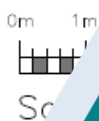


Planning Statement



Front Elevation...



REVISED HOUSEHOLDER
PLANNING APPLICATION
BY
MISS J GRUNDY

RELATING TO
PROPOSED EXTENSIONS AND
ALTERATIONS

AT

4 CROCKENHALL WAY
ISTEAD RISE
GRAVESEND
KENT
DA13 9DB

OUR REF: JA/23/54



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Robinson Escott Planning LLP,

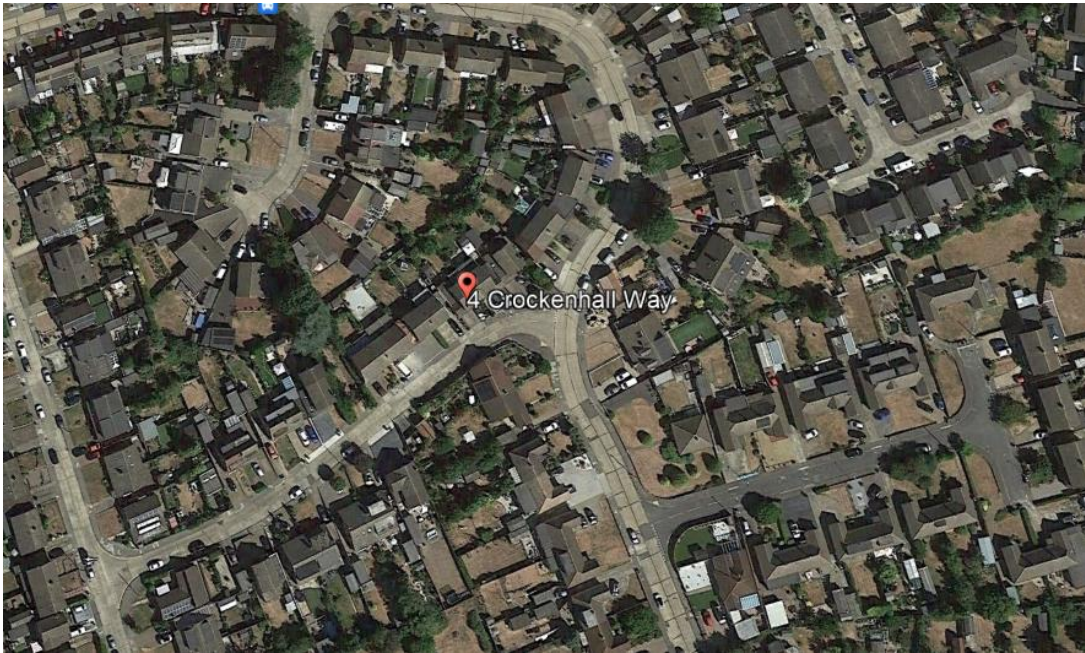
Downe House, 303 High Street, Orpington, Kent BR6 0NN

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. We have been instructed by Miss Grundy to prepare this Planning Statement in support of a revised householder planning application which proposes a series of alterations and extensions to her home at 4 Crockenhall Way, Istead Rise, DA13.
- 1.2. This application follows the refusal of application reference 2022/0855 on the 23rd September 2022. The initial application was refused on the basis of perceived harm to the character of the area as well as concerns over the standard of accommodation being proposed, resulting from insufficient bedroom size.
- 1.3. The proposal has been revised in light of the concerns raised in the Council's refusal of planning permission. We have considered the terms of the Council's refusal notice as well as the comments in the planning officer's delegated report. In our assessment this revised proposal addresses the concerns previously raised and planning permission should reasonably, therefore, be granted.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1. The application property comprises a semi-detached dwelling set over two storeys, located on the north-western side of Crockenhall Way. Istead Rise is a rural settlement which is located within the limits of built development, on shown on the Gravesham Plan Local Plan Proposals Map.



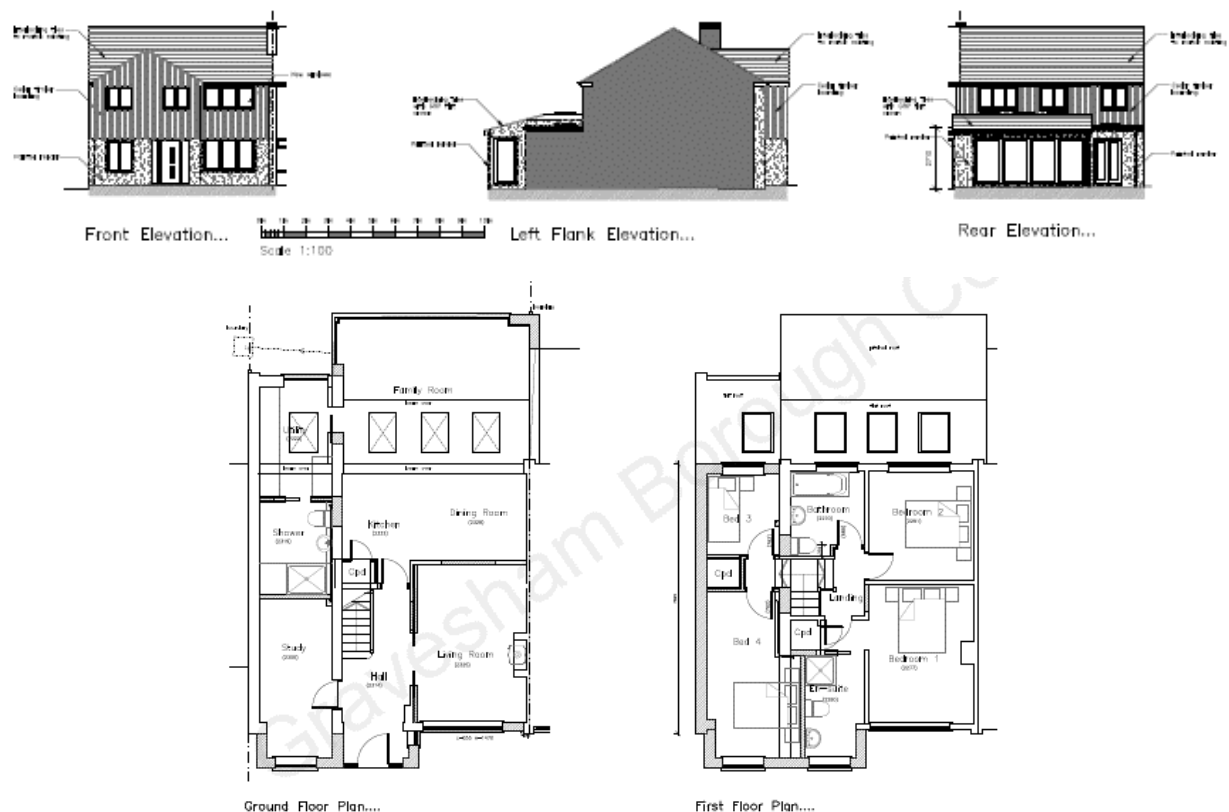
- 2.2. The settlement is inset from the Green Belt. The site is not located within a defined Conservation Area, nor are there any Listed buildings nearby.
- 2.3. The immediate character contains a variety of types and styles of property, including a number of examples of extended dwellings; in many cases these extensions include first floor or two storey side extensions.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. The Council's online planning history records indicate that the property has been previously extended in the form of a single storey front and side extension. This has provided an entrance canopy, study, bathroom and utility room and was granted planning permission under the Council's reference 2006/0102.

The recently refused application

- 3.2. As stated, on the 23rd September 2022 the Council refused planning application reference 2022/0855 which proposed the demolition of the existing rear extension and the construction of a single storey rear extension with roof lights alongside a first floor side and two storey front extension plus changes to the elevations of the building. This application was refused for two reasons.



Previously refused plans

- 3.3. The first reason for refusal suggested that the proposal was unacceptable in terms of 'scale and design' on the basis that it would appear 'incongruous' and would 'diminish the open visual

gap which represents the semi-detached nature of the properties.' The second concern related to the standard of accommodation which would result, specifically in relation to the Nationally Prescribed Space Standards and the size of one of the proposed bedrooms.

- 3.4. As stated, this revised proposal seeks to respond to the issues raised in the Council's refusal.

Nearby planning/design precedents

- 3.5. There are number of local examples of first floor side or two storey side extensions which cumulatively contribute to local character. These include:

64 Flowerhill Way, Istead Rise – approved under ref: 2019/1211



72 Flowerhill Way, Istead Rise – approved under ref: 2019/0544



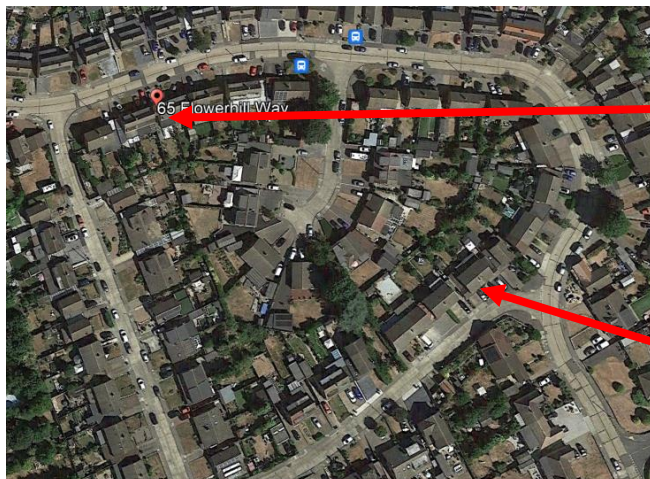
72 Flowerhill Way

Application site



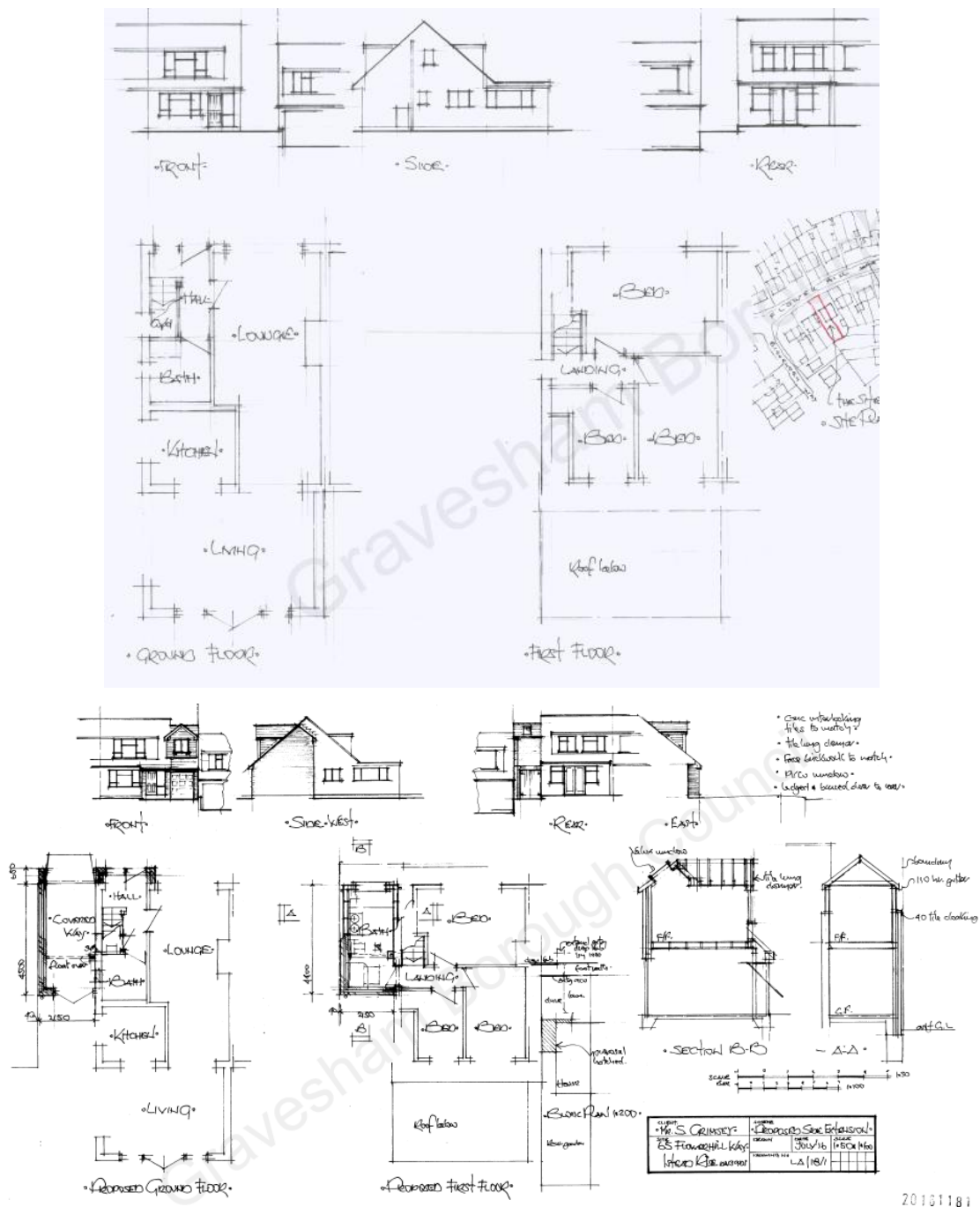
Existing and approved plans

65 Flowerhill Way, Istead Rise – approved under ref: 2016/1181



65 Flowerhill Way

Application site



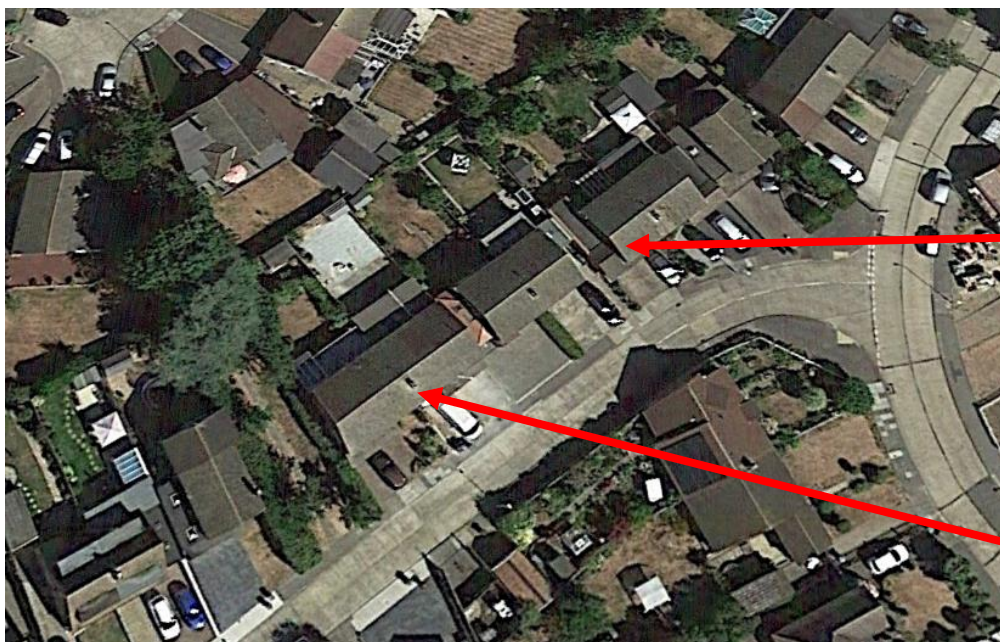
Existing and approved plans

- 3.6. There are other examples of side extensions hard up to the flank boundary, including at numbers 61 and 63 Flowerhill Way. It is clear, therefore, that these form part of the character of the area.



61-65 Flowerhill Way

- 3.7. Indeed, on Crockenhall Way itself, numbers 10 and 12 are examples of two storey side extensions which exist and form part of the streetscene.



Application
site

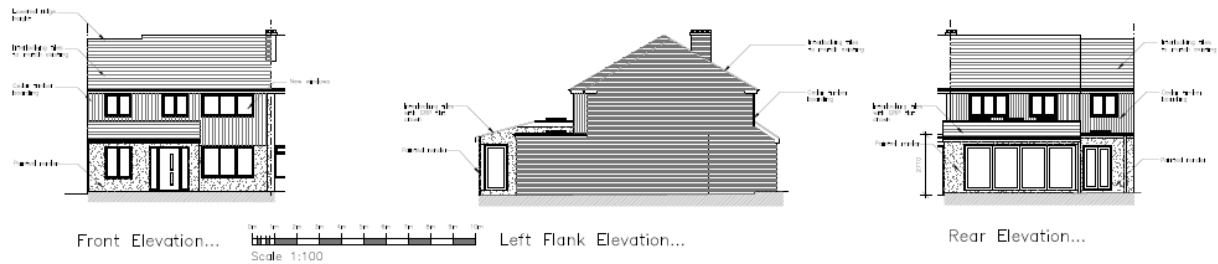
10-12
Crockenhall
Way



10-12 Crockenhall Way

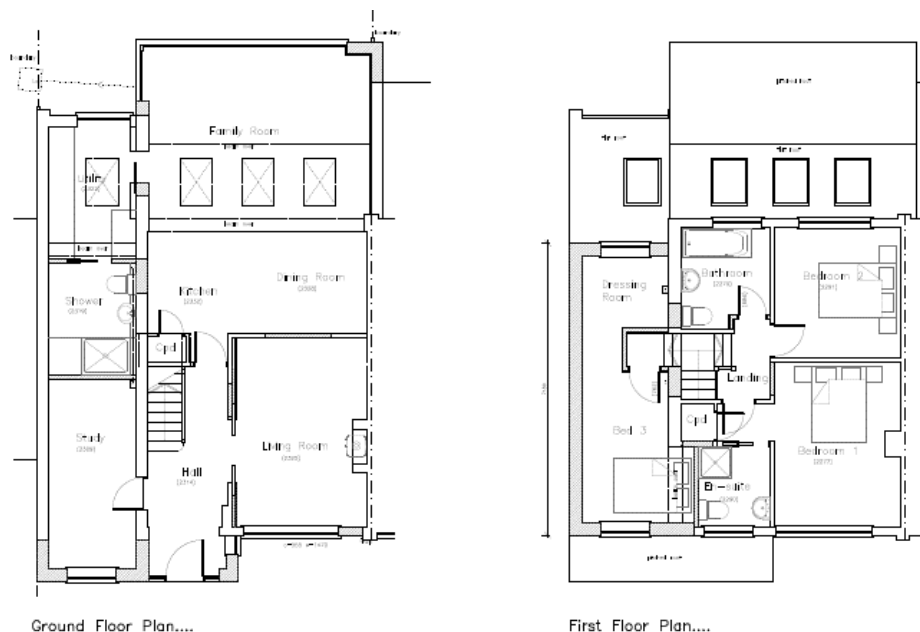
4. THE REVISED PROPOSAL

- 4.1. There were previously no concerns in relation to any effect on neighbouring residential amenity, nor were there any concerns in relation to car parking or highway matters. The comments in the planning officer's report related largely to matters of design which this proposal seeks to address.



Revised elevations

- 4.2. The planning officer's previous assessment confirmed that no concerns were raised in relation to the single storey rear extension element of the scheme. This element, therefore, is unchanged in this revised proposal. The Council's main concern related, in a design sense, to the first floor side extension which will infill the space between the application property and the boundary at first floor level.



Revised floorplans

- 4.3. The previous proposal was criticised on the basis that it followed the existing ridge height and projection to the front. The Council acknowledge that their Design Guide seeks to ideally encourage two storey extensions to be set back from the main elevation and set down from the over main ridge height. The Council are concerned that the previous proposal appeared as a *'bulky addition to the host dwelling.'*
- 4.4. In response, the plans have been amended to remove the front projection previously proposed at first floor level and the new front gable feature which was previously shown. The first floor side extension has been set down from the main ridge height of the existing property and has been recessed back from the rear elevation to add the *'subservience'* which was sought by the Council.
- 4.5. The result is that the extension sits more comfortably against the context of the existing house, with the removal of the first floor forward projecting element having a lesser effect on the overall appearance of the property.
- 4.6. The scheme continues to infill the space above the previous side extension at first floor level, however, in our assessment this does not give rise to the suggested harm to local character which was alleged by the Council. As set out above, there are a number of examples in the immediate and wider area of two storey or first floor side extensions which have infilled the space to the flank boundary and would sit comfortably within the context of the street scene.
- 4.7. The internal layout of the extension has been altered to remove bedroom 4 which allows bedroom 3 to be extended accordingly. This now ensures that all internal room sizes comply with the Nationally Prescribed Space Standards such that the Council's second reason for refusal has been directly addressed.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. Of relevance to this application are the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021); the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), the saved policies of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) plus any supplementary planning guidance. The details of the relevant policies are set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 5.2. The main purpose of the revised Framework remains to achieve sustainable development through a plan-led system. The presumption in favour of sustainable development remains and, if development is sustainable, this should go ahead without delay.
- 5.3. The Government continue to recognise that design is indivisible from good planning, and that high quality design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 127 seeks to ensure that development proposals add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and effective landscaping, and are sympathetic to local character and history.
- 5.4. Paragraph 134 recognises that whilst poor design which fails to take opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should be avoided, design which reflects local design policies or any adopted design codes is encouraged. Outstanding or innovative design which promotes a high level of sustainability or helps to raise the standard of design more generally, along with design which fits the '*overall form and layout of their surroundings*' is also encouraged.
- 5.5. The Framework reiterates that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework is a material consideration.

National Design Guide (2019)

- 5.6. In 2019 the Government introduced the National Design Guide (NDG) which sets out that the underlying purpose for design quality and the quality of new development at all scales is to create well-designed and well-built places that benefit people and communities.
- 5.7. Section 1 of the NDG sets out that new development may draw its inspiration from the site, its surroundings or a wider context, or it may also introduce '*new approaches to contrast with, or complement, its context*'.
- 5.8. Paragraph 58 of the Guidance states that where the scale or density of new development is '*very different to the existing place*' it may be appropriate to create a new identity rather than to scale up the character of an existing place in its context.
- 5.9. Importantly, the National Design Guide recognises that well-designed places do not need to copy their surroundings in every way. Local authorities are urged to welcome elements that reflect how we live today, and include innovation or change such as increased densities, or to incorporate new sustainable features or systems. It is clear, therefore, that there is no requirement at a national level to copy or replicate existing characteristics in order to create a sustainable development.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- 5.10. The Core Strategy sets out the Council's overarching planning policies in respect of new development. The Council's previous refusal notice alleged conflict with policy CS19.
- 5.11. Policy CSO1 sets out that the Council will take a positive approach to new development proposals which reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is contained within the NPPF.
- 5.12. Policy CS19 relates to development and design principals and requires all new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. Sustainable construction standards and techniques are supported. The policy states that the Council will look to conserve the

character of the local built, historic, and natural environment and ensure that development is integrated well with the surrounding local area.

Saved Policies of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994)

- 5.13. The Council's previous refusal notice did not allege any with relevant saved policies.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)

- 5.14. The key principles of the Council's guidance is a focus on ensuring any extensions and alterations to a house respect its original character and utilise high quality materials. It also provides guidance to ensure that new development does not harm the privacy and amenities of adjacent properties. Any proposed extensions and alterations to a house should respect the original character of the existing dwelling, complement and correspond with the character of neighbouring properties and the local area. It should be noted that this does not always mean an exact replication of the existing character.
- 5.15. The focus is on protecting wider character rather than stipulating precise design advice. Two storey extensions should be set back and below the overall roof height to maintain subservience.
- 5.16. Paragraph 10.5 relates to two storey side extensions and states that, in most circumstances, a gap should be retained to the flank boundary. However, the overarching purpose of the guidance is to maintain existing local character overall, so a judgment must be made based on the specific context of each site and each case on its merits.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. The proposal has been amended in response to the Council's earlier concerns. The changes internally have directly addressed refusal ground 2 with the removal of bedroom 4 and the enlargement of the proposed bedroom 3. This issue, therefore, is considered to be directly resolved.
- 6.2. It is acknowledged that the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (note that this is guidance rather than adopted policy) makes broad reference to two storey extensions maintaining a degree of '*subservience*' and the Council's general preference to maintain a gap to the flank boundary in relation to two storey side extensions or first floor infill extensions. However, Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy is predominantly concerned with maintaining local character and does not set out any prescriptive criteria. Therefore, there is an individual judgement to be undertaken in each case as to whether any proposal would give rise to demonstrable harm.
- 6.3. The Council's adopted policy (CS19) is predominantly concerned with development being visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It seeks to preserve local character – in this case there are numerous examples of similar extensions which cumulatively form part of the wider '*character*'. These are material considerations.
- 6.4. To that end, it appears that the Council have been somewhat inconsistent in their application of Policy CS19. For example, under reference 2019/1211, planning permission was granted at 64 Flowerhill Way for a series of extensions and alterations including a two storey side extension. This extension was set back from the front elevation and included a stepping down from the main ridge height but did not maintain any gap to the boundary.
- 6.5. The Council were satisfied that '*In design terms the proposal respects the design, scale and proportions of the host dwelling*' and it was confirmed that '*The proposal is acceptable in terms of design and therefore complies with Policy CS19.*'
- 6.6. In this case it appears that a similar judgement should be reached. The scheme has been altered to address the Council's concerns in relation to the internal layout, and the roof of the first floor side extension has been set down from the main ridge height, as well as the extension

being recessed back from the main rear elevation to accord with the Council's preferences with regard to subservience.

- 6.7. Maintaining the front elevation at first floor level (removing the previously proposed forward projection element at first floor level) maintains the existing character of the property and results in a dwelling which will sit comfortably within its context, thereby maintaining the characteristics of the street scene. This is entirely in accordance with the Council's policy requirements and accords with the overall objectives of their Supplementary Planning Guidelines.
- 6.8. It is common ground that the single storey rear extension is acceptable and gives rise to no harm, likewise there are no concerns in relation to neighbouring amenities arising from the earlier proposal. In this case, therefore, the scheme protects the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and will, in our assessment, respond positively to local character.
- 6.9. The Council previously acknowledged the other examples in the street scene which have involved two storey side extensions, notably at Nos. 10 and 12 Crockenhall Way. While these may be 'historical cases' which (in the terms of the previous planning officer's report) '*would have been determined under a previous policy,*' they nevertheless exist and therefore form part of the character of the area. In our assessment it is unreasonable to disregard these physical examples of extensions of a similar scale and design when the overarching assessment includes the extent to which any proposal would maintain local character.
- 6.10. It is our view, therefore, that the overall objectives of Policy CS19 had been adhered to, likewise the overall objectives of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance are not in conflict with this revised proposal.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The revised design of the extensions includes a suitable degree of subservience and removes elements of the proposal which the Council considered to be '*bulky*' and would lead to an effect on the street scene which was '*incongruous*.' In our assessment, therefore, this revised proposal has directly addressed the earlier concerns.
- 7.2. The Council are understandably keen to ensure that domestic alterations maintain the street scene and are of a high quality. In our assessment this revised proposal accords wholly with these objectives, with nearby examples of very similar (or larger) side extensions which infill the gap to the boundary representing significant material considerations which must form part of the Council's assessment.
- 7.3. In light of the forgoing and all material planning considerations in this case, therefore, we would respectfully suggest that planning permission should reasonably be granted subject to any necessary planning conditions.