

Penfold Project Services

GRACY LODGE, VALLEY LANE, MEOPHAM, KENT, DA13 0DG

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

November 2023

Introduction

This application is submitted for alterations and increase in roof height to create space with useable head-height on the first floor, rear dormer, additional roof light windows to front and rear roof slopes and erection of a two-storey porch

The proposals are required to provide a reasonable family home for the applicants and their family.

In June 2021 an application for a similar property at La Clef, Valley Lane, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0DG was submitted to the Council (reference **20210784**) for the erection of a single storey rear extension, alterations and increase in roof height to create space with useable head-height on the first floor, rear dormer, additional roof light windows to front and rear roof slopes and erection of a two-storey porch and was granted consent on 06 October 2021.

Similarly, and an application at Muttis Haus, Ridge Lane, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0DP (reference **20211469**) for the erection of a single storey rear extension, alterations and increase in roof height to create space with useable head height on the first floor, additional rooflight windows to front and rear roof slopes, erection of a two-storey entrance porch and infill extension to front was granted consent on 25 January 2022.

More recently a similar application at Bluebell Spinney Valley Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG (reference **20210805**) for the removal of existing roof, construction of enlarged barn hipped roof, erection of a rear dormer, insertion of roof light windows to front and rear, conversion of loft space to habitable rooms and erection of a front porch application has also been approved.

As these were deemed acceptable to the Council the same development and design principles have been adopted to create the proposals for this application.

Existing Property

The site is located on Valley Lane in Borough Council of Gravesham and lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The property was constructed following grant of planning consent for the erection of a four-bedroom chalet bungalow (reference 20111027) on 23 February 2012

However the rooms within the roof space are restricted in their use by the restricted headroom created by the sloping roofs to the property.

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

Application form;

Drawing No.01 – Plans & Elevations As Existing – A1

Drawing No.02 – Plans & Elevations As Proposed – A1

Drawing No.03 – Site Location Plan – A4

Drawing No.04 – Block Plan as Existing – A2

Drawing No.05 – Block Plan as Proposed – A2

Relevant Planning History

19520162 - Erection of chalet - Permitted

19520212 - erection of chalet -File Missing

19520376 - Erection of a chalet – Permitted

19750114 - Erection of single storey extension at rear for a bedroom and entrance lobby - Permitted

19750335 - Erection of a garden shed - Application Refused

19930250 - Erection of replacement two-bedroom bungalow and detached double garage. AMENDMENT: Alterations to garage roof, addition of 2 no. windows on west elevation, alterations to garage doors on the front elevation, and addition of one window and door in the east elevation – Permitted

19970379 - Application for approval of brick sample as required by condition (ii) of planning permission ref no. GR/93/250W - Permitted

20111027 - ****REVISED/AMENDED DRAWING**** Erection of a detached four-bedroom chalet bungalow - Permitted

20111027 - ****REVISED/AMENDED DRAWING**** Erection of a detached four-bedroom chalet bungalow - Permitted

20120484 - Application for approval of conditions 3, 4, 5 and 6 attached to planning permission reference number 20111027 relating to the external facing materials, landscaping scheme, slab levels and refuse storage area - Permitted

20130087 - Application for non-material amendment to planning permission reference number 20111027 relating to alterations to Velux windows, two additional Velux windows and one additional window in flank elevation - Permitted

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

Other material considerations

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) 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 (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these. National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 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

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 - Residential Layout Guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 - amended June 2020
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Analysis

Policy Context in Culverstone - Green Belt Policy:

Policy C14 of Gravesham Local Plan First Review (GLPFR) and the Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Culverstone Valley Area was removed by order of the inspectorate. It ceased to be relevant on adoption of the Core Strategy in September 2014, at which point Green Belt policy became the principle policy informing appropriate development across the area.

In light of this the application site is deemed to fall within the Green Belt and the proposals are therefore subject to Paragraph 145 of the NPPF which requires extensions or alterations to not be disproportionate to the original building and saved policy C13 (GLPFR) which restricts extensions to dwellings situated in the countryside to (C13.ii) "one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling", prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.

Character and Appearance

Gracy Lodge is a detached chalet style bungalow in use as a single family dwelling. The property is located on the eastern side of Valley Lane and is significantly set back from the highway. It is characterised by a dual pitched roof with roof windows and gable end projections to each side of the front elevation.

The property is within a relatively developed part of the Culverstone Valley with properties on both sides, Bullfinch Lodge to the north and Glencoe to the south.

This application proposes alterations to the roof of the property and the erection of a central two storey front gable to increase usable floor space in the loft.

The extension to the front of the property provides a balance to a symmetrical elevation with the proposed two storey entrance porch providing a bold architectural statement and central focus to the building as a whole.

Moreover the use of distinctive materials of a coloured render finish to the two storey entrance, blue/black slates to both faces of the cranked roof and side gable walls and modern black framed fenestration will provide an extremely striking building.

Extension to Dwelling

The application site is located in the Green Belt and as such Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) is relevant. Development in the urban area is prioritised as the sustainable location for development. In the rural area, Policy CS02 (LPCS) 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, i.e. in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS

There are five principle issues in determining this application;

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
3. The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
4. Other matters;
5. Any very special circumstances; and
6. Impact on the Landscape.

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 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. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the specified exceptions. The relevant exception to consider for this application is part c of paragraph 149 of the NPPF, which states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

In determining this proposal account will be taken of Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (November 1994) which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside. It sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully, with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 of the NPPF.

In particular Policy C13 places an overall limit on extensions of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling unless the increased floor space has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling (criteria ii). It also requires the massing, scale and form of any extension to be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting (criteria vi). It is considered that these factors are relevant in determining whether the size of an extension is proportionate and as such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF and should be afforded due weight.

	Original Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	% Increase Above Original
Footprint (m ²)	102.50	107.90	5.40%
Internal Floor Area GF (m ²)	89.36	95.50	
Internal Floor Area FF (m ²)	71.86	88.80	
TOTAL Internal Floor Area (m²)	161.42	184.30	14.17%
Volume	N/A	N/A	N/A

As with the previously referred to application reference **20210784** which forms the basis for these conclusions: -

The calculations demonstrate in regards to the one third limit of saved policy C13 neither the internal nor the footprint exceed the limits. The volume addition was not calculated in this application and will instead be visually assessed. Therefore, purely in numerical terms the proposal is not contrary to the local plan Green Belt policy.

However the numerical calculation forms only a part of the overall assessment. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It does not provide a figure.

The proposals with this development as again referring to the previously approved application, introduces a crack pitched roof, which reduces perceived bulk. The front gable, a two storey front extension is subservient, which also reduces the perceived bulk.

In addition, the eave height has been maintained which creates a balanced appearance and, although the application description refers to an increase in roof height, it is very likely that the increase will be marginal if at all.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in a disproportionate addition to the property and as such the proposal would not be inappropriate development which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is therefore in accordance to Policy CS02 (LPCS), Policy C13 (LPFR) and to paragraph 149 of the NPPF.

2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 137 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that

the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Any new built form of development is likely to impact on the openness of the Green Belt; however it is important to establish the degree of harm. The development has been designed in order to reduce perceived bulk through subservience and a crack pitched roof form. Moreover, the retention of eaves at the same height maintains a balance appearance.

This proposal is therefore considered to maintain the openness of the Green Belt by virtue of reducing perceived bulk and good design as adopted on previously referred to other applications.

Reference back to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF informs us that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Whether the development causes any other harm and whether there are any other relevant considerations to balance the overall planning argument, should now be considered.

3. The effect on the character and appearance of the area

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) states that new development will be visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area.

This application comprises of the erection a front gable, a marginal increase in the ridge height, and the erection of a single storey rear extension.

The dimensions of each part of the development are:

Front Gable

- Depth – 0.440m
- Width – 4.60m
- Height – 6.39m

Roof Alterations

- Ridge height increase – max 0.275m
- Eave height increase - 0m

Although the proposed development will change the character and appearance of the property significantly, the addition of two storey entrance porch is subservient to the main roof, and will it will greatly enhance the appearance of the dwelling and provide a far more attractive elevational treatment to Valley Lane

It is also acknowledged that the Culverstone and Valley Drive context presents a mixture of properties each with different design. Some other surrounding properties have carried out similar extensions with glazed front gables and created habitable rooms in the loft space. However, as many of

these extensions were determined under historic policy guidance, removed by order of the planning inspectorate, are therefore no longer relevant.

To conclude, the extensions to the property are well designed and are proportionate to the scale of the host dwelling. The cranked pitch roof has enabled the existing eaves to be maintained. As such the development hereby proposed should be considered to be good design in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF.

4. Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The development will provide acceptable living conditions in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Neighbouring

There will be no impact on the amenity of adjoining properties in terms of loss of light, overlooking, sense of enclosure or loss of outlook. As such the proposal will safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Parking and Highways

The proposed development will not impact on parking or highways.

5. Very special circumstances

No specific arguments are being submitted with this application in relation to the assessment of 'very special circumstances'.

6. Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being located within the Green Belt the property is located within the Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by varied topography, ancient wood and haphazard mosaic resident plots and small holdings.

Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

The development does not impact on the landscape as the property is located in a wooded and relatively well-developed area. Therefore, the proposal accords with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and safeguards the quality of the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

Conclusion

The proposed development is similar to other approved developments in the area and should therefore be considered favourable and should be granted permission.