



# Delegated Report

## Householder Planning Application

**Planning Application No:** 20230812

**Location:** Stirling Villa Whitepost Lane Culverstone Gravesend

**Description:** Erection of a part first floor addition and alterations to the roof including 1no dormer window in the front roof elevation and side roof elevation., and 2no. skylights in the side roof slope and 1no. in the rear roof slope, with changes to the fenestration and doors.

**Applicant:** Mr & Mrs Gavin

**Site Visit Date:** Desktop Assessment

### Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form  
Site Location Plan  
Block Plan  
Proposed Block Plan  
01 Rev A – Existing/Survey Floor Layout, Elevations, Block and Location Plans  
02 – Proposed Ground Floor Layout and Proposed Block Plan  
03 – Proposed First Floor Layout and Proposed Elevations  
Design Statement

### Relevant Planning History

| Reference | Description                                                        | Decision   | Decision Date |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 20010013  | Erection of single storey 3 bedroom dwelling with integral garage. | 09/04/2001 | Permitted     |

### 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

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 Places

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020).
- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006).
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);
- Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

### **Consultations, Publicity and Representations**

#### Consultees

*Ward Councillors:* No comments

*Meopham Parish Council:* No comments

*GBC Highways:*

I have no highway objections. The property already has provision for the parking of two cars and there is no encroachment on the parking area.

However, the additional bedroom will require a secure cycle parking place to conform to adopted vehicle parking standards.

#### Neighbouring properties

10no. surrounding properties were consulted and no comments were received from members of the public. The final date for submission of comments ended on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

### **Officer's Analysis**

#### Principle of Development

This application is located in a rural settlement inset from the green belt, where alterations and extensions to residential buildings are generally acceptable in principle as per Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development.

However, all other relevant matters should be considered. In this instance, the main points to consider would be the potential impact on; Visual Amenity (Design, Character and Appearance), Amenity of Future Occupiers, Residential Amenity of neighbours and Parking Provision.

#### Design, Character and Appearance

In this instance the existing dwellinghouse, is set discreetly behind existing boundary hedging and visibility of the building is limited to the existing drive entrance. There are other dwellinghouses in the vicinity of greater prominence, either with two storey elevations or roof dormers or end facing jerkinhead roof forms, providing the additional accommodation. Bungalows are however prevalent in the wider area,

and it appears that over time many have been built up resulting in this variance. To the south there is a number of detached, two storey brick-built buildings of similar design. However, this dwellinghouse is not particularly visible from the south side of the highway given the hedging to the front and south side elevation. This dwellinghouse has greater visibility from the north side of the road and so is viewed visually with Kingsley House, which is two storeys but set further back.

Whilst this site is **not** in a Conservation Area or the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), this area of Meopham Downs is subject to a Landscape Character Area appraisal. This landscape character appraisal states its aims in this area 'Conserve traditional character of built environment by drawing on traditional building materials and techniques for new development'.



From the aerial view above it can be seen the dwellinghouse (which was built on an area of derelict vacant land) as built following consent in 2001, has a much larger footprint than most other dwellinghouses in the area. As the current building exists, it has an unusual layout, which lies close to all boundaries and gives little room for the building to '*breathe*'. Whilst at the time it was considered acceptable, planning legislation has changes and it is likely that were such a development be considered today, it would be unacceptable due to poor design. However, it would not be reasonable to apply modern standards to those decisions.

To help understand the extent of the increase the following summary information is laid out below:

| Measurement         | Existing Dwellinghouse | Proposed Dwellinghouse | Change (+/-m)             |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Footprint           | 143m <sup>2</sup>      | 143m <sup>2</sup>      | NO CHANGE                 |
| Total Floor Space   | 143m <sup>2</sup>      | 208 <sup>2</sup>       | +65m <sup>2</sup> (45.5%) |
| Maximum Eave Height | 2.65m                  | 4m                     | +1.35m                    |
| Maximum             | 5.2                    | 7.1m                   | +1.9m                     |



increase of the size of the dwellinghouse as proposed here would undermine the original conclusions of the previous approval; that the building would be subservient. And by turning this low form, bungalow with a large footprint into a two-storey dwellinghouse, it would no longer be a subservient infill development. It would instead become an incongruent, uncharacteristic, and harsh interruption amidst the mix of rural character dwellinghouses of appropriate sizes.

Paragraph 9.3 of the Householder Extensions/Alterations Guide is as follows:

**9.3** Matching roof styles and pitches should be used in new extensions and new extensions should normally not be larger, higher or forward of the existing dwelling unless they echo an existing characteristic in the local area. It is usually preferable for an extension to have a lower roofline and be set back behind the front building line. In most cases a flat-roofed extension to the front or side, or where clearly visible from the street, will not be supported (unless the original house main roof is flat).

In this instance the first-floor extension would inevitably be higher than the existing dwellinghouse. There is no existing characteristic in the local area of a building of such a large footprint with a first floor. The roof form at first floor would be cluttered and create the appearance of a large and elongated, incoherent built form from all elevations.

The National Design Guide (2021) also provides guidance on how scale can impact the enclosure and how design decisions at all scales shape the character and identity of a space. Paragraphs 26, 27 and 58 of the National Design Guide are included below for information.

**26** Scale is the height, width and length of each building proposed within a development in relation to its surroundings. This relates both to the overall size and massing of individual buildings and spaces in relation to their surroundings, and to the scale of their parts. It affects how a space can be used and how it is experienced. The relationships between the different dimensions of a building or component are known as its proportions.

**27** Enclosure is the relationship between the height of the buildings across a space, and the dimension of the space itself. Taller building heights and a more built up building line both increase the enclosure. Different degrees of enclosure influence how people use different spaces, by creating differences in character that suit different activities.

58 Design decisions at all levels and scales shape the character of a new place or building and help to create a memorable sense of place. Character starts to be determined by the siting of development in the wider landscape, then by the layout and grain – the pattern of streets, landscape and spaces, the movement network and the arrangement of development blocks. It continues to be created by the form, scale, proportions, design, materials, details, patterns and colours of buildings and landscape. In this way, it creates a coherent identity for residents and communities to identify with.

Although, this proposal would affect one dwellinghouse, its large built form and increased height would increase the enclosure of the space and would impact the character of the area as this is not reflective of local design and would be an unusual anomaly, resulting in a negative and harmful impact to the identity, character and design of the area.

On balance, the proposed development would **NOT** comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2023) in terms of design, character and appearance.

#### 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.

All internal rooms would meet the required National Space Standards. The footprint of the building would not change. However, it is noted that there is a 3.7m – 9m depth of garden space from the rear wall with an area of approximately 130m<sup>2</sup>, based on the site location plan. It is noted that there appears to be a discrepancy between the rear garden depth on the block plan and the site location plan, but the site location plan seems to more accurately reflect the space apparent on aerial views. For a 4-bedroom house the minimum garden area is 100 metres squared, and minimum garden depth is 10m. In any case the external amenity space would not change from the existing provision.

#### 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.

The site is in an area which is residential and mostly detached. The first-floor elements would be located closer to the street, set away from the neighbouring property at the west of the site. Shambles to the south is 5m from the closest elevation which would be increased to two-storey. Kinglsey House to the north is 4 metres from the closest elevation and 10 metres from the nearest elevation which would be increased to two-storey height. Based on the southerly, east to west route of the sun, this would be unlikely to cause overshadowing at such distances to either of these neighbouring properties.

There would be an obliquely angled rooflight in the rear elevation which would not directly overlook neighbouring properties. The front elevation would result in additional windows which would face north

towards Kingsley House. Kingsley House is set further to the rear and the position of these windows would angle toward the front garden space and would not directly face neighbouring windows. Given the distancing from the neighbouring properties, it is considered that the development would not result in significant overbearing bulk that would harm the residential amenity of these neighbouring properties.

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

#### Highways and Parking

The GBC Highway Officer has raised no objection to the scheme. They have however noted the requirement for an additional parking space as a result of the increased bedroom. Where approved, a condition would be included requiring details of cycle storage be submitted, approved and thereafter maintained.

Adequate vehicle and cycle parking provision is therefore available in accordance with paragraphs 110 to 113 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 subject to further details of cycle parking provision.

#### **Conclusion & Recommendation**

The proposed development by reason of its dominating scale and poor design layout would result in significant harm to the character of this area and would as a result fail to comply with the requirements of the Householder Alterations/Extensions Guide, Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) in terms of design, character and appearance.

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

|                      |                                                                                     |                     |                                                                                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Case Officer:</b> | Ms Lisa Williams                                                                    | <b>Team Leader:</b> | <b>Richard Hart</b>                                                                  |
| <b>Signed:</b>       |  | <b>Signed:</b>      |  |
| <b>Dated:</b>        | 12th September 2023                                                                 | <b>Dated:</b>       | <b>13<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>                                                |