

Orchard House, Thong Lane, Shorne, Gravesend, DA12 4AD.

Proposed ground floor alterations to the garage and entrance hall and first floor extension over the garage and entrance hall.

Orchard House is a modern looking detached house which was designed and built to meet the requirements of the original family that owned and occupied the house since it's construction until very recently. The house was constructed in the late 1960 early 70's.

The plot is of a good size with a front, rear and side gardens. This house is located on the north side of the plot and on land at a lower ground height than the road and the houses on the west side of Thong Lane. All the boundaries are either fenced and have garden walls together with extensive natural screening with mature planting of trees and shrubs throughout the site. There is a garden wall along the front boundary with a gated access for the drive which together with the mature planting, screens the house from view effectively from various angles from the road.

Existing front elevation.





Street view.



Aerial view.

The photographs above show that the house sits in a large plot and is a good distance away from other dwellings. It also shows the range of house types and styles within the area which includes gabled, hipped and half-hipped roofs and some flat roofs. The barns shown in the aerial photograph to the north west of the house are soon to be re-clad in dark timber effect cladding.

The street view and aerial image show the extensive landscaping along both side boundaries and mature trees within the garden. The above photograph illustrates the extent of nature landscaping to the north side of the house and mature trees to the rear and side gardens.

Works proposed

The proposal is to enlarge the garage by increasing the width and depth of the garage in order that the garage can accommodate a modern car. The garage front is to be brought forwards slightly and depth increased to the rear so a small utility room can be created at the rear of the garage. The entrance hall is to be increased in depth by moving the glazed entrance forward slightly. The front door and window will be set back from the front of the garage. The ground floor will be rearranged internally with the staircase relocated.

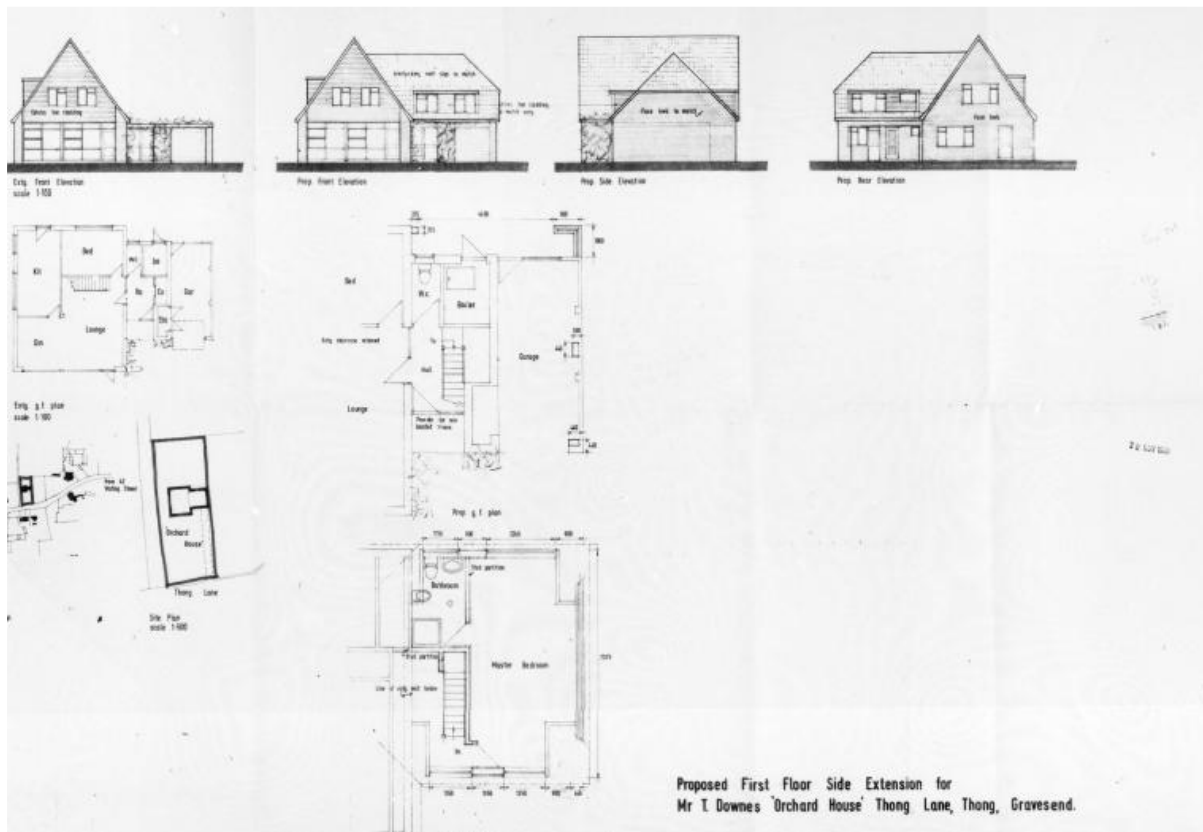
A first floor extension to provide a master bedroom, en-suite and a dressing room is proposed over the garage. The first floor front wall is set back from the alignment of the garage wall with a pitched tiled roof over the garage.

Planning history

We were unable to locate the original approval for the house in the online records.

In 1980 planning approval was granted for a first floor extension over the garage to provide a bedroom and en-suite bathroom. The approved extension had a pitched roof and half hip with the extension roof meeting the front gable roof at a lower level than the ridge as shown in the image below.

The proposed extension is of similar design as the approved alteration from 1980.



An application for a larger side and first floor extension was recently withdrawn following comments made by the case officer.

A Lawful Development application, number 20250773 has been validated for a single storey rear extension. However, this has been submitted on advice from the case officer and is not proposed to be constructed if this application is approved.

Planning policies

The house is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and within the Thong Conservation Area. It is outside the National Landscape boundary and Shorne Woodland Landscape Character Area.

The Development Plan documents for Gravesham comprise Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Policies Map, September 2014, Saved policies from the Local Plan First Review, November 1994 and the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-2030.

Relevant policies include

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014:

Core Strategy Policy CS01: Sustainable Development

Core Strategy Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development

Core Strategy Policy CS11: Transport

Core Strategy Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure

Core Strategy Policy CS18: Climate Change

Core Strategy Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994:

P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network

C13 – Policy for Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

National Planning Policy Framework 2023:

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development

Section 4 – Decision-making

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places.

Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land.

Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Other Material Considerations

Supplementary Planning Guidance and other Documents:

The Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents, Development Briefs and Conservation Area Appraisals. These elaborate on saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and policies in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and are material considerations in determining planning applications.

In addition, the Council has adopted a number of documents that have been produced by Kent County Council also as Supplementary Guidance.

The following documents are relevant to the consideration of this enquiry:

SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020).

SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006).

Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)

Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);

Design for Gravesham (2024)

Thong Conservation Area Appraisal.

This house is within the settlement of Thong and within the Green Belt. Whilst, in planning policy terms, there isn't a village boundary around the village according to the Local Plan, there is recognition of the settlement in the Conservation Area Appraisal. This appraisal described Orchard House as having a neutral impact on the Conservation Area. Within the Appraisal there are various important views looking into the Conservation Area and from within the designated area that the author of the Conservation Area Appraisal considered to be the key views. None of these key views relate to or are towards Orchard House.

The proposed floor area equates to an increase of just over 34% on the original house. This is in line with Gravesham's planning policy for houses in rural areas. The proposed first floor extension is very similar to the previous approval.

The LDC application for a single storey rear extension amounts to a gross area of 51.7 square meters. The gross area of the proposed extensions amounts to 54.7 square meters, comprising 10.4 square meters on the ground floor and 44.3 square meters on the first floor.

There is an Article 4 Direction on the area affecting the area covered by the Conservation Area which therefore means that planning approval is required for these alterations. The Article 4 Direction seeks to prevent alterations to the front gardens and walls and requires that planning applications are submitted for changes to the front of a dwelling. Within a Conservation Area permitted development rights are limited with a single storey rear extension to a depth of 4 metres being permitted.

This house is quite well screened from the front and very well screen by natural landscaping to the side and rear of the property.

Design

The house can be considered to me of modern design even by todays designs, although it was built some 50 plus years ago. The proposed extension is in keeping with the house and has modern features matched with tradition design elements such as the dark cladding and half hip.

The property needs to be modernised internally with the garage enlarged to accommodate modern day car dimensions. Electric vehicles tend to be longer and wider than most petrol and diesel cars. External changes such as the black fascia and weatherboard will be in-keeping with the Conservation Area and with the cladding to be installed to the nearby barns during their renovation. Black weatherboarding a traditional material used on many rural buildings within Kent.

Access

There is limited public transport within the settlement of Thong. The nearest bus stop seems to be at Riverview Park which is about 10 minutes' walk. It is very likely that future homeowners will use private cars as the main means of transport.

The house will have an internal staircase between floors currently there is a step up to the front door. Level access can be achieved at both the front and rear of the house. There are reception rooms and toilet facilities on the ground floor and therefore a disabled or ambulant disabled person can access the house. The layout is also adaptable for future needs for someone who becomes unable to use the stairs.

Cycle storage can be provided in the garage.

An electric vehicle charge point can be installed to the front of the garage.

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