



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20251086

Location: Woodside Pear Tree Lane Shorne Gravesend

Description: Erection of a two storey rear extension with balcony to first floor; single storey side extensions, and a two storey front extension with roof lantern and 3 roof lights to main roof.

Applicant: Mr Raj Sakaria

Site Visit Date: 06/11/2026

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
Cover Letter
8768-PD-01 – Site Location Plan Existing Site Plan
8768-PD-02 – Proposed Site Plan
8768-PD-03 Rev A – Existing Plans and Elevations
8768-PD-04 B – Proposed Plans and Elevations
Design and Access Statement
Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey (12/08/2026)
Preliminary Roost Assessment

Superseded Plans:

~~8768-PD-04 A – Proposed Plans and Elevations~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20250553	Application for a Proposed Lawful Development Certificate; Erection of two single-storey side extensions and a detached single-storey outbuilding.	Certificate Granted	03/09/2025
20250554	Prior approval for a single storey rear extension with a depth of 8m, maximum height of 4m and eaves height of 3.2m	Prior approval not required	07/08/2025
20250342	Prior approval for a single storey rear extension with a depth of 8m, maximum height of 4m and eaves height of 3.2m	Refused	14/05/2025

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (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
- C13 – Extensions to Dwelling in the Countryside

As set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012 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

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 (2026), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

- Section 5 – Meeting the challenge of climate change
- Section 12 – Making Effective use of land
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 14 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 19 – 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)

Emerging Local Plan as a Material Consideration

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) make it clear that planning applications can only be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Decision Making Policy DM4 of the Framework sets out that when considering development proposals, relevant policies may be given weight, however, this is subject to:

- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- The degree of compliance of the relevant policies in the emerging plan with the policies for plan-making in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework, the greater the weight that may be given to them).

West Oxfordshire District Council v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government & Rosconn Strategic Land Ltd [2018] EWHC 3065 (Admin) is a High Court judgement that deals with the weight to be given to a Regulation 19 Local Plan. In this judgement, the Court found that the weight to be given to an emerging Local Plan was a matter of planning judgement, which had to be reached having fully considered the relevant part of the Framework, which from 17 August 2026 Decision Making Policy DM4 of

the Framework.

The Council's emerging Local Plan has reached the Regulation 19 Consultation stage, with the consultation having ended on 18 August 2026. The emerging Local Plan does not form part of the Development Plan.

The Council is aware that third parties have raised objections to the wider emerging Local Plan and specific policies within it. Therefore, at present the Council cannot categorically state that the emerging Local Plan can be considered sound and consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) [as an emerging Local Plan being brought forward under the legacy system, it would be examined under the 2024 Framework]. Taking this into consideration, one can only conclude that at this stage of the process, **limited (i.e. minimal) weight should be afforded to the emerging Regulation 19 Local Plan.**

This position would only change once the emerging Local Plan has progressed towards submission and examination, with the Council being fully aware of policies that are subject to unresolved objections and with knowledge of policies that have had their soundness and conformity against the Framework challenged.

This approach accords with the approach taken in a separate High Court case, *Gladman Developments Ltd v SSHCLG & Corby Borough Council*; & *Uttlesford DC* [2020] EWHC 518 (Admin) and Court of Appeal [2021] EWCA Civ 104, which was also the subject of a Court of Appeal Ruling [2021] EWCA Civ 104.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Shorne Parish Council

This property has been the subject of 5 previous applications during 2025: 20250341 (raising roof height - withdrawn), 20250342 (single storey front extension - refused) and 20250343 (two single-storey side extensions, single storey front extension and a detached single-storey outbuilding - withdrawn), then 20250553 (two single-storey side extensions and a detached single-storey outbuilding – LDC granted) and 20250554 (rear extension – prior approval not required although we consider that planning permission was needed due to the actual height above ground level at the rear elevation). The Parish Council submitted comments on all the above proposals.

The existing house (four bedrooms, one bathroom) has a footprint area of approximately 118sqm. We are uncertain of its age and whether all the currently seen features such as the utility room, bay window and store are original. The house is quite close to, and set lower than, Pear Tree Lane.

This present proposal has several aspects:

Two-storey front extension (18sqm, 6m wide and protruding 3m towards the roadway):

- This creates a new entrance at the front of the house.
- The proposed porch depth is greater than usually permitted.
- The front roofline does not show subsidiarity to the main house roof, so the height of the dormer should be reduced to be much as existing.
- The window at first floor level as proposed appears overlarge. Together with the increase in bulk of the building as a whole, it will be visually intrusive and impact adversely on the streetscene. We consider that the area of glazing should be reduced and the design made more compatible with the adjacent dormer windows.
- Due to the house being set lower than the roadway, there could also be privacy issues for occupants.

Two storey side and rear extension on the north-east side and a part two storey/part single storey rear extension, on both sides extending beyond the original side wall of the house:

- These are respectively 34.5sqm, overall 11.5m by 3m, and 108sqm, being 6m deep and 18m wide at ground floor level.

- There is a lesser area at first floor level.
- A balcony is included at the rear but this should not cause overlooking.
- The rear roofline does not show subsidiarity to the main house roof, so the height of the dormers should be reduced.
- Two first-floor bedrooms have side windows but the distance to the adjacent houses is sufficient to ensure privacy.

Roof lantern on mansard roof:

- This should not protrude above the height of the rest of the roof, a flat design might be preferable.

Increase in floor area:

Overall, the floor area is to be increased from 118sqm, adding a further 160.5sqm to total approximately 279 sqm, an increase of 136% which is well over the limits of the “one third rule” applicable to house extensions in the Green Belt.

Other points/suggested Conditions:

- Removal of some trees and bushes is noted.
- Retention of the woodland should be required by Condition.
- An exterior lighting plan should be provided.
- In view of the size of extensions proposed, Permitted Development Rights should be withdrawn, requiring all subsequent structures to need a full planning application.

Ward Councillors

No comments received.

KCC Biodiversity (Latest Comments)

SUMMARY – SUFFICIENT INFORMATION PROVIDED

We have reviewed the additional information submitted for this application and advise that sufficient ecological information has been provided for determination. Recommended condition and informative wording are provided below.

BAT ROOST CONFIRMED

Emergence surveys have confirmed the presence of a Common Pipistrelle day roost within the building (B1), and a mitigation strategy has been proposed within the submitted Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey (Arbtech Consulting, August 2026). The proposed alteration of the existing building will result in the loss of the confirmed roost

Bats/their roosts are fully protected from disturbance and harm through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Some species of bat (including Bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared) are also listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 as Species of Principal Importance for conservation. Local planning authorities must have regard for the conservation of Section 41 species and all bat species as part of their planning decisions.

The applicant must therefore apply for a mitigation licence from Natural England for works to commence. This means that they must either:

- complete an application form for a bat mitigation licence (A13) providing a method statement and work schedule, all of which should be submitted to Natural England, or
- find an accredited “Bat Earned Recognition” consultant who can provide a quality-assured site registration with a quicker determination period.

At this stage, the local planning authority must have enough information prior to determination to be confident that a Natural England mitigation licence will be issued.

We have reviewed the mitigation strategy, and it has detailed the following will be included:

- The installation of one bat box per species prior to works commencing, in an undisturbed location, positioned 3-5m above ground in a South or South-westerly direction with a clear flight path;
- The provision of a toolbox talk to contractors by the named ecologist prior to the start of works;
- A pre-commencement inspection of any roost features by the named ecologist;
- Any bats found will be moved by hand to the bat box by the named ecologist.

We advise that we are satisfied that sufficient mitigation has been proposed to maintain the favourable conservation status of the bats.

In accordance with the February 2020 Natural England explanatory note for local planning authorities on Clause 9.3 and Annex D6.1 of BS42020:2013, planning conditions and European Protected Species licences, to help ensure the full implementation of the submitted mitigation/compensation strategy and the applicant's obtention of a mitigation licence from Natural England in advance of works, if planning permission is granted, we advise the condition below is included:

Suggested Condition Wording:

The development shall be completed in strict accordance with the details of bat mitigation strategy, enhancement measures and features specified within the following documents and drawings as submitted with the planning application, unless modified by a relevant European Protected Species Licence issued by Natural England:

- Page 10, Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey (Arbtech Consulting, August 2026)

All the biodiversity mitigation measures shall be implemented in full accordance with the specified timescales in the aforementioned documents and drawings, or as modified by the relevant licence. All enhancement measures shall be in place prior to first occupation, and all the biodiversity mitigation and enhancement features shall thereafter be permanently retained and maintained for the stated purpose of biodiversity conservation.

If the licensable works have not been started within two years of the date of the emergence surveys, if deemed necessary by a suitably qualified ecologist, updated surveys and an updated mitigation and compensation strategy shall be completed and submitted for approval in writing by the local planning authority prior to commencement of any works including site clearance.

SENSITIVE LIGHTING

Lighting in the vicinity of a bat roost or along commuting / foraging routes could constitute an offence both to a population and to individuals. Artificial lighting has been shown to be particularly harmful to bats along river corridors, near woodland edges and near hedgerows. Local authorities have a duty to ensure impacts upon legally protected species are avoided and impacts upon bats are a material consideration in any planning permission under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and through the NPPF 2026.

Therefore, to mitigate against potential adverse effects on biodiversity, the Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Professional's 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' (or subsequent updates) should be consulted in the lighting design of the development.

As recommended in the Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey (Arbtech Consulting, August 2026), we advise that the incorporation of sensitive lighting design for biodiversity is submitted to the local planning authority and secured via an attached condition with any planning permission.

Suggested Condition Wording:

Prior to occupation, a lighting design plan for biodiversity shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The plan shall show the type and locations of external lighting, as well as the expected light spill in lux levels, to demonstrate that areas to be lit shall not adversely impact biodiversity. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the approved plan and shall be maintained thereafter.

BREEDING BIRDS

All wild bird species, their eggs and nests are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As there is potential for nesting birds to be found on site, the following informative is recommended.

Suggested Informative Wording:

All wild birds and their nests are protected from harm under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As such, any works which may result in impacts to nesting birds should be conducted outside of the core nesting season which is March through August (inclusive) or under ecological supervision. A suitable exclusion zone should be established around any active bird nest in the event one is discovered during works; this exclusion zone should be maintained until all nesting birds have fledged and the nest is unoccupied.

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

Policy N2 (NPPF 2026) states To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should: Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use or would make them ineffective.

As stated in the Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey, the creation of additional habitat for bats is recommended. This should be outlined within a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan and include:

- The installation of two integrated bat boxes onsite, positioned 3-5m above ground level, facing in a South or South-westerly direction, with a clear flight path and away from and unlit by artificial light.

We also suggest the following enhancements:

- The provision of suitably placed bird boxes to be either integrated into the new structure, and/or located on an existing tree onsite;
- The provision of bee bricks and/or the provision of log piles/artificial refugia for reptiles and amphibians;

Suggested Condition Wording:

Within three months of works commencing, a detailed plan showing how the development shall enhance and maintain biodiversity shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include the suggested enhancement measures as detailed in the submitted Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey (Arbtech Consulting, August 2026), as well as the provision of bird boxes, bee bricks and log piles/artificial refugia. The approved measures shall be implemented and retained thereafter.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN: HOUSEHOLDER EXEMPTION

We consider this application exempt from statutory BNG because it is a householder application as defined within article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

KCC Heritage

No comment received.

Natural England
NO OBJECTION

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.

Natural England's generic advice on other natural environment issues is set out at Annex A.

Ancient Woodland, Ancient and Veteran Trees

You should consider any impacts on ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees in line with paragraph 193 of the NPPF. Natural England maintains the Ancient Woodland Inventory which can help identify ancient woodland. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have produced standing advice for planning authorities in relation to ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees. It should be taken into account by planning authorities when determining relevant planning applications. Natural England will only provide bespoke advice on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees where they form part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest or in exceptional circumstances.

You can also use the following inventories in your decision-making:

- the Woodland Trust's ancient tree inventory (ATI)
- Natural England's wood pasture and parkland inventory (includes ancient sites) on the Magic map system.

SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE

NO OBJECTION

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.

Natural England's generic advice on other natural environment issues is set out at Annex A.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zones

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 requires local planning authorities to consult Natural England on "Development in or likely to affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest" (Schedule 4, w). Our SSSI Impact Risk Zones are a GIS dataset designed to be used during the planning application validation process to help local planning authorities decide when to consult Natural England on developments likely to affect a SSSI. The dataset and user guidance can be accessed from the data.gov.uk website

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex A.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries regarding this letter, for new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Dickens Country Protection Society

The Society would wish to raise an objection on the grounds that the site is in an area within which Green Belt Policies apply. The proposal is for extensions doubling the floor area considerably more than the one third rule. The Society would draw attention to paragraph 154 (c) of the National Planning Guidance.

Without prejudice to the Society's objection in principle to the size of the extension, the Society would comment that the large window at first floor level in proposed gable on the south east elevation appears somewhat incongruous and out of character with the building.

Neighbouring properties

3no. surrounding properties were consulted, a site notice was placed near the site and 0 comments were received from members of the public. The final date to submit comments ended on 08.09.2026.

Officer's Analysis

Principle of Development

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt including impact on openness

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. At the beginning of section 13 of the NPPF (2026) it is stated that the government attaches great importance to Green Belts and that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policies is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open with their essential characteristics being their openness and permanence.

The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 states that extensions to dwellings within the Green Belt should be restricted to an overall limit of one-third of the gross floorspace of the original dwelling. The policy seeks to prevent the cumulative and disproportionate enlargement of dwellings and the consequent erosion of the openness and character of the Green Belt.

Policy GB6 of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) states that development within the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories identified by Policy GB7. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Policy GB2:1 of the NPPF (2026) sets out that the Green Belt has five purposes:

- a. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b. Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e. Assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Policy GB6: 2 of the NPPF (2026) sets out that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt which would be caused, including harm to its openness. It states that 'inappropriate development' is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that '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 proposed development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Policy GB7 of the NPPF (2026) states that the following categories of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or be required to

demonstrate very special circumstances:

- a. Development which is for agriculture, horticulture and forestry, or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;
- b. The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the original building. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- c. Limited infilling in villages lying within the Green Belt;
- d. Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in this Framework or the development plan (for instance, on a rural exception site);
- e. The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt;
- f. Certain other forms of development, provided the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised, and there would not be a significant conflict with the Green Belt purposes. These are:
 - Mineral extraction and processing, engineering operations, and transport, electricity network, water and telecommunications infrastructure required in a Green Belt location);
 - Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order;
 - Material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
 - The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments.
- g. Development where all of the following apply:
 - i. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
 - ii. There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed⁴¹;
 - iii. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework⁴²; and
 - iv. In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with policy GB8.
- h. Residential or mixed-use development which would:
 - i) Be within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B);
 - ii) Be physically well-related to the station or the settlement within which the station is located;
 - iii. Be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of

infrastructure;

iv. Not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development in the same location; and

v. In the case of proposals for major development, comply with policy GB8.

In the case of this proposal, it would fall under GB7(b).

Policy GB7(b) identifies the extension or alteration of an existing lawful building as not inappropriate development where it would not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared with the original building. Footnote 40 defines the original building as the building which existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after that date, as originally built.

In this case, based on the KCC Heritage maps, it appears that the dwellinghouse has likely not been extended previously and so is considered to be the footprint of the original dwelling. The existing dwellinghouse has an area of 119m² at ground floor and 88m² at first floor, totalling a floor area of 207m².

The applicant has not provided a clear assessment of the proposal against the dwelling as it existed on 1 July 1948. Instead, the submitted Design and Access Statement compares the proposed development against a hypothetical fallback comprising the existing dwelling, lawful extensions and a detached outbuilding.

This is not the appropriate baseline for assessing proportionality under Policy GB7(b) or saved Policy C13. Extensions, alterations and ancillary buildings constructed or authorised after 1 July 1948 do not form part of the original dwelling. Rather, the cumulative extent of all subsequent additions must be assessed against the original dwelling.

Measurements taken by the Local Planning Authority from the submitted plans indicate the following approximate gross floor areas:

Area	Existing Dwelling	Proposed Dwelling	Increase
Ground Floor	118m ²	264m ²	146m ² / 123.7%
First Floor	89m ²	177m ²	88m ² / 98.9%
Total	207m²	441m²	234m²/ 113%

The proposal would therefore more than double the floorspace of the existing dwelling. These calculations do not include the detached outbuilding relied upon by the applicant as part of the fallback case. Moreover, if the existing dwelling already incorporates post-1948 additions, the percentage increase relative to the original dwelling would be greater still.

The proposed development would include extensive two-storey additions, together with substantial single-storey development extending across the rear and sides of the dwelling. Although the existing ridge height would generally be maintained, the proposal would materially increase the dwelling's footprint, floorspace, width, depth and overall three-dimensional bulk.

Consequently, the development would represent a disproportionate addition over and above the original dwelling. It would not fall within Policy GB7(b) of the NPPF and would conflict with the one-third limitation contained within saved Policy C13.

Applicants Position

The applicant refers to an extant lawful-development position comprising substantial single-storey extensions and a detached outbuilding. A genuine prospect of implementing lawful development can constitute a material fallback consideration. However, the existence of that fallback does not alter the original-building baseline or demonstrate compliance with Policy GB7(b).

The applicant states that the proposed development would result in:

- a 10.40% reduction in building volume;
- a 15.67% reduction in gross external area; and
- a 47.97% reduction in building footprint,

when compared with the fallback scheme.

However, the submitted calculations are inconsistent. The Design and Access Statement identifies a fallback footprint of 311.43m² and a proposed footprint of 253.15m². These figures produce a reduction of approximately 58.28m² or 18.7%, rather than the stated reduction of 161.66m² or 47.97%. It is unclear whether the applicant has included the detached outbuilding within some calculations but excluded it from others.

Furthermore, neither the lawful extensions nor the outbuilding has been constructed. The detached outbuilding is separate and could potentially remain capable of construction following implementation of this permission. The proposed dwelling and lawful outbuilding could therefore exist cumulatively, resulting in a greater amount and spread of development than the proposal considered in isolation.

Accordingly, the claimed reductions would not necessarily be secured by granting permission. Limited weight should be given to those figures.

Openness

Although the proposal would not satisfy the proportionate-extension exception under Policy GB7(b), Policy GB7(e) provides a separate category of development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. This applies to the redevelopment of previously developed land where it would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The site contains an established lawful dwelling, garage, driveway and associated residential development. The land occupied by the dwelling and the immediately associated developed part of its curtilage constitutes previously developed land. The proposed works would remain concentrated around the established dwelling rather than introducing a separate building deep within the undeveloped garden.

Openness has both spatial and visual dimensions. Spatially, the proposal would represent a substantial increase over the dwelling as it presently exists. Its floorspace would increase by approximately 113%, with the ground-floor area increasing from approximately 118m² to 264m². The proposed two-storey rear additions would also introduce materially greater built volume at first-floor level, where the existing dwelling currently has a more limited form. This would cause some erosion of openness.

Nevertheless, the dwelling occupies a large plot of approximately 0.73 hectares and is set well back from Pear Tree Lane. The development would remain focused around the existing house and would not materially extend built development into the wooded north-western part of the site. The principal two-storey additions would be positioned predominantly to the rear, while the single-storey elements would be read in conjunction with the main dwelling. The proposal would retain the existing principal ridge height and would produce a more consolidated arrangement than the extensive lateral and rear spread shown by the lawful fallback extensions.

The site is also enclosed by mature trees, woodland and established boundary vegetation. These features materially limit the visual prominence of the development upon the wider Green Belt. Public views would largely be obtained from Pear Tree Lane, where the dwelling is substantially set back and the existing frontage and landscaping would restrict the prominence of the rear extensions.

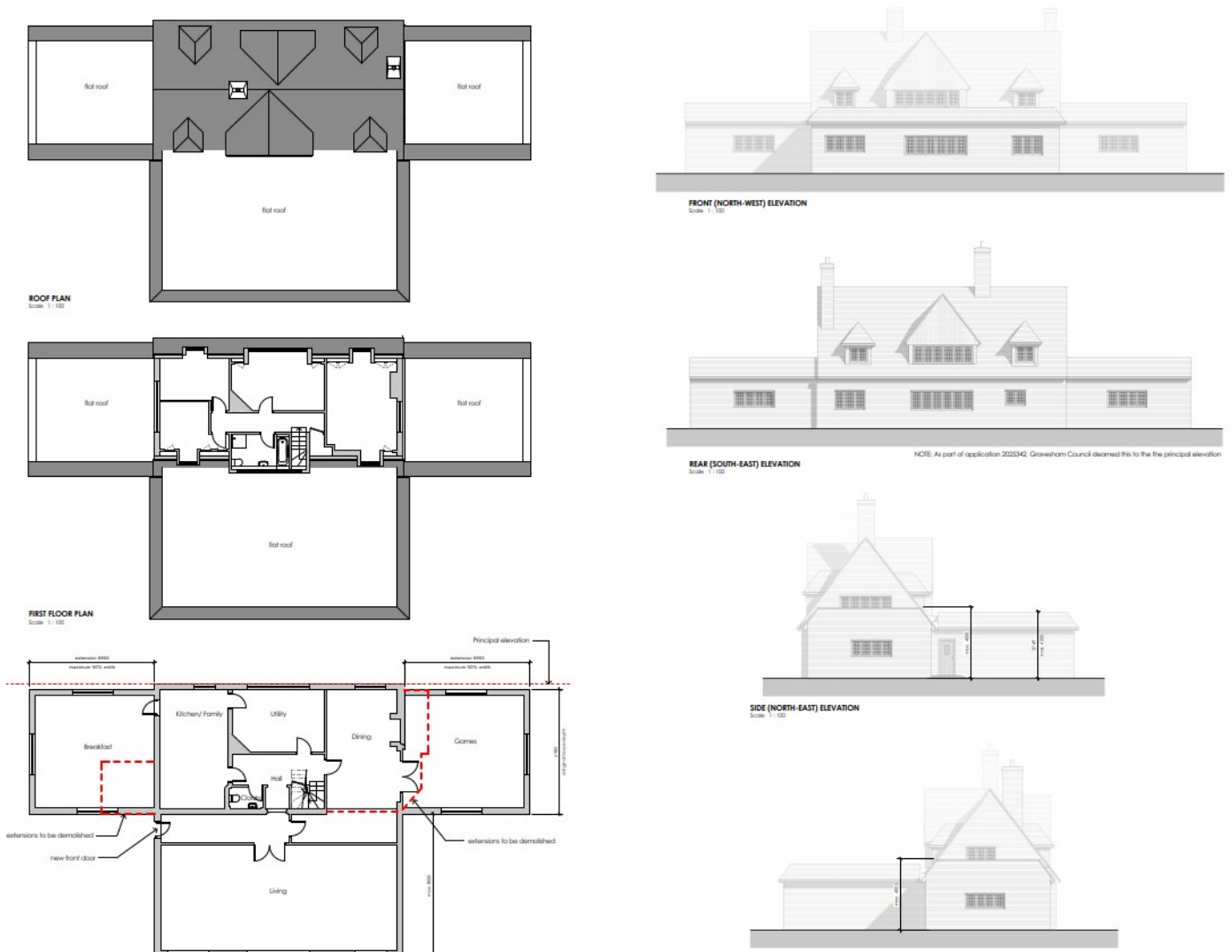
The proposal would therefore cause a loss of openness compared with the site's existing physical condition, particularly through its increased footprint and two-storey bulk. However, having regard to the size and enclosed character of the plot, the concentration of development around the existing dwelling, the retention of the principal ridge height and the limited effect upon the wider Green Belt, that harm would not result in substantial harm.

The proposal would be regarded as redevelopment of previously developed land which would not cause substantial harm to Green Belt openness. On that basis, it falls within the alternative exception provided by Policy GB7(e) and is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It should not therefore be treated as harmful by reason of inappropriateness, and very special circumstances are not required.

Very Special Circumstances

In addition to the assessment under Policy GB7(e), consideration has also been given to whether very special circumstances would exist if the proposal were regarded as inappropriate development.

LDC reference 20250553 confirms that extensive single-storey extensions may lawfully be constructed to the rear and both sides of the dwelling. The fallback represents a realistic possibility. The substantial additional accommodation it would provide means that there is a realistic prospect of its implementation if planning permission for the current proposal were withheld. Significant weight is therefore afforded to the fallback position.



Plans for approved application 20250553 (Not to Scale)

The approved development would wrap around three sides of the dwelling and create an expansive, low-rise and sprawling form of development, which bares little character to its existing dwelling. The extensive flat-roofed additions would appear poorly integrated with the pitched-roof form and traditional character of the existing house. The development would obscure part of the original dwelling, substantially increase its spread and produce an incongruous, disjointed and visually unattractive building.

By comparison, the current proposal would provide a more coherent and synonymous design. Although it would introduce additional built form at first-floor level, this would be incorporated through pitched and gabled roof forms which respond more successfully to the character of the existing dwelling. The existing ridge height would be retained, and the development would be more contained around the main house, avoiding much of the extensive spread of built form associated with the approved extensions. Greater openness would consequently be retained to the sides of the dwelling.

The current proposal would therefore result in a clear visual and spatial improvement over the lawful fallback. In summary, without permission, the applicant could lawfully implement a materially more sprawling and poorly designed scheme which would have a greater effect upon the immediate character and openness of the site.

As established above, the proposal would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. As the scheme has been considered as appropriate under Policy GB7 (e), the Very Special Circumstances assessment is not necessary to reach a conclusion. However, as the applicants have clearly made an argument in their submissions for a Very Special Circumstance case, it has been assessed in this instance.

If, contrary to the primary assessment above, the scheme did not comply with the categories considered not inappropriate under Policy GB7, then an assessment of Very Special Circumstances would need to be undertaken to assess whether any harm resulting from the proposed development is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The realistic prospect of implementing the extensive development certified under LDC reference 20250553, together with the reduced built form spread, more contained form and considerable design improvement offered by the current proposal, would clearly outweigh the definitional harm arising from inappropriateness. Accordingly, if it were necessary to undertake the very special circumstances assessment, very special circumstances would exist to justify the development.

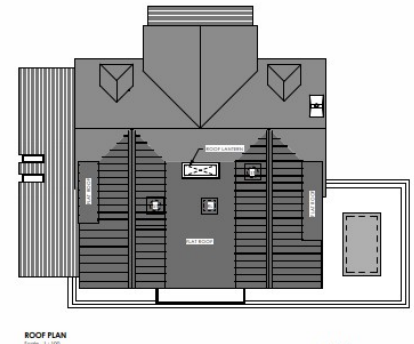
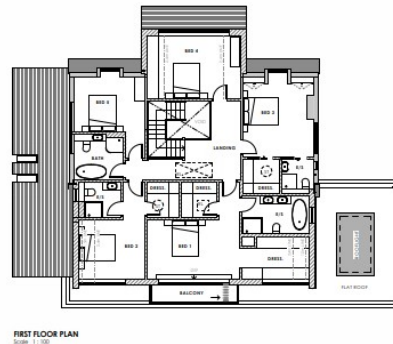
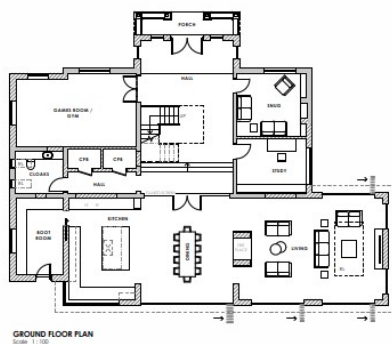
Green Belt Conclusion

The proposal would constitute a disproportionate enlargement of the original dwelling and would not fall within Policy GB7(b). However, it would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would fall within the separate exception provided by Policy GB7(e). It would therefore not constitute inappropriate development, and very special circumstances are not required. However, for clarity and transparency, a Very Special Circumstance assessment has been undertaken, and the proposal would amount to very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the definitional Green Belt harm, in that instance.

Design, Character and Appearance

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy requires development to be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive, and to conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment. Policy DP3 of the NPPF requires development to respond to the history, character and features of its site and setting, integrate with and enhance its surroundings, and create visually attractive and characterful development through an appropriate built form, architectural detailing and coherent palette of materials.

The application property is a detached dwelling occupying on a large plot on the northern side of Pear Tree Lane. The surrounding has a rural character, comprising detached dwellings of varied character, which are set within substantial plots. The site is not within a conservation area.



LEGEND

[Symbol]	EXISTING WALLS
[Symbol]	PROPOSED WALLS
[Symbol]	EXISTING ROOF
[Symbol]	PROPOSED ROOF
[Symbol]	EXISTING DOORS
[Symbol]	PROPOSED DOORS

REVISIONS

No.	Date	Comments
1	23/03/2024	Front window in plan reduced in height
2	09/01/2024	Rear extension (red) reduced in height

PLANNING
Clerk
Mr & Mrs Sakaria

PROJECT
Woodside, Pear Tree Lane, St DA12 3JF

FILE
Proposed Plans and Elevations

PROJECT NO.
8768

DATE
12/03/2024

REVISION
8768 - PD-04

SCALE
1:100 A1

CHECK
[Signature]



Proposed Plan (Not to Scale)

The proposal would significantly alter and enlarge the dwelling. At the front, the new central entrance and pitched porch with dormers on either would provide a formalised and symmetrical principal elevation. The front-facing gable, dormers and pitched-roof forms would retain the rural residential character of the existing building, while the single-storey side elements would remain visually subservient due to their limited height.

The greatest change would occur at the rear, where the development would introduce additional two-storey height additions. However, the design has sought to incorporate the totality of additions at the rear in a complementary manner, which reduces potential clutter of incongruous additions. The use of two pitched gables breaks up the width and mass of the rear elevation, while the pitch of the roofs would avoid raising the principal ridge height. The central balcony does break up the built form visually.

The rear would adopt a more modern design. This would contrast with the more traditional appearance of the front elevation but would remain visually. Given its position to the rear of the dwelling, the modern design would have a limited impact on the character of the Streetscene as it would not appear prominent or be easily viewed from Pear Tree Lane.

The proposal would retain brown/red brickwork and plain roof tiles on the front and side elements, reflecting the materials of the existing dwelling. The precise details of the brickwork, tiles, standing-seam roofing, render and feature panels should be secured by condition to ensure that the quality and consistency shown on the submitted drawings are achieved.

The resulting development would respond appropriately to the character and features of the site and its surroundings, whilst allowing for an appropriate degree of change, in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Policy DP3 of the NPPF (2026).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) requires new development to be located, designed and constructed so as to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers, including in respect of privacy, daylight and sunlight. Policy L2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026) requires sensitive redevelopment and additional development within existing plots to maintain acceptable living standards for residents in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, privacy and external amenity space. Policy P3 further requires development to provide healthy living conditions for occupiers, including adequate access to light.

Room Type	Proposed Internal Floor Area (m ²)	Minimum Space Standard (m ²)
Bedrooms	Bed 1 – 19.3 Bed 2 – 14.5 Bed 3 – 16 Bed 4 – 18 Bed 5 – 13.3	Double – 11.2 Single – 6.5
Kitchen/Diner	53	12.0
Living Room	48	13.2
Bathroom & WC	6.6	3.6

Garden Measurement	Proposed Garden Space	Minimum Space Standard
Area	5490m ²	100m ²
Depth	100m	10m

Overall, it is considered that the revised proposal would provide an acceptable standard of residential accommodation and would safeguard the living conditions of future occupiers. The proposal therefore complies with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), the relevant Residential Layout Guidelines, and Policies L2 and P3 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026).

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, 0 comments from members of the public were received.

The existing dwelling is located 26 metres from Glen Hurst to the north east. The extensions to the side would bring this building closer to this neighbour with a distance of 25.3m. The existing building is located 40 metres, from The Grange to the South West. The development would reduce this distance to 36.8m. Given the large scale nature of the plots in this area, and this site in particular the proposed development would be a significant distance from the subject property such that there would be no impact on these neighbours in terms of overbearing bulk, overshadowing, overlooking etc.

The development is therefore considered to safeguard neighbouring amenity in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), the relevant principles of the Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Guidance, and national decision-making Policies L2, DP3 and P3 of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026).

Parking and Highways

The site has a garage and a large driveway which would be retained. Given the substantial size of the plot and its existing garage and internal floorspace, there would be sufficient space for the provision of cycle storage as per KCC's Parking Standards (2006), which requires additional provision be provided for an increased number of bedrooms.

Adequate vehicle and cycle parking provision is therefore available, and the sustainable location of the site weighs in favour of the application. The proposal would be in accordance with policies TR3 and TR4 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2026), Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 subject to further details of cycle parking provision.

Biodiversity

Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and prevent any net loss of biodiversity within the Borough. Policy N2 of the NPPF requires development to minimise adverse effects upon biodiversity, conserve existing natural features where possible and incorporate features supporting protected and priority species. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, planning permission should be refused. Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, as amended, places a duty upon public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken in January 2026. The dwelling was assessed as having moderate suitability for roosting bats and further emergence and re-entry surveys were recommended. The subsequent Bat Emergence and Re-entry Survey, dated August 2026, confirmed a common pipistrelle day roost beneath a hanging tile on the north-western elevation of the dwelling. The proposed works would result in the destruction of this roost.

The survey recorded a single common pipistrelle using the roost. Common pipistrelles were also observed foraging within the vegetated garden and commuting through the site. No suitable hibernation habitat was identified and no further emergence surveys were recommended.

As the development would result in the loss of a confirmed bat roost, the applicant will be required to obtain an appropriate mitigation licence from Natural England before commencing the licensable works. Kent County Council's Biodiversity Officer has reviewed the survey information and mitigation strategy and considers that sufficient information has been provided to determine the application and for the Local Planning Authority to be confident that a Natural England licence is capable of being issued.

The proposed mitigation includes:

- installation of a suitable receptor bat box before works commence;
- a toolbox talk for contractors by the named ecologist;
- a pre-commencement inspection of the affected roost features;
- careful removal of the affected features by hand under ecological supervision;
- movement of any bats encountered to the receptor box by the licensed ecologist; and
- cessation of works and further ecological advice if unexpected species, roost types or hibernating bats are encountered.

The mitigation would provide an appropriate method of avoiding injury or mortality and maintaining the favourable conservation status of the species. The site contains extensive woodland, mature vegetation and established bat foraging and commuting habitat. Additional external lighting could affect the retained roosting, foraging and commuting opportunities. A wildlife-sensitive lighting scheme should therefore be secured by condition. This should identify the type, position and orientation of all external lighting and demonstrate the anticipated light spill in lux, ensuring that the woodland, boundary vegetation, bat boxes and identified flight paths remain unlit or appropriately dark.

The ecological report also recommends the installation of two integrated bat boxes within the completed development to provide permanent additional roosting habitat. Further enhancements comprising integrated bird boxes, bee bricks and log piles or other suitable refugia for reptiles and amphibians have been recommended by the Biodiversity Officer. These measures should be secured through a biodiversity

enhancement plan.

The development constitutes a householder application and is therefore exempt from the statutory biodiversity net gain requirement.

Natural England has raised no objection to the application.

Subject to conditions securing the bat mitigation and enhancement measures, an updated survey requirement, wildlife-sensitive lighting and the additional biodiversity enhancements, the development would adequately mitigate its effect upon protected species and provide ecological enhancements. It would therefore accord with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Policy N2 of the NPPF.

Conclusion

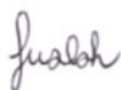
Having established that the proposal would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, Policy S5(5) of the NPPF is also applicable. There are no adverse effects arising from the proposal which would substantially outweigh its benefits, and the development is therefore acceptable in principle.

The proposed development would comply with all relevant national and local planning policies.

Recommendation

The recommendation is to approve the development subject to conditions.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	17th December 2025	Dated:	21 September 2026