



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20231043

Location: Westwood, Whitepost Lane, Culverstone, Gravesend

Description: Erection of a single storey rear extension and first floor extension over existing garage. Conversion of garage into habitable rooms, erection of an outbuilding to the rear and detached double garage to the front. Front boundary wall and gates.

Applicant: Reggi Donovan

Site Visit Date: Desktop assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form

Drawing no. WES/276/01 (Site Location Plan)

Drawing no. WES/276/02 (Site Block Plan)

Drawing no. WES/276/03 (Existing and Proposed Site Plan)

Drawing no. WES/276/04 (Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plan)

Drawing no. WES/276/05 (Existing and Proposed First Floor Plan)

Drawing no. WES/276/06 (Existing and Proposed Roof Plan and Outbuilding Floor Plan)

Drawing no. WES/276/07 (Existing Elevations)

Drawing no. WES/276/08 (Proposed Elevations)

Drawing no. WES/276/09 (Proposed Elevations – Garage and Outbuilding)

Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20080326	Construction of new enlarged pitched roof over dwelling incorporating two dormer windows in front roof slope and four dormer windows in rear roof slope; conversion of roof space into a total of five bedrooms, ensuite shower room/wc and bathroom/wc and erection of new front porch, chimney stack on the side and pitched roof over garage.	Permission	03.06.2008
19960607	Erection of single storey rear extension to form enlarged bedroom.	Permission	26.11.1996
19870962	Erection of single storey side extension to form kitchen and enlarged garage and erection of conservatory at the rear	Permission	09.12.1987
19780445	Erection of a single storey extension at the side to form a kitchen and a replacement private double garage	Permission	03.07.1978

19580410	Erection of bungalow and garage	Permission	28.07.1958
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Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 (June 2020)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2023)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Dickens' Country Protection Society

The proposed outbuildings should be conditioned to control any potential residential use.

KCC Heritage

The site lies within an area of multi-period background archaeological potential. However, I consider it unlikely that these proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

Southern Water

Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the public foul sewer to be made by the applicant or developer.

To make an application visit Southern Water's Get Connected service: developerservices.southernwater.co.uk and please read our New Connections Charging Arrangements documents which are available on our website via the following link: southernwater.co.uk/developing-building/connection-charging-arrangements

Our initial investigations indicate that there are no public surface water sewers in the area to serve this development. Alternative means of draining surface water from this development are required. This should not involve disposal to a public foul sewer and should be in line with the Hierarchy of H3 of Building Regulations with preference for use of soakaways. gov.uk/government/publications/drainage-and-waste-disposal-approved-document-h

Please note: There is a private foul sewer and communication pipe within the development site.

It is possible that a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site. Therefore, should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site.

Internal Consultees

GBC Highways

Whilst I have no objections to the main building alterations as two or more cars can be readily accommodated at the property, I do not consider the proposed garage as suitable for two cars, it measures some 4.8 metres wide by 5.7 metres deep internally compared with the preferred width and length in KCC SPG4 adopted guidance of,

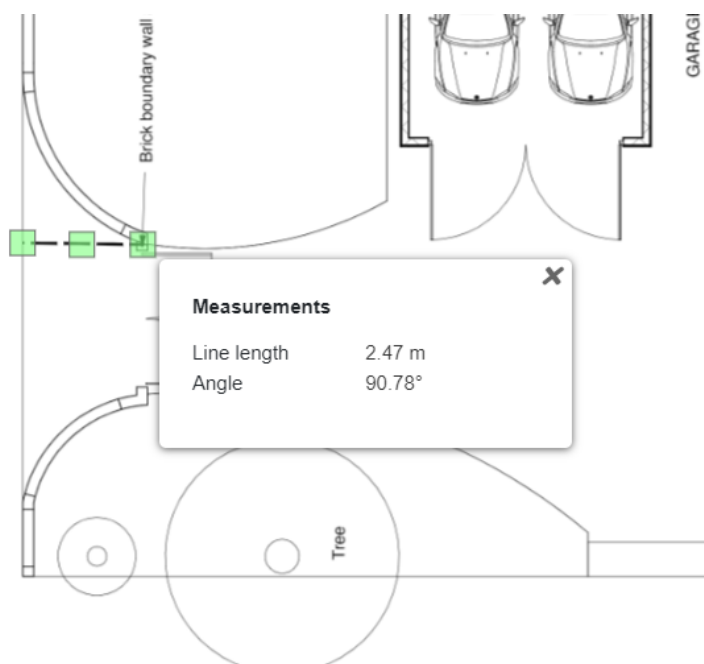
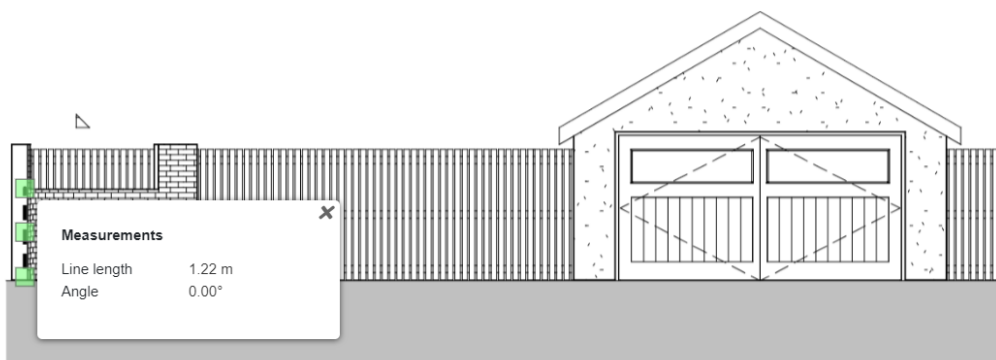
Taking these factors into account the preferred internal dimensions of a garage that should be considered for residential developments in Kent are:

Preferred Garage Size for Single Car	5.5m (length) x 3.6m (width)
Preferred Garage Size for Two Cars	5.5m (length) x 6.0m (width)

KCC SPG4.

It may be possible to reduce the width to 5.4 metres, but this would be the absolute minimum considered suitable for a double garage. There is also the possibility if two vehicles are parked in the garage, the hinged doors if fitted and depending on how they are hung could restrict the manoeuvring space. It may be better to delete the garage from the proposal or consider it suitable as only suitable for one car and cycles etc.

I do however object to the boundary alteration It is noted that gates and a front boundary wall are shown on drawing WES/276/03 Existing and Proposed Site Plan. The wall appears to be some 1.2 metres in height which is unacceptable as this would restrict visibility of drivers from the property and the gates are not set back far enough which means a vehicle could obstruct or partially obstruct the highway to the detriment of highway safety.



WES/276/03 Existing and Proposed Site Plan

Gates should be inset some 5.5 metres to ensure a vehicle is parked clear of the carriageway whilst they are opened or closed. Kent County Council Guidance states,

"11/Gates

Have you or are you considering installing gates?

The gates should not open outwards onto the public highway and you should have at least 5.5m clearance to ensure vehicles are not obstructing the public highway on accessing your property."

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/139485/Dropped-Kerb-Application-Guidance.pdf

If the gates, front boundary wall and side walls within 2.4 metres of the highway are to remain part of the application I object to the proposal on the grounds of the adverse impact on highway safety due to sightlines being compromised.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 5 properties. The consultation period expired on 10 November 2023.

No letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties.

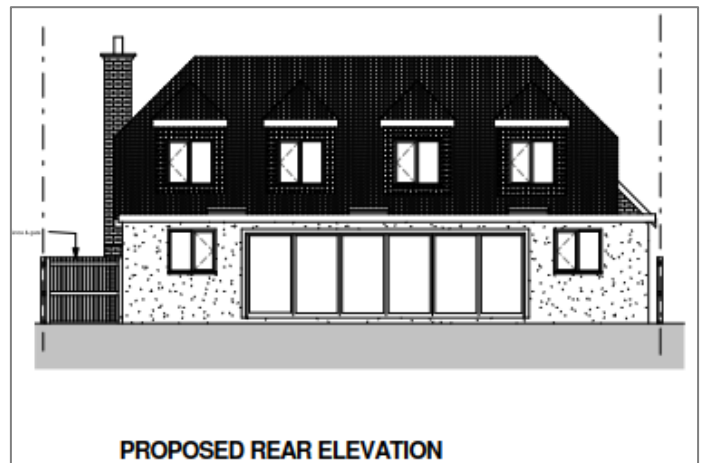
Local Ward Councillors were also consulted, and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks permission for the erection of a single storey rear extension and a first floor extension over the existing garage. The proposal also includes the conversion of the garage into habitable rooms, the erection of an outbuilding to the rear and a detached double garage to the front.

The single storey rear element will square off the rear of the house and will form a large open plan kitchen/lounge/diner. It will project approximately 2.8m beyond the existing 'family room' addition at the rear and approximately 6.2m beyond the existing rear kitchen wall. It will have a flat roof extending up to approximately 2.7m.

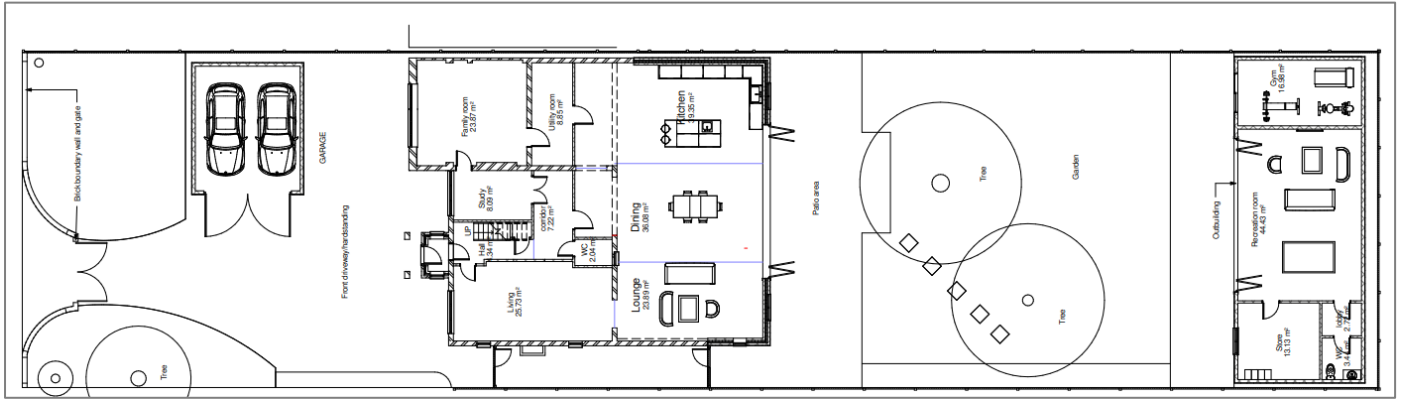


The first floor addition over the existing forward projecting garage at the front will form an ensuite bathroom for the master bedroom:

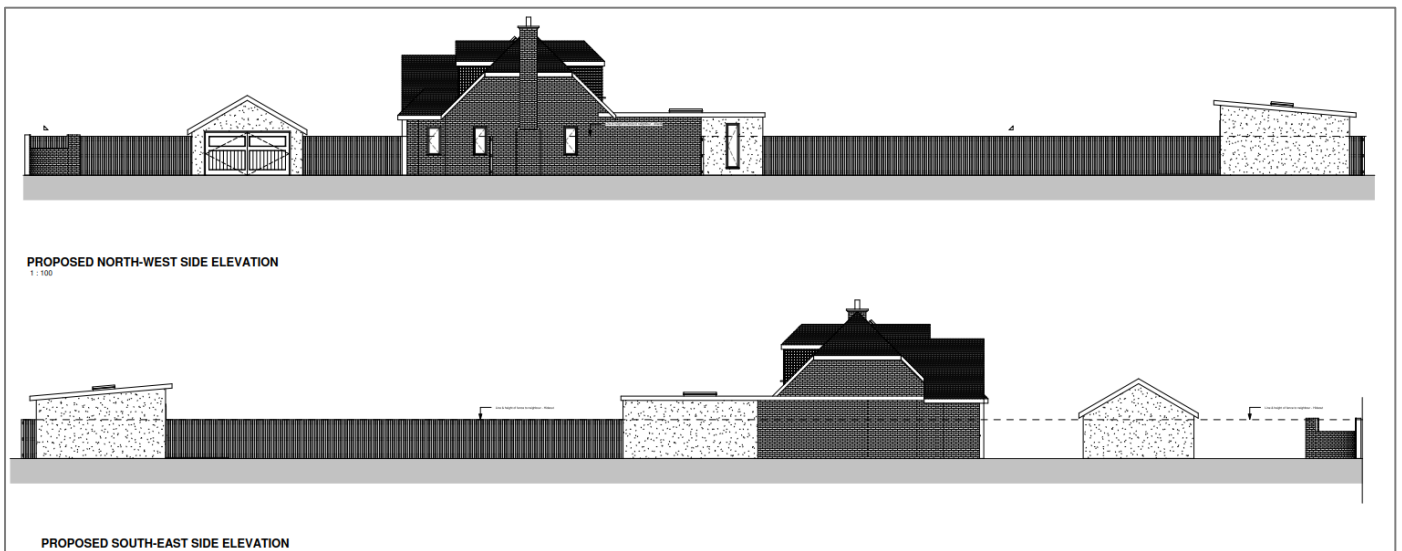


Downstairs, the existing garage will be converted to a 'family room'.

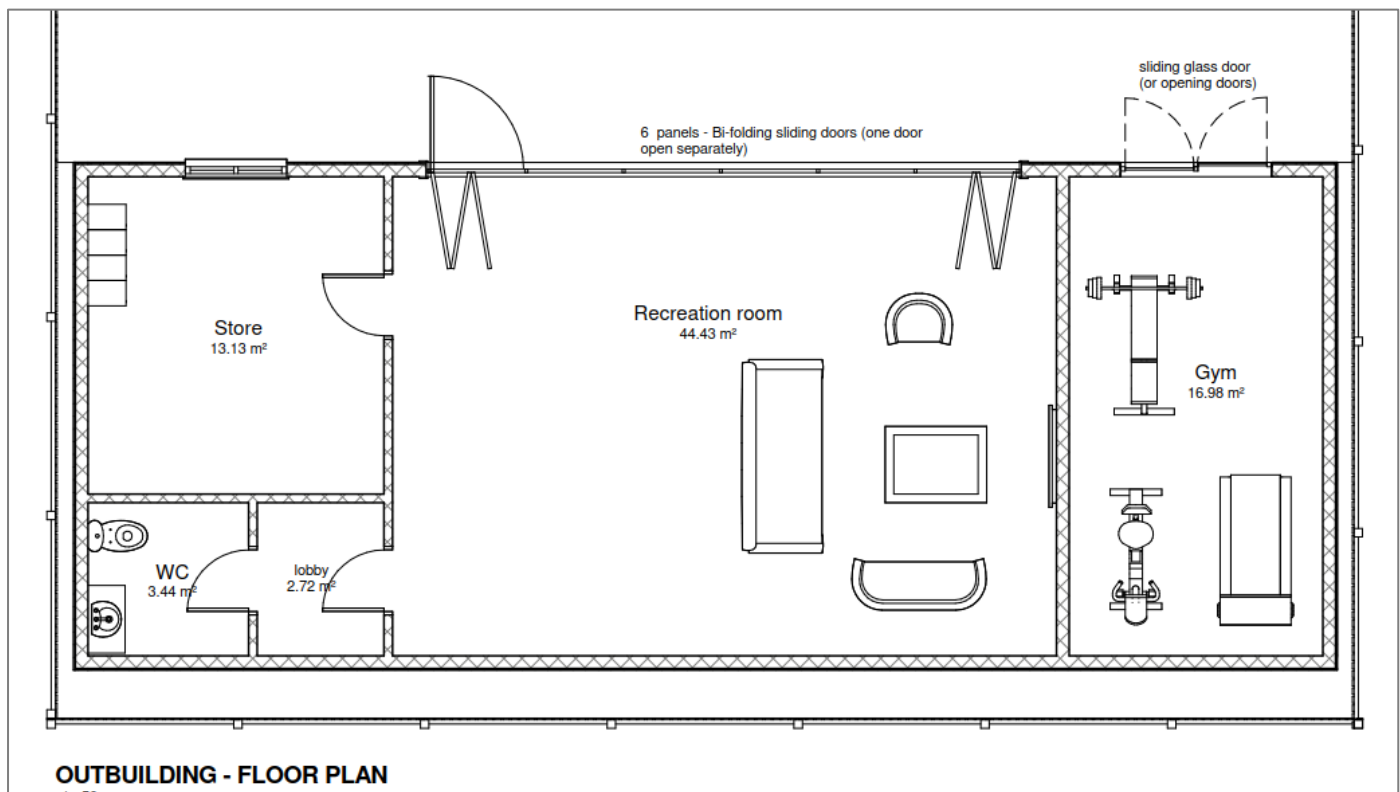
Proposed Site Plan:



A detached garage is proposed to the front of the property. This is intended for two cars. It will have a pitched roof up to 3.7m high, and 2m to eaves. The garage will be rendered.



A detached single storey outbuilding for 'recreational purposes' is also proposed at the end of the back garden. It will extend across the width of the plot, and will be approximately 15m wide by 6m deep, with a low sloping roof extending up to a maximum of 3.5m.



Finally, a new front boundary wall, pillars and gates are shown on the submitted plans. The boundary wall would be 1.2m high, the gates would be 1.7m high. As this front boundary treatment would be over 1m, planning permission would be required, and it has therefore been added to the description.



Design, Character and Appearance

Section 12 of the NPPF 2023 relates to achieving well-designed places and sets out the Government's requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 126 emphasises the importance of achieving high

quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2023 seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The site lies within the rural settlement boundary of Culverstone, inset from the Green Belt. Westwood is a one and a half storey, chalet style, detached property in a fairly generous plot, with a good size front and rear garden. The road is quiet and the area is residential.



The proposed rear extension would square off the rear of the property. It will be deep at just over 6m, but given that the property is detached, that the extension will be single storey and at the rear, and that adjacent properties have even deeper extensions, it will not adversely impact the character of the area.

The extension into the roof space of the existing forward projecting garage to create a bathroom will not significantly affect the appearance of the property, as it will extend into the existing built form of the dwelling. The change in windows and glazing on the front elevation is in keeping with the appearance of this residential property, and again would be congruent with the street scene.

With regards to the proposed outbuilding, whilst large, it is single storey and will be located at the bottom of the lengthy rear garden and would therefore not be visible from a public vantage point. Rear outbuildings at the bottom of the garden also appear to be a common feature along this stretch of properties. The proposed outbuilding will therefore have no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

It is considered that these elements of the proposal would be in line with the requirements for such additions as set out in the Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD. It is considered that overall, the extensions and outbuilding would remain proportionate in terms of the existing size of the house and would maintain the character and appearance of the area.

There are design concerns, however, with the remaining elements of the proposals: the front boundary treatment and garage.

In relation to the boundary treatment, the current front garden is open, as are a lot of the front gardens along the road. Where there are front boundary treatments, these largely comprise open fencing, trees/shrubs, or low brick walls with open timber gates, all of which are in keeping with the rural nature of this county lane. The proposed front brick wall will be more than 1.2m in height, the pillars and gates will be 1.7m high, and the gates will be solid. Such boundary treatment is considered to be out of keeping with the open rural character of the area and is therefore unacceptable.

With regards to the proposed front garage there is a similar development at the adjacent property to the south, Hideout:

Google Street View Image 2016:



This extension was approved under planning application 20151185. Part of the reason this garage was considered acceptable was because its design in timber was appropriate to the rural setting, its height was kept low at no more than 2.8m, and it is partly open which was considered to help create a visual break to the view of the front garden, in line with its previous open nature.

There are concerns with the proposed garage. Whilst the orientation of the proposed garage is acceptable, and it would be set back from the highway (further back than an adjacent front garage at Hideout to the south of the site), the rendered design is not considered to be appropriate in terms of the rural setting, and it will be prominent in terms of the proposed maximum height of 3.7m. Apart from the approved garage at neighbouring Hideout, there are no other examples of development forward of the main dwellings on the road. It is therefore important that the design of such development is appropriate in terms of the impact on the street scene, and this element of the proposal as it stands is not considered to be acceptable in terms of the rural character of the area, which is also largely open and undeveloped.

On the basis of the proposed garage and front boundary treatment, the proposal is considered to be unacceptable from a design perspective and would not comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2023, which require development to respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2023 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 130f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land.

Future Occupiers

The application does not involve increasing the size of the house in terms of number of bedrooms.

Garden space around the property will be affected by the proposed extensions/outbuildings but the rear garden in particular would regardless remain in excess of the recommended 100m² for a 5 bedroom property at approximately 300m².

Overall, it is considered that the proposals would comply with the Council's residential layout guidelines and the Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards in terms of the size of the proposed accommodation and retained garden space.

Neighbouring Properties

The proposed single storey rear extension and outbuilding will be close to the property boundaries. However, the submitted plans show no encroachment onto neighbouring land, and as the neighbouring dwellings are detached, the proposals will not have a dominant impact, particularly as they are single storey. Nor will they affect light or outlook to any significant degree. It would, however, be appropriate to restrict the use of the outbuilding in order to prevent any further impact on neighbours from potential alternative uses, such as residential.

The extension into the first floor will be at the front of the property will not extend the built form of the building, and there will not be any windows to the flank elevations that would affect neighbouring properties.

The single storey nature and position of the proposed garage to the front would not cause any sense of enclosure, loss of light, outlook or privacy to the closest neighbouring property, Hideout, which also has its own detached front garage on the other side of the boundary. Details of landscaping/boundary treatment should be conditioned to ensure that the proposal is integrated back into its surroundings, and the property boundaries and landscaping are retained.

Overall, it is considered the proposal would have an acceptable impact on neighbouring properties in terms of outlook and privacy, and daylight and sunlight. As such, the proposals comply with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 in relation to the impact on amenities.

Parking and Highways

There is no change in the number of bedrooms at the property as a result of the proposals. Regardless of this, it is considered that sufficient off-street parking space would be able to be maintained within the proposed garage and driveway space in accordance with parking standards.

However, the proposed garage is not suitable for two cars, as it measures some 4.8m wide by 5.7m deep internally compared with the preferred width and length in the KCC SPG4 adopted guidance of 5.5m by 6m.

The proposed garage would either have to be increased in size to comfortably fit two cars or reduced to fit one car plus bikes/storage.

There are more significant concerns, however, with the proposed front boundary treatment shown on the plans, which include a new brick wall and gates (see above proposed site plan). The wall appears to be some 1.2m in height, which is unacceptable as this would restrict the visibility of drivers from the property and the gates are within 2.4 metres of the highway and are therefore not set back far enough, which means a vehicle could obstruct or partially obstruct the highway to the detriment of highway safety due to sightlines being compromised.

It is therefore considered that there would be an adverse highways impact from the proposal. The proposal would fail to comply with Saved Policy T1 of the Local Plan First Review 1994 and Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Whilst there are some elements of the proposal that would be considered acceptable, the design and highways concerns about the proposed garage and front boundary treatment render the proposal unacceptable on the following grounds:

1. The height and design of the proposed detached garage and front boundary wall and gates would result in incongruous and overly dominant additions to the street scene which would detrimentally impact on the open rural appearance of the front gardens of Whitepost Lane and adversely affect the rural character of the area. These proposals are therefore contrary to the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, as the proposals fail to conserve or enhance the character of the local built and natural environment or integrate well with the surrounding area.
2. The height of the proposed front boundary wall and gates is excessive and would restrict driver visibility and the proximity of the gates to the highway could cause a vehicle to obstruct or partially obstruct the highway, which would be detrimental to highway safety on the basis of sightlines being compromised. The proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of Saved Policy T1 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 and Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	5th December 2023	Dated:	5th December 2023