



Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20260462

Location: The Limes Meopham Green Meopham Gravesend

Description: Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a replacement self-build 4 bedroom family dwelling.

Applicant: Mrs Maisie Elizabeth Randhawa

Site Visit Date: 31st July 2026

Submitted Documents/Plans

Planning Application Form;
Drawing No. 001 Rev A – Location Plan, Existing Block Plan, Proposed Block Plan;
Drawing No. 002 Rev A – Existing Floor Plans;
Drawing No. 003 Rev A – Proposed Floor Plans;
Drawing No. 004 Rev A – Footprint Comparison;
Drawing No. 005 Rev A – Existing Elevations;
Drawing No. 006 Rev A – Proposed Elevations;
Planning Statement;
Self-Build Form;
Arboricultural Report – Sylvanarb (Ref. SA/2500/26;
Tree Protection Plan; and
Tree Survey Plan.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19940696	Erection of conservatory.	Permitted	16.01.1995
19810891	Erection of single storey extension at side and rear to form garage lobby and store	Permitted	30.11.1981

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas

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 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 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
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic 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)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Management Plan – Rural Conservation Areas Appraisals (2016)
- Meopham Green Conservation Area Appraisal (2016)

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) which states that, with respect to buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

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

External

Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society does not accept the aggregating of floor areas of existing buildings for the purposes of comparison. The comparison should be like with like. The proposal would result in a house occupying almost the width of the plot with a significant increase in bulk, out of scale with the area.

In the Society's view the proposal could amount to over development.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by the displaying of a site notice, press notice and letters sent to 3 individual properties with an overall expiry of 03.07.26. No comments have been received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

The application seeks permission for the Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a replacement self-build 4 bedroom family dwelling.

Proposed Elevations



Proposed Front Elevation



Proposed North-West Elevation (Side)

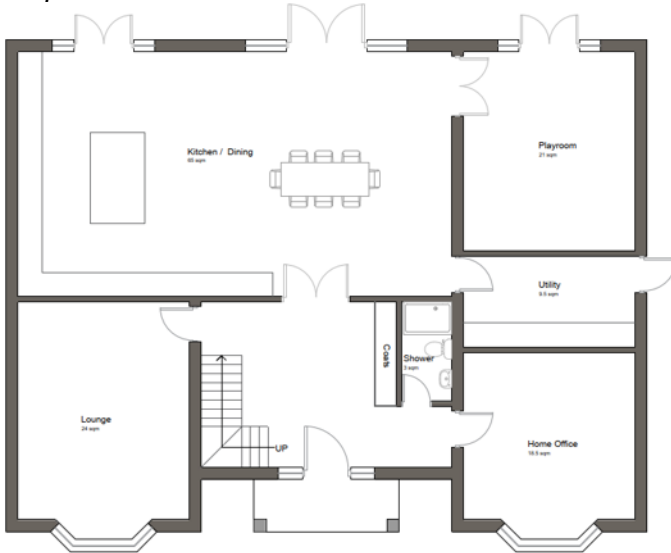


Proposed Rear Elevation

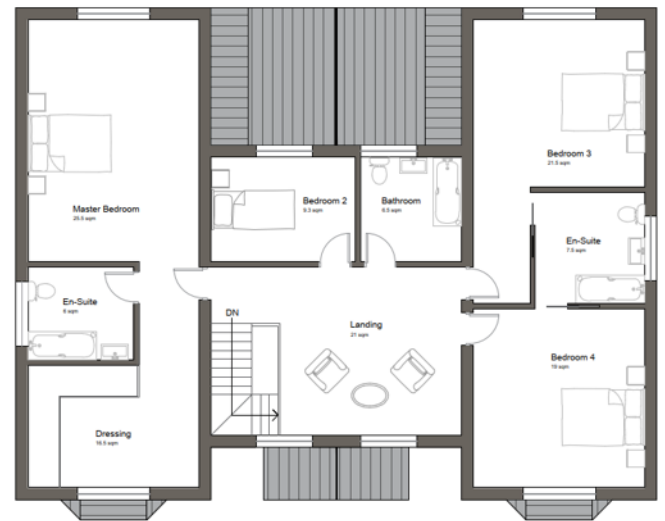


Proposed South-East Elevation (Side)

Proposed Floor Plans



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First Floor Plan

Site Description

The application site consists of the existing 4 bedroom detached dwelling, which is located Meopham Green which is a rural settlement inset from the Green Belt, and within the Meopham Green Conservation Area. The site is also located an archaeological notification area and in the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area.

The existing application property is a relatively modern building with red brick on the ground floor with red tile hung at first floor, brown concrete rooftiles, while upvc windows and timber door. The property is not

listed and is not highly visible from the surrounding area. The application property makes up a row of large detached properties of modern design on the south west side of the Green.

Existing Property



Streetscene



Principle Issues

As stated above, the existing property is not listed and is not located within the Green Belt. Therefore the principle issues in assessing this application are:

- Design, Character, Appearance and Impact on the Conservation Area
- Impact on landscape
- Impact on residential amenity
- Parking and Highways
- Impact on Trees
- Ecology and Biodiversity

Design, Character, Appearance and Impact on the Conservation Area

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to “achieving well-designed places” and sets out the Government’s requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 131 is particularly relevant:

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.

The aims set out in paragraph 131 of the NPPF are reflected in Policy CS19 of the 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”. In addition, Policy CS19 requires the following:

“...the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings.”

Policy CS20 (LPCS) states that:

“when considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset’s conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset.”

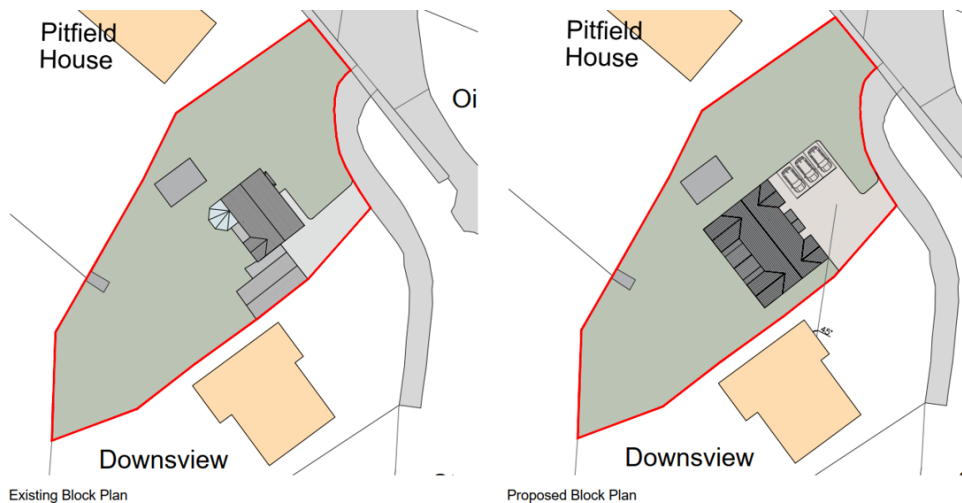
Saved Policy TC3 (LPFR) states that development is expected to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. As the application site lies within the Meopham Green Conservation Area, these policies are all relevant to the consideration of this application.

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.

The Meopham Green Conservation Area Appraisal highlights that *the modern Meopham Green takes the form of development around a large two-part triangular green with the A 227 as one side. Today an un-made track, Steele’s Lane, leads off south from the south east corner of the triangle, exactly as it did more than 100 years ago.* The application site is located to the southern boundary of the Conservation Area. The Appraisal states that *near the south extremity of the green as the road along the east side turns sharply to run along the south-west side, is the entrance to a development of four modern houses, one of considerable size.* With regard to the village Green, the Appraisal states that *the buildings, gardens, hedges, trees etc around the edges of the green that define it as a space rather than enclosing it.*

The existing property is a generous two storey detached four bedroom dwelling, set in a large plot, that is not listed and is more modern in design. Due to the extensive landscaping and the position of the property, wider views are not afforded from the Green or Wrotham Road. It is not considered that it contributes significantly to the character of the conservation area and there are no concerns regarding the principle of its replacement. The existing property has been extended to the side and the built form sits on the southern part of the plot. The proposed replacement dwelling would be located within a similar position. Whilst the overall footprint would be increased, it is not considered to dominate the generous plot, as demonstrated by the following existing and proposed site plan:

Proposed Site Plan



The design of the property has incorporated some traditional features in the form of bay windows and timber porch. The palette of red brick and timber doors together with a traditional pitch roof reflects similar developments within the area, more noticeably the Pitfield House directly to the north of the site which is a large detached dwelling, as well as more modern buildings to the south, as can be seen by the following images:

Pitfield House



Downsview and Stagland Heights



Overall, it is considered that the proposed replacement dwelling is acceptable in terms of scale, design and materials and would not detract from the immediate streetscene, character of the area or the Meopham Green Conservation Area.

The proposed development would therefore accord with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and saved Policy TC3 and Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994).

Impact on landscape

Section 15 of the NPPF highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 of Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes within the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that proposals will take account of the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment.

The application property is located in the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area which is characterised by gently undulating topography with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland, neat pattern of small square fields in the south, broader irregular shaped fields to the north and narrow lanes and roads lined with hedgerows. It has three large settlements located on the A227 running east and west and traditional architecture surrounding village greens provide local vernacular. The condition is good with the guideline to conserve and reinforce.

The replacement property would be located in a similar position to the existing property, within this existing residential plot and as such would not have a detrimental impact on the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area in accordance with Policy CS12 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Amenity of Future Occupiers / Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CS19 (LPCS) states that new development will be fit for purpose and will be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land. Harm to users of the adjacent properties due to roof terrace.

The proposed dwelling would provide ample room for the occupants with all the bedrooms exceeding the minimum standards, with all habitable rooms with good access to light and outlook and would retain approximately 605 sq.m of private amenity space. For a 4-bed dwelling, the garden space to be retained is in accordance with the Residential Layout Guidelines 2 (2020) and on this basis, it is not considered there would be any additional harms to the amenity or future occupiers of the replacement dwelling.

The replacement dwelling has the same ridge height than the existing, being approximately 8.7m. It is noted that there are additional windows in both side elevations, however these are either at ground floor or high level obscure glazed windows which serve non-habitable rooms. As such, it is considered that there would be no additional overlooking resulting from these windows and a condition will be added to the decision notice to secure this. The existing single storey side projections on the southern boundary would be replaced with two storey elements, which would add additional two storey built development to the boundary with Downsview, however with the position of the proposed property being further forward than Downsview, together with the existing separation between the properties, there would be no loss of outlook or overshadowing as a result.

Furthermore, no neighbour objections have been received.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed replacement property would be an acceptable form of development and would accord with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF (2024).

Parking and Highways

The proposal utilises the existing shared access and private driveway entrance and the proposed parking is in the form of three surface spaces located to the front. The loss of the double garage has been mitigated by surface parking to the front.

The driveway is suitable for turning a vehicle so it may enter and leave the highway in forward gear.

As such, the proposed parking provision, is sufficient and is in accordance with Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy and KCC Parking Standards (2006).

Impact on Trees

The application site contains a number of trees within its curtilage. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan have been submitted in support of the application, identifying and assessing all existing trees on the site. The assessment confirms that one tree located within the rear garden, identified as T4, an Oak (*Quercus* spp.), would need to be removed to facilitate the siting of the replacement dwelling further within the plot. This amended siting enables a more appropriate relationship between the proposed dwelling and the larger, more prominent trees situated towards the front of the site.

The Oak tree is classified within the report as a Category A tree, reflecting its high arboricultural quality and value. However, the tree has historically been pollarded to approximately 2 metres in height and, due to its close proximity to the existing dwelling, has been subject to significant management and pruning that has substantially reduced its canopy spread. Consequently, whilst of high arboricultural value, its contribution to the wider public visual amenity of the area is limited.

The submitted arboricultural information includes detailed tree protection measures for all retained trees, including protective fencing, no-dig surfacing and temporary ground protection. Paragraph 7.17 of the report concludes that the proposed development can be implemented without unacceptable risk to the retained trees, subject to the recommended protection measures being adhered to throughout the construction process.

Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of the Category A Oak tree, this loss can be appropriately mitigated through replacement planting elsewhere within the generous plot. Given the value of the tree, the provision of two replacement trees of the same or similar species and of appropriate size and quality is considered necessary to offset the loss and maintain the site's tree cover and biodiversity value.

A pre-commencement landscaping condition can therefore be imposed requiring the submission and approval of a detailed soft landscaping scheme, including details of replacement tree planting and the long-term maintenance and replacement of any failed planting. This will ensure that the replacement planting is

secured and successfully established.

Subject to the imposition of this condition, the proposal is not considered to result in unacceptable harm to the site's arboricultural, landscape or biodiversity value and would accord with the objectives of Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), particularly paragraphs 187 and 193, and Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Ecology and Biodiversity

Biodiversity Net Gain

Under the Environment Act 2021 and supporting Statutory Instruments Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is now mandatory for most development. The legislation requires a minimum 10% gain in biodiversity from applicable development either onsite, offsite or a combination of both.

BNG provided under the mandatory requirements offsite and significant BNG onsite must be secured by a legal agreement for 30 years under an approved Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)

There are strict legal requirements in terms of what an application must contain in relation to BNG before it can be accepted as valid. This is set out in Schedule 7A (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires the completed metric calculation tool showing the calculations of the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on the date of application and other information.

However, certain applications are exempt from the BNG regulations (the Biodiversity Gain Requirements Exemptions) Regulations 2024) including householder applications and include:

- Householder development as defined within article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- Development granted planning permission by a development order under section 59. This includes permitted development rights.
- Development subject to the de minimis exemption - development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of habitat, or 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerows.
- Self-build and custom build development - development which:
 - consists of no more than 9 dwellings, and
 - is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares, and
 - consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

The applicant has indicated that this is a self-build scheme and has completed the required self-build form with their application. The proposal description has been updated to indicate that the dwelling would be self-build, therefore complying with this exemption to the Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in biodiversity terms.

Conclusion

The proposal has been assessed against all relevant material planning considerations.

The proposed replacement dwelling would be acceptable both in terms of position, height, scale, massing and design that would sit well within the existing residential setting that would respect the character of the properties within the immediate streetscene and would not have a detrimental impact on the Meopham Green Conservation Area, neighbouring amenity or parking and highways, and matters relating to ecology and biodiversity enhancement can be appropriately addressed via planning conditions.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in planning terms and complies with all relevant national and local planning policies.

Recommendation

Permission.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Amanda Cue	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>A Cue</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	31 st July 2026	Dated:	31st July 2026