

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250648

Location: 15 Hopewell Drive Gravesend Kent DA12 4PX

Description: Conversion of roof space into habitable rooms with rear dormer and roof lights to front roof slope.

Applicant: MR Rajinder Singh Rai

Site Visit Date: 20 August 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Application for Planning Permission form;
Drawing no. 01 Existing layouts and elevations;
Drawing no. 02 Proposed layouts and elevations;
Drawing no. 03 Site location plan; and
Drawing no. 04 Existing and proposed block plans.

Procedural Issues

Drawing no. 02 does not appear to illustrate the proposed roof plan accurately. However, with reference to the proposed elevation and layout drawings, it is possible to adequately assess the proposal.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20020807	Erection of part two storey and part single storey rear extension to form kitchen at ground floor level with bedroom and enlarged bathroom at first floor level.	Permitted	13.11.2002
20020221	Erection of two storey rear extension to form kitchen with bedroom and enlarged bathroom over, in substitution of the scheme previously permitted under planning permission ref. no. GR2001/851.	Refused	29.05.2002
20010851	Erection of two storey rear extension to form kitchen with a bedroom and enlarged bedroom over.	Permitted	13.12.2001
19960534	Erection of single storey front extension to form porch and enlarged lounge.	Permitted	02.10.1996
19750116	Erection of front porch.	Permitted	03.04.1975

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development

- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network

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 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

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

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised to seven neighbouring properties by letter. One representation has been received and is summarised as follows;

- Adverse overshadowing impact on solar panels at no. 13 Hopewell Drive.

Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF 2024) sets out various design requirements and includes the need for the development to add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive; and be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF 2024 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the built environment and take account of the scale, height, building lines and other architectural features of buildings. Account should also be taken of strategic views, site topography, the

significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.

In relation to rear roof extensions, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) sets out that proposals should be set away from the gables, hips, eaves and ridge of a property; be lower than the existing ridge line and retain the original ridge line treatment; that dormers should not overwhelm the roof slope within which they are placed; and that windows should reflect the position, design and character of existing windows on the host building.

The application property is a semi-detached, two storey dwelling that has already been subject to significant extension and alteration. There is an existing part two storey and part single storey rear extension and a single storey front extension. It is noted that the rear extension has not built entirely in accordance with the approved plans (under reference 20020807) but it appears to have become lawful through the passage of time.



Rear elevation (photograph taken 20 August 2025)

The proposed dormer would wrap around the roof of the existing two storey rear extension and extend across, almost the full width of the roof of the application property. The dormer walls to be tiled to match with those on the existing roof and the dormer roof would be flat. A new window would be inserted into the existing gable end, in the side elevation of the dwelling and four rooflights would be installed in the existing front roof slope.

Although the proposed dormer would be set in slightly from the existing ridge and sides of the roof, by virtue of its excessive size and bulk, the proposal would overwhelm the existing roof slope. The proposed windows would not reflect the position or character of those existing and as such, would look incongruous. When the existing extensions and alterations to the property are considered, the proposal would result in an overdevelopment of the application property. Overall, the proposed development would be out of character with the existing building and those in the surrounding area and be detrimental to visual amenity. Therefore, the proposal would not be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 and the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed development would not adversely impact upon the private amenity space or internal layout of the application property, would provide an appropriately sized bedroom and would not adversely impact on the privacy, daylight or sunlight of its occupants.

In order to prevent a loss of privacy for future occupants, any proposed bathroom/w.c./en-suite windows should be conditioned to be permanently obscure glazed.

Overall, the proposal would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of future occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of neighbouring occupiers. In this regard, the Borough Council's adopted Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) are relevant.

The closest residential properties to the application site are nos. 13 and 17 Hopewell Drive (located to the north east and south west respectively). Nos. 54 and 56 Astra Drive are located to the south east and nos. 18 and 20 Hopewell Drive are located to the west, across the roadway.

The proposed development would introduce a number of new windows to the application property. The RLG set out that privacy distances between facing windows should be met, in order to prevent overlooking. A privacy distance of 21 metres is required for facing windows where there is no private garden area in between and a privacy distance of 26 metres is required where a private garden is within the field of view.

The proposed dormer windows would be to an en-suite shower room and a bedroom and due to their orientation and privacy distances above 26 metres, there would be adverse overlooking to any properties at the rear. Furthermore, the en-suite window would be conditioned to be obscure glazed.

The proposed dormer bedroom window would obliquely overlook the rear gardens of nos. 13 and 17 Hopewell Drive. However, as existing rear windows have similar overlooking impacts, the occupiers of these properties cannot not have an expectation of total privacy in their gardens. Dormer windows are a common feature in the residential environment and in many instances are development that does not require planning permission. As such, there would not be a significant adverse overlooking impact to the occupiers of nos. 13 and 17 Hopewell Drive.

A bedroom window would be inserted into the existing side wall that faces no. 17 Hopewell Drive. However, as that property has no windows in the side elevation, there would be no direct overlooking impacts. The new window would obliquely overlook the rear garden of no. 17 Hopewell Drive but as a secondary window, this could either be removed or obscure glazed (via a planning condition) to mitigate any adverse overlooking impacts.

The proposed bedroom and stairway rooflights in the front elevation would have privacy distances above 21 metres to the properties opposite and a high cill height, which would mean that no adverse overlooking impacts would occur.

Due to the design of the proposed development and to the layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings.

In order to prevent any future loss of privacy to neighbours, any planning permission granted should be conditioned to preclude the insertion of any windows or openings in the side elevations of the proposed development.

Overall, subject to the conditions set out above, the proposed development would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Parking and Highways

According to the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG4), a four or more bedroom dwelling should have three vehicle parking spaces. However, it is noted that KCC Highways & Transportation have provided more recent guidance (as yet unadopted) that requires a minimum of two spaces to be provided for a four or more bedroom property in a suburban location.

The proposed development would result in the dwelling potentially increasing from four bedrooms to five (if the existing small front bedroom is retained as such) and there would be no alteration to the existing parking or access arrangements. The existing frontage parking area can accommodate two/three vehicles and there is a rear garage (which is of substandard size).

It is noted that the application site is located in a relatively sustainable location, close to local shops and services and a bus route. There are no parking restrictions in Hopewell Drive and on street parking appears readily available. Therefore, even if the proposed development would result in a small increase in demand for on-street parking in the surrounding area, this would not exacerbate any existing parking issues and would not undermine highway safety.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would make sufficient provision for the parking of cars within the application site in accordance with the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards and would be in line with Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

A local resident has raised concerns regarding the adverse impacts of the proposed development on the existing solar panels at no. 13 Hopewell Drive.

Paragraph 163 of the NPPF 2024 identifies that the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change should be considered in preparing and assessing planning applications and paragraph 167, requires Local Planning Authorities to give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing domestic and non-domestic buildings (including heat pumps and solar panels).

Policy CS18 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) seeks to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the Borough by (amongst other things) supporting stand-alone decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy development and proposals which reduce carbon footprint including the retrofitting of existing homes.

It is noted that the courts have previously held that the overshadowing of solar panels is a material planning consideration, due to the part they play in addressing climate change and that even individual microgeneration schemes, are in the public interest (notably in *McLennan, R v Medway Council & Anor* [2019] EWHC 1738 (Admin)). In the absence of technical or substantive evidence relating to the extent of the reduced generating capacity for the solar panels at the neighbouring property, it is difficult to accurately assess the impact on climate change. It is acknowledged that the affected local resident has offered to provide specialist information regarding the solar panel impacts. However, due to the in principle, design issues raised above, this has not been requested. For the same reason, the applicant has not been asked to provide any overshadowing assessment.

Due to the orientation of the dwellings, the solar panels would still receive some sunlight and so be capable of some renewable energy generation. However, any reduction in sunlight to the solar panels would be likely to negatively impact upon the generation of renewable energy. As such, the proposal would be detrimental to climate change in principle and contrary to Policy CS18 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and to paragraphs 163 and 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

The application site is located in a smoke control area. As such, advice regarding smokeless fuels/appliances can be given to the applicant in an informative attached to any planning permission granted.

Conclusion

The proposed development would have no adverse residential amenity or highway safety impacts. However, the proposal would not be subservient to the existing roof, would be an overdevelopment of the application property and the proposed windows would not reflect the position or character of those existing.

Therefore, the proposed development would be out of character with the existing building and be detrimental to visual amenity. Furthermore, the proposal may negatively impact upon the generation of renewable energy and be detrimental to climate change.

Overall, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the proposed development attract significant weight and would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal. Therefore, following a thorough assessment of the application and all material planning considerations, it is considered that the proposed development cannot be supported.

Recommendation

That planning permission should be refused on the following grounds;

1. By virtue of its excessive size and bulk, the proposal would overwhelm the existing roof slope. The proposed windows would not reflect the position or character of those existing and as such, would look incongruous. When the existing extensions and alterations to the property are considered, the proposal would result in an overdevelopment of the application property. Overall, the proposed development would be out of character with the existing building and those in the surrounding area and be detrimental to visual amenity. Therefore, the proposal would not be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021).
2. The proposed development fails to demonstrate that there would be no significant overshadowing impacts to the solar panels at no. 13 Hopewell Drive. As such, the proposal would be likely to negatively impact upon the generation of renewable energy and be detrimental to climate change and contrary to Policy CS18 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and to paragraphs 163 and 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	20th August 2025	Dated:	20 th August 2025