

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20260411

Location: 26 Walmers Avenue, Higham, Rochester ME3 7EH

Description: Erection of front porch extension.

Applicant: Bradley & Olga Woods

Site Visit Date: 1 May 2026

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form

Drawing no. 2608_PL01 (location and block plans)

Drawing no. 2608_PL02 (existing drawings)

Drawing no. 2608_PL03 (existing site plan)

Drawing no. 2608_PL04 (proposed drawings)

Drawing no. 2608_PL05 (proposed site plan and section)

Relevant Planning History

20010377	Erection of single storey rear and side extensions to form sitting room, family room, study and garage; enlargement of existing roof and conversion of existing and proposed roof space into 3 bedrooms, 2 en-suite bathroom/w.c's, 1 en-suite shower room/w.c. and a dressing room.	Permitted	24.07.2001
19530075	Erection of bungalow	Permitted	06.05.1953
19500195	erection of bungalow	Application Refused	05.01.1951
19490211	Erection of colt type dwelling house.	Permitted	07.10.1949

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

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 4 – Decision-making
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- 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);
- Design for Gravesham: Design Code (2024);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009).

Emerging Local Plan as a Material Consideration

Paragraph 48 of the Framework makes it clear that planning applications can only be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. An emerging Local Plan, does not form part of the Development. The Framework, at Paragraph 49 allows local planning authorities to give weight to relevant policies in emerging Local Plans, according to:

- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the Framework, the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given to those policies.

West Oxfordshire District Council v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government & Rosconn Strategic Land Ltd [2018] EWHC 3065 (Admin) is a High Court judgement that deals with the weight to be given to a Regulation 19 Local Plan. In this judgement the Court found that the weight to be given to an emerging Local Plan, was a matter of planning judgement, which had to be reached having fully considered the relevant part (Paragraph 49) of the Framework.

The Council's emerging Local Plan, is in the process of being consulted upon (it has reached Regulation 19 stage), the Council is not yet aware of whether third parties will support or object to specific policies within the Plan, or whether they will consider the policies with the emerging Local Plan to be broadly sound and consistent with the NPPF (2024). Taking this into consideration, one can only conclude that at this stage of the process, **limited (i.e. minimal) weight should be afforded to the emerging Regulation 19**

Local Plan. This position would only change once the emerging Local Plan has progressed towards submission and examination, with the Council being fully aware of policies that are subject to unresolved objections and with knowledge of policies that have had their soundness and conformity against the Framework challenged.

This approach accords with the approach taken in a separate High Court case, Gladman Developments Ltd v SSHCLG & Corby Borough Council; & Uttlesford DC [2020] EWHC 518 (Admin) and Court of Appeal [2021] EWCA Civ 104, which was also the subject of a Court of Appeal Ruling [2021] EWCA Civ 104.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by site notice and individual letters to four neighbouring properties. No letters of representation have been received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a front porch extension. The proposed porch will project approx. 3m and will be approx. 3m wide. It will be approx. 3.4m with a flat roof. There will be a small canopy over the front door.

Design, Character and Appearance

The application site is a detached chalet bungalow with integral garage and off road parking for at least three cars. The street scene contains a mixture of type and design of dwellings with most having off road parking, low boundary treatments and soft landscaping to the front.

The proposed porch will not extend any further forward than the front of the house and is considered in proportion to the existing dwelling. It will have a flat roof with eaves higher than the original house however this will create a feature of the entrance and no objection is raised to this. Likewise, the plans show the materials to differ from the main house, such as Staffordshire blue brick, however this create a feature rather than appearing incongruous.

Landscape Character

The application site is located within the Higham Arable Farmlands landscape character area. the key characteristics are:

- Very gently undulating topography
- Open arable farmland
- Views out to the marshes and the River Thames in the north
- Original Saxon village of Lower Higham and more recent development to the south
- Marsh side hamlets and settlements
- Isolated farmsteads and scattered properties with locally distinct styles and materials
- Pockets of orchards and garden nurseries
- Historic sites including a Priory and Gad's Hill, once home to Charles Dickens
- Thames and Medway Canal (disused) runs to Lower Higham

The condition is poor and the sensitivity is moderate. The guidelines are to restore and create. The proposed porch will be located well within the application site and not readily visible from the street due to the existing front projection of the dwelling. The proposed porch therefore will have no detrimental impact

on the wider landscape.

The proposed porch therefore accords with policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Amenity

Future Occupiers

The proposed front porch will not result in the loss of any rear garden space or impact the off road parking available and therefore no concerns are raised.

Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed porch is single storey and set within the existing front projections of the dwelling. Due to the height, boundary treatments and distances from neighbouring dwellings there will be no detrimental impact in terms of loss of outlook, privacy, sunlight or daylight.

The proposed porch therefore accords with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135f of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Parking and Highways

The proposed porch will not result in any changes to the number of bedrooms or off road parking spaces and therefore no objection is raised on highways grounds.

Conclusion

The proposed porch will have no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene, amenities, parking or highway safety and therefore accords with the abovementioned policies and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation:

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	9 June 2026	Dated:	9th June 2026