

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20211188

Location: 17 Coutts Avenue Shorne Gravesend Kent

Description: Erection of single storey rear extension; construction of dormer extensions in the front and rear roof slopes; conversion of roof space into habitable rooms; and erection of single storey outbuilding in rear garden to provide games room/office.

Applicant: Mr James Gilham

Site Visit Date: 17 November 2021

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Planning Application form;
Red line site boundary plan;
Existing and proposed block plans;
Existing and proposed parking plan;
Drawing no. 21/09/02 01 Existing and proposed ground floor layout;
Drawing no. 21/09/02 02 Proposed first floor layout and sections;
Drawing no. 21/09/02 03 Proposed outbuilding layout, elevations and section;
Drawing no. 21/09/02 04 Existing and proposed elevations;
6 photographs;
Letter dated 24 September 2021 from the agent; and
Email dated 08 October 2021 from the agent.

The agent has confirmed that the proposed outbuilding would be used as an office for home working for the applicant and his wife and for storage due to the loss of the garage. It is noted that the submitted layout drawing also shows the outbuilding as being used as a family games room.

Relevant Planning History

None.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 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)

- P5 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

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
- 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;
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021)

Other documents

- Nationally Described Space Standard 2015
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment 2009

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

GBC - Environmental Protection Team, Regulatory Services

Watching Brief:

The applicant shall undertake a watching brief during construction in case any contamination issue is encountered. If during development any contamination is found, the local planning authority should be informed as soon as practical and the work shall not continue until written agreement is provided by the LPA as to the appropriate measures to be taken to resolve the matter and they are satisfied that those measures have been carried out

Code of Practice on Construction and Demolition:

Please apply

GBC - Highways Officer

Initial comments:

This proposal turns a three bedroom property into one with five bedrooms. This would require a minimum of two parking spaces to be provided to comply with the guidance published by Kent County Council, the Highway Authority. See Interim Guidance Note 3 of the Kent Design Guide for Residential Parking. In addition with the additional two bedrooms two cycle parking spaces should provided to comply with the guidance in SPG4.

No details are provided regarding a car and cycle parking layout, so I would suggest a parking plan should be submitted and the works completed prior to commencement. It should be noted that any additional parking in the front garden will require the existing carriage crossover to be widened to ensure direct

access is available to both spaces.

Comments on proposed parking layout:

Providing the property is served by a full width carriage crossover I have no objections. This will provide more than adequate car parking with most vehicles having direct access to the highway.

Any alternative layout would be restrictive, and I note other dwellings elsewhere in the road have widened crossovers.

Highways England

We will be concerned with proposals that have the potential to impact on the safe, reliable and efficient operation of the SRN, in this case, particularly the proposed route of the Lower Thames Crossing in the vicinity of Gravesend.

We have assessed the application from two perspectives

a) Impact of traffic attracted to or generated by the proposed development. Given the location and small scale nature of the potential development we have no objection from this perspective.

b) Impact on the construction and/or operation and maintenance of Lower Thames Crossing. The site is located close to the current red-line boundary for the Lower Thames Crossing. However, if the site is developed it should not affect the Crossing's construction and/or operation and maintenance. Therefore we have no objection from this perspective.

It should be noted that it is assumed that the applicant is fully aware of the proximity of the Lower Thames Crossing route to the site as will be any future investor, developer, purchaser or occupant and that any party will make any decision in full knowledge of the potential consequences of that proximity.

On this basis, we are content that the above proposed development will not unacceptably impact on the safety, reliability and/or operational efficiency of the current and proposed SRN (the tests set out in DfT C2/13 and MHCLG NPPF2021).

Consequently, we have No Objection to application 20211188.

KCC Heritage

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. I consider it unlikely, however, that these proposals will have a significant archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Shorne Parish Council

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

The existing property is single-storey and semi-detached, and on the north side of Coutts Avenue. The land here slopes to the north and from east to west.

The proposal has a number of elements:

- Full-width ground floor rear extension – This is satisfactory as there are not any new side windows.
- Rear box dormer – this is subservient to the existing roof. The proposed juliet balcony could however cause overlooking to the neighbouring property.
- Front box dormer - this is also subservient. We generally prefer for front box dormers to be avoided, however several other properties in Coutts Avenue already have these.
- Number of bedrooms: The increase in number of bedrooms from 2.5 to 4.5 is noted.
- Bathrooms – no bathroom is being provided upstairs and there is only a single enlarged bathroom downstairs. The design of this could perhaps be improved.

- Garden Room – although large this does leave gaps to the boundaries. Conditions should be attached that it is only an annexe to the main house and cannot be used as residential accommodation or as a separate dwelling. The proposed fish pond is noted.
- Parking – sufficient, adequate size parking needs to be demonstrated as available on site for both residents and visitors. On-street parking in Coutts Avenue is already extremely restricted and causes problems for both traffic and pedestrians.
- We have concerns that the proposals could constitute overdevelopment of the site.

Dickens' Country Protection Society

In the Society's view the front box dormer looks incongruous and to the detriment of the street scene; its impact could be reduced by introducing a pitched roof (not exceeding the existing ridge line) or it should be replaced by a smaller roof light.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised to nine neighbouring properties by letter. Three representations have been received (objecting to the proposal) and are summarised as follows;

- The proposed rear dormer is out of keeping and out of proportion by its size and bulk in relation to neighbouring properties and would turn a bungalow into a house.
- A standard sized dormer with a window, rather than French doors would be acceptable.
- The proposed alteration of the roof from a hip to a gable end would infill the space between properties (a feature of the street scene); would create a considerable mass of roof; and would be out of keeping with the surrounding area.
- If the proposed gable end was only taken as far as the ridge of the front projection, this would not be objectionable.
- Loss of sunlight and daylight into the kitchen of no. 21 Coutts Avenue.
- Loss of privacy in the rear garden/patio of no. 21 Coutts Avenue.
- The large rear dormer would set a precedent and be unattractive to look at.

Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

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. In this context it is considered that the starting point for assessing the appropriateness of built development in design terms, will be to consider how the proposal relates to the existing building and those in the surrounding area.

It is noted that Shorne Parish Council have commented on some specific design issues. They also raise concerns that the proposal could constitute an overdevelopment of the site. It is also noted that the Dickens' Country Protection Society consider the proposed front dormer to be incongruous and detrimental to the street scene and suggest a pitched roofed dormer or a roof light as an alternative. Lastly it is noted that local residents consider the rear dormer and hip to gable alteration to be excessive in size and out of keeping with the existing dwelling; that the rear dormer would set a precedent and should not have French doors.

The proposed development would involve a 4.3 metre deep, single storey, flat roofed rear extension across the full width of the property. A 2.6 metre (width) by 2.6 metre (depth) by 2.1 metre (height), flat roofed front dormer and a 6.8 metre (width) by 3.5 metre (depth) by 2.6 metre (height), flat roofed rear dormer with a Juliet balcony and a hip to gable enlargement of the main roof. In addition, there would be an 8.6 metre (width) by 5 metre (depth) by 2.7 metre (height) flat roofed outbuilding at the northern end of the rear garden.

The proposed external facing materials would match existing and as such, would be acceptable. In general design terms, the proposal would comprise of various features, none of which would look out of place in a

residential area. However in order to consider the visual impacts of the proposal, it is necessary to consider each element individually as well as cumulatively.

The proposed front dormer would be subservient in size to the main roof and would not look out of character with the existing building or the surrounding street scene, as there are a number of existing flat roofed front dormers in Coutts Avenue. It is also noted that there various rear dormers and two existing hip to gable alterations to the roofs of surrounding properties (nos. 15 and 21 Coutts Avenue) and that such alterations can be permitted development provided that the resulting roof space meets certain size specifications. In this instance, the proposed rear dormer and hip to gable alteration would cumulatively exceed the permitted development limit and would require planning permission.

The proposed rear dormer would add new built form to the rear of the building but it would be set down from the roof and set in at the sides. Furthermore the proposed hip to gable enlargement would add to the impression of increased built form on the building. Therefore overall the proposal would add significant size and bulk to the application property. However as the dormer would be subservient in size to the main roof and the hip to gable enlargement would be set in from the boundary of the property (so that it would maintain some space between the application site and no. 15 Coutts Avenue), neither feature would be excessive in size and they would not be out of character with the existing building or the surrounding street scene.

The design and materials for the proposed rear extension would match with the existing building and its surroundings. The proposed depth would be relatively large but due to its flat roof and rear location, the extension would not be widely visible in the surrounding area and as such, it would not be detrimental to visual amenity.

The application site is located in an urban area where domestic outbuildings are commonplace. The proposed outbuilding would be 0.2 metres too tall to be permitted development (as it would be within two metres of the boundary of the property). The applicant has confirmed that the proposed home office would be for use by the applicant and his wife and that no business use would take place. The outbuilding would provide a 11.8 square metre office and a 24 square metre games room, which would not be excessive in size for either of the proposed uses. The proposed outbuilding would be of substantial size, but it would just about be subservient in size to the existing dwelling. The design and materials would be appropriate to their location and therefore it would not be detrimental to visual amenity.

Cumulatively the proposed development would result in a significant change in the appearance of the dwelling and garden. However none of the design features either individually or cumulatively would be out of character with the building or excessive in terms of size or bulk and there are examples of similar features on various properties in Coutts Avenue. Therefore it is considered that the proposal would be of acceptable design and would not be an overdevelopment of the application site. As such, the proposed development would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

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. In relation to the Higham Arable Farmlands LCA, this document highlights that the key landscape characteristics are very gently undulating topography, open arable farmland and views towards the marshes and River Thames. It states that the overall condition of the landscape is poor and it has moderate sensitivity. It recommends that the landscape elements in poor condition should be restored, whilst safeguarding the character area as a prominent landscape feature within the wider landscape.

The proposed development would result in a significant change in the appearance of the building. However the building would retain its residential character and the proposal would not be visible outside of the existing urban area or in the wider surrounding landscape. Therefore it is considered that there would be

no significant adverse impacts to landscape character and the proposal would be in line with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed development would reduce the available amenity space at the application site but as 136 square metres of rear garden area with a depth of 14 metres would be retained, the proposal would be in line with the minimum amenity space requirements of the Borough Council's Adopted Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) for a property with four or more bedrooms.

The proposed new bedrooms would have areas (and widths) of 7.7 (2.5), 12 (3.2) and 14.7 (3.3) square metres (metres) respectively and would be in line with the minimum sizes set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard 2015.

Overall the proposed development would not harm the amenity of future occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014.

Neighbouring Amenity

The closest neighbouring properties to the application site are nos. 15 and 19 Coutts Avenue (which adjoin on either side) and nos. 10 to 14 Burdett Avenue (which are located to the north). Nos. 20 to 24 Coutts Avenue are located to the south across the roadway.

It is noted that Shorne PC have raised concerns regarding adverse overlooking impacts from the proposed Juliet balcony and that local residents are concerned about the loss of sunlight, daylight and privacy to the occupiers of no. 21 Coutts Avenue.

The proposed development would result in a new window (hallway) facing no. 15 at first floor level in the side elevation of the new roof. In addition, one existing bedroom window at ground floor level in the side elevation facing no. 15 would be removed. As the proposed first floor window would be to a non-habitable room, there would be no adverse overlooking impacts. The existing ground floor shower room and w.c. windows would become windows to a bathroom and as such, they would be conditioned to be obscure glazed in order to ensure privacy and to mitigate any overlooking.

The proposed front and rear dormer windows would have privacy distances of at least 29 metres for properties to the south and at least 35 metres for properties to the north and as such, there would be no adverse overlooking impacts. It is noted that the proposed Juliet Balcony would not provide any external space and as such, it would be not be significantly worse than a normal window in terms of overlooking impacts to the adjacent properties.

The proposed outbuilding would have windows in the southern elevation that would face the rear elevations of neighbouring properties. However due to the screening provided by boundary treatments and the privacy distance (some 20 metres), there would be no adverse overlooking impacts.

Therefore overall there would be no significant loss of privacy for any of the surrounding residential occupiers. In order to ensure that there is no potential for adverse overlooking impacts in future, a condition should be attached to any planning permission granted to ensure that no further openings are inserted into any flank elevations.

Due to the design of the proposed development and the layout and orientation of the buildings, there would be no significant loss of sunlight or daylight and as such, there would be no adverse overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of any surrounding residential properties.

As the proposal would provide a kitchen/diner, it would be appropriate to attach a condition to any planning permission granted to preclude any flue openings in order to ensure that there are no adverse odour or noise impacts to surrounding occupiers in future.

Overall it is considered that 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

The proposed development would result in the existing garage being removed; three new bedrooms being provided in the roof space and the loss of one bedroom at ground floor level (the property would increase from three bedrooms to five bedrooms). The existing frontage parking area would be retained.

It is noted that Shorne Parish Council has set out that adequate parking should be provided at the application site.

The GBC Highways Officer has not raised an objection to the proposal and seeks the provision of two car and two bicycle parking spaces and the widening of the existing crossover to serve the existing frontage parking area.

The submitted plans show that sufficient car parking spaces would be available and subject to a planning conditions requiring the existing parking area to be retained and the widening of the dropped kerb, these spaces would be permanently accessible across the site frontage. The application site has a large rear garden and could easily accommodate bicycle parking, which can be required to be provided by planning condition.

Overall it is considered that the proposed development 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 and P5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The application site is located in an area multi-period archaeological potential and Kent County Council Heritage considers it unlikely that the proposed works would have a significant archaeological impact. As such, the proposal would be in line with Policy CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC7 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

The application site is located within Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 and the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) Safeguarding Zone and is in close proximity to a gas pipeline (along the site frontage). Highways England have not raised an objection to the proposal in relation to the LTC and as the works would be relatively minor and would be located within the confines of an existing residential garden, it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts to groundwater, gas infrastructure or the route or operation of the LTC. The applicant should be made aware of the LTC via an informative on any planning permission granted.

The GBC Environmental Protection Team have requested that any planning permission granted include a watching brief condition to ensure that there is no potential for ground contamination.

A number of concerns have been raised by local residents, Shorne PC and the Dickens' Country Protection Society and the majority of these have been considered above. The outstanding issues are set out and commented on as follows;

- The large rear dormer would set a precedent and be unattractive to look at – there are a number of large existing dormers in the surrounding area and the design would not be out of character with the existing building or its surroundings. Therefore the proposal would not set a precedent or be detrimental to visual amenity.
- Conditions should be attached so that the garden room is only an annexe to the main house and cannot be used as residential accommodation or as a separate dwelling – this would be reasonable.
- No bathroom is being provided upstairs and there is only a single enlarged bathroom downstairs. The design of this could perhaps be improved – there is no planning justification for requesting an additional bathroom. Therefore the application will be considered as submitted.

Conditions

Time limit

Development in accordance with the approved plans

Prior to the first occupation, two bicycle parking spaces shall be provided

Prior to the first occupation, the dropped kerb should be widened to serve the existing car parking area

Materials to match existing

No further windows/openings

Obscure glazing to bathrooms

Outbuilding to be used for purposes incidental to the dwelling only

Retention of existing parking area

Watching brief contamination condition

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development complies with local and national planning policies and subject to the conditions set out above, the proposal would be acceptable.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	06 January 2022	Dated:	06 January 2022