



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20231308

Location: Longmead Foxendown Lane Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of a single storey rear extension with roof lights and alterations to roof. Erection of a front porch with alterations to fenestration and conversion of garage.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Tomlin

Site Visit Date: 11th January 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
2336-PL01 – Existing Floor Plan
2336-PL02 – Existing Elevations
2336-PL03 Rev A – Proposed Floor Plan
2336-PL04 Rev A – Proposed Elevations
2336-PL05 Rev A – Site Plans
2336-PL06 – Location Plan
Covering Letter

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19780829	Erection of single storey extensions at side and rear to provide double garage lounge and lobby store and formation of pergola	Permitted	03.11.1978

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)

- C13 – Extensions to dwellings in the countryside
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 - 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

Meopham Parish Council:

No comments received.

Ward Councillors:

No comments received.

GBC Highways Officer:

I have no highway objections, the property benefits from an extensive driveway which can readily accommodate several vehicles, so the garage is not required even with the increase in the number of bedrooms. However, with four bedrooms there should be parking for four cycles to comply with the requirements of KCC SPG4 which has been adopted by Gravesham as a supplementary planning document of one cycle per bedroom. The existing bedrooms benefitting from possible cycle parking within the garage.

KCC Heritage:

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, I consider it unlikely that these proposals, immediately adjacent to the existing dwelling, would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Neighbouring properties

2no. surrounding properties were consulted and a site notice posted on 11th January 2024 and again on 7th February 2024 when the proposal was changed to include the proposed garage conversion. The final date to submit comments ended on 28th February 2024. No comments were received from members of the public.

Officer's Analysis

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development in the Green Belt;
- Impact on openness and the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Amenity of Future Occupiers
- Residential amenity;
- Highways.

Officer Note: Conditions applied on a previous consent removed permitted development rights for conversion of the garage and so this change should be considered as part of the assessment.

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

The site is within the Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (para. 142 of the NPPF 2023). Paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The relevant exceptions to this policy are as follows:

Paragraph 154(c) identifies 'the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in *'disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building'*, as an exception to this policy.

Paragraph 154(g) identifies another exception as;

'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
- *not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would 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 areas 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 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.'*

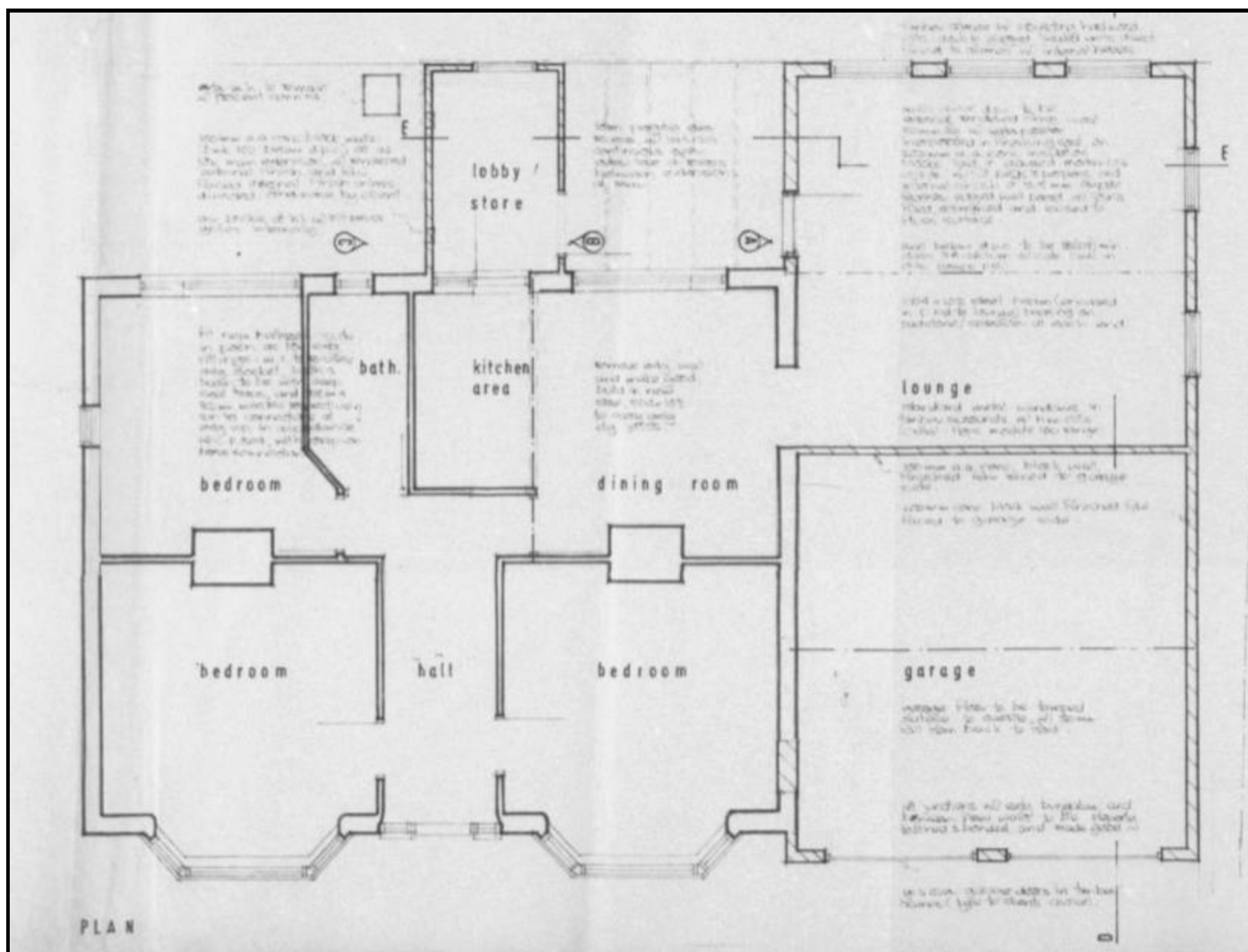
Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

Saved 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 154 of the NPPF (2023).

"Original dwelling" for the purpose of Saved Policy C13 means the building in permanent residential use at

1st July 1948.

Consent for extensions to the side and rear were given in 1978. The following floor plan taken from the approved details of that application shows the areas which were extended:



No other extensions appear to have taken place since and prior to this. The floor space of the original house and the previous extensions can therefore be ascertained from the existing plans provided as part of the current application. The original dwellinghouse therefore had a floorspace of 74m². The extensions were 61m² to the side and 5m² to the rear (totalling 66m²). This increase resulted in an increase of 89.2% and a total existing floor space of 140m².

The following details the calculations for the increased footprint:

Development Stage	Footprint
Original	74 m ²
Current	140 m ²
Proposed	170 m ²
Total Increase: 96 m ² /(129.7%)	

This assessment incorporates the floorspace of the garage which is proposed to be converted as this

section of the building was extended as part of planning consent reference; 19780829. The garage is physically attached but practically it is a separate feature of the dwellinghouse as there are no internal accesses from the garage to the dwellinghouse currently. Use of the garage for any other purpose other than storage of vehicle is also restricted by condition on the aforementioned decision notice. The conversion of the garage would therefore result in an increase in internal floorspace of 30m² (This is incorporated into the calculations above. The extensions proposed would result in increased floorspace of 20.6m². The residential floorspace as a result of the proposed converted garage and extensions, would increase by 50.6m² in total from the current internal residential floorspace.

<i>Development Stage</i>	<i>Residential Floorspace</i>
<i>Original</i>	71 m ²
<i>Current</i>	106 m ² (excluding garage)
<i>Proposed</i>	156.6 m ²
Total Increase: 85.6 m ² /(121%)	

This would be 88% greater than the 1/3 increase prescribed by saved Policy CS13 and above the allowance. The proposed development would result in a significant increase to the scale of the dwellinghouse from its original conversion, in the Green Belt.

However, in considering whether the additions would be disproportionate to the existing dwellinghouse, a visual assessment is necessary in combination with the floorspace data. From the front elevation, there would be minimal change in bulk, with the existing side projection proposed to have a raised height from 3.2m to 3.9m. The front bay windows would also be squared off creating a minor increase in bulk with creation of a 1m deep pitched roof porch. These changes from the front whilst resulting in visual increase would be minimal and mitigated by the design improvements incorporated. These design improvements include;

- Use of symmetrical pitched to the heightened side projection and front porch
- New windows, having a similar appearance but smaller size than the main dwellinghouse
- Additional porch set forward of the 'squared off' bays which would make them more recessed in their appearance

From the front, the resultant changes increasing the bulk would be appropriately balances with the sympathetic design, softening the appearance of the previously approved side extension and linking it more appropriately to the main dwellinghouse, in terms of appearance.

However, the main change would be to the rear, where there would be less impact on the streetscene, as there would be limited visibility from the public viewpoint. The previously approved 5m² extension would be removed and replaced with a single storey rear extension infilling the 10m wide and 3.2m deep space at the rear, creating a rectangular footprint. The proposed extension would be no deeper or wider than the existing layout extends to. It would use a crown roof which would ensure that the height of the roof would be well below that of the existing bungalow and would coincide with the existing angle of the roof pitch, providing a subservient and symmetrical appearance to the rear. It is somewhat unfortunate that the extension would result in the original side and rear elevation being enveloped by new additions but given the very small nature of older rural housing and the modern requirement of larger spaces, it is expected that such housing will be increased in size. It is also considered appropriate that the front and remaining side elevations are unchanged and that the overall height and roof form of the original dwellinghouse have been maintained as a bungalow, as is expected of many traditional rural housing in the Green Belt. It is also noted that the converted garage would not increase the physical footprint of the dwellinghouse and so visually would not contribute to its enlarged appearance.

On balance, despite the increase in scale, the development would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building visually and would comply with paragraph 154(c) and 154(g)

of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and Saved Policy C13 of Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994).

Impact on openness

In appeal reference APP/K2230/D/21/3282859 (Bucklebury, Pear Tree Lane, Shorne), which shall be included as Appendix A the Inspector found that the development accorded with paragraph 149(c) of the NPPF, and for that reason there was no requirement to assess the openness. They stated that: *'As I find the development is not inappropriate under paragraph 149c of the Framework, it is not necessary to consider the development under other sections of that paragraph'*

In this case, as the scheme has been assessed as compliant with paragraph 154(c) it is also not necessary to consider the development under other sections of the paragraph. As above, the scheme is considered compliant with paragraph 154(c) and 154(g) of the NPPF (2023) and so would be considered appropriate development in the Green Belt.

Landscape Character Area

Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of surrounding area. This application is located in a rural area. Whilst there are some areas of built form, such as this existing dwellinghouse, the landscape of the area is overwhelmingly rural and open, without built form. The dwellinghouses which form part of this cluster, are largely single storey and have limited footprints. The majority of these dwellinghouses have been converted over time from holiday chalets to become permanent residences, hence their small scale, more appropriate for the rural countryside. This site in particular forms part of the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

The Landscape Character Assessment described the modern development of the area as follows:

'In the mid 20th Century the land to the north of Harvel was divided into a multitude of small plots that has resulted in sporadic and piecemeal development. These plots are enclosed by a variety of boundaries including fencing, hedgerows and other materials, or defined by clearings in the woodland to create a haphazard mosaic of small-scale housing plots within the woodland. The style of properties is varied in terms of size, scale and style. Many plots accommodate derelict caravans adjacent to small brick bungalows. Security gates and fencing are dominant throughout the area. Many properties appear to have small adjoining paddocks accommodating a small amount of livestock and associated equipment.'

It continues to say:

'The uncharacteristic and sporadic settlement of small plots within coppice woodland is a dominant element within the area creating an incoherent landscape. There are many visual detractors, including derelict buildings and caravans, overgrown gardens, poor fencing, disjointed fencing materials and fly tipping. The visual unity is significantly interrupted, although the wooded nature of the area conceals much of the visual clutter from wider views.'

Given the harm caused to the landscape character from the areas of small plots such as the one referred to in this application, the condition of the landscape area is considered moderate and requiring a Conserve and Create approach, as noted in the Landscape Character Appraisal; 'The strong landscape elements within the Harvel Wooded Downs should be conserved, whilst design standards should be defined to halt the erosion of the area with inappropriate development.' Of particular relevance, the Landscape Character Assessment provides the following guidance to 'halt the erosion of the area with inappropriate development.':

- Conserve and maintain traditional and distinct buildings, materials and elements.
- Resist proposals that introduce inappropriate designs and materials.
- Improve and soften new development using characteristic landscape elements such as woodland

- blocks and hedgerows.
- Conserve enclosure of settlements within wooded areas.

In this instance, as has already been ascertained, the proposed development would result in the increase in built form to this plot. However, given its design and wider context, it is considered visually appropriate and proportional to the character of the area.

Overall and on this basis, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014, Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994 and Section 13 of the NPPF (2023).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The NPPF (2023) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land. The impact on neighbours will be assessed in the next section of the report.

The altered rooms meet the required minimum space standards, and the property would not have a significantly altered rear garden depth and area. On balance, the proposal would be acceptable under per SPG2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020.

Neighbouring Amenity

As outlined above, it is important that any development safeguards the amenity of neighbouring properties and land. Following a period of consultation with neighbouring properties, no objection to the proposal was received.

Valley View

This neighbour is located to the west. There is 2.1 metres between the dwellinghouses. The distance between the dwellinghouses would not be altered. The new extension to the rear would be no deeper or closer to this neighbour than the current side projection is. However, the would be a raised height to the side projection closest to this neighbour to 3.9m high (an increase of 0.7m). Given the minor height increase, distance and that the increased ridge height would pitch away from the direction of this neighbour, it would not result in substantial overbearing bulk or overshadowing. There also would be no openings directly facing this neighbours property.

Guillaume

This neighbour is located to the east. There is 13.7m between the buildings. The distancing would not be changed. Given this neighbours distance, and it position (set forward of the subject dwellinghouse, although there would be additional block apparent from this neighbours' perspective, it would not be overbearing or result in significant overshadow, particularly given its low form height. Again, due to the distancing and ground floor position the altered openings which would create an entrance door to the utility room (a non-habitable room), there would be no direct significantly harmful overlooking as a result of the scheme.

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

Highways

The GBC Highways officer has raised no objections to the scheme. They have advised of required cycle parking spaces. They also advise this space is likely possible within the garage and that there is ample

parking space on the front drive.

Adequate vehicle and cycle parking provision would therefore be available in compliance with paragraphs 114 to 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development complies with all relevant national and local planning policies. The recommendation is therefore to approve.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	29 th February 2024	Dated:	01 March 2024