



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 August 2026

By Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 September 2026

Appeal Ref: 6011621

26 St Johns Road, Higham, Rochester, Kent ME3 7BZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Spike against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20260334
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "New front porch, single-storey side extension. Garage to be demolished and replaced with brick external storage building. Raised patio extended, height and materials to match existing".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made against Gravesham Borough Council by the appellant. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary matter

3. Since the appeal was submitted a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) has been published. Consequently, the main parties were given the opportunity to make representations on this. These have been taken into account in making this decision.

Main issue

4. The Council's concerns do not relate to the proposed raised patio extension. As such, the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed porch, side extension and storage building on the streetscene and the character and appearance of the host dwelling and locality.

Reasons

5. The locality of the appeal site is characterised by detached and semi-detached bungalows, and the appeal concerns one of a pair of such properties. The host dwelling has a fully hipped main roof and there is also a hipped projection at the front that spans both properties. The main hipped part would be extended to the side and would therefore remain compatible with this character.
6. However, a gable ended projection would be built to the side and a gabled porch at the front. These roof forms would introduce a noticeable contrast with the predominantly hipped roof character of the host dwelling and neighbouring

properties, interrupting the established rhythm of the street. Although its effect would be fairly modest, the porch would also awkwardly overlap the hipped roof projection, highlighting the discordant difference in form. Despite their modest size, their form and projection to the side and front would make these features prominent in views from the street.

7. The appellant has drawn my attention to additions and alterations at other properties in the locality and I have carefully considered the submitted photographs. However, I saw at my site visit that properties in the vicinity of the site do not generally incorporate such alterations and have largely retained their original appearance at the front.
8. There is a gabled porch at No 10, but this is centrally located in a detached dwelling and does not have a comparable relationship with a hipped roof form, as would arise in this case. In any event, despite the extended dwellings in the vicinity, the proposed gabled porch and side extension would be atypical additions that would not sit comfortably within the prevailing characteristics of the streetscene.
9. The enlargement of the attached dwelling at No 24 includes a partly gabled side enlargement and a gabled front dormer addition. These changes already result in the pair of dwellings having a less balanced and asymmetrical appearance. The proposed fully gabled side extension and porch would add further elements, leading to a more visually disjointed relationship between the pair of dwellings.
10. In any case, these examples illustrate the detrimental effect such development can have and should not be used to justify a proposal that I consider would further erode the quality of the built environment. Moreover, without the full details and background to such cases there is nothing to show that the Council's decision-making has been unreasonably inconsistent.
11. The existing garage is of a modest scale and appearance and its replacement with a smaller outbuilding would not be beneficial to the streetscene. The additional height over the existing building would be sufficiently modest to prevent an adverse effect even allowing for the falling ground levels to the north.
12. However, despite matters such as these, I conclude that the streetscene and the character and appearance of the host dwelling and locality would be harmed by the proposed porch and side extension. Among other things, Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, Adopted 2014, Policy CS19 seeks new development that is visually attractive, conserves the character of the built environment and makes a positive contribution to the streetscene. Because of matters such as the disjointed appearance of the pair of dwellings and the contrasting roof forms, there would be conflict with these aims.

Other matters

13. The appellant has referred to a potential fallback position in the planning statement that was submitted with the planning application. A drawing has been provided that shows the appeal scheme and the plans submitted with an application for a certificate of lawfulness. This indicates that the potential fallback scheme would have a smaller porch and a lower side extension.
14. The case for allowing an appeal can sometimes be strengthened where the fallback proposal would have a greater adverse effect such that granting permission could

avoid a scheme with more harmful consequences being built. However, that is not the situation here, as the relevant parts of the fallback scheme would clearly be smaller, with a lesser bulk and resultant visual impact. Consequently, this matter does not lend support to the appeal scheme.

15. Framework Policy S3 indicates that decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This requires that Policy S4 should be applied when considering development proposals located within settlements as in this case. This policy intends that proposals should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework.
16. In this instance there would be a benefit to the local economy from construction works, but this would be relatively modest given the small scale of the development. Energy efficiency would be improved but there is no suggestion that this would meaningfully exceed the requirements of the building regulations.
17. It is acknowledged that the scheme would result in an improved quality of accommodation providing additional space for a dining table and storage. It would also provide additional floor area at a property where the existing space is below the Nationally Described Space Standard for England.
18. In Policy S4 2. c. it is indicated that one of the circumstances where the benefits of approving development are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects is failure to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances. In this case there would be conflict with Policy DP3 1, because the development would not respond to the context or integrate with and enhance the surroundings for the reasons given.
19. In the above circumstances I conclude that the benefits of the scheme would be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects.
20. Because the adjacent extension would not be built, there would be a gap between the existing side wall of the bungalow and the raised patio for which there are no plans. Consequently, it is not clear that the two parts are functionally and physically severable, and I shall not therefore make a split decision.
21. I note the concerns of the appellant over the Council's handling of the application. However, I must consider this appeal on its own planning merits.

Conclusion

22. The proposal would result in harm and conflict with the development plan. There are no other material considerations that indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

M Evans

INSPECTOR