

Delegated Report

Listed Building Consent Application

Planning Application No: 20250370

Location: Gads Hill House School, Gravesend Road Higham Rochester

Description: Application for Listed Building Consent; removal of floorboards to examine the floor joists. The floorboards will be replaced once investigations have been carried out.

Applicant: Gad's Hill School

Site Visit Date: 02 May 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Cover Letter;
- Application form;
- Drawing no. 5306/FE/01 Rev. A – Location Plan;
- Drawing no. 5306/FE/02 – Block Plan;
- Drawing no. C1332/SK/100 Rev. A – Existing Second Floor Plan;
- Drawing no. C1332/SK/101 – Rev. A – Existing First Floor Plan;
- Drawing no. C1332 SK-102 Rev. A – Existing Ground Floor Plan;
- Repair Investigation Strategy; and
- Heritage Statement.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230281	Application for Listed Building Consent for roof and ceiling repairs to classroom H1 and library extension; repairs to cupola and boundary garden wall; take down and rebuild garden shed; repairs to Gardener's Cottage chimney; and replacement self-supporting front boundary fence to Gravesend Road	Permitted	19.10.2023

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Listed Buildings
- 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.

Other material considerations

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

None.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Conservation Officer

I've now reviewed the application for opening up and investigation of the floor structure. The information submitted is comprehensive enough and when read with the structural engineers repair investigation strategy is an acceptable approach.

No adverse comments.

No response from:

- Historic England
- National Amenity Societies
- Higham Parish Council
- Ward Councillors

Publicity

The application was advertised by way of site and press notices – overall consultation expiry date was 02.06.2025 – no comments received.

Officer's Analysis

The application site consists of Gads Hill House situated on the southern side of Gravesend Road. It is a grade I listed building in use as a private school.

The proposal is for listed building consent for removal of floorboards to examine the floor joists with the floorboards to be replaced once investigations have been carried out. It should be noted that the agent has

advised that the works which are proposed have now been completed and closed up and that they will be making their recommendations to the school once the engineer has concluded his report which will formulate a future listed building consent application.

The removal of the floorboards is to allow access for the inspection of the floor joists and their supports, to help understand the cause of the permanent deflection of the floors. The proposal follows a condition survey being carried out in 2022 which found that the mansion is severely overused with students imposing loads on the building it was not designed or built for. The floors, ceilings and central staircase are said to generally be in a poor condition and will deteriorate further if not dealt with by the end of 2027.

The principal consideration in the assessment of this application is whether the proposal would protect the setting of this grade I listed building.

The suggested areas of floor boarding proposed to be removed to allow inspection of joists and supports are :

- Ground floor level with two areas in the room to the right upon entering the main front entrance door of the building;
- First floor level with one area each in the landing and classrooms H5, H6 & H7
- Second floor level with one area each in classrooms H1, H2, H3 and the landing area.

Although already completed the Repair Investigation Strategy submitted with the application details the method of how the works would be carried out. It is stated that within those areas the carpet or other floor finish will be carefully removed to allow access to the timber floorboards underneath. The floorboards will then be removed to allow inspection of the floor joists and sub-structure underneath. It is stated that once the floorboards & other floor coverings are removed the location of the ends of the floorboards and all screw and nail fixings will be identified and marked and the boards will also be marked to allow them to be replaced in their original positions. It is also stated that areas where the floorboards appear to have already been lifted previously will be prioritised over original undamaged areas of boarding and that the boards will be carefully lifted and set aside with the boards to be cut at joist positions only where necessary. With the floorboards removed inspection of the ceilings will also be carried out where possible. It is stated that once the floorboards have been inspected by the Structural Engineer, the floorboards are to be carefully reinstated as originally installed and will be refixed permanently given that it is acknowledged that repair works may not be carried out for some time or at all, depending on funding and the findings of the investigations. The carpets/other floor finishes will then be replaced as previously.

The application is well detailed and has arisen due to a condition survey showing that there are certain areas in the building where the floorboards are showing permanent deflection of the floors. There is therefore a valid need for the removal of these areas of floorboards to investigate the floor joists and their supports underneath to ascertain what the reason for the deflection is and formulate future repair proposals. The Repair Investigation Strategy submitted with the application is well detailed and shows that the removal, inspection and replacement of the floorboards was to be carried out in a considered and sympathetic manner. It is considered the proposal would not cause harm to the architectural and historic interest of this grade I listed building and therefore is compliant with Policy CS20 (LPCS) and saved Policy TC2 (LPFR).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

Conclusion

The proposed works (as now carried out) would protect the architectural and historic interest of this grade I listed building and are therefore compliant with local and national planning policy.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	9th October 2025	Dated:	10th September 2025