



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20221363

Location: Stable Cottage Meopham Court Wrotham Road Meopham

Description: Erection of single storey rear extension.

Applicant: Mr Robert Mayhew

Site Visit Date: 17.01.23

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form;
Supplementary Information – Heritage Statement;
Drawing No. PL001 – Site Location Plan;
Drawing No. PL002 – Block Plan – Proposed;
Drawing No. PL003 – Ground Floor Plan and Roof Plan – Existing;
Drawing No. PL004 – Elevations – Existing;
Drawing No. PL005 – Ground Floor Plan Roof Plan and Section AA – Proposed;
Drawing No. PL006 – Elevations – Proposed; and
Drawing No. PL100 – Block Plan – Existing.

Procedural Matters

This property is covered by The Street, Meopham Conservation Area Article 4 Direction Ar/09/5. Article 4 Directions were introduced in an attempt to address unsympathetic alterations to dwellings that harm or erode the character of the area. The aim of the Direction in regard to windows and doors is to resist the loss of traditional features and where these have already been lost, encourage the installation of appropriate replacements. It is noted that the front door as shown on the existing elevations is incorrect, and the front door has already been altered in line with the proposed elevations. According to Google images, the door has been in situ since 2016 and as such may now be immune from enforcement action.

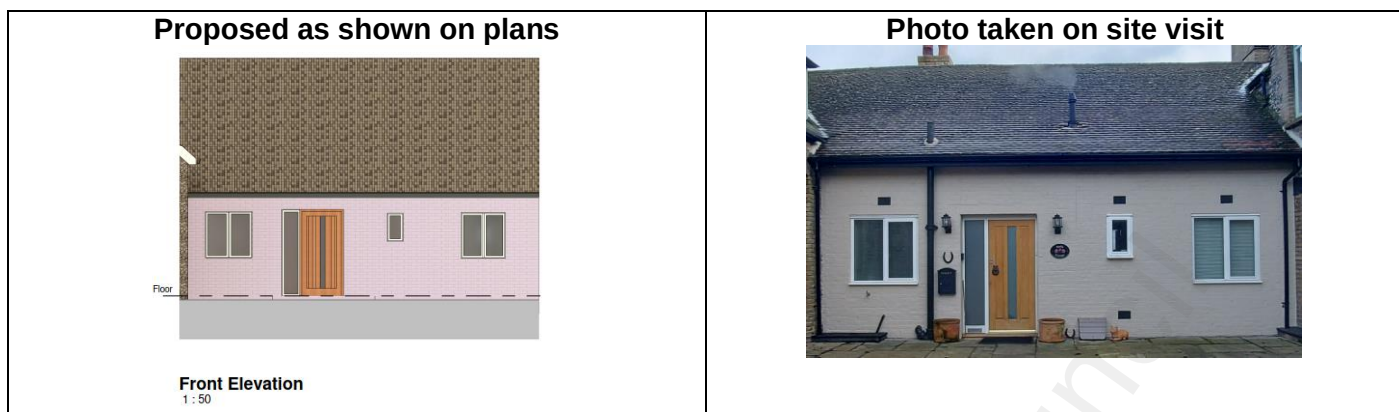
Existing as shown on plans



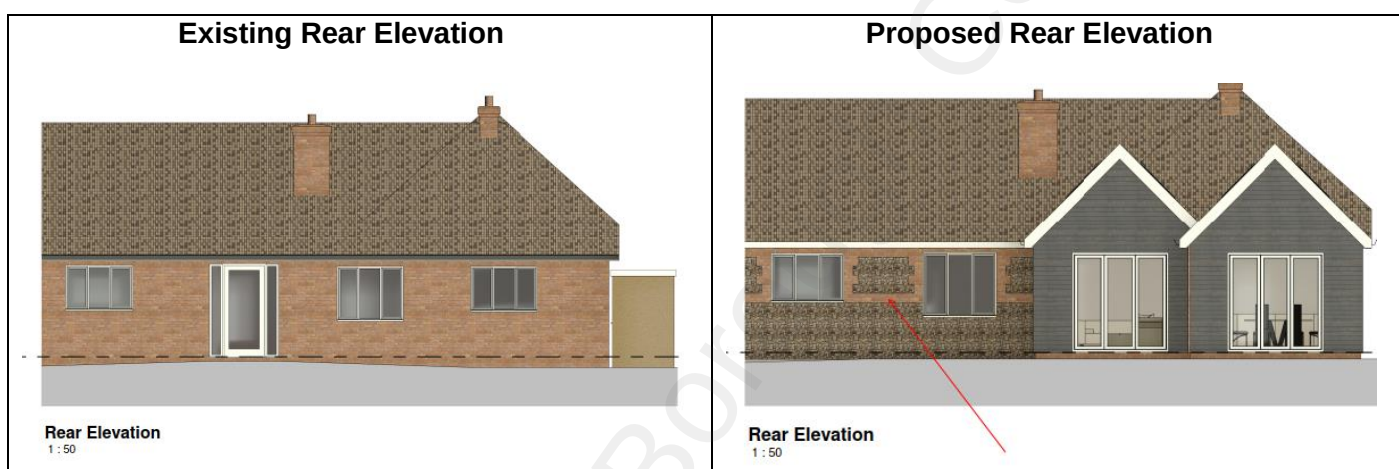
Front Elevation
1 : 50

Existing door as shown by Google 2016 Image





Similarly, the proposed flint/brickwork shown on the proposed rear elevation appears to have already been carried out, as noted on the site visit:



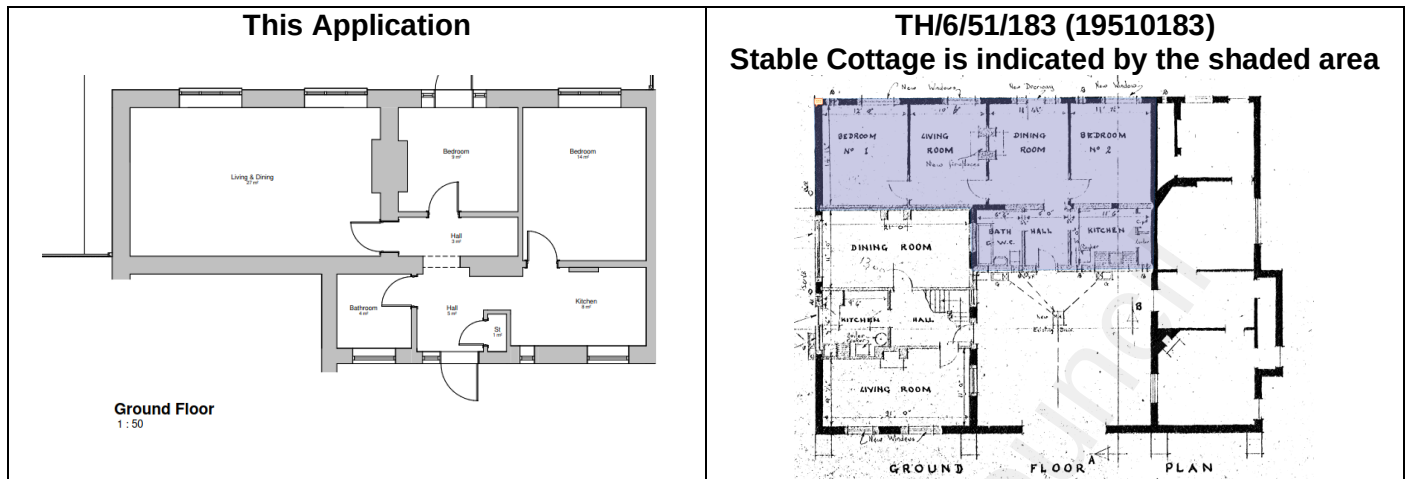
This does not affect the determination of this application.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
TH/6/51/183 (19510183)	Conversion of existing store building into two dwellings.	Permitted	10.12.1951
TH/6/51/80 (19510080)	Conversion of Meopham Court into three separate dwellings	Permitted	09.07.1951

Planning History Note

The existing floor plans for this application are similar to the proposed plans for the TH/6/51/183 (19510183) permission:



As such it is considered that the existing dwelling has not yet been extended and is as built.

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
- CS20 - Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites
- C13 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

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
- 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic 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);

- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021);
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009);
- The Street, Meopham Rural Conservation Area Appraisal (2017); and
- Rural Conservation Area Appraisals Management Plan (2016).

Section 72(1) of the Planning Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990 (as amended) requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Local Ward Councillors

No comments.

Meopham Parish Council

Meopham Parish Council raises no objections to this planning application providing it meets the requirements of GBC's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide.

GBC – Conservation Officer

No comments.

Neighbouring properties

A site notice was displayed on 17.01.23, the application was publicised in the paper on 19.01.23, two surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The overall consultation expiry date was on 10.02.23.

Officer's Analysis

Stable Cottage is a converted chalet style bungalow that is accessed via a shared courtyard area located to the front of the property.



This application proposes a single storey rear extension and fenestration changes to the rear elevation with a new window proposed in the left side elevation.

Proposed Development

The development will create space for internal layout changes to facilitate a new utility room and an enlarged kitchen/dining/living room and will have the following maximum dimensions:

- Height 5.00m
- Eaves height 2.98m
- Depth 3.06m
- Width 7.67m

The development will also allow more light into the property, ensuring a better living environment for future occupiers.

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 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; and
5. Any very special circumstances?
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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) 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 (2021), 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) (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 Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) (1994) 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 (m²)	94.39m ²	114.5m ²	21.30%

The calculations demonstrate that the proposed extension is under the one third limit set out in saved policy C13. In purely numerical terms, the extension is in accordance with the local plan Green Belt policy and can be considered an acceptable increase of the original building footprint.

The volume calculation of the extension to the original dwelling, has not been calculated in this application and will be assessed visually instead.

The numerical calculation only forms part of the overall assessment. In paragraph 149 of the NPPF (c), it states the extension or alteration of a building may be acceptable, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Although the development would increase the depth and footprint, it would be a modest addition as demonstrated by the additional floorspace coming well within the one third limit and its single storey nature. On balance, it will not be an incongruous addition causing the property to appear excessive in bulk and mass. In addition to this, under permitted development rights, an extension with a similar depth could be constructed.

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 therefore complies with Policy CS02 (LPCS), Policy C13 (LPFR) and to paragraph 149 (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 extension is single storey, subservient to the main dwelling, uses a staggered design and does not considerably project from the existing rear wall. It is therefore not considered to result in significant harm to the openness.

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 including impact on the conservation 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.

The Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021) states single storey rear extensions should be designed to ensure that appropriate materials are used and they are not overly dominant. The proposed extension will be located to the rear of the property and will be single storey. It will feature a double gabled staggered roof design, with rooflights in the roofslope. The door in the rear elevation will be replaced with a window, new patio doors will be installed in the extension and the window

that is to serve the new WC will be conditioned to be obscure glazed. Although not specified within this application, the roof tiles will be conditioned to match the existing, as will the fenestration. The external materials for the extension will be timber cladded walls. As such, the external materials are considered to be acceptable.

As the proposed development is to the rear of the property, and the site is set back from the highway, this will have a minimal impact of the street scene.

Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Impact on the Conservation Area

The site is located within The Street, Meopham Conservation Area and as such the principle issue in determining this application is whether the proposed development will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of The Street, Meopham Conservation Area. As such, Policy CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 are relevant. These policies place a high priority on the preservation, protection and enhancement of the heritage and historic environment.

The proposed alterations to the front door have already taken place and, as aforementioned in this report, may now be immune from enforcement action through the passage of time. The proposed single storey extension, as stated, will be a modest extension which would be subservient to the host dwelling. To ensure the proposed external facing materials are sympathetic to the host dwelling and conservation area, a condition is suggested to request samples of the materials, should permission be forthcoming. Furthermore, the extension is located to the rear of the property and would be unlikely to be seen from the public vantage point. Overall, subject to condition, it is considered the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

As such, the development is in accordance with statutory test 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policy CS20 (Heritage and the Historic Environment) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), saved Policy TC3 (Development Affecting Conservation Areas) of Gravesham's Local Plan First Review (1994) as well as Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

4. Other matters

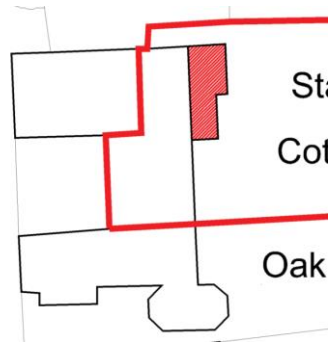
Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposal will safeguard the amenity of future occupiers. The garden depth of 27.09m and garden area at 430.08sqm, means the resultant private garden area exceeds the minimum garden area and depth as set out by Gravesham's SPG 2 - Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) (2020). The rooms proposed are in accordance with the RLG (2020) recommendation for floorspace, and will receive sufficient natural light. The new window to serve the WC in the front elevation will be conditioned to be obscure glazed to protect privacy. As such, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Neighbouring Amenity

No neighbour representations have been received for the proposal.

The proposed single storey development, in situ will have no impact on neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, loss of outlook or create any sense of enclosure. The extent of the development is indicated on the proposed block plan below and demonstrates how the extension will not have any impact on neighbouring amenity. Furthermore, the new window proposed in the left elevation of the existing dwelling will be at ground floor level and screened by fencing.



The proposed development is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highway issues related to this proposal.

5. Very special circumstances

No specific arguments have been put forward by the applicant in relation to the assessment of 'very special circumstances'.

6. Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site 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 proposed development is not considered to impact on the landscape, the single storey rear extension projects a minimal amount from the rear wall of the existing dwellinghouse. As such, the development is in accordance with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Archaeology

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. However, the proposed development would be unlikely to be impacted by this constraint.

Groundwater Protection Zone

The site is located within a Groundwater Protection Zone 3 area, however, the proposal is unlikely to pose an issue with regards to this constraint.

Conclusion

The proposed single storey rear extension is within the one third limit set out in saved policy C13 of Gravesham's Local Plan First Review (1994). It has been designed to be subservient to the existing dwelling, the proposed bulk and massing is acceptable, it will use acceptable external materials (subject to

condition) and will not significantly project from the rear wall of the existing dwellinghouse. Furthermore, under permitted development rights, an extension of a similar depth could be constructed. Moreover, there will not be a detrimental impact to the amenity of future occupiers or neighbouring properties and no harm will be caused to the conservation area or character of the landscape. Therefore, the proposed extension is considered to be a proportionate addition that is appropriately scaled within the green belt and conservation area setting and not harmful to its open character.

As such it is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

Permission

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Lucy Hankin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	L Hankin	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	2 nd March 2023	Dated:	3rd March 2023