

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240074

Location: 34 The Braes Higham Rochester Kent

Description: Raising of existing side roof.

Applicant: Mr Stuart Burles

Site Visit Date: Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form

34-THE-BRAES-FF-01 A – Existing Floor plans, Block Plan and Roof Plan

34-THE-BRAES-FF-02 A – Existing Elevations

34-THE-BRAES-FF-03 A – Proposed Floor Plans, Block Plan and Roof Plan

34-THE-BRAES-FF-04 A – Proposed Elevations

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20110611	Erection of single storey rear extension to form an enlarged kitchen/dining room and a conservatory.	Permitted	07.09.2011

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 and beautiful places
- 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;
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Higham Parish Council

No comments received.

Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Dickens Protection Society

With reference to the above planning application, in the Society's view the impact of the extension on the street scene would be significantly reduced if the raising of the flat roof on the extension could be avoided.

Neighbouring properties

6no. surrounding properties were consulted and 1 comment was received from a member of the public, objecting to the scheme. The final date to submit comments ended on 22nd February 2024.

The objection is summarised as follows:

- Neighbouring properties would lose light in a number of rooms including, entrance hall, stairs, landing, bedrooms, dining room and gardens.

Officer Note: Matters raised including, loss of light are not material planning considerations that can be taken into account as part of this assessment, but closely related is potential overshadowing, which is a material planning consideration and will be taken into account as part of this assessment.

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 Landscape Character Area.

Design, Character and Appearance

As shown in the below image, this application relates to a two-storey detached dwellinghouse, in a residential area.

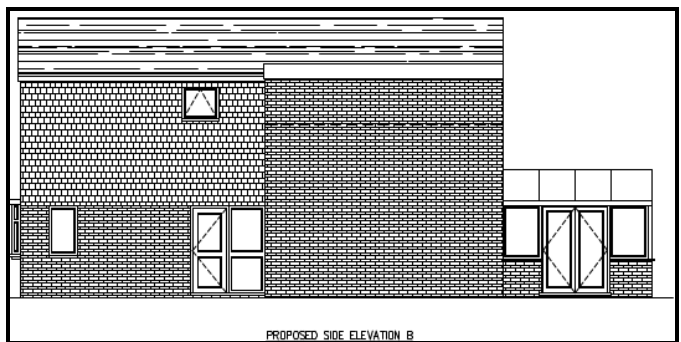
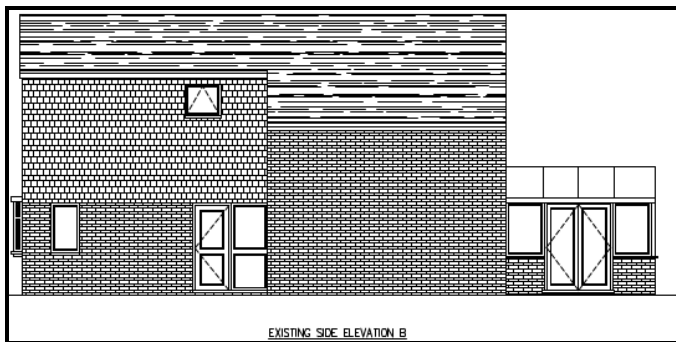


Image taken from Google Earth (2019)

The dwellinghouses on this section of the street, have similar appearances from the streetscene with similar, layout, form, design and setback on 30, 32, 34 and 36 The Braes. The topography of the road increases from north to south and the height relationship between the dwellinghouses reflect this. Whilst there is variation in design in the wider street setting, this is sectional with dwellinghouses of similar designs clustered together, result in a harmonious appearance and more subtle change in designs. As the below image indicates, the subject dwellinghouse is located in a cluster of similarly designed dwellinghouses and so changes visible from the front, would be more apparent in the streetscene.



The below front and side elevations (not to scale) show the proposed change.



There is currently a pitched roof side projection, set back from the front elevation, and had a lower eave height than the main part of the dwellinghouse, setting it apart from the main bulk as subordinate. The proposal would alter the pitch of this side projection to a flat roof, raising the eaves from 4m to 5.5, an increase of 1.5m.

Given the nature and appearance of this side projection, paragraph 10.5 of the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD, on Two Storey Side projections is useful in assessing how such elements of a building should be designed. The first part of paragraph 10.5 is included below with relevant sections highlighted.

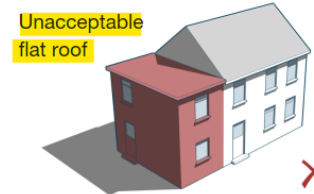
Two Storey Side

10.5 Two storey extensions can have a more significant impact on the appearance of the street. Care is also needed when considering the relationship between any proposed extension and the boundary with neighbouring properties as the separation between properties can provide access routes to the rear of the property and in some locations are part of the character of the area. Depending on the orientation of the neighbouring property, side extensions also have the potential to impact their amenity. To ensure these potential issues are resolved, two storey side extensions should be designed in accordance with the guidance below.

- **Footprint:** Extensions should generally aim to appear subservient to the host building by lying behind the main front building line, though where designed well or having regard to positive local character, other approaches can be supported. See advice of extensions to corner properties in the following section.
- **Height:** Extensions should not exceed the eaves height of the host building.
- **Width:** Extensions should generally be no greater than half the width of the host building. The existing rhythm of the street, including for example characteristic gaps between properties, the symmetry of pairs of semi-detached homes or groups of terraced houses, should not be unreasonably interrupted. A minimum gap of 1 metre should be retained between the extension and the flank boundary.
- **Design:** Extensions are of greater visibility, and should incorporate roof designs to reflect and generally be subservient to the main property's roof. The use of flat or false pitched roofs visible from the street should be avoided. Patterns of windows should reflect the host building and local character. Walls to extensions should not form the site boundary with the public highway, as these can be oppressive and encourage antisocial activities.
- **Materials:** Matching external materials and window / door frames should be used.
- **Overlooking:** Extensions should avoid inserting any flank windows where they would allow new, or significantly increased overlooking views into neighbouring gardens / properties.
- **Light / Outlook:** The 45 / 25 degree rule will be used to assess the impact of the extension on neighbouring light / outlook.

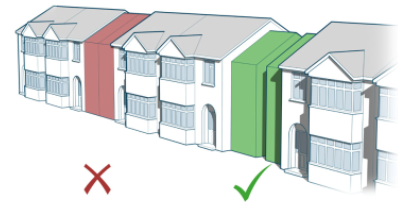


Ground floor set back 0.5m



Unacceptable flat roof

Two storey side extensions should be subordinate in scale to the original house.



Side extensions should be set back and set in to avoid the 'terrace effect'.

As can be seen the use of flat roofs which would be visible from the street scene should be avoided, the example included is similar to that proposed and is identified as unacceptable. The flat roof would also sit above the eave line, contrary to paragraph 10.5.

Paragraph 9.5, discusses roof design guidance specifically.

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).

The only exception identified for flat roofs is where the original house main roof is flat. That is not the case in this instance and there is no existing character of flat roof designs in the wider area.

The existing dwellinghouse is reflective of the wider character of the area and the neighbouring properties on either side of the same design and form. The roof extension would be to the side projection which is setback and uses a similar pitch which slopes down from the eaves of the main part of the dwellinghouse, creating a somewhat reflective and subservient appearance. This appearance is cohesive with the wider setting and streetscene from which the side projection is visible. The proposed roof extension would remove the reflective pitch and replace this with a flat roof, which would have a harsh and incongruent appearance, contrasting the sloping roof of the main dwelling and those dwellings in the wider area. The use of a flat roof alone would have this effect but in combination with the higher position of the roof above the eaves, this would further result in a dominating appearance, where it is currently a discreet and subservient element of the building.

On balance, the proposed development would **NOT** comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 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 roof extension is to create more usable space within bedroom 1, by creating a full height bedroom through raising the eaves. It would amend the size of bedroom 1 to approximately 16m², to accommodate an additional dressing room and ensuite in the enlarged area. Both these rooms would meet the internal space standards required by the SPG 2 Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020. No changes are proposed which would impact the actual external amenity space or the required external amenity space.

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, one objection to the proposal was received.

There are two adjoining properties;

36 The Braes

This neighbour is located to the south whilst the changes proposed to the roof would be to the north of the roof slope. The changes would not change the appearance of the building from the perspective of this neighbour's position and the potential impacts to this neighbour would therefore be minimal.

32 The Braes

This neighbour is located to the north of the dwellinghouse. The proposed roof extension would be to the north side of the dwellinghouse and so the changes would be apparent from this neighbour's perspective. There is 1.3m between these dwellinghouses and the subject building sits by the shared boundary. There would be no changes to width or depth and so the distances would be retained. However, there would be a 1.5m height increase at the closest point and so potential for impacts associated with overshadowing and so further assessment on potential overshadowing would be necessary.

The below 25-degree test shows the approximate central point of neighbouring windows in orange, based on the distance between the dwellinghouse and the height disparity. The yellow lines represent a 25 degree projection from the central point of the neighbouring windows.



As can be seen the proposed flat roof could overshadow the neighbour's windows. The hatched line drawn on this plan shows the existing roof slope and it is clear that the roofline currently overshadows the ground floor neighbour's windows. However this is a WC window and staircase window and so non habitable.

The window serving dining room at ground floor and bedroom at first floor could be impacted based on the image below. The neighbouring property no.32 is shown in the left, with the application property to the right. The red box outlines where the extension will occur;



From this image it is clear to see why this section of the roof was designed with a catslide roof in the first instance, to minimise impact on the neighbouring property. The proposal roof alteration will result in an unneighbourly form of development, reducing light to the rear elevation of 32 The Braes.

There would be no windows facing this property resulting from the scheme and so no overlooking concerns arise.

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

Landscape Character Area

The application site is located within the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by very gently undulating topography and open arable farmland. There is the original Saxon village of Lower Higham and more recent development to the south with marsh side hamlets and settlements.

Policy CS12 of Gravesham Core Strategy (2014) 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 proposal is for alterations to an existing property which is located in a built up rural settlement inset from the Green Belt. Although the proposed development would increase the size of the property marginally, it would still be maintained as an open site due to the size of the plot and the surrounding garden and as such the proposed development would not be detrimental to the open, rural landscape character of the surrounding area.

In respect of landscape character, the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development by virtue of its scale, bulk, massing and design would be an overly dominant and incongruous form of development which would not be sympathetic to or in keeping with the immediate streetscene it is situated in. The positive contribution that the existing dwelling makes to the streetscene would be replaced with a development that would cause harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene. In this respect the proposal is contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

The proposed dwelling by virtue of its scale, bulk, massing, design and proximity to neighbouring dwellings would cause overshadowing, be overbearing and be unneighbourly form of development which would be harmful to the amenity and privacy of neighbouring properties. In this respect the proposal is contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	13th March 2024	Dated:	21 March 2024