

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS/EXTENSION TO EXISTING HOUSE & NEW DETACHED GYM/ GAMES ROOM BUILDING AT REAR OF 'HIGHWAYS' OLD WATLING STREET GRAVESEND KENT DA11 7NT [RESUBMISSION OF APPLICATION 20250029]

1.0 SITE LOCATION & CONTEXT

1.1 The site is located on the northern side of Old Watling Street which itself is a continuation of the original Watling Street which runs from Singlewell Road in the south-east up to the junction with Golf Links Road. At that junction the road then becomes Old Watling Street running further to the north-west roughly parallel with the new A2 trunk road.

1.2 Both parts of this road are characterised by large detached houses, with a few bungalows, set in large plots the originals of which date back to the 1930/40's and display a wide mixture of types and architectural styles, with no one style or type being particularly dominant.

1.3 Many of the original bungalows in the roads have either been completely demolished and replaced by two storey houses, application 20130633 Casa Lila, Old Watling Street, application 20141001 35 Watling Street, application 20220198 Santona, Watling Street, application 20240097 Tourmalane, 63 Old Watling Street, application 20240284 12 Brenchley Avenue or had first floors added to the original footprint, together with substantial extensions, to convert into a house, application 20061105 Mayberry Old Watling Street [next to the site] application 20140484 Kateshga Old Watling Street and 20240220 8 Brenchley Avenue, amongst others. Most of the properties in the roads have been substantially altered and or extended together with loft conversions which present a strong, almost continuous, built-up road frontage.

1.4 A number of properties have permitted detached double garages built against or near the front boundary walls, which in most cases have electrically operated entrance gates and where the land to the front of the properties is given over to vehicle parking with little by way of soft landscaping. In many cases there are large detached buildings set at the bottoms of the rear gardens used as summer houses, gyms and games rooms. [Examples of these will be set out later in this Statement].

1.5 There is a strong Asian community within the local area with an overwhelming emphasis on traditional family and where the great majority of the properties have been altered and extended substantially in order to accommodate elderly extended members of the family, parents and grand parents. It is particularly noticeable that members of this community are not avid gardeners and practically all front gardens are given over to hard landscaping for car parking. There is a strong absence of flowers, shrubs and trees throughout the front gardens and the majority of rear gardens are given over to decking and lawns. A tour of Old Watling Street, Watling Street, Orchard Avenue, Brenchley Avenue and Singlewell Road will confirm this fact.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 There appears to be little by way of planning history associated with the property except for GR00/500 submitted in 2000 "The retention of dormer extension in the front roof slope and retention of bedroom in loft space" which was permitted.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

3.1 The footprint of the existing house currently occupies the full width of the site, boundary to boundary, which prevents any possible external access to the rear of the property. Therefore, the first part of the proposal is to demolish the existing eastern side extension which contains the former garage but now a store, cloakroom and utility room. In any event the 'garage' was never wide enough to accommodate any normal size of motor vehicle.

3.2 It is proposed to build a smaller sized side extension that will leave a clear 800mm wide passage alongside the eastern boundary giving pedestrian access to the rear of the property. Internally it will provide a new cloakroom, lobby and utility room **which will include a 600mm wide window in the front.** Externally, the walls will be finished with a smooth coloured render to match that of the existing house and the pitched roof covered with hand made clay plain tiles.

3.3 It is proposed to construct a single storey rear extension across the entire width of the existing house to enlarge the kitchen and provide a family leisure area. In order to reduce the visual impact that a straight forward flat roof extension would have and which would also detract from the character of the existing house, it is proposed to construct a truncated pitched roof with a tiled apron around the perimeter of the roof using hand made clay plain tiles. The resulting smaller flat roof area will contain two glazed lantern lights to maximise natural light into the extension. The extension would be 2.5m high to the eaves and 3.6m to the top of the truncated roof, this flat roof area will finish some 150mm below the cill line of the first floor windows and therefore, **“ does not intercept the first floor windows”**.

3.4 A similar roof construction was permitted under application 20190700 at 9 Brenchley Avenue, a short distance from this site where the tiled apron contained 4no Velux roof lights. Application 20190970 at 10 Brenchley Avenue where the rear extension measured 8.0m out from the main house the first 5.0m of which was a flat roof some 3.65m high, complete with a large glazed lantern light, with the last 3.0m being a tiled apron roof sloping down to the eaves at 2.6m high which contained 4no. Velux roof lights. There are many other examples, throughout the area, of large flat roof rear extensions, spanning the entire width of the property, containing one or more glazed lantern lights.

3.5 The main roof to the existing house is the original and covered with Rosemary clay plain tiles, which will be set aside and re-used on the new roof. The existing roof is constructed with two hips at the rear, facing northwards, with a central valley gutter running into the main roof at right angles which is completed with a flying hip at each of the eastern and western ends. At the front there is a fully hipped roof above the main bay window on the eastern side of the house and a double pitched dormer window set centrally within the main roof and which appears somewhat incongruous within the roof scape. This double dormer serves a single room used as a computer room but due to the roof shape the room has very limited headroom, some 2.0m. The existing roof is some 8.0m high above ground level.

3.6 The applicant wishes to remove the roof completely and re-pitch the roof from front to back, at the same angle as the existing by raising the existing eastern and western walls by some 800mm before constructing fully hipped ends up to a new ridge height of 8.4m some 400mm higher than the existing ridge and 100mm[4 inches] higher than the adjoining property, Mayberry, which has an 8.3m ridge height, under application 20061105. This latest revised proposal significantly reduces the proposed ridge height by 1.0m from 9.4m to 8.4m. A further property has also had applications approved with an increased ridge height from 8.0m to 8.4m under ref: 20200400 and latterly under ref: 20250007 at The Whitehouse, Watling Street and this is repeated with numerous other applications throughout the local area.

3.7 The new roof construction results in a small “table top” flat roof at the apex of the roof measuring some 4.7m x 2.8m with a lead or GRP covering. Whilst this is not ideal the flat roof area is not visible from ground level or from surrounding buildings. This type of design has become a common feature of replacement dwellings in the area and to those properties that have undergone substantial first floor extensions. Amongst these are applications 20200400 The White House, Watling Street, application 20220198, Santana Watling Street, application 20250527, Longreach, Old Watling Street [which includes table top roof to new dormers], application 20060406, 5 Brenchley Avenue, application 20211244 The Orchards, Watling Street and application 20250556, Wayside, Watling Street.

3.8 The roof space accommodation has been slightly reduced in floor area and the dormer window in the front roof slope has been moved eastwards to align centrally above the first floor landing window and the ground floor front door, but the hipped roof has been retained. The two separate dormer windows in the rear roof slope have been removed and replaced with a combined flat roof dormer serving the Master Bedroom and En-suite Bathroom and placed centrally within the roof width. The window in the eastern wall, which previously overlooked the adjoining property, Mayberry, and served the Office/Study has been removed and replaced with a standard Velux light in the roof slope.

4.0 GARAGES

4.1 The local area is characterised by numerous detached garages build adjacent to the front boundaries of the properties;

Application 20250728 The Whitehouse, Watling Street. [Pending]

Application 20250062, Santana, Watling Street.[Permitted]

Application 20130925, Mayberry [adjoining the site] Old Watling Street. [Permitted]

Application 20080018, Wayside, Watling Street. [Permitted]

In previous application 20250029 the Case Officer raised objections to the proposed detached garage at the front of the property, however, despite the applications set out above and recent Appeal decisions and in order not to prejudice this application the proposed garage is deleted.

5.0 DETACHED GYM/GAMES ROOM

5.1 The applicant wishes to construct a detached single storey building at the bottom of the rear garden to be used as a Gym and Store, which will also contain a small Cloakroom, to be used solely by members of the family.

Because of the limited width of the garden at the rear fence line the building will be “L” shaped and have a footprint of some 36sq.m and taken as a percentage of the ground floor footprint of the main house represents 28%, however, when taken as a percentage of the whole habitable dwelling this reduces to 14%.

5.2 This type of building/facility is commonplace throughout the local area with many of them being considerably larger than that proposed by the applicant and therefore representing a greater percentage of the existing residential habitable space. Set out below are some examples but by no means does this cover all similar applications throughout the area.

Application 20250728, The Whitehouse Watling Street, 9.0m x 4.3m = 38.7sq.m

Application 20230002, Santana, Watling Street, 15.14m x 5.64m = 85.4sq.m

Application 20160278, Casa Lila, Old Watling Street, 12m x 4.0m = 48sq.m.

Application 20131063, The Moorings, Watling Street, 12.54m x 4.075m = 59sq.m

Application 20241070, 12 Brenchley Avenue, “L” shaped 6.2m x 6.9m = 31sq.m [4.0m high steep pitch roof]

Application 20231035, 8 Brenchley Avenue, 12.0 x 4.0m = 48.0sq.m

Application 20220055, The Orchards, Watling Street, “L” shaped 5.9m x 7.0m = 32.0sq.m

Application 20140020, 21 Brenchley Avenue, large rectangular building contains Bike Workshop, Day Room, Gym, Garden Store and 2 Equipment Stores [no scale/dimensions on drawings]

There are two further sites at Newlands, Watling Street, where there are extensive domestic outbuildings in the rear garden and 25 Watling Street with similar buildings, but nether site appears to have Planning Consent or Lawful Development Certificates.

5.3 These buildings are constructed in all manner of materials from facing bricks, rendered and painted block work, timber/cement fibre cladding under a variety of roof coverings from concrete interlocking tiles, artificial slates, roofing felt or GRP [glass fibre]. It is proposed to construct a fully hipped roof and cover the roof in artificial slate tiles with matching segmental tiles to the ridge and hip ends. The walls will be clad externally with dark grey Hardie-plank cement fibre horizontal cladding boards and all double glazed windows and doors will have dark grey powder coated aluminium frames.

5.4 The roof designs vary from totally flat, mono-pitch, gable ended pitched, hip ended pitched and fully hipped. The ridge heights also vary from 4.0m [appl.20241070], 3.94m [appl.20230002], 3.0m [appl. 20160278], 2.985m [appl. 20131063]. The applicant has reduced the angle of the roof to the proposed building thus reducing the ridge height by some 500mm, from 4.3m to 3.8m. Therefore, this would now appear totally consistent with other similar buildings throughout the area.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Within the Policies of the National Planning Policy Framework[NPPF] 2024 there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Furthermore, in accordance with Article 35[2] of the Town & Country Planning [Development Management Procedure[England] Order 2015 [as amended] and Paragraph 39 of the

NPPF 2024 the Council is required, wherever possible, to approach the assessment and determination of applications in a positive and creative way and where appropriate work pro-actively with applicants to secure a sustainable development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and which are in accordance of the Development Plan for the area.

6.2 This application is a re-submission of 20250029 which was Refused Consent in March 2025. Despite numerous attempts to engage with the Officer of the Council, in accordance with 6.1 above, to address the concerns set out in the Case Officers Report all approaches have failed.

6.3 Therefore, this re-submission has been altered from the original without the benefit of any advice or input from Officers of the Council but nevertheless the applicant is hopeful that previous concerns have been adequately addressed.

6.5 The proposed works are of a type and scale consistent with that of applications approved throughout the immediate and wider area of this part of Gravesend. The applicant would contend that the proposed works present a pleasing visual appearance to the existing property that further enhances the immediate local area in accordance with the Policies set out in the NPPF and the Local Development Plan.

6.6 The Applicant would respectfully urge the Council to give this re-submission favourable consideration and recommend approval.