

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250784

Location: Two Trees Rhododendron Avenue Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of 3 dormer windows to the front roof slope.

Applicant: Mr And Mrs Watts

Site Visit Date: 26 September 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Application for Planning Permission form;
Drawing no. PL-133-01 Rev. A Existing layouts, elevations and section, block and site location plans;
and
Drawing no. PL-133-10 Rev. C Proposed layouts, elevations and section and block plans.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20240427	Erection of single storey rear extension with chimney and rooflights; dormer extension in rear roof slope; front porch; outbuilding at the rear; and installation of rooflights in front roof slope.	Permitted	02.08.2024
20240101	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of erection of dormer in rear roof slope; single storey rear extension with chimney; pitched roof over existing porch; and rooflights in front roof slope.	Refused	23.04.2024
20040722	Erection of a detached double garage at the front and variation of condition (9) of planning permission reference number GR/1997/741 (for the erection of the bungalow) to allow the caravan to be retained on the site and used for residential purposes after the bungalow is occupied, for a temporary period of 12 months.	Permitted	30.03.2005
19980615	Variation of conditions 3 and 7 of planning permission ref no. GR/97/741 to allow extension of the roof over the north west corner of the building and alterations to various windows including installation of velux windows in roof slopes, additional window in front elevation, installation of new windows, including a semi-circular window in rear elevation and installation of semi-circular window in north side elevation.	Permitted	19.11.1998
19970741	Erection of detached bungalow and formation of vehicular access.	Permitted	24.03.1998

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- 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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Meopham Parish Council

No response received.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by a site notice and to two neighbouring properties by letter. Two representations (in support) have been received and are summarised as follows;

- No loss of privacy for the occupiers of Wilimijo, Rhododendron Avenue (located opposite).
- No impact on neighbours as the windows are not visible from adjoining properties.

Officer's Analysis

Green Belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt and as such, paragraphs 142 and 143 and 153-160 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF 2024) and Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 are most relevant.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy.

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF 2024 sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 143 lists five purposes that the Green Belt serves.

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF 2024 states;

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness⁵⁵. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Footnote ⁵⁵ reads as follows:

⁵⁵ Other than in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate.

Therefore, in the following assessment, substantial weight will be given to any harm to the Green Belt (including its openness) unless the development is not inappropriate development.

Paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF 2024 set out the circumstances in which new built development can be considered as not inappropriate in the Green Belt. In this instance, paragraph 154(c) is most relevant and sets out that;

the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

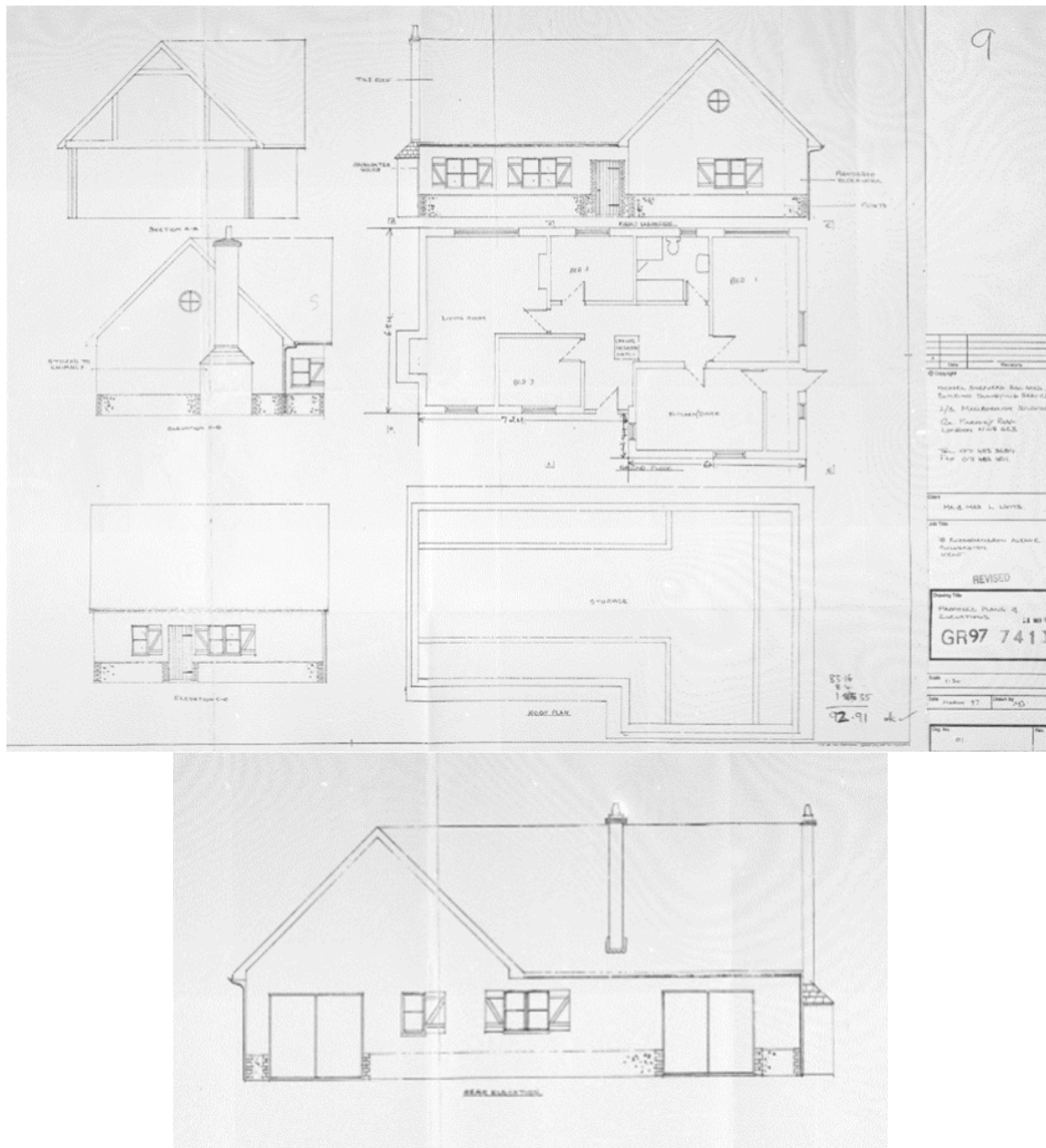
Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside. It sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF 2024, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully; with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with that document.

In particular, Saved Policy C13 places an overall limit on extensions of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling unless the increased floor space has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling (criteria (ii)). It also requires the massing, scale and form of any extension to be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting (criteria (vi)). It is considered that these factors are relevant in determining whether the size of an extension is proportionate and as such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF 2024 and should be afforded some limited weight.

Therefore, as a general rule (and in line with Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)), the Borough Council considers that extensions which exceed the overall floor area of an original building by one third (33%) or more, are likely to be disproportionate additions. However, it is acknowledged that floorspace is only one measure of such impact and in coming to a conclusion on this issue, the Council has regard to a range of other factors including the volume, scale, mass and height of

the proposal.

In this instance, the original building at the application site would constitute the replacement dwelling erected under planning permission reference 19970741. The following are images of the approved drawings;



The floor area of the original building was 94 square metres, it had a height of 6.5 metres and was a modest bungalow with a simple gable end roof design and an L-shaped footprint.

Under planning permission reference 19980615, the application property was extended by an addition to the roof. The permission allowed the habitable use of the roofspace, i.e. it created a usable first floor area. The following are images of the approved drawings;



This extension added 83 square metres floor space to the application property (there was no change in the building footprint) and was an 88% increase in floor area above the original building. However, it is noted that the majority of the new floor area was contained within the original roof volume, with the building footprint being unchanged from original. The bulk of the building was slightly increased by the addition of a pitched roofed, gable end on the northern side of the roof (with a volume of some 16 cubic metres).

In March 2005 planning permission was granted for the erection of a detached garage at the front of the application site (reference 20040722). The approved garage has subsequently been extended into the roof space and converted into living accommodation over two floors. The floor area of the garage is 56 square metres.

In addition, there are two outbuildings located in close proximity to the dwelling. The outbuilding on the northern side has a floor area of 11 square metres and the outbuilding on the southern side has a floor area of 11 square metres. The southern outbuilding is a recent construction (under planning permission 20240427) and replaces a previous southern outbuilding that had a floor area of 14 square metres.

It should be noted that there is case law (most notably *Sevenoaks District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and Dawe 1997* which establishes that a domestic outbuilding may be regarded as an

extension to a dwelling provided that it forms a ‘normal domestic adjunct’. In considering whether a proposal is considered to be a normal domestic adjunct, consideration is given to location and use in relation to the main dwelling.

The use of the outbuildings at the application site are currently as habitable accommodation (former garage), as a utility area with a washing machine (outbuilding on the northern side) and as a shed (outbuilding on the southern side), which would be ancillary and incidental to the use of the main dwelling.

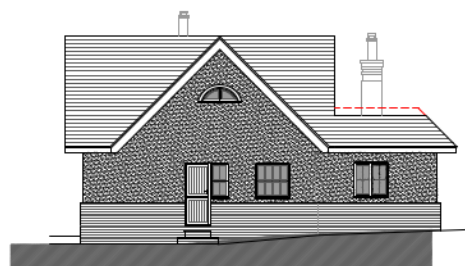
All the outbuildings have a close physical and functional relationship to the main dwelling. As such, they are considered to be normal domestic adjuncts and constitute extensions to the dwelling at the application site. Therefore, the floorspace of these buildings would be included in the assessment of whether the proposal constitutes a cumulative disproportionate addition to the original building.

The garage has a floor area of 56 square metres and the rear outbuildings have cumulative floor areas of 22 square metres, which amount to a 78 square metre increase above the original building.

Under planning permission reference 20240427, the application property is proposed to be extended by the addition of a single storey rear extension and a rear dormer. Works have commenced on site to erect the rear extension. As part of this development, two outbuildings are proposed to be removed and a single new outbuilding erected (NB one outbuilding has already been removed but one remains in place). The following are images of the approved drawings;



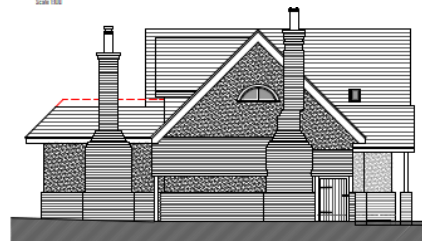
Proposed Front Elevation
Scale 1:50



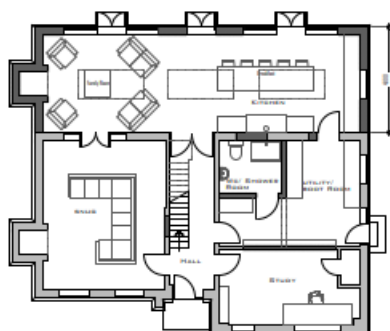
Proposed Side Elevation
Scale 1:50



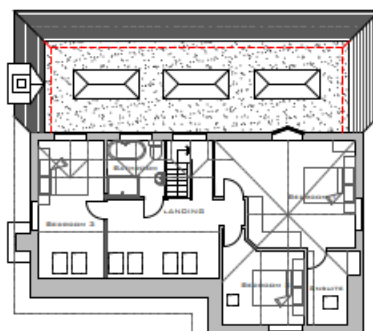
Proposed Rear Elevation
Scale 1:50



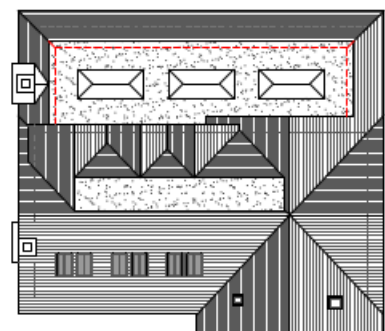
Proposed Side Elevation
Scale 1:50



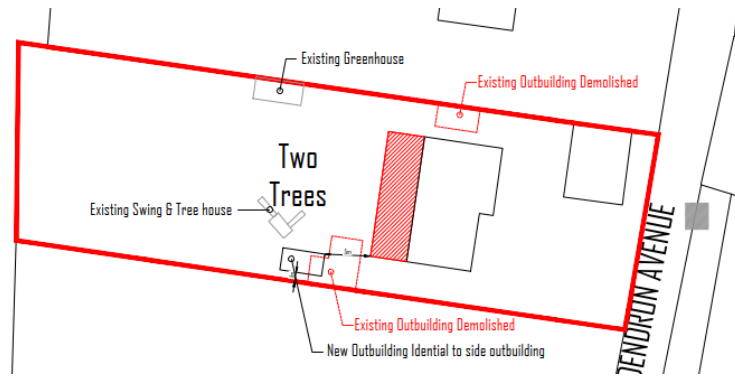
Proposed Ground Floor Plan
Scale 1:50



Proposed First Floor Plan
Scale 1:50



Proposed Roof Plan
Scale 1:50



This extension will add 60 square metres of new floor area to the application property. As a result of the outbuilding changes, they would be reduced in floor area by 14 square metres. The proposed roof alterations would add some 16 cubic metres of volume to the roof.

The current proposed development would comprise of three dormers located in the front roof slope and would result in an increase of some 3 square metres of floor area above the original dwelling. Essentially the proposal would improve the head height above existing areas of the loft space. In terms of volume and bulk, the proposed development would add some 5 cubic metres to the front roof slope and the dormers would be small and viewed in the context of an existing front gable.

When the floor area of the existing and approved extensions is taken into consideration, the cumulative increase in floor area above the original building would be 210 square metres or a 223% increase above original ($83+78+60+3-14=210$), which numerically would be a disproportionate addition.

However, it is noted that a significant proportion of the existing increased floor area above original was located in the roof of the property. As such, it did not add to the external size/volume of the building (as it was within the existing roof space). Furthermore, the proposed increase to the floor area of the dwelling resulting from this application, would only be some 3 square metres. Lastly, the proposed dormer extension would only add around 5 cubic metres of volume to the roof. Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged that the application property has been extended significantly from its original form, the alterations proposed as part of this application are relatively modest and limited in terms of bulk and massing, such that a refusal is not considered defensible at appeal.

It is also noted that the proposed removal of an outbuilding located on the northern side of the building (pursuant to condition 4 of planning permission reference 20240427) would reduce the impression of built development across the plot, by narrowing the built form. An informative can be used to remind the applicants of the need to remove this outbuilding, prior to the first occupation of the development approved under 20240427. Furthermore, pursuant to condition 4 of planning permission 19970741, planning permission would be required to erect any further outbuildings at the application site.

It is acknowledged that the proposed development, by its nature as new built form, would erode openness and therefore, would be detrimental to the Green Belt in spatial terms. However, due to its small volume and the screening provided by mature trees and vegetation, the proposed development would not be widely visible from any public vantage points. Therefore, the visual detriment to the openness of the Green Belt would be limited.

Overall, the proposal would be appropriate development in the Green Belt and in line with Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review and paragraph 154(c) of the NPPF 2024.

Design, Character and Appearance

The application site is located in the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area (LCA) and as such, Policy CS12 of the Local Plan Core Strategy is 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.

According to the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, the Harvel Wooded Downs LCA is characterised by varied topography with steep valley sides and plateaux. Ancient woodland, chestnut coppice and small paddocks and pastures can be found. Views both within and out of the character area are limited because of the combined effect of topography and the heavily wooded character of the landscape.

The application site is located in a rural area, which has been somewhat urbanised and the residential nature of the application site would be retained. The proposed development would result in the introduction of new built form at the front of the application site, which would consolidate and extend the level of built development on the plot and in the wider area. However, by virtue of its design and proposed screening, the proposal would not be harmful to overall landscape quality. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to landscape character and would be in line with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 requires new development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding local area. In particular, the design of new development should be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area.

For front roof extensions, the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) sets out, where there is not an existing established character of such development, front dormers will generally be unacceptable.

The area surrounding the application site has a variety of dwellings in different types and styles and with a variety of external facing materials and outbuildings. However, front roof extensions are not commonplace (although it is noted that a side dormer exists at Woodlands View, Rhododendron Avenue). The prevailing character of the existing buildings are chalet style dwellings (bungalows with rooms in the roof space). Many properties have gable end roof features and it is arguable that a dormer would be less visually prominent and bulky than one of these.

The dwelling at the application site is a bungalow with rooms in the roof space and a front gable. It has a tiled roof and rendered walls with flint detailing. The external facing materials for the proposed dormers would match with the existing dwelling. The dormers would be small and subservient in size to the main roof slope. Therefore, despite their prominent frontage location, they would not be visually detrimental to the character of the existing building.

Overall, the proposed development would be appropriate in terms of design and would not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of existing building or the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposal would be in line with Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed development would increase the headroom of an existing bedroom and provide a home office/study area and there would be no alteration to the rear garden area and depth. As such, the proposal would provide a good standard of living for future occupiers and be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Neighbouring Amenity

Due to the design of the proposed development, to the screening provided by mature vegetation and boundary treatments and to the layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings. As such, 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 proposed development would increase the headroom of an existing bedroom and provide a home office/study area. The existing parking arrangements would not be altered and are sufficient for a three bedroom dwelling. As such, 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.

Suggested Conditions

Time Limit

Development in accordance with the approved plans

Materials to match existing

Conclusion

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

Recommendation

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 October 2025	Dated:	2nd October 2025