

# Delegated Report

## Householder Planning Application

**Planning Application No:** 20230220

**Location:** Elmscroft Steeles Lane Meopham Gravesend

**Description:** Erection of a single storey side extension.

**Applicant:** Mr Ben Heatley

**Site Visit Date:** Desktop Assessment

### Submitted Documents/Plans

Planning Application Form;  
Site Location Plan;  
Drawing No. 01 – Existing Ground Floor Plan;  
Drawing No. 02 – Existing First Floor Plan;  
Drawing No. 03C – Proposed Ground Floor Plan;  
Drawing No. 04B – Existing & Proposed Front Elevations;  
Drawing No. 05B – Existing & Proposed Side Elevations;  
Drawing No. 06B – Existing & Proposed Rear Elevations;  
Drawing No. 07A – Existing & Proposed Side Elevations; and  
Drawing No. 08A – Existing & Proposed Site Block Plans.

### Relevant Planning History

| Reference | Description                                                                                                             | Decision   | Decision Date |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 20220458  | Erection of single storey side extension to existing dwelling house.                                                    | Refused    | 14.07.2022    |
| 20060211  | Erection of an attached double garage at the side and single storey front extension to form a replacement porch and wc. | Permission | 05.05.2006    |
| 19850290  | Erection of two storey side extension to form enlarged lounge and enlarged bedroom and bathroom over                    | Permission | 19.07.1985    |
| 19780644  | Erection of an extension at first floor level to form bedroom and box room at side                                      | Permission | 26.10.1978    |
| 19780308  | Outline application for erection of detached dwellinghouse                                                              | Refused    | 17.05.1978    |
| 19560119  | Erection of pair of private garages                                                                                     | Permission | 08.08.1956    |

### Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport

- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

#### Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 4 – Decision making
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 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);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

### **Consultations, Publicity and Representations**

#### KCC – Heritage

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, it is considered unlikely that these proposals, immediately adjacent to the existing dwelling, would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

#### Meopham Parish Council

Meopham Parish Council raises no objection subject to a condition preventing the extension becoming a separate hereditament.

#### KCC – Public Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way NS360 lies to the north of the site. The route may be affected by the application, and I therefore enclose a copy of the Public Rights of Way network map showing the definitive line of this 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.

#### GBC – Highways Officer

I have no highway objections, the property has more than adequate car parking provision. However, to comply with SPG4 a secure cycle parking space should be provided for the additional bedroom.

#### Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by a press notice, site notice and individual neighbour letters to 3 properties with an overall consultation expiry date of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2023. No letters of representation have been received.

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

### **Officer's Analysis**

#### Background

##### *Previous application*

This application is a resubmission of a previous refused application (Planning Ref. 20220458) for the erection of single storey side extension to existing dwelling house, which was refused in July 2022 for the following reasons;

- 1. The proposal represents a disproportionate addition and exceeds the one third limit to the original dwelling, which will harm the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), Policies CS01 (Sustainable Development), CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Sections 12 and 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*
- 2. By virtue of the size and scale, the proposed side extension is considered to be unacceptable, as it is a dominant and un-subservient addition to the application property, that is considered to be detrimental to the character and appearance of the property itself. The development is therefore contrary to the requirements of paragraphs 130, 174 and 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 10.4 of the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD, October 2021.*

A post refusal pre-application was submitted to seek advice on addressing the above reasons for refusal. Within the pre-application response, it was concluded that taking into consideration the attached double garage that could still be implemented as part of the 2006 planning permission, a smaller side extension with a reduction in ridge height and footprint that does not project past the rear building line of the host dwelling, may be looked upon more favourably.

Therefore the current application seeks to address the previous reasons for refusal and the advice within the pre-application submission.

The differences between the refused and current scheme are as follows;

- A reduction in projection from the side of the existing property by 1m from 4.7m to 4.6m;
- A reduction in length of 2.02m from 8.99m to 6.97m;
- A reduction in eaves height of 0.08m from 2.65m to 2.57m;
- A reduction in ridge height of 1.06m from 5.55m to 4.49m; and
- A reduction in internal floor area of 10.72m<sup>2</sup> from 37.33m<sup>2</sup> to 26.61m<sup>2</sup>.

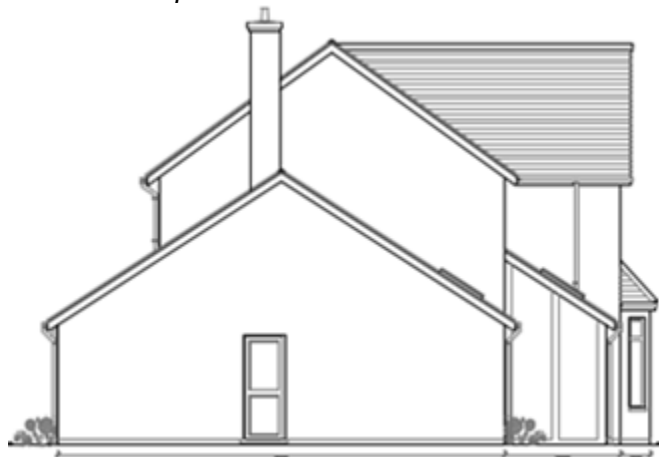
*Previous Proposal Front Elevation*



*Current Proposal Front Elevation*



*Previous Proposal Side Elevation*



*Current Proposal Side Elevation*



*Previous Proposal Rear Elevation*



*Current Proposal Rear Elevation*



#### *'Original' dwelling and previous development*

It would appear that the original dwelling was constructed prior to 1940. Looking at the planning history, together with historic maps and plans, it would appear that it has already been extended from its original construction and that planning permission Ref. 19780644 for the *erection of an extension at first floor level to form bedroom and box room at side* and Ref. 19850290 for the *erection of two storey side extension to form enlarged lounge and enlarged bedroom and bathroom over*, have both been implemented and therefore do not form part of the 'original' dwelling.

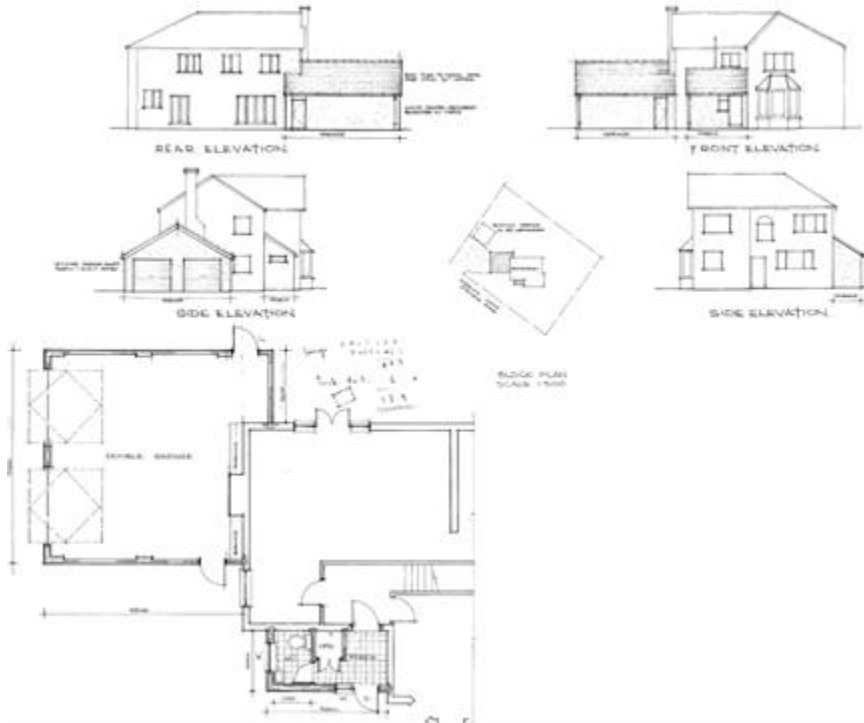
Planning permission was also granted in 2006 for the *erection of an attached double garage at the side and single storey front extension to form a replacement porch and wc* (Ref. 20060211). It would appear that this permission was never fully implemented and only the replacement porch and wc were constructed. However, it must be noted that in terms of the attached garage shown on the approved plans, this could still be constructed under this permission. Condition 1 of the decision notice states;

1. *The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of*

*three years beginning with the date on which this permission granted;*

By constructing the porch, Condition 1 of planning permission 20060211 has already been satisfied and could therefore still be implemented fully.

#### *Approved Plans for Ref. 20060211*



In relation to the detached double garage, this was given permission in 1956 (Ref. 19560119) and is therefore also not part of the 'original' dwelling. However as this is a detached non-habitable building, this would not form part of the calculations to the extensions to the property.

#### Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located in the Green Belt and in the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area as defined on the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy policies map and this must be the starting point for determining this application.

The application site at Elmscroft, Steeles Lane is a detached two storey dwelling set in a large corner plot. The property sits at an angle to Steeles Lane and A227 South Street and has extensive soft landscaping and trees which obscure the majority of the views. The property benefits from a large detached double garage to the side and extensive driveway providing road parking for more than three cars.

#### *View from the A227 South Street*



#### *View from Steeles Lane*



The proposal is for the erection of single storey side extension to existing dwelling house. The extension

would project 4.6m from the existing side elevation, be 6.97m in length, 2.57m in height to the eaves and 4.49m to the ridge with a pitch roof with 2no. rooflights to the front.

The proposal would create an attached annexe consisting of an open plan living area with kitchenette, ensuite and snug. In addition to having an internal access door, it would also benefit from its own access from the side. Whilst the supporting application form does not state its purpose, the proposed floor plans would indicate that this would provide an annexe.

*Existing Front Elevation*



*Proposed Front Elevation*



*Existing Side Elevation*



*Proposed Side Elevation*



*Existing Rear Elevation*



*Proposed Rear Elevation*



The key issues in consideration of this application is whether;

- the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt;

- impact on openness and the purposes of the Green Belt;
- very special circumstances;
- character and appearance;
- the proposal would impact the living conditions of future occupiers;
- the proposal would impact on adjoining properties;
- the proposal would result in any parking and highway safety issues; and
- the proposal would adversely impact on the landscape character of the site.

### The appropriateness of the development within the Green Belt

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt is development that by definition, is 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.

The NPPF (2021) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. At paragraph 138 the NPPF (2021) lists the 5 purposes which the Green Belt serves. Of particular relevance in this case is that it assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The NPPF (2021) makes it clear that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, with a small number of exceptions (paragraph 149). The listed exceptions include the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) (LPCS) prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it 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 (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in (LPCS).

Furthermore, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) (LPFR), which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF (2021), the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully; with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 the NPPF (2021).

In particular Policy C13 (LPFR) 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 (2021) and should be afforded weight.

In determining proposals for residential extensions in the Green Belt an assessment will be made against the impact of the 'original' existing development. The original building is the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, however, for older homes constructed prior to July 1st, 1948, the 'original dwelling' refers to the floorspace of the dwelling as it was on this date. Any additions that have occurred since the 'original' dwelling date are considered cumulatively and will be counted as part of the overall increase in floorspace of the dwelling when new additions are being assessed. The reason for this is small reductions in openness, repeated many times, can have a cumulatively detrimental effect.

The existing dwelling in this case has been extended since its original construction, as laid out within the Background section. The following calculations show the dwelling as built, the existing extensions and the proposed.

**Existing dwelling (as built)**

Ground Floor: 70.82m<sup>2</sup>

First Floor: 48.5m<sup>2</sup>

Total: 119.32m<sup>2</sup>

**Existing Dwelling (as extended)**

Ground Floor: 88.99m<sup>2</sup>

First Floor: 78.6m<sup>2</sup>

Total floor space increase from dwelling as built: 48.27m<sup>2</sup>

Total Overall Floorspace: 167.59m<sup>2</sup>

Percentage increase over original dwelling: 40.45%

**Proposed Extension**

Ground Floor: 26.61m<sup>2</sup>

Total floor space proposed: **194.2m<sup>2</sup>**

Total floor space increase of proposed extension over original dwelling: **22%**

Total floor space increase of existing and proposed extensions over original dwelling: **62.45%**

Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) provides the local interpretation of national policy and states there will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.

In this case the increased floorspace exceeds the one third limit and therefore is not within the parameters set by Policy C13 (LPFR). Therefore, it will be necessary to assess the proposal on the overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.

The original dwelling was a modest two storey detached dwelling. It has been extended on both sides at two storey, creating a large two storey detached dwelling. As highlighted in the background section, the proposed single storey side extension would be located in the same location as the approved attached garage which has not been erected, but could however still be implemented as part of the 2006 planning permission. The attached garage as shown on the approved plans would have a projection of 6.5m from the existing side elevation, a depth of 7m which includes a 2.4m projection beyond the rear elevation of the main dwelling, a ridge height greater than the current proposal and an overall external footprint of 45.5m<sup>2</sup>. The proposed side extension would have an external footprint of 32.03m<sup>2</sup>, a reduction of 11.81m<sup>2</sup> from the previous submission of 43.84m<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the projection, depth and height has been reduced from both the previous refused scheme and the approved attached garage. Therefore, taking all the above into consideration, the proposed side extension would result in less bulk and massing than both the previous refused scheme and the approved attached garage.

Overall, it is considered that the current revised scheme has been designed to match the host dwelling and would appear as a modest extension that would have less bulk and massing than the previously approved attached garage. It is therefore considered that the proposed extension, would have less visual impact than the approved garage and would be an acceptable addition to the dwelling and would not result in a detrimental impact in terms of bulk or appearance of the dwelling.

In summary it is considered that this extension is in accordance with Policy CS02 (LPCS) and Section 13 of the NPPF (2021).

### Impact on openness and the purposes of the Green Belt

Having determined that the proposal is an inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is necessary to assess the effect on the openness and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The NPPF (2021) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

The proposed extension would project approx. 4.6m from the existing principal side elevation which sits at an angle to Steeles Lane, bringing it closer to the front boundary. Looking at the original property, which was a modest 3 bedroom dwelling, prior to being extended, the proposed side extension would increase the external footprint, however as highlighted in the previous section, the proposed extension would have less bulk, massing and external footprint than the previously approved garage. Therefore and whilst the proposed development if assessed alone would result in a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt, taking all the history of the property into account and assessing on its own merits, the proposed extension would result in less impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the previously approved garage and would therefore be acceptable in this instance.

Therefore, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy CS02 (LPCS) and Section 13 of the NPPF (2021).

### *External works*

It has been stated on the application form and submitted drawings, that all external materials would match the existing.

### *Satellite View*



### Very Special Circumstances

Para. 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Para. 148 states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. '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 proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

No 'very special circumstances' have been put forward in the submission and it would not usually be relevant in such an application as this, however in this instance it is considered that the extant planning

permission for the attached double garage is a material planning consideration, and the proposed side extension would have less impact and would therefore be considered 'very special circumstances'.

### Character and appearance

The application property is located on the corner of Steeles Lane and South Street (A227) within the Green Belt. The property is located at an angle and is obscured by maturing trees and landscaping and as such views are obscured. The proposed single storey side extension would have a pitch roof which would not project further to the front or rear than main host dwelling. The proposed extension with modest side projection and low ridge height would appear as a subservient addition to the dwelling and would not dominate the northeast side elevation when viewed from Steeles Lane. Paragraph 10.4 of the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021) states that *extensions should generally be no greater than half the width of the original building*. The original dwelling as constructed had a width of 8.29m. Therefore with the proposed extension having a width of 4.6m, would be more than half the width of the original dwelling, however when viewed against the property as it stands today, it would not dominate the side or front and rear elevations and would appear as a subservient addition. Therefore, in this instance, it is considered that the proposed extension would result in an acceptable addition to the property.

Taking account of all the above, it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with Policies CS02 and CS19 (LPCS) and Sections 12 and 13 of the NPPF (2021).

### Impact on future occupiers

The revised NPPF (2021) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The proposed development would be used as an attached annexe and would provide a good level of accommodation for its occupant. In addition, the property benefits from an extensive garden and the proposed extension would not have a significant impact on the private amenity area. As such, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the living space of the main dwelling and as such accords with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

### Impact on neighbouring properties

The impact on neighbouring properties is considered with regard to criteria specified within Policy CS19, which states 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.

Given the separation distance between properties and the scale of the proposal, it is considered the proposal would not result in loss of light, privacy, outlook and increased overshadowing. No objections have been received. As such the development is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) in respect of the living conditions for neighbouring properties.

### Parking and Highways

The proposal would result in an annexe with one additional bedroom. However the existing detached garage and driveway provide parking for more than three vehicles and therefore the development would accord with KCC Vehicle Parking Standards, and the proposals would therefore comply with Saved Policy P3 of the Local Plan and Policy CS11 (LPCS).

### Any Other Material Planning Considerations

#### *Landscape Character Area*

Section 15 of the NPPF (2021) highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced and the greatest weight will be

given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting.

The application site is located within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. The topography is gently undulating with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland. The area is characterised by neat pattern of small square fields in the south, broader irregular shaped fields to the north, with narrow lanes and road lined with hedgerows. The condition is good and the guidelines are to conserve and reinforce.

Due to the layout of the site, position of the proposed extension and surrounding built form, it is considered that there would be no direct impact on the landscape character area. As such the proposal would accord with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the NPPF (2021).

### **Conclusion & Recommendation**

For the reasons given above, it is considered that the previous reasons for refusal have been overcome and the proposed extension would be an acceptable addition to the property which would have less impact on the bulk and massing of the property than the previously approved attached garage. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not result in a detrimental impact on the Green Belt or the dwelling and character of the area, and is considered to be in accordance with local or national planning policy for the reasons laid out above and is therefore recommended for permission.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

|                      |                           |                     |                                                                                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Case Officer:</b> | Mrs Amanda Grout          | <b>Team Leader:</b> | Miss Faye Hobbs                                                                       |
| <b>Signed:</b>       | <i>A Grout</i>            | <b>Signed:</b>      |  |
| <b>Dated:</b>        | 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 | <b>Dated:</b>       | 16 May 2023                                                                           |