



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20221214
Location:	Blue Ash, 86 Rhododendron Avenue, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0TT
Description:	Erection of a two storey rear extension, installation of 3 No. pitched dormers in the front roof slope with external alterations.
Applicant:	Mr Julien Roberts
Site Visit:	N/A Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Application Form - dated 09/11/2022;
- Drawing no. 1622.WD.01 - Existing Site Location, Block and Floor Plans;
- Drawing no. 1622.WD.02A - Proposed Floor Plans and Sections;
- Drawing no. 1622.WD.04 - Existing Front and Side Elevations;
- Drawing no. 1622.WD.05 - Existing Rear and Side Elevations;
- Drawing no. 1622.WD.06A - Proposed Front and Side Elevations;
- Drawing no. 1622.WD.07B - Proposed Rear and Side Elevations;
- Drawing no. 1622.WD.08 - Proposed Site Plan (scale - 1:200).

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20130841	Erection of a detached garage.	PERMITTED	01.11.2013
19990472	Retention of the attached garden shed at the side.	REFUSED	02.09.1999
19950240	Erection of single storey side extension to form granny annex and detached double garage at the front & erection of shed & greenhouse.	REFUSED	23.06.1995
19910409	Erection of detached bungalow with detached garage at the front and construction of a cesspool.	PERMITTED	16.07.1991
19880663	Erection of chalet for weekend and holiday use and installation of septic tank.	REFUSED	23.01.1989

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

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

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards
- C13 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

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.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 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 Guidance (SPD) (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Internal consultees

Local Ward Councillors - No comment received.

External consultees

Meopham Parish Council - Meopham Parish Council objects to this planning application on the grounds of inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Kent County Council (Public Rights of Way) - Public Rights of Way NS293 lies to the west of the application area and I therefore enclose a copy of the Public Rights of Way network map showing the definitive line of the path for your information.

It is important to advise the applicants that a public right of way must not be stopped up, diverted, obstructed or the surface disturbed and there must be no encroachment on the current width, at any time now or in future. This includes any building materials or waste generated during any of the construction phases. Please note that no furniture or fixtures may be erected on or across Public Rights of Way without the express consent of the Highways Authority.

Neighbouring properties

An advert was published in the local paper and a notice displayed on site.

In addition, three surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 6th January 2023.

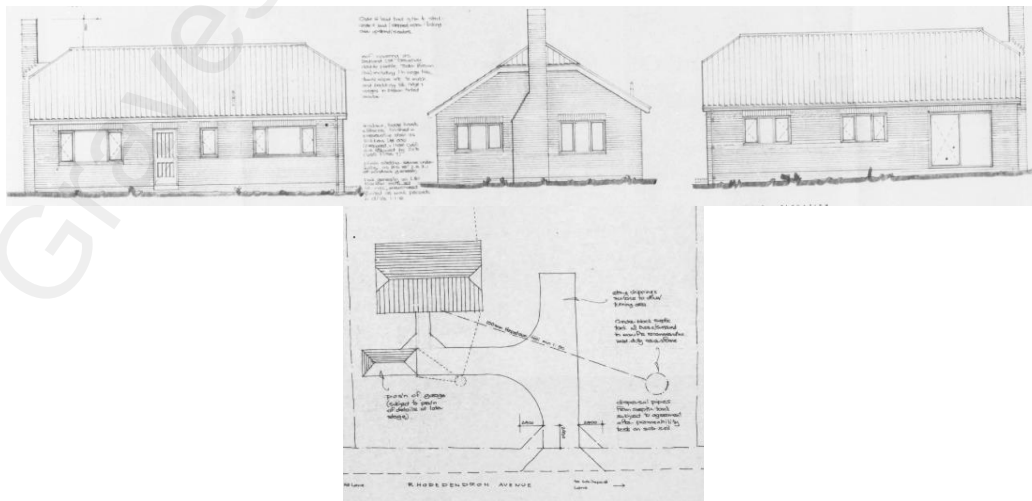
Analysis

Site Description and Context

Blue Ash is a detached chalet style bungalow located on the eastern side of Rhododendron Avenue and within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is elevated above Rhododendron Avenue.



The existing property is considered to be the original dwelling, with the exception of the attached structure (highlighted as a lean-to on the plans). Therefore, for the purpose of this application the existing property is considered to be original, as supported by the exerts below from the 1991 application (ref. 19910409):



Proposed Development

This application proposes the erection of a two storey rear extension and alterations to the roof in the form of three front dormers and one rear dormer. The rear extension will be constructed up to the ridge and have a flat roof with a maximum height of 5.75m, and an eave height of 4.7m. It will project beyond the rear wall of the property by 5m and will have a width of 5.95m. The proposed dormers will have identical dimensions, at a height of 2.65m, a depth of 1.5m and a width of 2.6m.

Existing



Proposed



Green Belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt and as such Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) is relevant. Development in the urban area is prioritised as the sustainable location for development. In the rural area, Policy CS02 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, i.e. in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS.

There are five principle issues in determining this application;

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
3. Any very special circumstances?
4. The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
5. Other matters; and
6. Impact on the Landscape.

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 goes on to say that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the specified exceptions. The relevant exception to consider for this application is part c of paragraph 149 of the NPPF, which states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

In determining this proposal account will be taken of Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (1994) which 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, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully, with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 of the NPPF.

In particular 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 and should be afforded due weight.

	Original Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	% increase above original
Footprint (m²)	93.7m ²	123.8m ²	32.1%
Internal Floorspace Area (m²)	81.6m ²	207.5m ²	154.2%
Volume	-	-	-

The calculations demonstrate that the proposed additions to the dwellinghouse both exceed and are below the one third limit set out in saved policy C13. Although the internal floor space significantly exceeds the one third limit, the overall footprint increase accords with the limit of saved policy C13. Therefore, in purely numerical terms, the extension is not contrary to the local plan Green Belt policy and does not represent a disproportionate increase over the original floor area of the building. The volume calculations of the extensions, over the original dwelling, have not been calculated in this application and will instead be visually assessed.

However, the numerical calculation forms only a part of the overall assessment. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It does not provide a figure.

The extensions hereby proposed are disproportionate additions to the original dwelling. The two storey rear extension is considered to be disproportionate, it would be constructed up to the ridge

of the property without any subservience and would have a large flat roof, which add significant bulk and mass. Similarly, the dormer windows lack subservience and have an excessive roof overhang, which increases their scale and massing, resulting in overly dominant features on the roof slope.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would result in a disproportionate addition to the property and as such the proposal would be inappropriate development, which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is therefore contrary to Policy CS02 (LPCS), Policy C13 (LPFR) and to paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021).

2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 137 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Any new built form of development is likely to impact on the openness of the Green Belt, however it is important to establish the degree of harm. Openness of the Green Belt has both a spatial and visual aspect.

The development will enlarge the dwelling substantially, with the rear extension almost doubling the overall depth of the property and the dormer windows dominating the roof slope. As discussed above, the development will add significant bulk and has been poorly designed without subservience, which substantially adds to the overall mass of the extensions. The rear extension has a flat roof which would be constructed up to the ridge of the property, the flat roof section creates harsh edges and a bulk appearance, serving to add to the overall mass of the proposal. Moreover, the scale and depth of the dormers (including overhang) create bulky and dominant features on the roof slope. Therefore, the significant increase in bulk and massing will have a harmful impact on the spatial openness of the Green Belt.

In visual terms, the site is set above the highway but has been cleared of all planting a foliage, with a rip-rap, gabion retaining wall installed. Although this clearance and ground works do not form part of this application, they do form part of the context of the site and mean that the frontage of the property is clearly visible from the highway. As a result of these factors, the proposed development, specifically the dominant dormer windows, would cause considerable harm to the visual openness of the Green Belt.

Therefore, the proposed development is considered to cause an unacceptable degree of harm to the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt.

Reference back to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF (2021) informs us that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Whether the development causes any other harm and whether there are any other relevant considerations to balance the overall planning argument, should now be considered.

3. Very special circumstances

No specific arguments have been put forward by the applicant in relation to the assessment of 'very special circumstances'.

4. The effect on the character and appearance of the area

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) states that new development will be

visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area. Moreover, Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the NPPF (2021) sets out that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Gravesham's newly published Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for developments. Generally, the SPD highlights the importance of new development complimenting and corresponding to existing character and the wider context. In this case, the rural character of the area and other surrounding dwellings should be considered. Furthermore, the SPD states that two storey rear extensions should be subservient and subordinate, should incorporate similar roof designs and should not dominate the property. In addition, the SPD asserts that roof extensions should be lower than the ridgeline and should not overwhelm the roof slope.

The extensions are considered to be poor design by virtue of the lack of subservience or subordination. The dormers and rear extension are large and disproportionate additions, that dominate the dwelling. Neither the extension or dormers have been designed with subservience or subordination, and are contrary to the principles set out within Gravesham's SPD. Furthermore, the rear extension fails to respect or respond to the original characteristics of the property, and introduces a bulky flat roof. The Local Planning Authority do not support applications proposing flat roofs above single storey level by virtue of their bulky and incongruous appearance. Therefore, the proposed extensions are bulky and incongruous additions to the property, and are poor design contrary to Gravesham's Design Guidance SPD (2021), Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

5. Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposal will safeguard the amenity of future occupiers. The garden is large and will not be significantly reduced as part of this development. The rooms proposed are in accordance with Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines (2020) and will receive sufficient natural light. Therefore, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

Neighbouring

There will be no impact on the amenity of adjoining properties in terms of loss of light, overlooking, sense of enclosure or loss of outlook. As such the proposal is considered to safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highway issues related to this proposal.

6. Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by varied topography, ancient wood and haphazard mosaic resident plots and small holdings.

Policy CS12 (LPCS) 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 poor design of the proposed extensions are considered to have an adverse impact on the Harvel Wooded Downs. Therefore, the development is contrary with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Conclusion:

The application has been fully considered and is contrary to local and national planning policy.

The proposed extensions are inappropriate development within, and is also harmful to the openness of, the Green Belt. The development is disproportionate and bulky, introducing a large flat roof extension and overly dominant dormer windows, and are out of scale and massing with the original dwelling. Therefore, the proposal is not only harmful and inappropriate within the Green Belt, but is also poor design contrary to Gravesham's Design Guidance SPD (2021). As such, the application is contrary to Policies CS12 and CS19 (LPCS), saved Policy C13 (LPFR) as well as Sections 12 and 13 of the NPPF (2021).

Recommendation:

Refusal

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

Case Officer:	Mr Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	5 th January 2022	Dated:	6 th January 2023