



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230432

Location: Mulberry Cottage 72 Beechwood Drive Meopham Gravesend

Description: Demolition of detached garage; Erection of single storey side extension and roof alterations including new front and rear gables.

Applicant: Mr Nikolay Donchev And Mrs Vasela Stefanova

Site Visit Date: Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Planning Application Form;
Drawing No. 0923.WD.01A – Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plan;
Drawing No. 0923.WD.02 – Site and Location Plans;
Drawing No. 0923.WD.03 – Existing Elevations Front North East and Rear South West;
Drawing No. 0923.WD.04 – Existing Elevations Side South East and Rear North West;
Drawing No. 0923.WD.05D – Proposed Elevations Front North East and Rear South West REVISED;
Drawing No. 0923.WD.06D – Proposed Elevations Side South East and Rear North West REVISED;
Supporting Information – Email Regarding Roofspace; and
Supporting Information – Planning Statement.

Superseded Documents/Plans

~~Drawing No. 0923.WD.05B – Proposed Elevations Front North East and Rear South West; and~~
~~Drawing No. 0923.WD.06B – Proposed Elevations Side South East and Rear North West.~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19910489	Erection of single storey detached dwelling and garage.	Permission	21.08.1991
19600143	Erection of chalet for weekend and holiday purposes	Permission	01.06.1960
19580004	Erection of three chalets for weekend and holiday use	Permission	02.04.1958

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)

- 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 Green Belt Land
- Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 - amended June 2020
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Meopham Parish Council - Meopham Parish Council objects to this planning application on the grounds of inappropriate development within the greenbelt.

Internal Consultees

GBC - Highways Officer - I have no highway objections the driveway provides adequate car parking for a three bedroom dwelling, however as a result of the additional bedroom a secure parking provision should be made for one cycle.

Neighbouring properties

A notice was displayed on site 26th May 2023.

In addition, nine surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 23rd June 2023.

Procedural Issues

The proposal seeks to demolish the existing garage and construct a single storey side extension. The proposal also includes roof alterations to provide front and rear gables which include windows within the gables both front and rear. The supporting information states that this would not be habitable space and that it is to provide light to the existing storage area only. Therefore, no first floor plan has been provided.

Officer's Analysis

Background

It would appear that the original dwelling was constructed some time after 1991, following planning permission dated 21st August 1991 (Planning Ref. 19910489). Looking at the planning history, together with historic maps and plans, it would appear that the property has not been extended since its construction and therefore the dwelling that is on the site is considered to be the 'original' dwelling.

The detached garage to the east of the property formed part of the 1991 planning permission and was constructed at similar time to the original dwelling.

Approved Plans for Ref. 19910489



The key issues in consideration of this application is whether;

- the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if inappropriate its effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land with it;
- the proposal would impact on adjoining properties;
- the proposal would impact the living conditions of future occupiers
- the proposal would result in any parking and highway safety issues;
- the proposal would adversely impact on the landscape character of the site;

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the demolition of detached garage; Erection of single storey side extension and roof alterations including new front and rear gables.

The proposed extension would project 3.96m from the side of the existing dwelling, 11.66m in length and 2.86m in height to the eaves with a pitch roof. The alterations to the roof include a gable end with a ridge height of 5.99m with single window in each gable end front and rear. The overall ridge height remain at 5.87m with the gable sitting at 5.99m. The side extension would provide two bedrooms and a bathroom and the existing bedroom 2 converted to the extended kitchen with the existing bathroom converted into a hall and toilet. The proposal would create one additional bedroom. The loft space would remain as storage with the two windows providing additional light.

Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located in the Green Belt and in the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area as defined on the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy policies map and this must be the starting point for determining this application.

The application site at Mulberry Cottage, 72 Beechwood Drive is a detached bungalow with detached single garage to the side, set in a large plot. The property is set back from the highway by approximately 17.21m.



Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations



The appropriateness of the development within the Green Belt

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt is development that by definition, is 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.

The NPPF (2021) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. At paragraph 138 the NPPF (2021) lists the 5 purposes which the Green Belt serves. Of particular relevance in this case is that it assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The NPPF (2021) makes it clear that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, with a small number of exceptions (paragraph 149). The listed exceptions include 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.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) (LPCS) prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it 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 (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in (LPCS).

Furthermore, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) (LPFR), which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF (2021), the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully; with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 the NPPF (2021).

In particular Policy C13 (LPFR) 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 (2021) and should be afforded weight.

In determining proposals for residential extensions in the Green Belt an assessment will be made against the impact of the 'original' existing development. The original building is the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, however, for older homes constructed prior to July 1st, 1948, the 'original dwelling' refers to the floorspace of the dwelling as it was on this date. Any additions that have occurred since the 'original' dwelling date are considered cumulatively and will be counted as part of the overall increase in floorspace of the dwelling when new additions are being assessed. The reason for this is small reductions in openness, repeated many times, can have a cumulatively detrimental effect.

The existing dwelling in this case has not been extended since its original construction, as laid out within the Background section. The following calculations show the dwelling as built and the proposed.

Existing dwelling (as built)

Ground Floor: 89.52m²

Total: 89.52m²

Proposed Extension

Ground Floor: 47.45m²

Total floor space proposed: **136.97m²**

Total floor space increase of proposed extension over original dwelling: **53%**

Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) provides the local interpretation of national policy and states there will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.

In this case the increased floorspace exceeds the one third limit and therefore is not within the parameters set by Policy C13 (LPFR). Therefore, it will be necessary to assess the proposal on the overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.

The original dwelling is a modest single storey detached dwelling with a detached pitched roof single garage located to the side. The garage has a footprint of 22.72m² and overall the property has an external footprint of 112.24m². The proposed single storey side extension would have an external footprint of 47.45m², which is only 24.73m² greater than the existing garage. The resultant external footprint of the dwelling with the proposed extension would only be 22% greater when including the existing garage. In relation to the impact on the bulk and massing of the property, the extension would not project further to the front or rear than the host property and the roof has been designed to adjoin the main with only a slight increase of the gable height. When looking at the property within its setting, it would not detract from its surroundings with many of the properties in Beechwood Drive having first floor windows within the gables, especially No. 73 to the north west.

Streetscene with No. 73)



It is therefore considered that the proposed extension and roof alterations would be an acceptable addition to the property and would not detract from the host dwelling or have a detrimental impact on the streetscene.

However it was considered that the full gable would add too much bulk and volume to the appearance of the property. The Agent was contact to discuss introducing a hipped roof. This was considered to be achievable as the first floor is only to be used for storage and not habitable accommodation, therefore a reduction in the useable floor area due to the hip would not compromise habitable space. The Agent discussed this with their client and after some back and forth negotiations, a modest half hip was introduced to the scheme. This was considered an overall improvement and so the revised plans have been added to the file.

The proposal is therefore considered appropriate development in the Green Belt and would accord with para. 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

Very Special Circumstances

The applicant has not provided a supporting statement setting out any very special circumstances that exist to clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm such as the effect on openness that may result from the proposal. As the proposal falls within exception (c) of paragraph 149 of the NPPF, it is not considered that very special circumstances are necessary.

The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) 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.

The proposed side extension would be set in from the boundary further than the existing garage and would not project further to the rear or front than the existing building line. Therefore it is considered that it would not harm the openness of the Green Belt. Whilst the height is greater than the existing garage, it would adjoin the main roof and has a pitch that matches the existing. Whilst the roof would have a larger expanse

than the existing, it would not be significantly greater in height and has been designed to not be a bulky addition.

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.

The effect on the character and appearance of the 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 side extension would have a larger footprint than the existing garage, however as stated above, it is set further off the side boundary and does not project further to the front or rear than the main dwelling. In relation to the roof alteration, the character of the Beechwood Drive is very mixed with many properties having first floor windows and gable and pitch roof features.

Whilst this change will alter the appearance, it is not considered harmful to the character or appearance of the street scene. Moreover, the extension will remain subservient to the main dwelling, which is considered to be good design and an appropriate hierarchy of height. The bulk and massing, as already discussed, has been reduced slightly with the introduction of a small hip to the roof, which is important due to the proximity of the extension to the neighbouring property.

The proposed side extension and roof alterations will not have any detrimental impact on the character of the street scene. While it is acknowledged that the alterations and introduction of fenestration to the front will change the appearance of the structure, some boundary treatment and planting is proposed which will serve to soften and screen the structure. Overall the development is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).

Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The development is not considered to have any detrimental impact on the amenity of future occupiers and is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Neighbouring

The proposed extension has a modest projection with no habitable room side facing windows. Whilst the height is greater than the existing garage, it is not considered to result in unacceptable overshadowing above the existing. The extension is slightly forward of the neighbouring property, and is clear from the planning history that the area of the neighbouring property possibly affected by overshadowing was a garage, that has since been converted to habitable space. The roof enlargement may result in a slight tunnelling effect and sense of enclosure, which was another reason for request an amendment to the roof. The amended roof assists with this, and on balance, any impact would only be minimal. No objection or concerns have been raised from the neighbour in question. The development will therefore not impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy, overshadowing, outlook or sense of enclosure. As such, the development is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Parking and Highways

The existing parking spaces within the garage will be lost as part of this application. However, the driveway has sufficient space for two vehicles to park, which accords with Kent County Council's parking standards (SPG 4) (2006) for a three bedroom property.

Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by varied topography, ancient wood and haphazard mosaic resident plots and small holdings.

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 side extension, roof alterations and loss of the garage is not considered to impact on the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area as it is within a relatively well-developed part of the landscape.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

For the reasons given above, the proposed extension and roof alterations would result in an acceptable additional to the dwelling and streetscene and would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area or the Green Belt

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

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Amanda Grout	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	17 th July 2023	Dated:	25 August 2023