

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230992

Location: 7 Hudson Close Gravesend Kent DA12 5FB

Description: Conversion of the loft space to a habitable room with dormer to the rear and a roof light to the front roof slope.

Applicant: Miss Rebecca Smith

Site Visit Date: 16/11/23

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
Site Location Plan
002 – Existing Floor Plans
003 – Existing Elevations and Section
004A – Proposed Floor Plans
005 – Proposed Elevations and Section
006 – Existing Block Plan
007 – Proposed Block Plan

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20110850	Application for minor material amendment to planning permission reference number 20100277 for demolition of existing dwellings and erection of a total of 195 dwellings comprising 127 two storey, two and three bedroom terraced houses, 10 three storey, four and five bedroom houses, 4 two storey, two bedroom houses with wheelchair access; 54 one and two bedroom flats comprising two blocks of three storey and two blocks of four storey flats and laying out of associated car parking spaces and amenity area; to replace blocks A and B with eight, three bedroom and two, two bedroom houses, making a total after amendment of 181	Permitted	18.11.2011
20100277	Demolition of existing dwellings and erection of a total of 195 dwellings comprising 127 two storey, two and three bedroom terraced houses, 10 three storey, four and five bedroom houses, 4 two storey, two bedroom houses with wheelchair access; 54 one and two bedroom flats comprising two blocks of three storey and two blocks of four storey flats and laying out of associated car parking spaces and amenity area.	Permitted	01.12.2010

20060086	Outline application for the erection of a total of 426 dwellings comprising 84 one and two bedroom flats in three and four storey blocks and 342 two, three, four and five bedroom two and three storey houses.	Permitted	30.06.20069
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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

- SPG 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)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors:

No comments received.

GBC Highways Officer:

The property was built as a three-bedroom dwelling with it appears communal parking at the average rate of 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling. A four-bedroom property should ideally be provided with two parking spaces. In isolation a four-bedroom property may not place a parking strain on the area, but it could set a precedent for further conversions which would eventually place a strain on car parking in the area. In addition, a secure parking place should be provided for a single cycle to comply with the guidance in SPG4 issued by Kent County Council.

Note Gravesham's adopted vehicle parking standards are out of date. See paragraph 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that maximum vehicle standards are no longer appropriate except in special circumstances which are not relevant here. This just leaves the guidance issued by Kent County Council as Highway Authority, but not adopted by Gravesham Borough Council. This is Interim Guidance Note 3 Residential Parking and forms part of the Kent Design Guide. For a three bedroom property this states on average 1.5 parking spaces should be provided per three bedroom dwelling, increasing to two spaces for a four bedroom property in a suburban area.

Looking at the Google Street View images, there would not appear to be an existing parking problem in the area, but no doubt if there is, local residents will have made comment and should be taken into account. Currently on the information I have available this proposal should not result in any adverse effect on highway safety or parking. However, the same may not apply for future applications in the area.

Neighbouring properties

The final date for submission of comments ended on 27th October 2023.

6no. surrounding properties were consulted, and 0 comments were received from members of the public.

Officer's Analysis

Principle of Development

This application is located inside the Urban Boundary, 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 and Residential Amenity of neighbours and Highways.

Design, Character and Appearance

This proposed scheme contains two external design elements; A front facing rooflight and a rear dormer roof extension. Each element will be discussed in turn.

The front facing rooflight, would be the more prominent addition of the two, as it would face the street and so it would have potential impact on the streetscene. Whilst roof lights are not prevalent in the area, solar panels are and so there is an acceptance of roof additions in the area. This is usually the case for urban areas, subject to the design, scale and extent of the additions to avoid a cluttered and unbalanced roof. In this case, the addition would be a small discreetly located roof light in the top corner close to the ridge. It would not be disproportional to the other windows on the front façade and would not result in a cluttered appearance.

The proposed dormer to the rear would have less visibility from the streetscene given its rear location. However, the design should still be appropriate even with a limited impact on the streetscene. The Householder Extensions/Alterations Guide, provides guidance on roof extensions. For rear roof extensions the guidance is as follows (areas highlighted as most relevant to this discussion):

Rear Roof Extensions

10.9 Whilst in many instances, rear roof extensions can be undertaken without permission under permitted development, these can and have had a harmful effect on roofscapes. When assessing planning applications, a high standard of design shall be required. Rear roof extensions and alterations should be set away from the gables, hips, eaves and ridge of a property and follow the guidance below:

- **Height:** Should be lower than the existing ridge-line, and original ridgeline treatment should be retained.
- **Massing:** Should not wrap around two-sides of a hipped roof unless in special circumstances where it can be justified; this will be judged on a case by case basis. Dormers should not overwhelm the roof slope within which they are to be placed.
- **Alignment of Windows:** Should include window position and design which reflects the position, design and character of windows to the lower levels of the host original building.
- **Detail:** Large blank facades on dormers can have an overbearing appearance and will not generally be acceptable.

In this case, the proposed dormer would not be set under the ridge of the roof. It would expand by the entire width of the rear roof slope, overwhelming the roof slope on which it would be placed. The windows proposed would be taller than the lower elevation windows and would not align with their positions. The resulting dormer roof extension would be large and disproportionate, overwhelming the rear roof slope. Its design in terms of fenestration would be cluttered and incongruent when viewed with the existing windows on the house.

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.

The proposed scheme would introduce a second floor, incorporating staircase, bedroom and a wardrobe room. There is no criteria for minimum space standards for storage rooms. The bedroom would have a floor space of 15 square metres exceeding the minimum space requirement for a double bedroom. There external ground space would not be altered by the development. The development would therefore comply with the requirements of the Residential Layout Guidelines (2015).

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 front facing window would face onto the road and would be obliquely angled so as not to directly overlook neighbouring windows or amenity spaces.

The rear dormer would face the private rear garden at 92 Christian Fields Avenue. There is 10 metres from

the rear wall of the dwellinghouse and the rear boundary. However, there are first floor windows facing this property currently and so there is an existing level of overlooking. The similarly positioned windows, albeit higher in level would not be significantly more likely to overlook this neighbours property and garden than the existing situation allows.

The proposal is therefore considered **NOT** to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in compliance with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Parking Provision and Highway Safety

Whilst the GBC Highways Officer has not objected to this scheme as there is no evidence of parking inadequacy. They have noted that as a new development, there is potential for increased alterations and extensions in the area, which provide additional accommodation, could lead to issues in the future. This is noted However, the application at hand raises no significant concerns regarding parking provision which would warrant a reason for refusal.

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.

The recommendation is to refuse this application for the above reason.

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

Case Officer:	Ms Lisa Williams	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	22 nd November 2023	Dated:	22 November 2023