

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250723

Location: 50 School Lane Higham Rochester Kent

Description: Application for the conversion of an existing outbuilding to be used for additional living space.

Applicant: Mrs Michelle Sustins

Site Visit Date: Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form
- Site Location Map
- Proposed Block Plan
- Pre Existing Block Plan
- Proposed Floor Plan
- Front Elevation
- Rear Elevation
- Side Elevations
- Existing Floor Plan

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Outcome	Decision Date
20240254	Installation of a vehicle crossover and hardstanding.	Permitted	20.05.2024

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

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) sets out those 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 The review 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 a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) general conform with the

National Planning Policy Framework (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 - Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPD4 - Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Local Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Dickens Protection Society

The Society would wish to object to the proposal on the grounds that the building could be occupied separate from the main house.

This would amount to substandard development, out of character with the area, and with a lack of amenity.

Higham Parish Council

Higham Parish Council feel it is in the best interest of parishioners to provide comments to the above planning application for the 'conversion of an existing outbuilding to be used for additional living space' at 50 School Lane, Higham, Kent ME3 7JF.

Our councillors don't have any concerns with the planning application details, however, if this application is permitted, they would like a condition that stipulates the outbuilding in question remains as an annexe to the main dwelling and cannot be a separate building, that could be rented out, for example.

Neighbouring properties

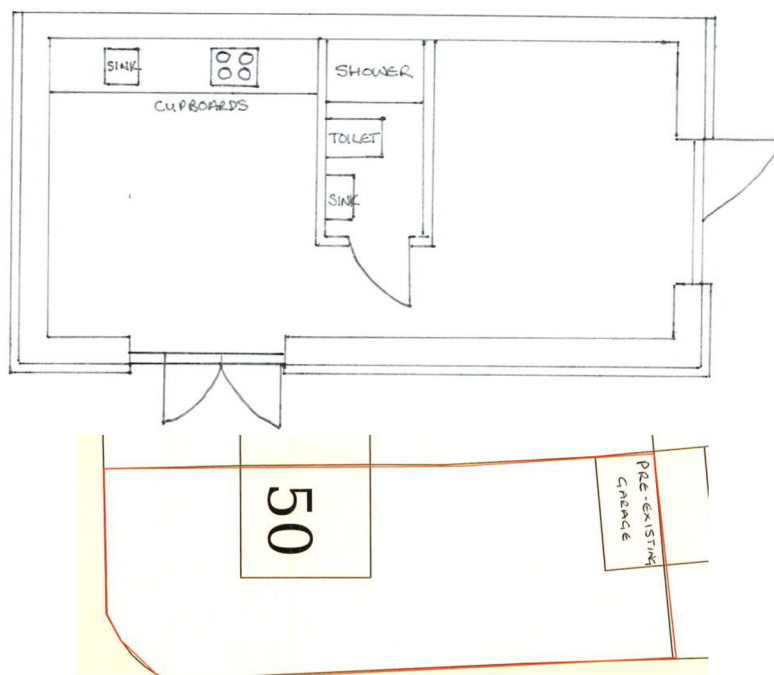
The application was advertised by way of letters to 3 surrounding properties. The consultation period expired on 12.08.2025 and no comments were received.

Analysis

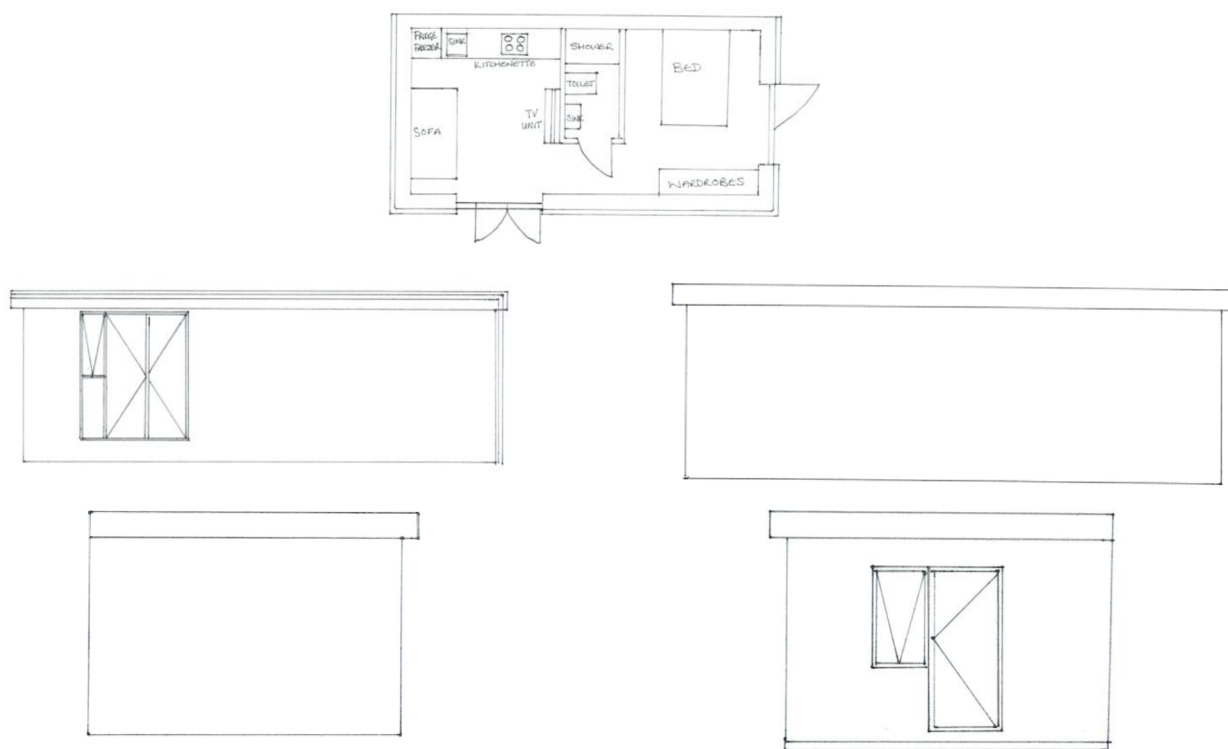
Proposal

The proposal seeks to convert the existing outbuilding to be used for additional living space.

Existing Outbuilding Floor Plan



Plans and Elevations of Outbuilding as Proposed.



Character and Appearance

The application site comprises a two storey semi detached house situated within the rural Parish of Higham. The site is within a parcel of development which is inset from the greenbelt and within the Higha, Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area.

The site has an existing outbuilding which is situated at the foot of the plot, it comprises fenestrations in the south and western elevations. The outbuilding site previously was home to a garage which was accessible via St Johns Road, however the garage was demolish and replaced with an outbuilding which was of a

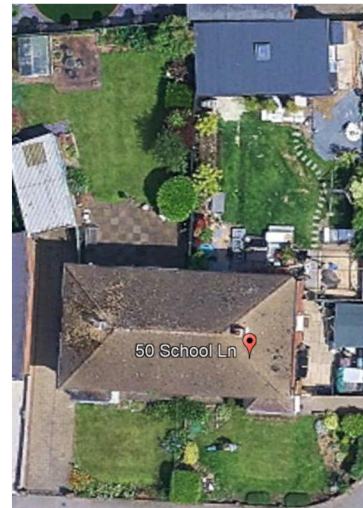
slight larger footprint.

The garage was not conditioned and so its removal was not a planning breach, the property also had all of its permitted development rights retained and so an outbuilding could be built under Class E of the general permitted development Order.

Pre Existing



Site as Present



The proposal seeks to convert the outbuilding to use as an additional living area. The outbuilding will have a bedroom, shower room and toilet and a small kitchenette with a living space. In terms of alterations, the existing outbuilding will not be changed in any way and will retain its existing, design, height and fenestrations. Internally there will be no changes as the building already contained a shower and w/c and a kitchenette.

The outbuilding is not considered a separate unit of accommodation the proposal does not show it as having an independent access from the road, nor is there any enclosure around the structure as it will open onto the main garden. The floor plans indicate that there is a kitchenette which has a sink and fridge/freezer area, however there is no space for a washing machine which would be situated in the main dwelling.]

In order to regulate the use of the building it will be conditioned in a manner which will prohibit its use as an independent unit.

In terms of the design and appearance of the outbuilding, it is not considered to be out of scale, nor intrusive. It is of a fairly modest height and is of a similar appearance to other outbuildings within the vicinity.



The outbuilding is considered to be of an appropriate design and scale and is therefore compliant with the requirements of CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The outbuilding has a floor space of circa 23sqm, the National Housing standards state that a one bedroom, one person dwelling that is single storey must have an internal floor area of 37sqm (with shower room). The Gravesham Residential Layout Guidelines states that a bedsit (including kitchen/bathroom/wc) should have a floorspace of 30.0sqm.

In this instance the outbuilding does fall short of the above standards in terms of overall space. However the bedroom in the outbuilding will have a floor space in excess of 8sqm, this is above the minimum floor space required for a single bed according to the Residential Layout Guidelines 2020. It is important to note that as this is an outbuilding conversion the space standards would not be applicable in the same manner as it would to a new dwelling.

The kitchenette and living area as ancillary to the main dwelling, the occupant of the outbuilding will still have a reliance on the main house and would have access to living spaces in the main dwelling.

In terms of light and outlook, the annexe will have double doors in both the south and western elevations which will offer light and outlook. The bedroom will have a door which will face away from the main dwelling and in the direction of the boundary fence, whilst this is not ideal in terms of outlook it is considered a refusal on this basis would not be balanced.

The kitchenette and living space will have outlook onto the main garden area and given the distance between the dwelling and outbuilding there are no concerns relating to the loss of privacy.

On balance the proposed development is considered to comply with the requirements of CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

Neighbouring Amenity

The proposal would not result in any additional windows or external alterations to the existing building. The existing windows/doors are situated in the front and side elevations which do not face directly into the private amenity space of any of the neighbouring properties. Therefore there will be no loss of outlook, privacy, sunlight or daylight to any neighbour.

No neighbour representations have been received.

Therefore in respect of impact on neighbour amenity, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and Paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Parking and Highways

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 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.

Saved Policy P5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) allows a relaxation of the vehicle parking standards for changes of use of buildings and the sub-division of existing dwellings in certain circumstances and provided that existing on-street parking problems are not unduly exacerbated.

The application property has a hard surfaced area on the frontage which can accommodate vehicles and there is also the option of on street parking on St Johns Road which does not have any restrictions. Planning permission for the front hardstanding and cross over was granted under 20240254.

It is considered that sufficient space would be available at the site to accommodate the required vehicle and cycle parking.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety and would be in line with Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policies T1, P3 and P5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

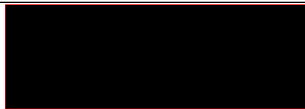
The application site is located in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA) and as such, Policy CS12 of the Local Plan Core Strategy is relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications.

The Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area defined by very gently undulating topography, open arable farmland, views out to the marshes and the River Thames in the north, Original Saxon village of lower Higham and more recent development to the south, marsh side hamlets, isolated farmsteads and scattered properties with locally distinct styles and materials. Policy CS12 seeks to conserve, restore or enhance the overall landscape character.

The application site is located in a rural settlement inset from the green belt and is surrounded by residential dwellings. It is noted that there would be no external changes to the existing outbuilding or loss of vegetation and that the residential nature of the application site would be retained.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to landscape character and would be in line with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Sharon Sahota	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	08/09/2025	Dated:	10 th September 2025