



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20241079

Location: 2 Church Cottages, Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Demolition of existing garage and erection of new garage (including agricultural store) and reconfiguration of the property access.

Applicant: Mr A Smith

Site Visit Date: 21st January 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Planning Application Form;
Planning, Design, Access & Heritage Statement;
Drawing No. DHA/34788/01 – Site Location Plan;
Drawing No. DHA/34788/02 – Existing Site Layout Plan;
Drawing No. DHA/34788/03 – Existing Garaging, Floor Plan, Roof Plan & Elevations;
Drawing No. DHA/34788/04 – Proposed Site Layout Plan;
Drawing No. DHA/34788/05 – Proposed Garaging & Garden Storage Floor & Roof Plan; and
Drawing No. DHA/34788/06 – Proposed Garaging & Garden Storage Elevations & Section.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230533	Application for Listed Building Consent for the replace structurally unsound construction with green oak frame and reconstruct gable end and shared front chimneys as a result of scaffold collapse.	Permission	13.07.2023
20230441	Replace structurally unsound construction with green oak frame and reconstruct gable end and shared front chimneys as a result of scaffold collapse.	Permission	13.07.2023
20210899	Reconfiguration of vehicle access for the property and replacement and resiting of a single storey garage.	Permission	20.12.2021
20201367	Application for approval of conditions 3 and 4 attached to planning permission reference no. 20200295 relating to samples or details of the external facing materials and samples or detailed drawings to a scale of no less than 1:5 of all new external joinery (3) and a sample of any additional bricks that are required to supplement the existing bricks which are to be re-used, together with details of the mortar mix (4).	Approval of Details	14.09.2021
20201366	Application for the approval of conditions 3, 4 and 5 attached to Listed Building Consent reference number 20200296 relating to samples or details of the external facing materials and samples or detailed drawings to a	Approval of Details	14.09.2021

	scale of no less than 1:5 of all new external joinery (3), a sample of any additional bricks that are required to supplement the existing bricks which are to be re-used, together with details of the mortar mix and pointing finish (4) and the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist (5).		
20200296	_REVISED PLANS_ Application for Listed Building Consent for the removal of rear two storey extension and erection of two storey side extension, removal of front porch and replacement with a small canopy, reinstatement of cat-slide roof, replacement of modern windows and restoration of original material, minor changes to the internal layout, alterations to the external elevations and planting of a Yew hedge along the eastern boundary.	Permission	10.06.2020
20200295	_REVISED PLANS_ Erection of two storey side extension, removal of front porch and replacement with a small canopy, reinstatement of cat-slide roof, replacement of modern windows and restoration of original material, minor changes to the internal layout, alterations to the external elevations and planting of a Yew hedge along the eastern boundary.	Permission	10.06.2020
20190873	Application for Listed Building Consent for the removal of rear two storey extension and erection of two storey side extension, removal of front porch and replacement with a small canopy, reinstatement of cat-slide roof, replacement of modern windows and restoration of original material, minor changes to the internal layout, alterations to the external elevations and planting of a Yew hedge along the eastern boundary.	Refused	14.11.2019
20190872	Erection of two storey side extension, removal of front porch and replacement with a small canopy, reinstatement of cat-slide roof, replacement of modern windows and restoration of original material, minor changes to the internal layout, alterations to the external elevations and planting of a Yew hedge along the eastern boundary.	Refused	14.11.2019
20190111	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the continued use of land as domestic garden ancillary to the main dwelling.	Certificate Granted	03.05.2019
20181185	Application for Listed Building Consent for the removal of rear two storey extension and erection of two storey side extension, removal of front porch and replacement with a small canopy, reinstatement of cat-slide roof, replacement of modern windows and restoration of original material, minor changes to the internal layout, alterations to the external elevations and planting of a Yew hedge along the eastern boundary.	Refused	05.03.2019
20181184	Erection of two storey side extension, removal of front porch and replacement with a small canopy, reinstatement of cat-slide roof, replacement of modern windows and restoration of original material, minor changes to the internal layout, alterations to the external elevations and planting of a Yew hedge along the	Refused	05.03.2019

	eastern boundary.		
20100154	Application for Listed Building Consent for erection of a single storey rear extension to form an enlarged kitchen/breakfast room.	Refused	15.04.2010
20100122	Erection of single storey rear extension to form an enlarged kitchen/breakfast room.	Refused	15.04.2010
20010561	Application for Listed Building Consent for the erection of a conservatory at the rear.	Refused	31.08.2001
20010254	Erection of a conservatory at the rear.	Refused	31.08.2001
20010414	erection of single storey side extension to existing detached garage to form a double garage.	Permission	19.07.2001
20010007	Erection of extension to existing detached garage to form double garage incorporating construction of a new roof over the existing garage.	Refused	02.03.2001
19940155	Application for listed building consent for retention of satellite dish.	Refused	06.09.1994
19930253	Erection of detached garage	Permission	15.06.1993
19800239	Erection of detached double garage at side	Withdrawn	18.11.1980

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS11 – Transport
- 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
- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- TC2 – Listed Buildings
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

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)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 4 – Decision Making

- 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- The Street, Meopham Rural Conservation Area Appraisal (2017)

Other Relevant Guidance

- Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2023)
- Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)
- Gravesham Front Driveway Design Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)

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.

The Council has a statutory requirement under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council has a statutory duty in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

External

KCC Heritage Conservation

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, based on existing Historic Environment Record data for the area and the past development of the site, I consider it unlikely that these proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

KCC Highways & Transportation

Thank you for your consultation in relation to the above planning application. I note that in highway terms the proposals do not differ materially from the previous application for this site, GB/20210899.

As noted in our response to the previous application for this site, the reconfiguration of the property access and the stopping up of the existing vehicular access is considered to be acceptable.

Consequently, I refer to the above planning application and confirm that provided the following requirements are secured by condition or planning obligation, then I would raise no objection on behalf of the local highway authority:-

- Completion and maintenance of the access shown on the submitted plans, including the stopping up of the existing access and the reinstatement of the footway, prior to the use of the site commencing.
- Use of a bound surface for the first 6 metres of the access from the edge of the highway.
- Gates to open away from the highway and to be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the back of the highway.
- Provision and maintenance of 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility splays behind the footway on both sides of the access with no obstructions over 0.6 metres above footway level, prior to the use of the site commencing.

It is important to note that Local Planning Authority (LPA) permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society would suggest that if consent is granted, conditions should be imposed to control any potential residential use.

Neighbouring properties

The application was advertised on site and in the press and individual letters sent to two surrounding properties with an overall expiry date of 3rd January 2025. No comments have been received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

The application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing detached double garage and the erection of new garage (including agricultural store) and reconfiguration of the property access.

Existing Garage



Proposed Garage



Site Description and Surroundings

The application site is 2 Church Cottages, a Grade II Listed Building located within the Green Belt, The Street, Meopham Rural Conservation Area and the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area.

Key issues:

- Principle of Development
- Appropriateness of Green Belt development
- Impact on the openness of the Green Belt
- Very Special Circumstances
- Impact on the Setting of the Grade II Listed Building
- Impact on the Conservation Area
- Impact on adjacent properties.
- Parking and Highways
- Other Material Planning Considerations – Landscape Character Area

Principle of Development

Policy CS01 (Sustainable Development) sets out that support will be given to proposals that accord with the development plan. A positive approach to new development will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF (2024) and the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

The proposal would replace the existing detached double garage and would utilise the existing access.

The proposal therefore accords with Policy CS01 of the Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (LPCS) and the principle of the development is acceptable.

Appropriateness of Green Belt development

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt is development that by definition, is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 goes on to say that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The NPPF (2024) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. At paragraph 143 of the NPPF (2024) lists the 5 purposes which the Green Belt serves. Of particular relevance in this case is that it assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The NPPF (2024) makes it clear that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, with a small number of exceptions (paragraph 154). The listed exceptions the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces (paragraph d).

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) (LPCS) prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in (LPCS).

The original external footprint of the garage is 46.73m², which would increase to 96.04m², and therefore represents a 105.52% increase. The proposed garage would have a ridge height of 5.91m, whereby the existing garage has a ridge height of 3.88m, which is an increase in ridge height of 2.03m and with a barn hip design over the existing modest hip roof design, also create further bulk and massing

	Original Garage	Replacement Garage (proposed)	% increase above original
Footprint (m²)	46.73	96.04	+105.52%
Internal Floorspace Area (m²)	35.49	77.83	+119.30%

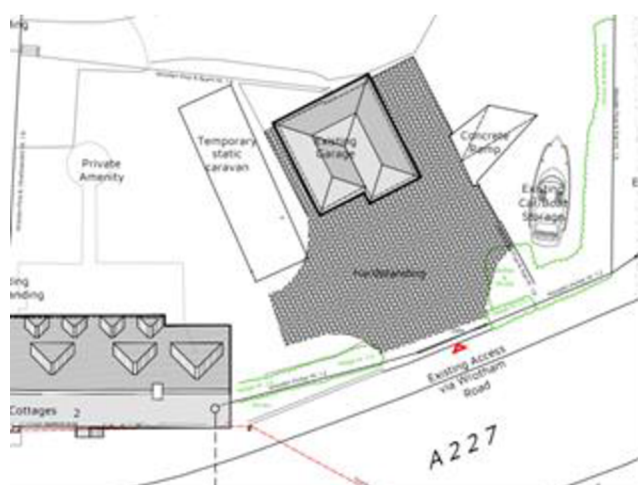
The NPPF (2024) paragraph 154(d) also states that exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt apply only where a replacement of a building should not be materially larger than the one it replaces.

Whilst the proposed garage would replace the existing garage, the proposal would result in a garage that has a footprint over twice the footprint of the existing and substantial increase in height, bulk and massing.

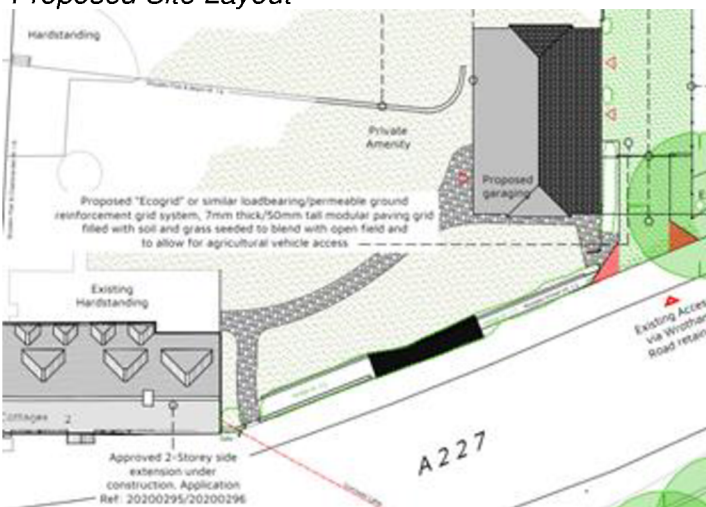
In addition, the existing garage, being a detached double garage provides the same level of parking to the proposed and the existing building is in a good state and does not appear to need replacing.

Furthermore, the proposed block plan shows that the garage would appear as a dominate structure that gives a dominant appearance over the main dwelling.

Existing Site Layout



Proposed Site Layout



Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed garage has been designed to a high specification, it is not considered to be either modest or subservient to the host property.

The proposed replacement garage is considered to be very clearly a disproportionate increase above the original building as defined in the NPPF (2024).

Impact on the openness of the Green Belt

The NPPF (2024) makes it clear that an essential characteristic of Green Belt is their openness. Open means the absence of development irrespective of the degree of visibility of the land in question or from public vantage points.

The existing garage is already a substantial detached double garage, however it appears acceptable when viewed in its setting with the associated dwelling. The proposed replacement garage would appear as a dominant building that is neither modest nor subservient and would be highly visible from the streetscene.

Existing Streetscene



A combination of all of the above would create significant additional built form on the site and would change the natural character of the site.

Together with the above, the proposed garage would result in a form of development that is not subservient in bulk or massing of the existing host dwelling. It is considered that the proposed garage would result in an undesirable increased built form on the site which undermines the purposes of including the land within the Green Belt.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed development would undermine the openness of the site and would not preserve the character and appearance of the Green Belt and would conflict with the NPPF (2024).

Very Special Circumstances

As indicated above, national planning advice states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Furthermore, it states that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The application does not include Very Special Circumstances within the supporting planning, design, access and heritage statement and it is not considered that the existing garage does not provide adequate vehicle parking or storage to serve the occupants.

In conclusion it is considered that the harmful effect of the development in relation to the Green Belt is not clearly outweighed by other considerations. There can, in consequence, be no very special circumstances and therefore the proposal is in conflict with Policy CS02 of the Local Plan Core Strategy and the Section 13 of the NPPF (2024).

Impact on the Setting of the Grade II Listed Building

The host dwelling, 2 Church Cottages is Grade II Listed and sits in a prominent position on Wrotham Road. The existing garage has a subservient appearance to the host dwelling with a subservient footprint and modest height and roof design.

The proposed replacement garage with a more than twice the footprint and over 2m increase in ridge

height, would dwarf the host dwelling and with increased bulk and massing would not protect the integrity of the Grade II Listed building or respect its setting, but cause harm to it.

In respect of design and impact on the listed building, the proposal is considered unacceptable and would cause harm to the integrity and setting of this listed building contrary to local and national planning policy.

The proposal is considered unacceptable and contrary to Policy CS20 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the NPPF (2024).

Impact on the Conservation Area

Policy CS20 (LPCS) requires new development to preserve and, where appropriate enhance the significance of the Borough's heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of The Borough's urban and rural conservation areas. The existing garage has a subservient appearance to the host dwelling and to the streetscene, that does not detract from the listed building. It sits quite unobtrusively to the north east of 2 Church Cottages. The proposed replacement garage would still be a larger structure with increased massing and bulk that appears as a new dwelling, rather than an ancillary garage. It is considered that it would neither enhance nor preserve The Street, Meopham Rural Conservation Area and as such is contrary to Policy CS20 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the NPPF (2024).

Impact on adjacent properties.

Development should not cause demonstrable harm to the amenity of any existing residents or property such that it will materially harm their living conditions. Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires new development to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land and paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024) which requires the amenity of existing residents to be protected.

Given the sufficient distance to the neighbouring properties, it is considered that the proposed development would not adversely affect the neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, privacy, outlook and increased overshadowing. As such, the proposal would comply with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and the NPPF (2024).

Parking and Highways

The replacement garage and layout would provide the same parking facilities as the existing and would utilise the existing access. There is no objection on the grounds of highway safety. The proposal complies with Policies CS11 and CS19 (LPCS) and Saved Policy P3 (LPFR).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Landscape Character Area

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 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced and the greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting.

The application site is located within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. The topography is gently undulating with clear views across the immediate landscape and occasional wider views from the main road towards the residential settlements of Istead Rise and New Barn. The dominant land use is

agricultural, with a mixture of grazed pasture and arable use. Small clumps of woodland neglected orchards and commercial horticulture exist in parts. There is a presence of horse related activity scattered throughout the landscape.

Due to the nature of this proposal there will be no direct impact on the landscape character area. As such the proposal would accord with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the NPPF (2024).

Conclusion

The proposed replacement garage, by virtue of the resultant additional bulk, scale and massing, will result in a disproportionate addition that fails to complement the form of the existing Grade II Listed dwelling. The proposal represents a disproportionate addition with excessive scale, bulk and massing compared to the original garage, which will harm the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt is contrary to Policies CS01 (Sustainable Development), CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) and CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Sections 13 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

The proposed garage, by virtue of the resultant additional height, bulk, scale and massing, would not protect the integrity or the setting of the Grade II Listed building, known as 2 Church Cottages. The proposal would be contrary to Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

By virtue of the resultant additional height bulk, scale and massing, the proposed garage would result in a disproportionate addition that fails to preserve or enhance The Street, Meopham Rural Conservation Area. Therefore the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Conservation Area contrary to Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Recommendation

Refusal

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

Case Officer:	Ms Amanda Cue	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	22 nd January 2025	Dated:	22 nd January 2024