

Red Tiles, Pear Tree Lane, Shorne, Near Gravesend, Kent, DA12 3JX.

Planning, Design and Access Statement.

Property Description

Red Tiles is a detached house that is set back from the road by over 16 metres and having a garden of a very good size with a depth of about 35metres and width of 23 metres. The overall plot size being about 1350 square metres.

To the front there is a hedge and low wall to the front boundary. The hedge is currently managed to keep the hedge at a low height. To either side of the drive immediately beside the hedge are two small, planted borders with a closely mowed lawn behind.

The drive is block paved.

The house is arranged over two floors and has a tall, pitched roof. There is a single storey double garage on the north side which is attached by way of the roof structure and enclosed walkway between the house and garage. To the north side of the garage is a paved path to the rear garden with lawn slightly raised above drive level. To both side of the plot there are thick, tall evergreen hedges which, at a height of around 3 metres provide very effective natural screen between the houses.

A conservatory has been added to the rear of the house.

Proposal

The proposal is that the garage be demolished and a two-storey extension with pitched roof be added on the left side of the house. In order to maintain a gap between the left boundary and the extension and to reduce the width of the extended house overall, the side extension will be deeper than the current house.

Planning

A pre-application was submitted in September 2022, and a site meeting discussion took place with alterations suggested on site by the case officer, Mr Bonthron to create better balance to the house. Revisions to follow this suggestion were submitted and the written pre-app response of the 25th November 2022 reflected these revisions.

The response was very thorough with too much detail to list here however the key points were that:

1. The proposed design and layout floor and volume calculations showed a significant increase in both over the existing building and in excess of a reasonable increase that would be acceptable.
2. The proposed additions are still too significant although the revised height, design and balance proposed was a significant improvement to the design submitted by a previous practice that had been refused.
3. The build line to the east being in line with the existing garage wall is seen as having too much impact when increased in height to two storeys.

4. That there are large landing areas which could be usefully used as habitable room space.
5. That a flat roof, even if a small area, would not be accepted and a tradition ridge design is required.
6. Consider bringing in the east wall possible to a position halfway across the width of the garage.
7. Within the reply there was an acknowledgment that the properties along Peartree Lane are varied with no uniformity in design. To add to this there is also great variation in style, bulk, plot size and the position of houses within their plots as well as garden landscaping and boundary treatments.

Following this written pre-application response revised design proposals that have been amended to take into account the points raised during the pre-application enquiry meeting and in the written reply. Subsequently, revised sketches were sent to seek a further response to the revised floor layout proposal with the advice then being to create a step in the side wall so that there is a slight step in of the wall at the point where the extension runs behind the rear wall of the existing house. This advice has been incorporated into this application proposal.

The previous refused application, application number 20220554, was refused on the 19th July 2022. The reasons stated in the decision notice being as follows:

The proposed development significantly enlarges the property, introduces disproportionate features and is poor design. These additions result in increased bulk and incongruous appearance which is inappropriate development within and harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, and fails to preserve the character or appearance of the host dwelling or the Shorne Woodlands Landscape Character Area. Therefore, the development hereby proposed is contrary to Policies CS02 (Scale & Distribution of Development), CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), saved Policy C13 (Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside) of Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021), as well as Sections 12, 13 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

2. The extension to the driveway and expansion of hard landscaping to the front of the property fails to provide a net gain of biodiversity and is harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, contrary to Sections 13 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Within the reply there was an acknowledgment that the properties along Peartree Lane are varied with no uniformity in design. To add to this there is also great variation in style, bulk, plot size and the position of houses within their plots as well as garden landscaping and boundary treatments.

The house to the east side is a very modern looking two storey flat roofed house with modern external materials. It is set in the northern portion of the plot and away from the subject plot. To the right and at the rear there is a separate garage building which looks to be 1.5 storeys in height, again flat roofed and this is closer to the boundary to Red Tiles. Virtually all the front garden between the

house and the road is laid to lose grey stone aggregate that forms the drive. There is a recently planted hedge, possibly a Beech hedge to the front boundary.

To the west side there is a much larger house than Red Tile which has a two-storey part with pitched roof and gable to the front on the left side and what appears to be a large extension over two floors but with the first floor in the roof on the right side. Virtually all the front garden area is paved and used as parking. A timber garage with shed behind is located between the house and boundary hedge to Red Tiles. The front boundary has a close boarded fence with brick piers and shrubs planted in front of the fence to either side of the drive entrance and a border on the house side of the fence before the paved drive.

Further to the west are two storey houses with garages to the side which create a very wide built form. St Margarets having a width of some 35 metres when including the various buildings on the west side.

Except for the modern new house which is set at about 11 metres back off the road at it's closed point, all the house in this stretch of the road and on the south side of Peartree Lane are about the same distance set back from the road. Plots vary in size and shape.

After further revisions to the design to reduce the width of the proposed extension and with the extended section running back so it is deeper than the original house, a further pre-application discussion with the suggestion that there is some setting in of the section of the extension that is beyond the alignment of the rear of the existing house, creating a break line.

The applicant would like to alter the existing drive to create the ability to turn a car around within the drive. Currently the drive is wide enough for much of it's length for one car so cars park one behind the other and will drive forwards in and reverse out so the alteration that's proposed will enable cars to turn to drive out forwards. The proposal retains sufficient green garden area to the front of the house.

The proposed drawings reflect the discussions at pre-application and achieves an attractive, balanced design that will sit well in the large plot.

The local planning policies applicable to this proposal are set out in the Case Officer's Report on the previous application that was refused and are listed below:

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

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

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
- 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 Guidance (SPD) (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009).

Policy C13 enables extensions of up to 1/3rd of the gross floor area although with some scope for consideration to larger extensions subject to considerations of the plot and location and visual assessment of the proposal.

An extensive area around the town of Gravesend is Green Belt. The whole area of Shorne Ridgway is within the Green Belt and so the impact on the Green Belt is also a consideration.

In this case the overall width of the proposed house will be less than the current width of the house and garage. The garage is an ugly part of the house and at present the appearance looks to be unbalanced.

To reduce the bulk viewed from the front, the design seeks to balance the requirement to provide a home for the family of 6 that live in the house with the need to achieve an acceptable visual appearance by way of size and bulk. In order to reduce the width of the house, the two-storey extension has been reduced in width following pre-application feedback and extends behind the main house. A step in the side wall provides a break line and enables a slight setting in of the section of the extension that is behind the rear wall of the existing property.

The property has permitted development rights to extend by way of an 8 metre rear extension across the rear of the main house with neighbour consultation or 6 metres in depth without and to add an extension to the side of up to half the width of the original house. Whilst this would be best affected by demolishing the garage first, then combination of side and rear extensions would add considerably to the floor area and volume. Also, the roof space can be converted under permitted rights.

However, rather than consider extending under permitted development rights which could result with the built form extending across the whole site width and into the rear garden and will a disproportionately large area of single storey flat roofed extensions at ground level, this revised proposal creates a much more attractive and balanced house which is designed to fit in with the area. The applicant is seeking to update the look of the house and to modernise it by removing tile hangings and by way of facing brick and smooth render to the elevations.

As mentioned earlier in this statement, the houses within the immediate vicinity and on the same side of the road have been extended significantly and have greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than this proposal.

Also, some very significant re-developments of plots along Pear Tree Lane have taken place.

Application 20221100 Glen Hurst. A two-storey house with flat top to roof and a previously approved two storey side extension. Enlarged by way of two storey side extension and change to traditional ridge so there was an increase in height and width of the building. Increase in footprint of 48.9% and of floor area by 83.2%. Approved 7th December 2022.

Merivale Application 20200984 approved 1st February 2021. A two storey house with catslide roofs to both side elevations replaced by two storey house of greater height and significantly larger floor area and volume. Although the officer's report didn't calculate the increases, they are over 90% floor area increase and over 128% volume increase. The large increase in size being justified by way of permitted rights development that could be achieved to the original house.

This property is just a little east and on the opposite side of the road to the application property.

Long Acre. Application 20221239. Approved 30th January 23. Demolition and redevelopment. Increase in height over the original dwelling. 47% increase in floor area and 33% volume increase over the original dwelling.

There are other examples of redevelopments and extended houses with significant floor area and volume increases.

The overall increase in floor area proposed is 70.6% and increase in volume of 40.5% is based on the original floor area LPA calculation of 145.4 square metres and volume of 629.49 cubic metres.

However, this must be considered against the development the applicant can undertake under permitted development rights. The applicant can add a single storey extension to the rear of the original house of 8 metres in depth, a gross floor area of 75 square metres, a side extension by replacement of the garage with an extension 4.7 metres wide and the full depth of the house, 29 square metres and could add two floors to the house to provide a further 109 square metres of floor area, a total of 213 square metres that could be added under permitted development rights.

Side and rear extensions alone that are permitted amount to slightly more than the additional floor area proposed under this application.

If a single storey side extension were built, then a detached garage could be built to the left side of the house and behind the front build line under permitted rights. This would have the effect of creating development across the complete site width.

Ground floor potential PD Development indicated below.



The garden has matured evergreen hedges to both side boundaries and the rear boundary. To the front boundary there is a hedge which is kept trimmed to a low height to maintain the vision splays to the drive. There is a substantial distance between the proposed house and the house to the left. Whilst the house on the right side is closer, there is a substantial evergreen hedge, both in height and width, between the houses creating a complete visual barrier. Therefore, there are no overlooking issues that would arise from the proposed alterations. The removal of the wide single storey garage will enable a wider gap between the extended house and left side boundary and the right-side gap between the house and boundary is unaltered.

Modest alterations are proposed to the front to increase car parking and to enable cars to turn within the drive rather than reversing into the road. A new hedge set back from the sight lines across the front garden will provide greater privacy and a natural screen. In order to improve biodiversity a mixed native species hedge comprising Beech, Dog Rose, Crab Apple, Sweet Cherry and Hazel is proposed which attract bees and insects and birds to the blooms and fruits.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Extracts are taken from the above document and referred to below.

38. Green Belt serves 5 purposes:

- (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

49. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- 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;

We consider that by the design alterations that are proposed that house will sit more evenly within the plot and a wider gap on the east side between the house and boundary will improve the visual openness of the plot. Alternative options for extensions being added by way of permitted development rights could have a significant impact on the openness by way of a side extension and free-standing garage adjacent to the new side extension between the house and hedge and by way of a large ground floor rear extension.

130. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- (e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- (f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users [49](#); and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The proposed alterations will enable this family of six persons to live in a well designed house that is arranged to meet the varying needs of the family and to provide a comfortable, safe and secure environment for all the family's needs including the special needs of one of the children as outlined to the case officer. Further information can be provided privately to the case officer by the applicant.

Overall, this proposal will enhance the appearance of the house in keeping with the major upgrading of houses along Pear Tree Lane.

Design

The proposed alterations are designed to improve the visual appearance of the house which currently looks unbalanced within the plot having a wide single storey garage to one side and two storey house and high-pitched roof to the right side.

The alterations have been the subject to pre-application discussions and adjustments since to meet the guidance provided.

Access

The property is within a residential area within about 1 mile of Shorne Village centre and 1.5 miles of Higham village centre. There are various facilities offered in both villages including public houses, mini-markets and a Post Office. There are Doctor's Surgeries at Higham and at Shorne. An extensive range of shops, medical facilities, restaurants and leisure facilities are offered in Gravesend and in the Medway Towns, both about 4 miles distant.

A bus services runs to Shorne Ridgway stopping near the top of Tanyard Hill and provides are service between Meopham, Cobham, Shorne and Gravesend.

There are mainline railway stations at Higham, Strood, Gravesend, Meopham and Sole Street, all of which are easily accessible by car and Higham Station or Gravesend Station would be accessible by cycle to someone of reasonable fitness level.

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