



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20211079
Location:	Chestnut Lodge, Whitepost Lane, Culverstone, Gravesend, DA13 0TW
Description:	Erection of garage on the front drive with associated ground works.
Applicant:	Mr Joss Stevens
Site Visit:	4 th November 2021

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form - dated 20/09/2021

Drawing no. 0195-21-PL01 - Site Location Plan, Proposed Block Plan, and Existing and Proposed Elevations.

Relevant Planning History

Application No.	Description	Status	Decision
20181129	Retention of a front and side boundary wall and the landscaping details to the front of the property.	REFUSED	14.02.2019
20180540	Retention of a front and side boundary wall and the landscaping details to the front of the property.	REFUSED	04.09.2018

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards

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)

- Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 - Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 - amended June 2020;
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Meopham Parish Council - No objection.

Kent County Council Heritage - The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. I consider it unlikely, however, that these proposals will have a significant archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Internal Consultees

GBC Highways Officer - I have several issues with this proposal.

1. The development would hinder sight lines at the entrance to the detriment of road safety
2. Gates if installed should be a minimum of 6 metres set back from the highway, so a vehicle can wait clear of the highway whilst they are opened or closed and most importantly not overhang the highway to the detriment of road safety.
3. Proposed landscaping/boundary treatment could hinder visibility at the access and nothing over 850mm (one metre maximum) should be permitted within 2.4 metres of the highway in the interests of road safety.
4. The proposed gates appear to conflict with access to the garage and the turn into and out of the garage appears to be restricted, however see below.
5. The depth of the garage is less than 4 metres, does not meet the guidance for a garage in SPG4 and would not be able to accommodate many modern day cars. The current Ford Fiesta being just over 4m at 4.04m minimum. Therefore at best it can be considered a store/garage for cycles or motorcycles. The applicant therefore needs to demonstrate that any final design will still safely accommodate a minimum of two off street car parking spaces, but given its location a third car parking space would be preferred to ensure visitors can park clear of the highway. Whitepost Lane is a single tracked highway that does not have the benefit of street lighting, so parking on street particularly at night or in inclement weather could be hazardous.

To permit this application could set a precedent for applications from nearby properties to the general detriment of highway safety.

For the reasons listed above I would recommend refusal of the application. Although it may be possible to modify the design to an acceptable arrangement.

Neighbouring properties

Seven surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 14th October 2021.

Officer's Analysis

Chestnut Lodge is a detached residential property located on the western side of Whitepost Lane. The property is distinctive in terms of design with prominent gable end and steeply pitched roof; it is set back from the highway by approx. 18m and is set within a generous garden. A boundary wall and gates have been installed on the front of the property and, although these were refused planning permission in 2018 and 2019 (refs. 20180540 / 20181129), have since been deemed permitted development after a planning enforcement investigation.

This application proposes the erection of a garage on the front driveway and other associated ground works.

Design, Character and Appearance

Policy CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) requires new development to be "visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive" and to "conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment". It also requires new development to "integrate well with the surrounding local area", also stating that:

"...the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings."

Similarly, Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) seeks to achieve well designed places and sets out government requirements in terms of design.

The garage will be constructed towards the front of the curtilage and will be perpendicular to the front boundary. It will be constructed using shiplap cladding, have a shallow pitched roof sloping and will have the following dimensions:

- Depth - 7.05m
- Width - 3.6m
- Height (max) - 2.4m
- Height (min) - 2.1m

The garage will have an impact on the open character of this part of the street scene; however the fencing, boundary wall and gates constructed under permitted development have already materially altered this character and urbanised the appearance. As a standalone structure, given that it is perpendicular to the highway and not excessive in size or bulk, the garage would not have a detrimental impact on the street scene. Therefore, the introduction of a relatively small garage will not be out of character with the existing appearance and is considered acceptable in terms of design.

Overall, the garage hereby proposed will have no impact on the character of the street scene, which was urbanised by the permitted development operations undertaken. The application is therefore in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF by failing to be good quality design.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The development proposed is not considered to materially impact on the residential amenity of any adjoining properties. The garage is not excessive in size, has a relatively low roof height and is located sufficient distance from any neighbours to not impact on light, outlook or result in any overlooking. Similarly the boundary wall and gates will not impact on amenity. As such, the proposal safeguards residential amenity in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS). No neighbour representations have been received. The use of the garage will be restricted to safeguard neighbour amenity moving forward.

Parking and Highways

The development proposed raises concerns in terms of highway policy and guidance. The Council's Highway Officer has registered objection to this proposal; however the issues raised are not all material considerations for this application.

Firstly, concerning the gates. As these were permitted development, the insufficient set-back from the edge of the highway and potential of vehicles blocking the highway cannot be considered as part of this application.

Secondly, there are concerns with visibility splays and sightlines by virtue of the landscaping. The visibility splays proposed are contrary to Kent County Council's Vehicle Crossing Guidance (VCG) (2018) and represent a highway hazard. The policy states that visibility splays not be hindered by landscaping or boundary treatment exceeding a height of 0.85m, within 2.4m of the edge of a highway. In this case the planting will be within this 2.4m of the highway and according to the plan drawing will have a height of approximately 1.5m. Although this is an area of concern, a condition will be attached to ensure that the visibility splays are maintained with no planting exceeding a height of 0.85m.

Lastly, the Highway Officer queried the depth of the garage given that the door will be on the flank elevation and the depth is only 3.6m. A car parking space should have a minimum depth of 5m according to Kent County Council parking standards (SPG 4). If the intention is to park vehicles end-end down the driveway the access would be awkward having to enter at an angle. Moreover, the plans show that the gates will also impede the access to the garage door. While these matters are not ideal, they are not considered sufficient ground to refuse the application and could be addressed by vehicle tracking plans, or other annotations on a floor plan.

Overall, the proposed development is acceptable in terms of highway safety, subject to conditions. The visibility splays will be conditioned to ensure that no planting exceeds a height of 0.85m and there can be no highway objections regarding the permitted development gates. As such, the application is in accordance with Policy CS11 (LPCS), saved policy P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994, the Adopted Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG4) and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Impact on the Landscape - In addition to being inset from the Green Belt, the property is located within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by gently undulating topography with a mix of arable and pasture farmland, three large settlements located along the A227 and traditional architecture surrounding village greens providing local vernacular.

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.

It is not considered that the proposed garage and other ground works would have any impact on the landscape due to location of the site being within a residential and relatively well developed area.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

The garage is not excessive in size or bulk, will be constructed perpendicular to the front boundary and will not impact on the character or appearance of the property, nor street scene which has been urbanised by the gates and fencing constructed under permitted development. The development will not impact on the amenity of future occupiers, or neighbouring properties. In addition, the development is acceptable in terms of highway policy. As such the development is in accordance with Policies CS11 and CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), saved policy P3 of Gravesham's Local Plan First Review (1994), the Adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG4) (2006) as well as Sections 9 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Therefore, it is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mr Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	9 th November 2021	Dated:	11 November 2021