on daylight, sunlight, and overshadowing.

In view of this information, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its impact on daylight and sunlight in relation to the properties at nos. 1 - 15 Marriott's Wharf and nos. 16 - 47 Marriott's Wharf.

Concern was also raised with respect to direct overlooking of the south elevation of 16-47 Marriotts Wharf and window to window distances being below the required minimum privacy distance. The proposed elevations for Option 1 and Option 2 show that the windows on the rear elevation would be obscure glazed and fixed shut. In light of this, it is considered there would be no loss of privacy between these windows and the existing properties to the north (nos. 16 - 47 Marriott's Wharf).

However, given the close proximity of the two buildings, it remains a concern that the proposed development would have an overbearing impact on those occupiers of nos. 16 – 47 Marriott's Wharf whose windows face the development. This concern was set out in the delegated planning report relating to application 20240549 as follows:

It is also noted that the proposal would result in increased height, at close proximity to these south facing habitable windows. The distance would be between of 7.7m-10.3m. Whilst this will have impacts in terms of overshadowing, it would also result in significant harm to the amenity of these residential properties as a result of the scale and proximity of the development, leading to overbearing bulk which would be an unneighbourly form of development.

This concern would need to be addressed in any future planning application.

Reason for refusal 2

This reason for refusal raises concern that the internal space standards set out in the Council's Residential Layout Guidelines have not been complied with. This is explained in the delegated planning report relating to application 20240549 as follows:

The minimum space required for a kitchen/Diner and Living room combined would be 25.2 m². At 23.3m², this room would not meet the required spacing for flat one.

This issue does not appear to have been addressed in your current submission. It would need to be addressed in any future planning application.

This reason for refusal also raises concern that the proposal “fails to provide high quality amenity space”. Paragraph 31 of the Council’s Residential Layout Guidelines, provides the following requirements for amenity space for flats:

In any new building, space about buildings should be provided appropriate to the area and type of unit. This is in addition to any space required under vehicle parking standards, and for drying grounds, footpaths and access ways internal to the layout.

For communal flats, a communal garden area equivalent to a minimum of 10 sq. metres shall be provided for amenity space.

It would appear that no amenity space has been provided to serve the development. Any future planning application should either show sufficient amenity space to meet the requirements of paragraph 31 of the Council’s Residential Layout Guidelines, or provide a justification for the lack of amenity space. Any such justification would be considered on its merits.

Reason for refusal 3

The Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar site and Special Protection Area (SPA) are internationally important for nature conservation as the area is a wetland and supports important numbers of wintering waterbirds and migrating birds. There has been a decline in the number of birds using these sites in recent years. Studies show that this could be due to people using the estuary and marshes for recreation purposes. The North Kent Bird Disturbance Report concludes that all new housing development within 6km of the North Kent Ramsar Sites or Special Protection Areas (including the Thames Estuary and Marshes) and larger housing development beyond 6km from the sites could have an adverse impact on them. This is because new housing development is likely to lead to further increases in recreational use of the sites which means that further declines in the bird population cannot be ruled out. Possible mitigation measures are set out in the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy.

Having considered a number of options, the Council have decided to impose a tariff on new dwellings within 6 km of the Ramsar site and SPA and for larger housing developments beyond 6 km from them. Developers will need to pay £337.49 per dwelling. The money raised will be used to pay for schemes to avoid the adverse impacts of new development on the birds. More information can be found on the Council’s website via the following link:

[Thames Estuary and Marshes | Nature conservation and landscape – Gravesham Borough Council](#)

The third reason for refusal relating to planning application 20240549 relates to the absence of the required contribution towards strategic mitigation measures within Special Protection Areas. In the email accompanying your current submission, it is noted that the applicant intends to provide the required contribution when a revised application is submitted. The payment of this contribution would address the concern set out in the third reason for refusal.

Reason for refusal 4

The fourth reason for refusal raises concern that “insufficient detail has been submitted to allow the full impacts of the proposed development to be accurately assessed in terms of noise impact, given the location of the proposed flats on a busy road and fronting a car park in close proximity”.

It is noted that a Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted with your request for pre-application advice. This sets out the results of a noise survey that was carried out and provides the following conclusions:

- 6.2 *The results of the noise level survey and assessment indicate that the development site is exposed to high levels of external environmental noise at the front of the site during both the daytime and the night-time periods, mainly from road traffic noise.*
- 6.3 *The rear part of the site is significantly quieter and is not affected by any commercial or other noise sources except for screened road traffic noise from West Street.*
- 6.4 *An appropriate noise mitigation scheme has been recommended for the new dwellings which should provide sufficient noise attenuation to meet the required internal acoustic criteria and fully protect the amenity of future residents in accordance with the standards outlined in the WHO Guidance, BS 8233 : 2014 and the ProPG guidance document.*

Any future planning application should be accompanied by the Noise Impact Assessment together with full details of noise mitigation measures including acoustic ventilation measures.

Reason for refusal 5

The fifth reason for refusal relates to the ecological impact of the proposal. It raises concern that insufficient detail has been submitted to allow the full impacts of the proposed development to be accurately assessed in terms of ecological impact. The documents provided with the application did not include an Ecological Impact Assessment or a Bat Survey.

In the consultation response from KCC Biodiversity in relation to planning application 20240549 the following recommendations were made:

No ecological information has been submitted with this application. As a result of reviewing the data we have available to us, and the information submitted with the planning application, we advise that further information is sought from the applicant with regards to the potential for ecological impacts to arise.

We have taken this view as the proposed extension will directly impact the roof of the building and insufficient information has been provided to enable us to consider the likelihood of roosting bats being present.

As such, an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist, in accordance with good practice guidelines. The EcIA will include the following:

- *Details of the impacts of development proposals on the ecological baseline established via a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PEA) and any required emergence surveys.*
- *Details of any necessary and achievable ecological mitigation and/or compensation measures;*
- *Details of ecological enhancement measures, and;*
- *Provision of sufficient information to determine whether the project accords with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation.*

It is noted that your current submission is accompanied by a Bat Scoping Survey – Preliminary Roost Appraisal (12 March 2005). This indicates that a survey of the building was carried out in March 2005. It sets out the following findings:

The site is in an urban surrounding, with roads, buildings and dwellings, with very few trees and green spaces near-by, although the Thames does provide some suitable foraging opportunities for bats to the north. The street lighting further limits the site's suitability for bats in general. The site consists of a building and area of hard standing for car parking to the rear (no vegetation, no trees).

No bats or signs of bats were found during the internal/external inspection of the building. It is a two-storey brick building with tight corrugated fibre cement roofing sheets with insulation panels below (with metal strips). There is also a small area of tight flat felted roof to the back. There were no Potential Roosting Features and thus the building is judged as offering no suitability for roosting bats.

The adjacent building to the west (Marriotts Wharf) has a tight slate roof, tight soffit box and the mortar along the ridge tiles is intact, with no visible Potential Roosting Features.

The Appraisal contains the following recommendation:

No impact is expected onto roosting bats and thus no further work is recommended for these species.

This addresses the fifth reason for refusal relating to planning application 20240549. Any future planning application should be accompanied by the Bat Scoping Survey – Preliminary Roost Appraisal submitted with your request for pre-application advice.

Other issues

It is noted that two different options have been provided in terms of the elevational treatment of the building. Option 1 is very similar to the scheme considered as part of application 20240549. Option 2 proposes a mansard-style design solution.

At a national level good design is one of the central requirements of the NPPF:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities (paragraph 131)

The aims set out in paragraph 131 of the NPPF are reflected in Policy CS19 of the Council's Core Strategy. This requires new development to be "visually attractive, fit for purpose and

locally distinctive” and to “conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment”. It also requires new development to “integrate well with the surrounding local area”.

Design for Gravesham (2024) expands on the Core Strategy, and Policy CS19 in particular to provide additional clarity on what is expected of applicants when submitting design proposals, setting out the minimum requirements to achieve design quality.

As the site is located in proximity to the High Street Conservation Area, Section 16 of the NPPF, Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy, Saved Policy TC3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal are also relevant.

Both design options are considered acceptable and would be in-keeping with the appearance of the existing building and character of the wider area. They would not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the High Street Conservation Area. It will be important to ensure that good quality materials are proposed for the construction of the extension.

Summary

In summary, many of the concerns set out in the reasons for refusal relating to planning application 20240549 appear to have been addressed in your pre-application submission. However, there are a number of concerns that remain outstanding:

- The proposal would have an overbearing impact on those occupiers of nos. 16 – 47 Marriott’s Wharf whose windows face the development.
- The internal space standards set out in the Council’s Residential Layout Guidelines have not been fully complied with.
- No amenity space has been provided to serve the development

In order to enable the Council to support your proposal, these issues would need to be fully addressed in any future planning application.

Next Steps

If planning permission is sought, an application can be made through the Planning Portal, here:

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/applications>

Please be aware that should you wish to submit an application it must be compliant with local and national validation requirements. You can find the requirements at:

[Validation checklist | Guides for planning applications – Gravesham Borough Council](#)

For further pre-application services I would refer you to our website;

<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/pre-application-planning-advice/pre-application-service>

You are advised that PRE20250105 is now closed.

Note: The comments contained herein are offered on an informal basis and without prejudice to the determination of any subsequent planning application. The Borough Council reserve the right to add to or amend the comments in the light of any further information coming forward or matters that were not previously considered.