Gravesham Borough Council

Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20251270

Location: Former Chalk Scout Hall Castle Lane Gravesend Kent

Description: Erection of a detached two storey 3 bedroom self-build chalet bungalow.

Applicant: Mr Jamie Masters, Bespoke Builds Ltd

Site Visit Date: 3 February 2026

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
OS Plan
Land Registry Title Plan
Drawing no. P01 (Existing Site Plan)
Drawing no. P02 (Proposed Site Plan)
Drawing no. P03 (Plans and Elevations)
Planning/Design/Access Statement
Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
Slate information
Self-Build Form

Relevant Planning History

Many of the applications relating to this site are condition applications. The most relevant planning applications have been included below.

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230851	Retention of a temporary welfare unit to provide toilet and shower facilities, canteen, office and bedroom.	Refused	21.09.2023
20210514	Demolition of the existing building and erection of two detached 3/4 bedroom chalet style bungalows.	Permitted	07.04.2022

Development Plan

<u>Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)</u>

- 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 Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 – Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- SPG 4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Dickens' Country Protection Society

The Society would wish to raise an objection. The site plan for the proposed development is in direct conflict with drawing PO4, approved under application 2023/0849 for the site of two bungalows. The site is amenity land for No.8.

The development, if approved, would rob No.8 of amenity land and result in a cramped form of development, out of character with the area. The on-site parking provision for the proposed additional bungalow appears in adequate.

Internal Consultees

GBC Environmental Protection

There is no objection to this application. The submitted CEMP is acceptable for this size of development. The following is advised:

Smoke Control Informative

The proposed development is situated in a smoke control area. As such, only authorised smokeless fuels as listed in the Smoke Control Areas (Authorised Fuels) Regulations 1991 shall be burnt or fireplaces/appliances exempted by Smoke Control (Exempted Fireplaces) Orders shall be utilised. Exempt appliances are appliances (ovens including pizza and tandoori ovens, wood burners and stoves) which have been exempted by Statutory Instruments (Orders) under the Clean Air Act 1993. These have passed tests to confirm that they are capable of burning an unauthorised or inherently smoky solid fuel without emitting smoke. They must be fitted and used according to manufacturer's instructions and they can only be used for the fuel for which they are designed. When purchasing fuels and fireplaces the applicant should clarify with the vendor their suitability with respect to use in Smoke Control Areas. For further information, including confirmation that an appliance and/or fuel is suitable for use in a smoke control area, the applicant should contact the Council's Regulatory Services air.quality@gravesham.gov.uk

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 5 properties and on site. The overall consultation period expired on 5 February 2026.

No letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties.

Officer’s Analysis

Proposal

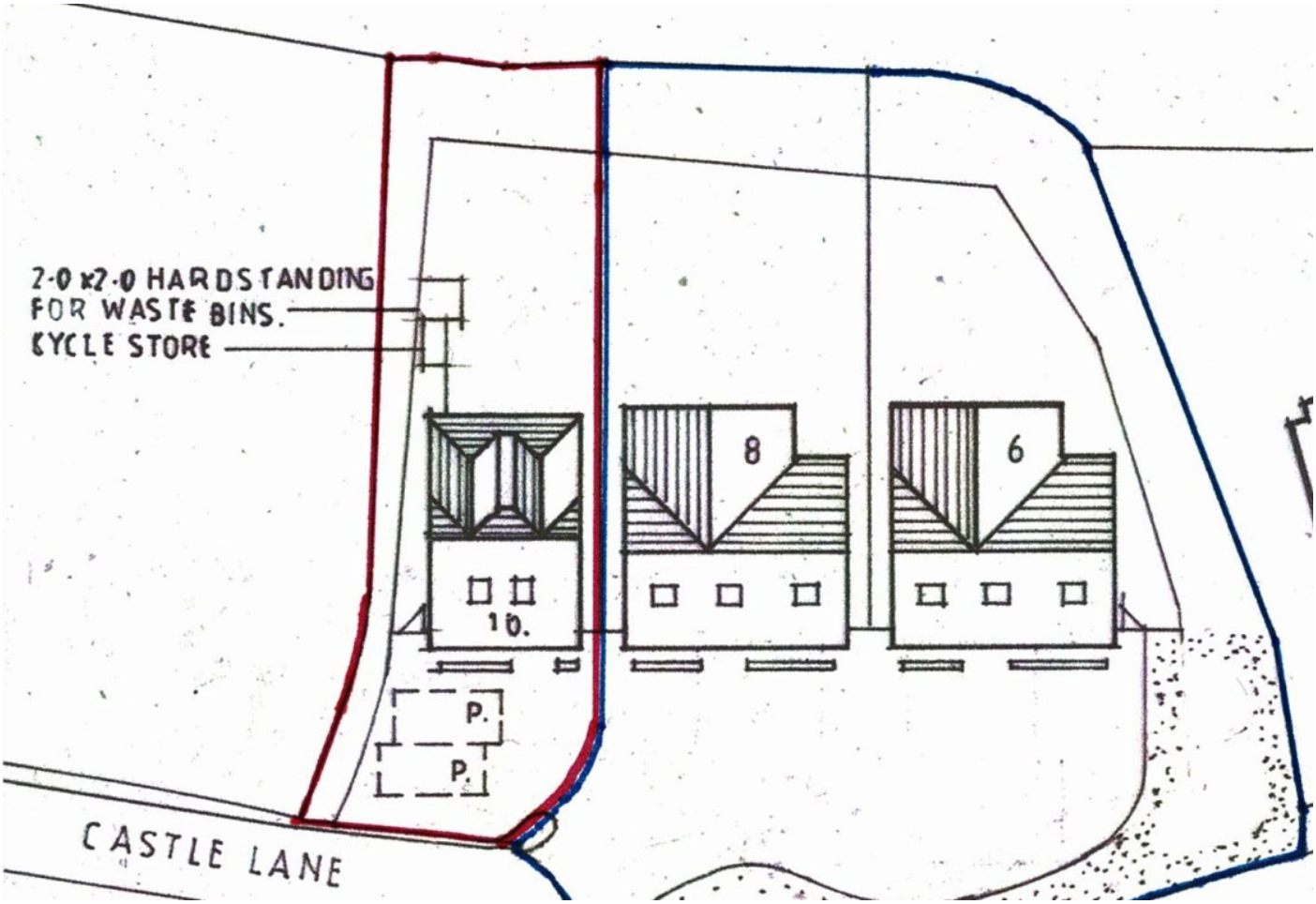
This application seeks permission for the erection of a detached two storey 3 bedroom self-build chalet bungalow.

The dwelling would comprise a hallway, WC, kitchen and open plan living/dining space on the ground floor and 3 bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. The building would be a smaller version of and would match the style of the two detached dwellings immediately adjacent to the south. The materials are proposed as follows:

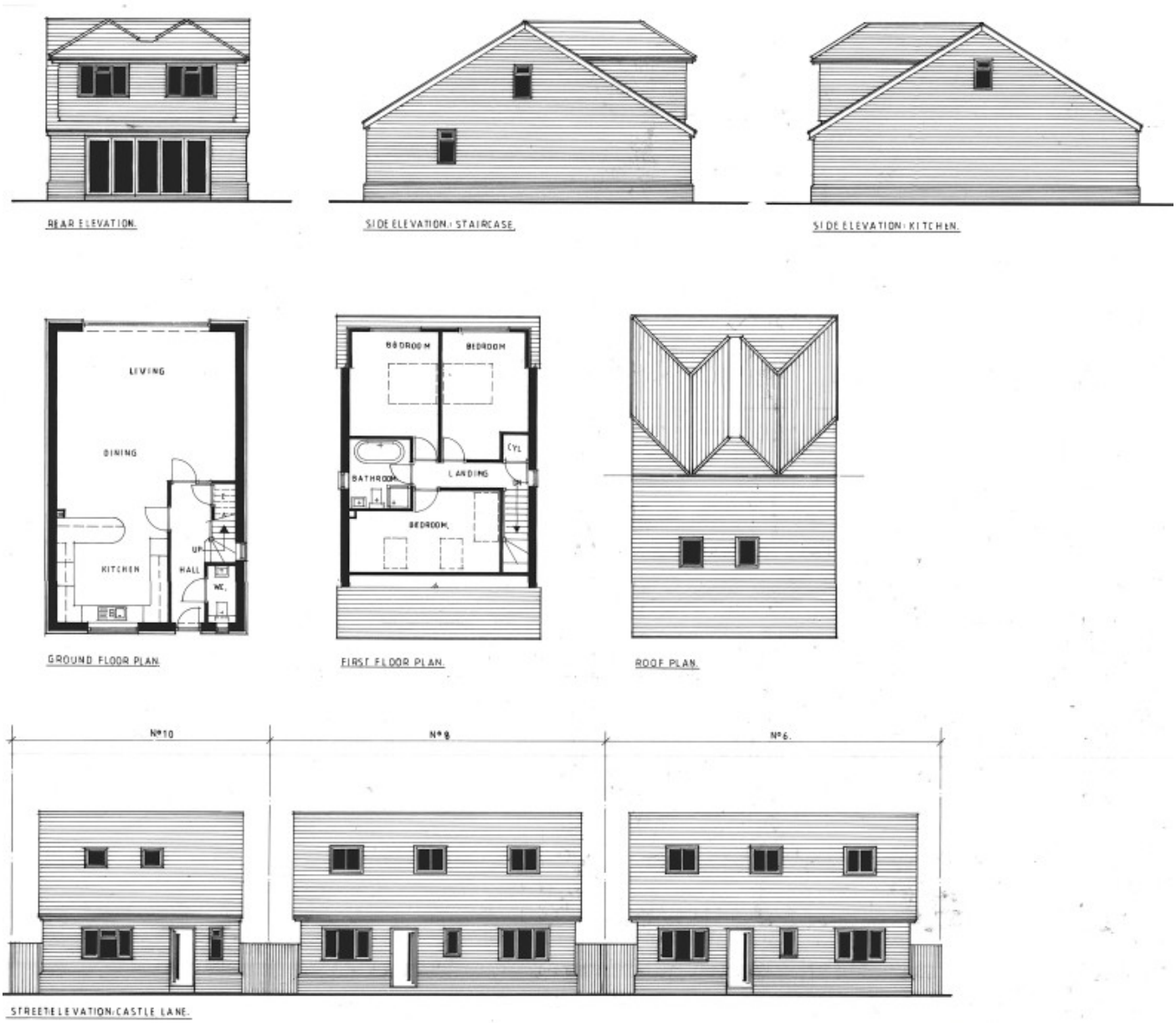
- Facing bricks to be Ibstock Grosvenor county mix.
- Cladding to be cement fibre board Anthracite Grey.
- Roof tiles to be Eternit slate.
- Windows to be powdered coated aluminium in black.
- The only lighting to be provided is adjacent to the entrance door and is to be operated in conjunction with a PIR system.

There would be two parking spaces to the front of the property, and bin storage and cycle storage (in a shed) at the rear, via a side access to the rear garden.

Proposed Block Plan:



Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations:



Principle Issues

The application site is located in the countryside, outside any rural settlement and in the Green Belt. It is also within the Higham Arable Farmland Landscape Character Area. Taking into account these designations, the main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are the principle of the development in the Green Belt, and the impacts on landscape character and the appearance of the surrounding area, on residential amenities and on highways.

It should be noted that the site immediately adjacent to the application site had permission granted for the erection of two detached 3/4 bedroom chalet style bungalows under application 20210514. The principle of residential development in this location is therefore already established.

Green Belt Matters

Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 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 the Core Strategy 2014.

Green Belts are of great importance. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by preserving the open and permanent characteristics of Green Belts (paragraph 142 of the NPPF 2024). Paragraph 153 of the NPPF 2024 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. '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

Any harm to the Green Belt should be given substantial weight. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless either one of the exceptions in paragraph 154 applies.

The submitted Planning Statement considers the development is potentially not inappropriate under paragraph 154 (b) of the NPPF 2024, which relates to the following:

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposal can be considered under this exemption, as it involves previously developed land (the site was part of the former Scout Hall site). The main consideration in relation to whether this exemption applies relates to whether substantial harm is caused to the openness of the Green Belt. This matter will be considered further below.

Harm to Openness

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF 2024 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Paragraph 013 of the Planning Practice Guidance 2025 on Green Belts looks to assess the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt by taking into account the spatial and visual aspects of a development, its duration and remediability, and the activity levels generated. These matters must be considered in relation to the proposal.

As previously stated, the application site, whilst currently void of development, formed part of the former Scout Hall site. Residential development in the form of two detached chalet style bungalows has already been completed on the wider site.

Current Google Earth Image:

In terms of the spatial impact of the proposal, the proposed dwelling will cover a fair portion of the site in terms of the built footprint and building height and will therefore have an impact on its openness. Due to the position of the site on Castle Lane, the visual impact of the proposal would be discernible from a public vantage point. However, the development would be read in the context of existing surrounding residential development, which includes the two new houses built on the wider former Scout Hall site. Opposite to the west of the site, the higher density residential development on Castle Lane and Filborough Way is within the urban boundary, and whilst the land to the east of Castle Lane is outside the urban boundary and less densely built up, there are residential properties extending either side of the application site to the north and south. The development of the site in the manner proposed will result in a limited and localised visual impact, as the proposed dwelling would fit in with the surrounding residential development.

Given the nature of the proposed development, which consists of one dwelling, the activity levels generated would also have a similar impact to the surrounding uses.

On the basis of the limited spatial, visual and activity impacts on the Green Belt, it is considered that the

proposal would not have a substantial harm on the openness of the site.

Conclusion on Green Belt

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2024 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the listed exceptions apply. In this case, due to the fact that the proposal would not have a substantial impact on the openness of the site, the proposal would meet the exception criteria and as a result the Green Belt would not be harmed.

The exemption under paragraph 155 has not been considered as the proposal complies with paragraph 154.

Landscape Impact

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 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.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 aims for development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

The application site is located in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area within the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (GLCA) and as such, Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2014 is also relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham LCA will be taken into account in determining applications.

In relation to the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area, one of the key characteristics of the area is the open, gently undulating farmland, which provides high visibility across the area. The overall condition of the landscape is poor and has moderate sensitivity. It is recommended that key landscape elements should be restored and created. Proposals that introduce extensive or obtrusive elements within visually sensitive areas of the open landscape should be resisted.

The application site is read in the context of surrounding residential development and is therefore not considered to be within a visually sensitive area. This proposal for one dwelling will not adversely affect the wider landscape character area, and the proposal will comply with the requirements of Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

However, no landscaping submissions have been included and whilst the submitted Planning Statement does discuss retention of existing planting, there is currently very little planting at the front of the site. Given the rural location, and the concern about paving over the whole frontage for parking, it is therefore considered appropriate to condition landscaping details to ensure the site frontage is appropriately landscaped taking account of its position in the Landscape Character Area.

Design, Character and Appearance

Section 12 of the NPPF 2024 relates to achieving well-designed and beautiful places and sets out the Government’s requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 131 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 135 of the NPPF 2024 also 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.

Whilst it is recognised that development which makes effective use of land should be supported (paragraph 124 of the NPPF 2024), this comes with the proviso that it should safeguard and improve the environment and not conflict with other policies in the NPPF. Relevant to this proposal, paragraph 129 of the NPPF states that developments that makes efficient use of land should be supported, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing, the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), and the importance of securing well-designed places.

In a similar vein, Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy sets out that new housing development is expected to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes, taking into account the existing character of the area and evidence of local need to create sustainable and balanced communities. The proposal forms a 3 bedroom detached dwelling and would therefore be supported by Policy CS14, providing design and character is also acceptable.

Policy CS15 of the Core Strategy seeks to achieve a minimum density for new residential development in the rural area of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph), subject to the overriding consideration that all new housing will be at a density that is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area. The application site measures 0.04 hectares; 1 dwelling on this site would be below the density target at 25 dph and would be appropriate for the area.

The layout and design of the proposed dwelling is a smaller version of the existing dwellings approved under application 20210514 immediately adjacent the proposal site to the south. The dwelling would be a chalet style bungalow, with accommodation in the roof, and with parking to the frontage and a garden to the rear. The materials are proposed to match the existing new dwellings. The proposed dwelling would therefore be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding residential development, in accordance with the requirements of the aforementioned policies.

<u>Residential Amenity</u>

The NPPF 2024 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 135f). 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, and avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution.

Future Occupiers

The proposal complies with the Technical Housing Standards - Nationally Described Space Standards 2015 in terms of the size of the proposed accommodation, which with a gross internal floor area (GIFA) of approximately 120m^2, exceeds the minimum standard for a 3 bedroom, 2 storey dwelling (the largest 6 person, 3 bed unit would require a minimum GIFA of 102m^2).

The proposed rear garden would measure approximately 166m^2 and would be 16.7m deep. The proposed accommodation and amenity space would therefore be acceptable for future occupiers.

There are no neighbouring properties that would cause any unacceptable amenity impacts on the future occupiers of the dwellings in terms of loss of light or privacy.

The garden area for the existing new dwelling constructed to the southern boundary of the application site (No. 8) will be reduced by the construction of the proposed dwelling in this space. However, this garden area will be approximately 200sqm in area and therefore will exceed the 100sqm minimum area for a 4 bedroom house set out in the SPG2 Council's Residential Layout Guidance. The remaining garden area for No. 8 will therefore be acceptable.

Neighbouring Properties

The neighbouring property most likely to be affected by the proposal would be the recently constructed new dwelling positioned to the southern boundary of the application site (No. 8). The neighbouring property to the north (No. 32 Castle Lane) is well separated by its generous side garden, and land level differences mean that the proposed dwelling will be largely screened from the view of this property:

View to south across side garden of No. 32 Castle Lane:

In terms of the impact on the neighbouring new dwelling No. 8, the proposed new house will not project beyond the front or rear building lines and will not have any dominating impact on the existing property or affect light or privacy to any significant degree. Existing flank windows to No. 8 are all non-habitable (the only first floor window serves a bathroom). Ground floor windows for the existing and proposed properties are obscured by boundary treatments:

20210514 Approved Elevations and Floor Plans

As such, the proposal would comply with the requirements of the SPG2 Residential Layout Guidelines (2020), Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135f of the NPPF 2024.

Parking and Highways

A 3 bedroom dwelling would require a maximum of 2 car parking spaces. There are 2 parking spaces proposed to the front of the new dwelling. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with parking standards. There have been no objections in relation to parking from neighbouring properties.

The existing access for the two other new dwellings would be used to serve the application site. This has already been approved and the addition of the use of this access for one new dwelling would not cause any significant highway concerns.

A shed is proposed within the rear garden which will provide cycle storage space for two cycles.

The proposal would comply with Saved Policies T1, T5 and P3 of the Local Plan and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Environmental Protection

The application has a low environmental risk. There is no objection to the proposal and the submitted CEMP is acceptable for this size of development. A smoke control informative is advised.

Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar / Special Protection Area (SPA) – SAMMS Tariff:

As the application site is within 6km of the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar Sites and would provide additional residential accommodation, the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in-combination, on the coastal North Kent Special Protection Areas (SPAs)/Ramsar sites from recreational disturbance on the over-wintering bird interest. On this basis a tariff of £337.49 is required (given there is one additional dwelling proposed on the site).

The applicant has paid this tariff, and the Local Planning Authority can be satisfied that the proposal would put

in place adequate measures to mitigate potential significant adverse effects on the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar Sites, which would comply with paragraphs 187 and 194 of the NPPF 2024 and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Biodiversity net gain is a way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This statutory framework is referred to as 'biodiversity net gain' in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains.

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

In this case, the proposed development is covered by an exemption: it is a self-build development and meets the conditions necessary to qualify for such an exemption. Therefore, the development would not be subject to biodiversity net gain. However, the submitted Planning Statement sets out that a bird and bat box and two bug hotels are to be provided on the site. Details of these can be included in an appropriate condition to ensure their provision on site.

Conclusion

The proposed development would provide a net increase of 1 dwelling on the site and would offer a small contribution towards meeting general housing need in the Borough. Accordingly, this weighs in support of the application, particularly where evidence has shown that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing supply.

This also has to be balanced against safeguarding and improving the environment, matters which are sought throughout the NPPF 2024. In this case, as discussed above, it is considered that the proposal is not inappropriate in the Green Belt and would not cause substantial harm to the openness. Furthermore, it is also acceptable in relation to the design and impact on the application site and the character and appearance of the surrounding buildings and area, and with regards to residential amenity and highways matters, and complies with the requirements of Policies CS11, CS12, CS14, CS15 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policies T1, T5 and P3 of the Local Plan 1994, and paragraphs 115, 124, 129, 131, 135 and 154 of the NPPF 2024. The application is therefore recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Permission subject to conditions.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	**Team Leader:**	Mrs Faye Walsh

Signed:	K. Parkin	**Signed:**	
Dated:	4 March 2026	**Dated:**	06 March 2026