

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230383

Location: 1 Cheyne Walk Meopham Gravesend Kent

Description: Erection of new wall to boundary facing Whitehill Road and new deck area

Applicant: Mr Maguire

Site Visit Date: 05.05.2023

Preliminary Matters

Following the validation of the application, an uninvited revised part block plan, elevation drawing (proposed) and a planning statement was sent to the Local Planning Authority on 02.05.23. This was following a visit and discussions with a member of Meopham Parish Council, after which the applicant felt it would be beneficial to incorporate some replacement planting in front of the proposed new wall. The agent was advised that it was not normal procedure to provide revisions and additional information without invitation and that this should be avoided with future applications. However, in this instance, the proposals would not significantly alter the scheme, and the revised plans were added to the file on 11.05.23.

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form;
Supplementary Information – Planning Statement;
Drawing No. 01 – Floor Plan – Existing with Side Elevations;
Drawing No. 02B – REVISED Part Block Plan and Elevations – Proposed;
Drawing no. 03 – OS Plan; and
Drawing No. 04 – Block plan – Existing.

Superseded Documents/Plans

~~Drawing No. 02A Part Block Plan & Elevations – Proposed.~~

Plan Note

It would have been preferable to have received a proposed block plan showing the wider context, however, on balance, the plans provided in conjunction with the visit to site was considered to be sufficient.

Relevant Planning History

No relevant history.

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

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)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 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);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009).

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

KCC - Heritage Conservation (E & W)

No comments received.

Local Ward Councillors

No comments received.

KCC – West Kent Public Rights of Way Officer

No comments received.

GBC – Highways Officer

No objections.

Meopham Parish Council

Meopham Parish Council objects to this planning application as if permitted the new wall will have a

disproportionate impact on the street scene and would constitute overdevelopment of the site. It may also set an unhelpful precedent for other householders to extend their fences in Cheyne walk and the surrounding roads.

A note on comments received from Meopham Parish Council

This comment was received prior to the planting being included within the proposal. However, the proposed planting would not overcome the concerns raised within the Parish Council's comments, and the comments do not indicate that planting (which could be secured by condition if relevant) would counter any concerns raised.

Other Representations

The following representation is from the Dickens' County Protection Society and provided the below comments:

With regards to the above planning application, the society notes that, although this is a sloping site, that in its view- to limit the impact on the street scene, the wall plus fence should follow more closely the level of the existing round* and not exceed 2.20m in height.

(The above is considered to be a typing error and should say *ground).

Neighbouring properties

Six surrounding properties were consulted, a site notice was displayed on 05.05.23 and the application was publicised in the Gravesend Messenger. The overall consultation expiry date was on 26.05.23. No representations were received.

Officer's Analysis

1 Cheyne Walk is a detached chalet bungalow style property located on the corner junction of Cheyne Walk and Whitehill Road. Whitehill Road is located to the east of the application site and slopes downwards here, towards the south.

The property as viewed from Cheyne walk



The property as viewed from Whitehill Road

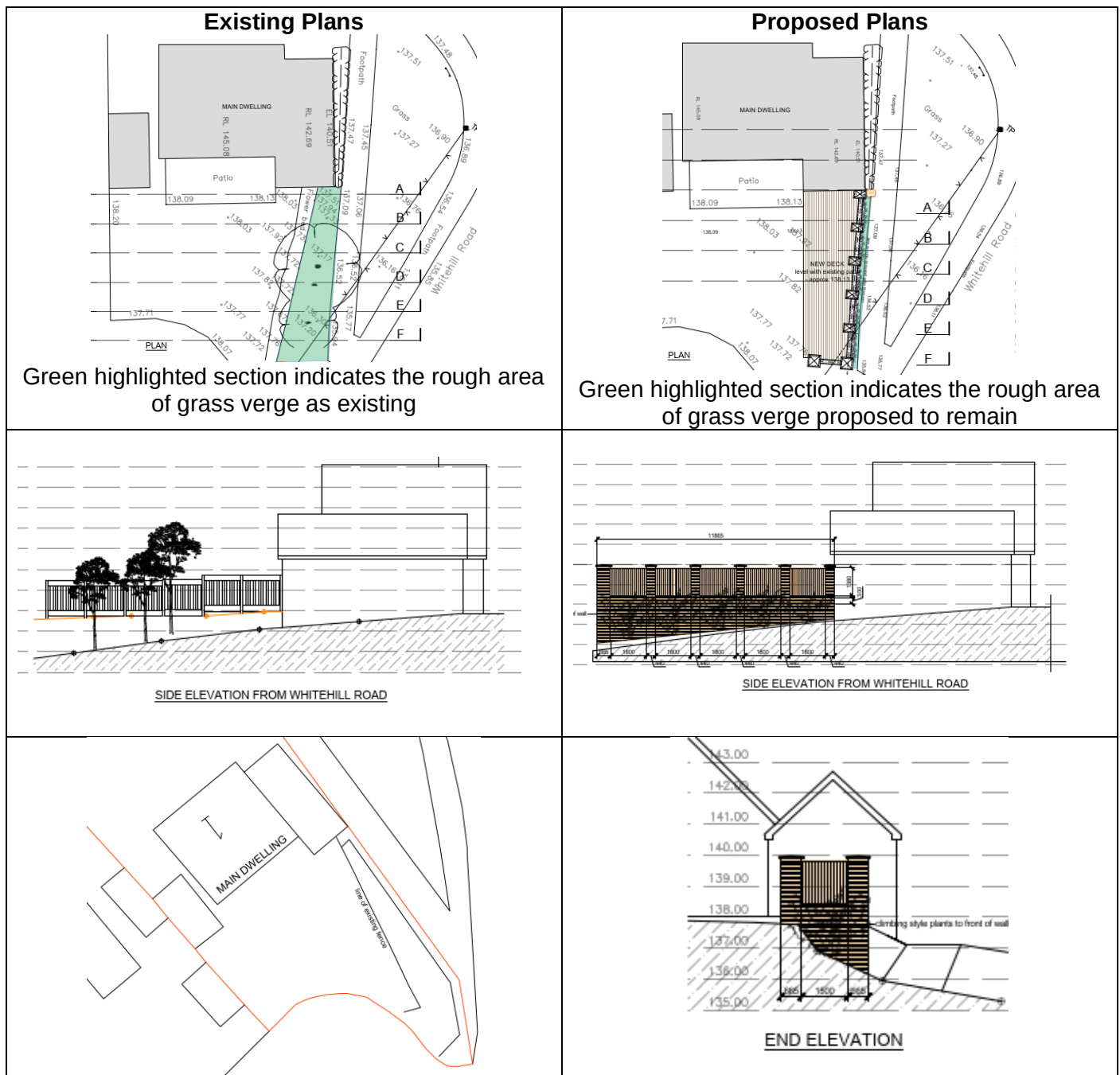


This application proposes the erection of a new boundary wall facing Whitehill Road and the construction of a new deck area within the garden.

Proposed Development

The development would result in the relocation of the boundary treatment to run directly adjacent to the footpath, which would essentially eradicate the existing grass bank. In addition, the existing timber fence would be replaced with a brick wall/timber fence panel boundary treatment, with a deck area created in the garden.

The brick wall would be 3.92m high (max) and 11.87m in length (max), and then would angle back to part enclose the new decking area.



Design, Character and Appearance

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.

Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021) states *it is important to ensure that any extensions or alterations to a home are well designed, well-built and sympathetic to their surroundings. By doing so we can ensure that there are no adverse effects on the original house, immediate neighbours, the local view of the street, as well as the character and appearance of the local area.*

The Design SPD (2021) sets out the design expectations for front garden boundary treatments in section 10.23. Although the proposed boundary treatment would not be within the front garden, it would be highly visible from the street and as such the requirements within the design guidance are relevant here. It states:

Boundary treatments visible from the street should:

- *Respond to the design of the dwelling;*
- *Be consistent with the height of other enclosures on the road;*
- *Avoid the introduction of different styles along the street. Treatments should reinforce the dominant boundary type along the street, ensuring consistency with the style and age of the property;*
- *Consider well-maintained planting as an alternative solution and retain any hedgerow;*
- *Encourage natural surveillance of the street and help design out crime;*
- *Incorporate visibility splays and sight lines for pedestrian and vehicular safety;*
- *Hedges are also encouraged given their air quality benefits.*

As aforementioned above, the application site lies on the corner junction of Cheyne Walk and Whitehill Road. The proposed boundary treatment would front Whitehill Road, but would also still be very prominent when entering Cheyne Walk. Properties along Whitehill Road incorporate boundary treatments of varying materials including fencing, hedging and brick/stone walls. However, it should be noted the extent of these boundary treatments, including height, are much less than what is proposed as part of this application. With regards to Cheyne Walk itself, it is characteristic of the area for properties to have an open frontage with large grass front gardens, trees/bushes and there is also hedging present which at times is used as a boundary treatment. Some fencing is noted within the area but this is much lower in height, is set back from the footway and in many instances maintains adequate grass visual amenity space in front of the boundary treatment as well.

Although the decking area itself would not necessarily raise concerns in isolation, the application proposal would result in an engineering operation which would include the removal of almost all of the existing grass bank along with the existing trees and the installation of a brick wall/fence. This green space is considered to be a positive visual attribute which contributes to the quality of the local area. The proposed boundary treatment would be a very prominent incongruous addition within the local vicinity and is not consistent with the height of other enclosures. Furthermore, it would detrimentally impact the open character of the area by installing a large wall/fence which would also be directly adjacent to the footpath with little setback.

The property is situated at the edge of the more dense/urban grain of development, which gives way to the Green Belt/Meopham Downs Landscape beyond. The existing landscaping and set-back fencing serves to blend the distinction between rural and urban features, which would be eroded by this proposal. The new wall would connect with the existing flank wall of the dwellinghouse, resulting in a vast expanse of brickwork fronting Whitehill Road, which is not appropriate for, or characteristic of the rural area. It is noted that some planting has been provided on the revised plans, however this is not considered to mitigate the impact of the development on the host dwelling and character and appearance of the area.

Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policy CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposal would enlarge the private garden area for the property, which already exceeds the requirements of Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) (2020). As such, the proposed development would safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (NPPF) (2021).

Neighbouring Amenity

No neighbour responses were received during the consultation process. Nonetheless the development has been assessed in terms of neighbouring amenity.

In situ, the proposal would not affect neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of light, privacy, outlook or cause a sense of enclosure and therefore is considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (NPPF) (2021).

Highways and Parking

There are no highways or parking concerns that arise as a result of this proposal and Gravesham's Highways Officer raises no objections.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Impact on the Landscape - the property is located within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by gently undulating topography with a mix of arable and pasture farmland, three large settlements located along the A227 and traditional architecture surrounding village greens providing local vernacular.

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 erection of the proposed boundary treatment in this location would result in the loss of the grass bank and associated trees which is considered to have a detrimental impact on the landscape.

Impact on Biodiversity - The removal of biodiversity opportunity in the form of the grass bank and associated trees would be contrary to Section 15 of the NPPF (2021), which states that development should result in a net gain in biodiversity. Some planting is proposed in terms of climbing style plants, however this is not considered to mitigate the biodiversity that would be lost.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is contrary to local and national planning policy.

The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the open character of the local area. In addition, the extent of wall/fence would be incongruous and would result in a harmful urbanising feature which would negatively impact the host dwelling, the local vicinity and the landscape. Furthermore, the proposal is not considered to adequately mitigate the biodiversity lost as a result of the development.

As such the proposal is contrary to Policies CS19 and CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014), and Sections 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021.)

Recommendation

Refusal.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Lucy Hankin	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	L Hankin	Signed:	
Dated:	8 th June 2023	Dated:	13 June 2023