

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20221213

Location: 19 Hermitage Road Higham Rochester Kent

Description: Erection of part two storey and part single storey side/rear extension; refurbishment of existing single storey rear extension; and erection of pitched roof over existing front porch.

Applicant: Mr Daniel Turner

Site Visit Date: 08 December 2022

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Planning Application form;
Drawing no. SP-493-P-100 Red line site boundary plan;
Drawing no. SP-493-P-101 Existing layouts and roof plan;
Drawing no. SP-493-P-102 Existing elevations;
Drawing no. SP-493-P-200 Rev. A Proposed layouts;
Drawing no. SP-493-P-201 Rev. A Proposed elevations; and
Drawing no. SP-493-P-202 Rev. A Existing and proposed block plans.

Superseded Documents/Plans

Drawing no. SP-493-P-200 Proposed layouts;
Drawing no. SP-493-P-201 Proposed elevations; and
Drawing no. SP-493-P-202 Existing and proposed block plans.

Procedural Issues

Following a request from the case officer, the applicant confirmed that there would be no encroachment over the boundaries of the application site and the description of the proposed development was amended from;

‘Erection of a two storey extension to side and refurbishment of existing single storey rear extension.’ to;

‘Erection of two storey side/rear extension; refurbishment of existing single storey rear extension; and erection of pitched roof over existing front porch.’

Following a further request from the case officer, the proposed development was amended to reduce its size and scale and the description was further amended to that shown above. There was no need to re-consult or re-publicise the amendment, due to the reduced size of the proposal.

Relevant Planning History

None.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

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)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 - 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)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

GBC – Highways Officer

I have no highway objections, the property has two parking spaces with the garage and hardstanding in front of it, which complies with guidance. A secure cycle parking space should however be provided to comply with the requirements of SPG4 due to the construction of an additional bedroom.

Higham Parish Council

No response received.

Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society is concerned that the proposed front gable appears to be projecting some 2.5m in front of the original building line.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by a site notice and to ten neighbouring properties by two letters (to reflect

the amendment to the original description). One representation has been received and is summarised as follows;

- Seeks confirmation whether the proposal involves making the existing single storey rear extension two storey. If so, concerns raised regarding adverse impacts to sunlight at no. 21 Hermitage Road.

Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) sets out various design requirements and includes the need for the development to add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive; and be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the built environment and take account of the scale, height, building lines and other architectural features of buildings. Account should also be taken of strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.

The application site is located in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA) and as such, Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 is also relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications. In relation to the Higham Arable Farmlands LCA, this document states that the overall condition of the landscape is poor and that it has moderate sensitivity. It recommends that the key landscape elements in poor condition should be restored and that the whole area should be safeguarded as a prominent landscape feature in the wider landscape.

In relation to two storey side extensions, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) highlights that they can have a significant impact on the appearance of the street and that the separation between properties can be part of the character of an area. Specially it states that such extensions should lie behind the main front building line, should not exceed the existing eaves height and be no greater than half the width of the host building. It also states that the characteristic gaps between properties and the symmetry of pairs of semi-detached homes should not be unreasonably interrupted and a minimum gap of one metre should be retained between an extension and the flank boundary.

The application property is located in a prominent corner position, at the junction of Hermitage Road and St Johns Road. It has a generous side garden area, with low boundary walls which are matched by the property at no. 17 Hermitage Road and together they provide an open character to the surrounding street scene.

The following image (annotated from the applicant's red line site boundary plan) illustrates that there is a strong building line in St Johns Road, which the application property and no. 17 Hermitage Road do not currently breach. This building line and the open appearance of the corner properties are fundamental features of the surrounding street scene.



It should be noted that prior to the amendments to the proposal, it was considered that the proposed development would not be subservient in size/scale to the existing building and would have reduced the amount of open space at the side garden of the application site to an unacceptable level, undermining the open character of the application property and the street scene.

With regard to the amended proposal, the proposed side extension would still project beyond the building line in St Johns Road but would appear subservient in both size and scale to the existing dwelling, as it would have a width less than the width of the main dwelling and be set back, behind the front building line of the property.

The proposal would be constructed from materials that would match with the existing building and those in the surrounding area and would have a roof design that matches existing. Furthermore the proposal would leave over 4 metres between the extension and the flank boundary. All of which are positive design features, in line with the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021).

The proposed pitched roof over the existing porch would not be out of character with the building and would assimilate well into the surroundings, where some pitched roofs to porches already exist.

The proposed development would not detract from the residential nature of the surrounding LCA in this existing urban location and would be in line with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

It is noted that the Dickens' Country Protection Society has raised concerns regarding the projection of a proposed front gable. However this comment related to the original proposal and this element of the proposal (which was actually a rear gable) has now been removed.

Overall, the proposed development would be appropriate in terms of design and would not undermine the character of the existing dwelling or the surrounding area. As such, the proposed development would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed bedroom would exceed the minimum floor area requirements set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard (2015) and there would be no significant reduction to the size or depth of the existing garden, which already exceeds the requirement for a dwelling with three bedrooms set out in the Residential Layout Guidelines (June 2020).

In order to prevent a loss of privacy for future occupiers, any proposed bathroom/w.c./en-suite windows would be conditioned to be permanently obscure glazed.

The proposed development would improve the living conditions for future occupiers and sufficient rear garden area and depth would be retained. As such, the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of future occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Neighbouring Amenity

The closest residential properties to the application site are nos. 17 and 21 Hermitage Road (located to the west and east respectively). Nos. 64 to 74 Hermitage Road are located to the south across the roadway. No. 2 St Johns Road is located to the north across a private accessway and no. 1 St Johns Road is located to the north west across the roadway.

The existing dwelling has a number of openings in the side elevation that faces no.17 Hermitage Road. Following the proposed development any side windows would be some 3 metres closer to that property. No 17 has three window/doors in its side elevation. The first floor window is a hallway but it is likely that the ground floor window/doors are for habitable rooms. The proposal would include one new window at first floor level (a secondary bedroom) and a bi-fold door to a kitchen/diner at ground floor level in the side elevation facing no. 17. These would be located some 19 metres from the side elevation of no. 17.

It is noted that the Residential Layout Guidelines (June 2020) requires a window to window distance of at least 21 metres between the facing windows of habitable rooms. In the absence of this, adverse overlooking impacts could occur.

Some screening is provided by vegetation at no. 17 but the boundary walls between the properties are low and would not mitigate the adverse overlooking impacts associated with the proposed bedroom window. Therefore any planning permission granted would include conditions which require obscure glazing to the side bedroom window and preclude the insertion of new windows at first floor level in the side elevation of the extension in future. As such, there would be no adverse overlooking impacts to the occupiers of no. 17 Hermitage Road.

The proposed development would alter the existing fenestration on the front and rear elevations of the application property and include two new windows in both the proposed front and rear elevations of the extension (a bedroom at first floor at the front, an en-suite shower room at first floor at the rear and kitchen/diner windows at both ends of the ground floor). The existing high level porch window would be increased to a full height window, the existing lounge window would be increased in size and include French doors and a new utility room door would be inserted into the existing single storey rear extension.

There would be at least 21 metres between the new windows and the front elevations of nos. 70 to 74 Hermitage Road and as such, there would be no adverse overlooking impacts. For no. 2 St Johns Road, there would be some 19 metres between the new windows and the side elevation of that property and an existing outbuilding and boundary treatments would screen any overlooking. As such, there would be no adverse overlooking impacts to the occupiers of nos. 70 to 74 Hermitage Road or no. 2 St Johns Road.

Due to the design of the proposed development and to the layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of any of the surroundings dwellings.

A local resident has raised concerns regarding adverse impacts to sunlight at no. 21 Hermitage Road. However these concerns would only have related to the addition of a second storey on the existing rear extension. As this is not proposed, then there would be no adverse sunlight impacts to the occupiers of no. 21 Hermitage Road.

Overall the proposed development would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Parking and Highways

The application property is a three bedroom dwelling with three off-street parking spaces (a garage and on-site parking for two vehicles). As a result of the proposed development the existing parking provision and number of bedrooms at the property would be unchanged.

The GBC Highways Officer has not raised an objection to the proposal but requires the provision of secure cycle parking. However it is noted that this request related to the original proposal (for a larger extension, which added a fourth bedroom to the property). As the number of bedrooms would not now increase, then there would be no justification for requiring the provision of cycle parking.

In order to ensure that there are no future adverse parking impacts, a condition would be attached to any planning permission granted to permanently retain the existing garage/parking arrangements.

Overall it is considered that the proposal would make sufficient provision for the parking of cars within the site in accordance with the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards and would be in line with Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The application site is located in an area of multi-period archaeological potential but the proposed works would not have a significant archaeological impact. As such, the proposal would be in line with Policy CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC7 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

The application site is located within Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 but as the proposed works would be relatively minor and would be located within the confines of an existing residential garden, it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts to groundwater.

Suggested Conditions

Time Limit

Development in accordance with the approved plans

Materials to match existing

Obscure glazing to en-suite shower room and secondary bedroom windows

No further openings in flank elevation

Retention of existing garage and hardstanding for parking

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposal would comply with local and national planning policies and subject to the conditions set out above, the proposal would be acceptable.

Planning permission subject to conditions is recommended.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>K Joyce</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	02 February 2023	Dated:	2 nd February 2023