



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20221210

Location: Beech Stables 2 Ifield Farm Shorne Ifield Road Shorne

Description: Erection of single storey rear extensions to form new ensuite bathroom and kitchen; alterations to fenestration.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs B Fletcher

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
A.01 – Location Plan
A.02 – Proposed Block Plan
A.03 – Existing Floor Plans
A.04 – Existing Elevations
A.05 – Proposed Floor Plans
A.06 – Proposed Elevations
A.07 – Existing and Proposed Perspectives and Cross Sections
Photographs

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20060951	Conversion of existing stable building on the north side of the site into 2 three bedroom dwellings (Units 1 & 2); conversion of stable building on western side of the site into one four bedroom dwelling (Unit 3); conversion and reconstruction of oast houses and barn into one five bedroom dwelling (Unit 4); conversion of piggery range on eastern side into a four bedroom dwelling (Unit 5); conversion of existing granary into live/work unit to Unit 3; conversion of existing brick building into live/work unit to unit 4; conversion and extension of cart shed building to provide covered parking area for units 1, 2 and 5 and erection of new cart shed building to provide covered parking for units 3 and 4. Erection of associated garden walls and formation of hard and soft landscaping.	Permitted	08.01.2007

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)

- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- 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)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Greenbelt Land
- Section 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- Section 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic 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);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

The final date for submission of comments was 6th January 2022.

Consultees

Ward Councillors: No comments received.

Parish Council:

The Parish Council has no objection in principle to this proposal, subject to there not being any significant valid objections from neighbours, but also has the following comments:

- The application description is not entirely correct as it does not mention the construction of a 4th bedroom.
- The proposed extensions are in keeping with the existing and neighbouring properties
- There is a wooden retaining structure to the bank on the western side of the property, the extensions extend very close to this structure, which could make mutual maintenance difficult.
- The proposed additional bedroom is very narrow and may have finished internal dimensions of less than 2m, which could restrict its future use.

Officer Note: Although the description does not mention the bedroom, the general description of increased bulk is correct, and the bedroom can clearly be seen on the proposed floor plans and this is adequately transparent. Maintenance of outdoor space is not a material planning consideration. Points regarding design and internal dimensions are noted and will be addressed under sections of the assessment titled; Design, Character and appearance and Amenity of Future Occupiers.

Gravesham Borough Highway Officer:

Proposals such as these are always worthy of careful consideration.

In terms of residential parking, the Council's adopted parking standards can be considered as no longer relevant in terms of car parking for residential parking as the National Planning Policy Framework, considers maximum standards to be inappropriate in most circumstances.

So, whilst not adopted by Gravesham it only leaves the Kent County Council Interim Guidance Note 3 of the Kent Design Guide available locally.

GUIDANCE TABLE FOR RESIDENTIAL PARKING

LOCATION	CITY/TOWN CENTRE	EDGE OF CENTRE	SUBURBAN	SUBURBAN EDGE/VILLAGE/RURAL
ON-STREET CONTROLS	On-street controls preventing all (or all long stay) parking	On-street controls, residents' scheme and/or existing saturation (Note 3)	No, or very limited, on-street controls	No on-street controls, but possibly a tight street layout
NATURE OF GUIDANCE	MAXIMUM (Note 1)	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM (Note 6)	MINIMUM (Note 6)
1 & 2 BED FLATS	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit
FORM	Controlled (Note 2)	Not allocated	Not allocated	Not allocated
1 & 2 BED HOUSES	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1.5 spaces per unit
FORM	Controlled (Note 2)	Allocation possible	Allocation possible	Allocation of one space per unit possible
3 BED HOUSES	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	1.5 spaces per unit	2 independently accessible spaces per unit
FORM	Controlled (Note 2)	Allocation possible	Allocation of one space per unit possible	Allocation of one or both spaces possible
4+ BED HOUSES	1 space per unit	1.5 spaces per unit	2 independently accessible spaces per unit	2 independently accessible spaces per unit
FORM	Controlled (Note 2)	Allocation of one space per unit possible	Allocation of both spaces possible (Note 7)	Allocation of both spaces possible (Note 7)
ARE GARAGES ACCEPTABLE? (Note 4)	Yes, but with areas of communal space for washing etc.	Yes, but not as a significant proportion of overall provision	Additional to amount given above only	Additional to amount given above only
ADDITIONAL VISITOR PARKING (Note 5)	Public car parks	Communal areas, 0.2 per unit maximum	On-street areas, 0.2 per unit	On-street areas, 0.2 per unit

NOTES

1. Reduced, or even nil provision is encouraged in support of demand management and the most efficient use of land.
2. Parking/garage courts, probably with controlled entry.
3. Reduced, or even nil provision acceptable for rented properties, subject to effective tenancy controls.
4. Open car ports or car barns acceptable at all locations, subject to good design.
5. May be reduced where main provision is not allocated. Not always needed for flats.
6. Lower provision may be considered if vehicular trip rate constraints are to be applied in connection with a binding and enforceable Travel Plan.
7. Best provided side by side, or in another independently accessible form. Tandem parking arrangements are often under-utilised.

Here the parking requirement for a three and four bedroom property in a rural location is the same at 2 vehicles.

Looking at application 20060951, the parking for this property was/is barn, giving unit 2, 4 parking spaces well in excess of the minimum requirement.

re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority'

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

Core Policy CS02 sets out where development should be distributed in the borough. Preference is given to those urbanised area as sustainable locations. Outside urbanised areas, those rural settlements which are inset from the Green Belt would also be considered acceptable in principle. This site is in a rural area, in the Greenbelt **NOT** forming part of a settlement inset from the Greenbelt. In this context the policy states that developments; *'will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan.'*

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

Policy C13 sets out the requirements for extensions to dwellings. Of particular consideration and to assist in assessing whether the addition would be disproportionate, this policy limits the increased floorspace to one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling. However, this policy does pre-date the NPPF, and greater weight should be given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 the NPPF 2021. "Original dwelling" for the purpose of Policy C13 means the building in permanent residential use at 1st July 1948.

Planning consent for conversion of the stables was achieved in 2007 and the dwellinghouse as converted has not been extended since. The original dwellinghouse has an existing gross floor area of 115.5m². The proposed floor area would be 153.5m² and increase of 38m². This is an increase of 32.9%, within the one third limitation.

In principle and subject to assessment of design, character and appearance, the dwellinghouse as extended would be considered modest and would not result in significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt, in accordance with paragraphs 147-151 of the NPPF, Core Policy CS02 of Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and Saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan First Review 1994.

Design, Character, Appearance, Heritage Impact and Rural Setting

Design, Character and Appearance

The proposed extensions are 2no. single storey elements which would provide a small courtyard style garden area between. The proposed scale and size of the extensions in isolation, and being single storey would generally be subservient. The low-pitched roof form adds to the subservient appearance, and would generally be preferable to a flat roof addition. The creation of the two extensions rather than extending for the entire rear also limits bulk and visual dominance over the main dwellinghouse. As specified in the application form, the proposed external materials would match the existing dwellinghouse. Generally, the extensions would be subordinate to the main dwellinghouse in scale and appearance.

However this proposal fails to take into account the historical and original farmstead character of the property, and the wider development. Policy CS19 requires that development will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, as well as taking account of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings. Account should also be taken of the significance of the heritage assets which contribute to local character and sense of place. Therefore impact should also be considered on the heritage context and rural setting.

Heritage Impact and Rural Setting

Advice on historic farmsteads can be found here: [Farm Buildings and Traditional Farmsteads | Historic England](#). Historic England state:

'Traditional farmsteads are heritage assets which, through conservation and reuse, make a significant contribution to rural economies and communities.'

Although not Listed or in a Conservation Area, this is a historic farm building within an historic farm complex which is considered important in terms of its architectural and historic interest and contribution to the landscape. Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, recognises the importance of preserving the heritage and historic environment and a non-renewable resource, which once lost, cannot be replaced. This particular farmstead uses a traditional courtyard layout, where historically, working buildings are arranged around one or more yards. The working buildings are traditionally low form, and simple in design, allowing the farmhouse, or in this case the oast house, to be the dominant and more complex feature. The proposal to erect two extensions to the rear, whilst small in scale would appear incongruous given the sites rural setting and its current reflection of the clearly identifiable traditional farmstead form and layout. Whilst the development is in residential use, the neighbouring buildings have retained its simple, traditional and rural character and further extensions would undermine this resulting in an unduly domesticated appearance, eroding the rural character and permanently altering the traditional courtyard form of the farmstead complex.

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets, which include non-designated heritage assets. It draws a distinction between substantial harm and less than substantial harm to such an asset. For the latter, which applies here, the test is that the harm should be weighed against public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.

The existing dwellinghouse contains 3 bedrooms, kitchen, living room and an ensuite. The proposed layout would include four bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, living room, a bathroom, an ensuite and a WC. This would provide additional habitable accommodation to enhance the building for modern family living. However, given the existing level of accommodation, limited weight can be given to any suggestion that this extension would necessarily help to secure the future use and functioning of this non-designated heritage asset. There would be some economic and employment benefits however this would be short-lived and limited. It is therefore clear that the public benefits would not outweigh the harm to non-designated heritage asset.

The proposal would therefore be contrary to the requirements of; Policy CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of design, character, appearance, heritage and rural context.

Landscape Character Area

The proposal is for extensions and alterations to an existing property which is located in a rural area in the Green Belt, but also the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. This Landscape Character Area is characterised by very gently undulating topography and open arable farmland. There is the original Saxon village of Lower Higham and more recent development to the south with marsh side hamlets and settlements.

Policy CS12 of Gravesham Core Strategy (2014) 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 would increase the size of the property, but despite its minor increase in scale is considered to harm the landscape character of the site due to the interruption to the tradition courtyard form of the historic farmstead and increase in domestic features and so it would be detrimental to the traditional rural landscape character of the surrounding area.

In respect of landscape character, the proposal is therefore considered contrary with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed additional rooms would meet minimum space standards. However, the rear extensions would significantly reduce the space from the rear wall. However, when approaching the issue practically, it is evident that the associated outdoor recreational garden for this property is located to the north-west side of the building and not the rear, and the space in this area would be unchanged.

The rooms meet the required minimum space standards and the dwellinghouse would continue to have adequate garden space and area as per SPG2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020.

Neighbouring Amenity

Charlie Brown Stables, 1 Ifield Farm, is the attached neighbour located to the south-east, and is the neighbour most likely to be impacted by the development. As can be seen in the applicant provided photograph, the boundary at this rear point is separated by close boarded fencing, with a shed building immediately adjoining this in this neighbour's plot.



As is evident, there are no windows immediately adjoining the boundary on this neighbour's rear elevation and so the extension would not overshadow this neighbour detrimentally, particularly given the southern location of this neighbour and the east to west, southern route of the sun result in shadowing extending northwards, into the applicant's plot. The additional window would face north west, into the applicant's garden area and would not directly overlook any neighbouring plot.

The proposal is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in compliance with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Parking Provision

The approval to convert the stables to a dwellinghouse ensured provision of 4 vehicular parking spaces. A 4-bedroom house would require 2 and so adequate space is available for vehicular parking. However, an additional bedroom would require spacing to be provided for an additional cycle parking space. This could be secured by condition.

Adequate parking provision is therefore available subject to inclusion of a condition requiring details of cycle parking provision, in compliance with saved policies T1 and P3 of the Local Plan First Review 1994 and Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion

The proposed development would result in an incongruous form of development, which would substantially harm the traditional rural setting, form and appearance of this historic farmstead, and there are no matters which would outweigh this harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to CS19 and CS20 of the Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

It would also result in significant harm the Higham Arable Farmlands landscape character of the site due to the interruption of the tradition courtyard form of the historic farmstead resulting development which is detrimental to the traditional rural landscape character of the surrounding area and contrary to Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation

Refusal

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

Case Officer:	Ms Lisa Williams	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	16th January 2023	Dated:	January 2023