

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250462

Location: 9 Orchard Avenue Gravesend Kent DA11 7NX

Description: Conversion of loft space to form habitable rooms with dormer in rear roof slope, extension to roof at side and roof light in front roof slope.

Applicant: Mr Elliot Stone

Site Visit Date: 25 June 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Application for Planning Permission form;
Drawing no. 1 Existing and proposed layouts and elevations and proposed roof plan;
Site location plan;
Existing block plan;
Existing parking plan;
Proposed parking plan; and
Letter from the agent dated 01 May 2025.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20200277	Erection of a single storey rear extension and construction of a dormer window in the front roof slope.	Permitted	01.05.2020
19970729	Erection of car port to side.	Permitted	25.11.1997

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of 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 Highway Network
- 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)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

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)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised to five neighbouring properties by letter. Two representations from the same local resident (objecting to the proposal) have been received and are summarised as follows;

- Adverse overlooking impacts to the rear garden
- Adverse impacts to sunlight
- Overdevelopment, which is not subservient to the host building.
- Unbalancing impact on the pair of semi-detached dwellings.
- Concern regarding noise levels and start and finish times during construction works.
- Completion of exterior work important.

Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF 2024) sets out various design requirements and includes the need for the development to add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive; and be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF 2024 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the built environment and take account of the scale, height, building lines and other architectural features of buildings. Account should also be taken of strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.

In relation to rear roof extensions, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) sets out that proposals should be set away from the gables, hips, eaves and ridge of a property; be lower than the existing ridge line and retain the original ridge line treatment; that dormers should not overwhelm the roof slope within which they are placed; and that windows should reflect the position, design and character of

existing windows on the host building.

The application property is one half of one of three sets of semi-detached, two storey dwellings, which have similar architectural styles and external facing materials and which form a visually consistent section of development at the eastern end of Orchard Avenue. The application property and the other semis have been subject to various alterations and extensions but there remains a clear symmetry with the semi-detached building of which it is a part and a strong consistency with the two semi-detached buildings located on either side.



The combination of the hip to gable enlargement, the side roof extension and the rear dormer would result in a significant increase in built form. The dormer would be excessive in both size and bulk and would overwhelm the rear roof slope and the proposed side roof extension would be incongruous in design. The hip to gable enlargement and side roof extension, together would have an adverse unbalancing impact on the pair of semi-detached dwellings, resulting in a top heavy and bulky roof on one side of the building;



The positive features of the proposal are that the external facing materials would match existing, that the rear dormer would be set away from the gables, hips, eaves and ridge of the extended roof and that the proposed side roof extension would be set down from the ridgeline and back from the front building line.

It is also noted that no. 5 Orchard Avenue has a rear dormer and hip to gable enlargement (planning permission reference 20071019). As the following images show, that dormer is smaller and less bulky than that proposed at the application site and the original side roof element is unaltered (which is not the case here). Therefore, the existing alterations at no. 5 are not directly comparable to that proposed at the application site.

Overall, it is considered that the negative impacts of the proposed design would significantly outweigh the positive features. The proposed development by virtue of its size, bulk and design, would not be subservient to the existing building, would have an unbalancing impact and would be an overdevelopment of the application site. As such, the proposal would be out of character with the existing building and its surroundings, would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene and would be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014), to Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 and to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide 2023.

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants. In this regard, the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) and the Borough Council's adopted Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) are relevant.

Neighbouring Amenity

The closest residential properties to the application site are nos. 7 and 11 Orchard Avenue (located to the east and west respectively). Nos. 4 to 8 Orchard Avenue are located to the north, across the roadway and nos. 1 and 2 Pomarium Close are located to the south.

RLG set out that privacy distances between facing windows should be met, in order to prevent overlooking. A privacy distance of 21 metres is required for facing windows where there is no private garden area in between and a privacy distance of 26 metres is required where a private garden is within the field of view.

The proposed windows in the rear dormer would have a privacy distance of over 26 metres to the side elevations of nos. 1 and 2 Pomarium Close and the proposed first floor rear bathroom window would be obscure glazed. The proposed front velux window (master bedroom) would have a privacy distance of over 21 metres to nos. 6 and 8 Orchard Avenue. No new windows would directly face no. 11 Orchard Avenue and to prevent overlooking, a condition could be attached to any planning permission granted to ensure that none could be inserted in future.

The proposed rear dormer would obliquely overlook the rear gardens of nos. 7 and 11 Orchard Avenue. However, as existing rear windows have similar overlooking impacts, the occupiers of these properties cannot not have an expectation of total privacy in their gardens. Dormer windows are a common feature in the residential environment and in many instances are development that does not require planning permission.

Overall, it is considered that any adverse overlooking impacts associated with the proposal would not be so significant as to warrant a refusal of planning permission.

Due to the design of the proposed development and to the layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no significant adverse overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings. In particular, it is noted that the application site and its neighbours are south facing and as such, any adverse impacts to sunlight would be limited to certain parts of the day.

Furthermore, there is at least four metres of separation between the side wall of no. 11 Orchard Avenue and the side wall of the application property and any affected side windows at no. 11 are to non-habitable rooms (garage/ensuite) or are secondary bedroom windows with alternative natural light sources.

Whilst it is noted that a local resident has raised specific concerns regarding adverse overlooking impacts and a loss of sunlight to no. 7 Orchard Avenue, it is considered that these impacts (for the reasons set out above) would not be so significant as to warrant the refusal of planning permission.

Overall, the proposed development would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Parking and Highways

Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) require new development to mitigate its impact on the highway and public transport networks and to provide sufficient parking in accordance with adopted parking standards.

According to the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG4), a four or more bedroom dwelling should have three vehicle parking spaces. However, it is noted that Kent Highways & Transportation have provided more recent guidance (as yet unadopted) that requires a minimum of two spaces to be provided for a four or more bedroom property in a suburban location.

The proposed development would result in the dwelling increasing from three bedrooms to four and there would be no alteration to the existing parking or access arrangements. The existing frontage parking area could accommodate at least three vehicles and an existing garage would be retained (although it is of substandard size).

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would make sufficient provision for the parking of cars within the site in accordance with the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards and would be in line with Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The application site is located within an area of multi-period archaeological potential, Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone. However, as the proposed development would be within the confines of an existing residential curtilage and no groundworks would occur, then it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts to archaeology, sensitive habitats or groundwater.

The application site is located in a smoke control area. As such, advice regarding smokeless fuels/appliances can be given to the applicant in an informative attached to any planning permission granted.

A local resident has raised a number of concerns, the majority of which have been covered in the above discussion. The outstanding issues are summarised and commented on (in italics) as follows;

- Concern regarding noise levels and start and finish times during construction works – *Construction issues are not a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. However, any planning permission granted would include an informative which sets out appropriate working hours and noise considerations during construction works.*
- Completion of exterior work important – *any planning permission granted would include a condition requiring the works to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans.*

Conclusion

The proposed development would have no adverse highways or residential amenity impacts and there would be no adverse impacts to groundwater, archaeology or sensitive habitats. All of which weigh in support of the proposal. However, the proposal would not be subservient to the existing building, would have an unbalancing impact and would be an overdevelopment of the application site.

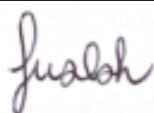
Overall, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits and therefore planning permission should be refused on design grounds.

Recommendation

That planning permission be refused on the following ground;

1. The proposed development by virtue of its size, bulk and design, would not be subservient to the existing building, would have an unbalancing impact and would be an overdevelopment of the application site. As such, the proposal would be out of character with the existing building and its surroundings, would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene and would be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014), to Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 and to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide 2023.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	1st July 2025	Dated:	04 July 2025

