

Planning Statement

Site Address:

42, Dover Road East, Gravesend, DA11 0RG

Proposed Development:

Demolition of chimney. Conversion of loft space incorporating a hip to gable roof alteration and rear dormer extension to an existing mixed use building comprising of a ground floor shop and a self contained residential unit above. The proposal will provide two additional bedrooms and shower room at loft level forming a two storey self contained dwelling above commercial premises.

1. Introduction

This planning statement has been prepared in support of a proposed loft conversion, including a hip-to-gable roof alteration and rear dormer extension, to an existing mixed-use property within the administrative area at 42, Dover Road East, Gravesend, DA11 0RG, Gravesham Borough Council.

The property comprises a vacant ground floor commercial unit (Use Class E) and a self-contained residential dwelling above. The proposal relates solely to the residential accommodation, with no change proposed to the lawful use of the ground floor commercial unit.

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site consists of a two-storey mixed-use building located within an established urban area. The surrounding context is characterised by a mix of commercial and residential properties, typical of local high street and secondary retail frontage environments within Gravesham.

The ground floor unit is currently vacant but retains its lawful commercial use, while the upper floors are in residential use.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal seeks permission for a loft conversion incorporating:

- A hip-to-gable roof extension
- A rear dormer extension

The development will provide:

- Two additional bedrooms
- A shower room at loft level

The works will enhance the existing residential unit, creating a larger single self-contained dwelling (Use Class C3). No changes are proposed to the ground floor commercial unit.

4. Existing Use of Ground Floor Commercial Unit

The ground floor of the property is in lawful Use Class E (commercial), although it is currently unoccupied.

The unit has direct access from the street and remains suitable for future commercial occupation. The proposal does not include any change of use or physical alterations to this part of the building, thereby ensuring the retention of commercial floorspace.

A separate rear entrance provides independent access to the residential unit above. There is no internal connection between the commercial and residential elements, ensuring clear functional separation.

5. Planning Considerations

5.1 Principle of Development

The proposal seeks to improve an existing residential unit within a sustainable location. National planning policy encourages the efficient use of land and the optimisation of existing buildings, particularly in urban areas.

As the proposal does not result in the loss of a commercial unit and retains the mixed-use nature of the building, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

5.2 Impact on Character and Appearance

The proposed hip-to-gable and rear dormer extensions are common forms of development within residential areas and are considered to be in keeping with the character of similar properties.

The rear dormer will be positioned to the back of the property, limiting its visibility from the public realm, while the hip-to-gable alteration will integrate with the existing roof form.

Overall, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area.

5.3 Residential Amenity

The development will provide improved living conditions for future occupants by increasing internal space and functionality.

Given the nature and position of the extensions, there will be no significant adverse impacts on neighbouring properties in terms of:

- Loss of privacy
- Loss of light
- Overlooking or overshadowing

5.4 Impact on Commercial Unit

The proposal will have no impact on the operation, access, or viability of the ground floor commercial unit.

The unit will remain vacant but available for future occupation, with its lawful use unchanged. The independent access arrangements between the commercial and residential elements will be retained.

5.5 Fire Safety and Access

A separate rear access is maintained for the residential unit, ensuring independence from the commercial premises.

Fire safety measures, including enhanced separation and protected escape routes, are addressed in detail within the accompanying Reasonable Exception Statement. These measures ensure a safe relationship between the residential and commercial elements of the building.

6. Planning Policy Context

The proposal aligns with the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which supports:

- The efficient use of land
- The optimisation of existing buildings
- The delivery of high-quality housing

At a local level, the development is consistent with the general aims of Gravesham Borough Council's planning policies, which seek to:

- Support sustainable development
- Protect commercial uses while allowing residential improvements
- Maintain the character of established areas

As no loss of commercial floorspace is proposed, the development complies with policies relating to the protection of employment and retail uses.

7. Conclusion

The proposed loft conversion represents a sustainable and proportionate form of development that enhances the existing residential accommodation without impacting the ground floor commercial unit.

The scheme:

- Retains the lawful commercial use (Class E) at ground floor level
- Preserves the mixed-use character of the building
- Improves residential quality and internal space
- Raises no significant concerns in terms of design, amenity, or policy compliance

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms, and approval is respectfully requested.