

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250506

Location: Gads Hill House School Gravesend Road Higham Rochester

Description: Installation of a proposed polycarbonate roof canopy over outdoor seating area.

Applicant: Gad's Hill School

Site Visit Date: 30 May 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Cover Letter;
- Application form;
- Location Plan;
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/100 – Existing Block Plan;
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/101 – Proposed Block Plan;
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/110 – Existing & Proposed Ground Floor Plan;
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/111 – Existing Roof Plan;
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/112 – Existing West & East Elevation;
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/113 – Existing Section A-A & North Elevation;
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/121 – Proposed Roof Plan;
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/122 – Proposed West & Existing East Elevation; and
- Drawing no. 5297/PL/123 – Proposed Section A-A & North Elevation.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20120284	Application for minor material amendment to application reference number 20110361 which was for amendments	Permitted	24.05.2012

	to Listed Building Consent reference number 20070189 relating to the design of the proposed new junior school; for the creation of gates for fire access purposes.		
20120283	Application for minor material amendment to application reference number 20110362 which was for amendments to planning application reference number 20070188 relating to the design of the proposed new junior school; for the creation of gates for fire access purposes.	Permitted	24.05.2012
20110362	Application for minor material amendments to planning permission reference number 20070188 relating to the design of the proposed new junior school only.	Permitted	16.08.2011
20110361	Application for minor material amendments to Listed Building Consent reference number 20070189 relating to the design of the proposed new junior school only.	Permitted	16.08.2011
20070189	Application for Listed Building Consent for the demolition of existing school hall and outbuildings and erection of a part one and part two storey junior school and a three storey senior school; internal and external alterations in connection with the conversion of the mansion house (old school building) into a Dicken's Visitor's Centre involving new glazed entrance link and replacement of some windows; erection of a maintenance shed; laying out of service yard and formation of car and coach park.	Permitted	02.08.2010
20070188	Demolition of existing school hall and outbuildings and erection of a part one and part two storey junior school and a three storey senior school including minor revisions to the previously considered floor plans and elevations facing Crutches Lane; conversion of the Mansion House (Old School Buildings) into a Dickens Visitor Centre involving the erection of a glazed entrance link, erection of maintenance shed and laying out of a service yard, formation of car port and coach park, improvements to Crutches Lane/Gravesend Road junction and improvements to existing vehicular access to the school along Crutches Lane.	Permitted	09.07.2010

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS10 – Physical and Social Infrastructure
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Listed Buildings

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 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Historic England

Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application.

We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers. You may also find it helpful to refer to our published advice at <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/>

It is not necessary to consult us on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals. However, if you would like advice from us, please contact us to explain your request.

No response from:

- GBC Conservation Officer
- Higham Parish Council
- National Amenity Societies

Neighbouring properties

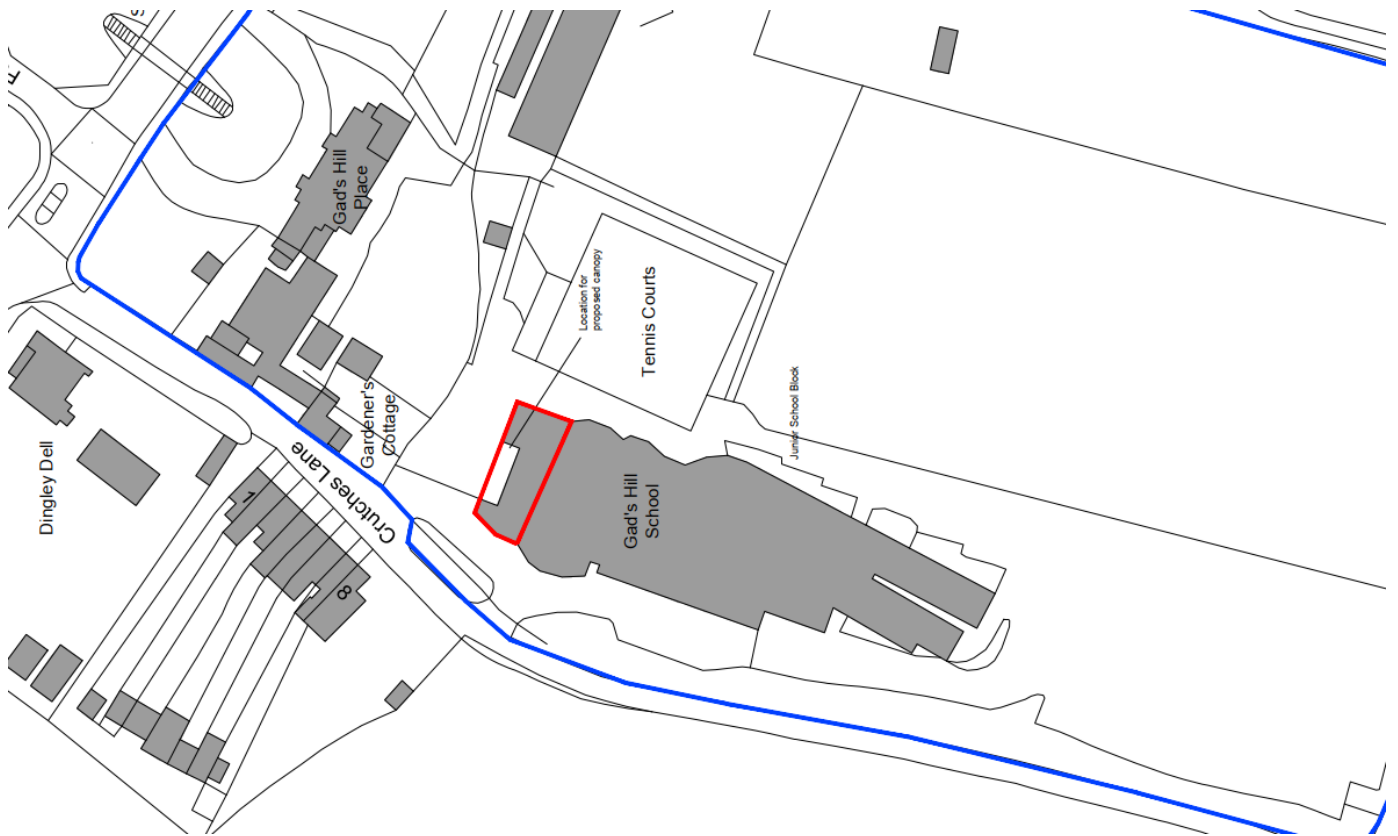
9 surrounding properties were consulted plus site and press notices – overall consultation expiry date was 27.06.2025 – no responses received.

Officer's Analysis

The application site consists of part of the junior school to the rear of Gads Hill House. The site is located in the Green Belt, in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area and Gads Hill House is a grade I listed building.

The proposal is for installation of a proposed polycarbonate roof canopy over outdoor seating area.

This plan shows the location of the proposed canopy in the context of the junior school and the wider site:



There are already existing steel beams over the outdoor seating area. It is proposed to install a polycarbonate canopy over the outdoor seating area.

Existing and proposed north elevation:



Existing and proposed west flank elevation:



The canopy was approved under the original permissions refs. 20070188 & 20250189 and subsequent amendments in 2011 (refs 20110361 & 20110362) but the canopy was not completed due to wishing to reduce costs. As the development approved under the 2011 amendments has been commenced with the building of the junior school, the permission has been implemented and the canopy could be carried out at a later date under those permissions therefore. However, this application has been submitted and so will

be duly assessed.

The principle considerations in the assessment of the application are

- Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Impact on openness
- Design, Character and Appearance including Heritage
- Landscape Character
- Neighbouring Amenity

Green Belt

The NPPF (2024) states at Paragraph 142 that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

At Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2024) it is stated that, when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2024) states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the exceptions given in 154 (a) – (h) applies. Furthermore, paragraph 154 states that the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all of the criteria listed in 154 (a) – (d) are met.

Whether the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2024) states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies

a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

e) limited infilling in villages;

f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

i. mineral extraction;

- ii. engineering operations;*
- iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
- iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*
- v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
- vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.*

Of these (c) applies as the proposal is for the alteration of an existing building. Steel beams already exist over the seating area. The proposal is for a polycarbonate roof over the steel beams. It would measure 11.4m in width by 4m in depth. Given the size of the junior school building the canopy would not form a disproportionate addition as it would cover a small area in which there are already steel beams and the area underneath would not be enclosed at all but would be fully open. Overall, it is considered the proposed canopy would not constitute a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. The proposed development is therefore not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would be compliant with Policy CS02 (LPCS) and section 13 of the NPPF (2024).

Impact on Openness

The canopy would consist of a sheet of polycarbonate over existing steel beams with the area remaining open underneath. It would not increase the size of the junior school building at all and would be a very light-weight, see-through structure. It is considered the canopy would not impact on the openness of the Green Belt and in this respect the proposal would be compliant with section 13 of the NPPF (2024).

Design, Character and Appearance including Heritage

The canopy, as stated, is a slim light-weight structure which would cover an external seating area. It is not an obtrusive or incongruous design and would be appropriate for this modern school building and allow the seating area to be used in all weathers. The material is considered for a modern building. The junior school building is in the grounds of the grade I listed Gads Hill Place but given that the school has been considered acceptable in these grounds under the previous permissions, it is not considered that a small canopy over an external seating area which would remain open would cause any additional impact on the setting of the grade I listed building than is already the case with the junior school. It is of simple slimline design and would be in keeping with the design of the rest of the junior school. As such in respect of design, character and appearance including heritage, the proposal is considered compliant with Policies CS19 & CS20 (LPCS), saved Policy TC2 (LPFR) and sections 12 & 19 (LPCS).

Landscape Character

Given the scale of the canopy and that it would be attached to a much larger school building and of slimline design, it is considered it would not cause any impact on the wider landscape and there would therefore be no impact on the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character. As such in respect of landscape character the proposal would be compliant with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Neighbouring Amenity

There are no neighbouring properties in the vicinity of the proposed canopy and therefore there would be no impact on any neighbouring properties. No neighbour representations have been received. In respect of neighbouring amenity the proposal is compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

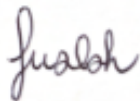
Conclusion

The proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, would not impact on the openness of the Green Belt, would be acceptable in respect of design, character and appearance and would not impact on the setting of the grade I listed Gads Hill Place, would not impact on landscape character and would not impact on neighbouring amenity. As such the proposal is compliant with local and national planning policy.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	15th July 2025	Dated:	16 July 2025