



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240667

Location: Home Acre Melliker Lane Meopham Gravesend

Description: Demolition of existing porch and erection of replacement porch, alterations to fenestration including windows and doors in new locations and removal or alteration of existing openings, conversion of garage to a habitable room and external render and thermal insulation.

Applicant: Mrs Marta Pochtowska

Site Visit Date: 05.08.2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Drawing no. D-33 – Plans As Existing;
- Drawing no. D-34 – Roof Plan & Section As Existing;
- Drawing no. D-35 – Elevations As Existing;
- Drawing no. D-36 Rev. A – Plans As Proposed;
- Drawing no. D-37 Rev. A – Roof Plan & Section As Proposed;
- Drawing no. D-38 Rev. B – Elevations As Proposed;
- Drawing no. D-39 – Site Location Plan, Block Plan Existing & Proposed; and
- Design & Access Statement.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20240309	Erection of a two storey front and first floor side extension.	Refused	29.05.2024
20240269	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed construction of a front wall and gate.	Granted	20.05.2024
20240057	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed erection of a wall and gate.	Refused	18.03.2024
20231296	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate in respect of the proposed erection of shed, summer house, greenhouse and car port with drive-way extension.	Granted	09.02.2024
20231267	Prior approval application for a single storey rear extension with a depth of 7.90 metres, maximum height of 4.00 metres and eaves height of 2.43 metres.	Prior Approval Not Required	18.01.2024
20230792	Erection of a first storey side extension and a double storey front extension including removal of porch and alteration of garage including conversion to a habitable	Refused	13.10.2023

	room and changes to fenestration.		
19520182	Erection of a dwelling house	Permitted	01.08.1952
19500204	Erection of a dwellinghouse	Permitted	08.03.1951

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 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

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)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 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

Consultees

GBC Environmental Protection

No comments to make on this application.

Meopham Parish Council

We would object to this proposal as it was out of character with a country street scene in the green belt by way of bulk and impact on the openness of the green belt.

Neighbouring properties

3 surrounding properties were consulted plus site notice – overall consultation expiry date was 30.08.2024 – no responses received.

Officer's Analysis

The application site consists of a two storey detached dwelling which has been extended with a single storey side and front extension forming a double garage and front porch (permitted under ref. 19860810) and a sun room on the rear (no planning history). The site is located in the Green Belt, the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area and in an Area of Archaeological Potential.

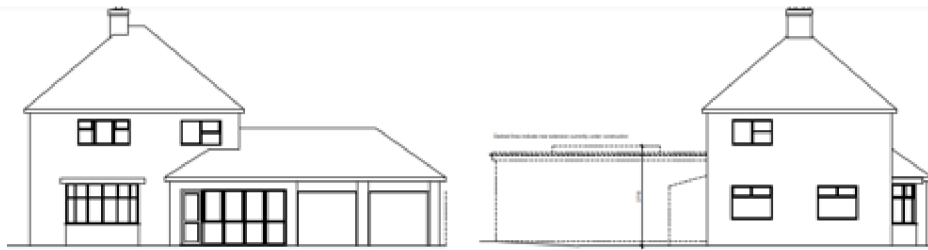
There have been previous applications for extensions to the property with the most recent being application ref. 20240309 which was for erection of a two storey front and first floor side extension. This application was refused on 29.05.2024 on the following grounds:

- 1. The proposed first floor side and two storey front extensions by virtue of their floorspace, volume, scale, design, mass and height would be disproportionate additions to the original dwelling, which would harm the openness of the Green Belt. In the absence of any very special circumstances that clearly outweigh this harm, the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014), Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) and Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).*
- 2. The proposed first floor side and two storey front extensions by virtue of their design, scale, bulk and massing would be overly dominant additions which would create a larger and more prominent dwelling that would not respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area and would have an adverse impact on the landscape character of the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).*

This current proposal is for demolition of the existing porch and erection of a replacement porch, alterations to the fenestration, conversion of the garage into a habitable room and external render and thermal insulation. The first floor side and two storey front extensions which were previously proposed are no longer proposed. It therefore needs to be seen whether this current proposal addresses the grounds of refusal of previous application ref. 20240309 and whether all other matters are also acceptable.

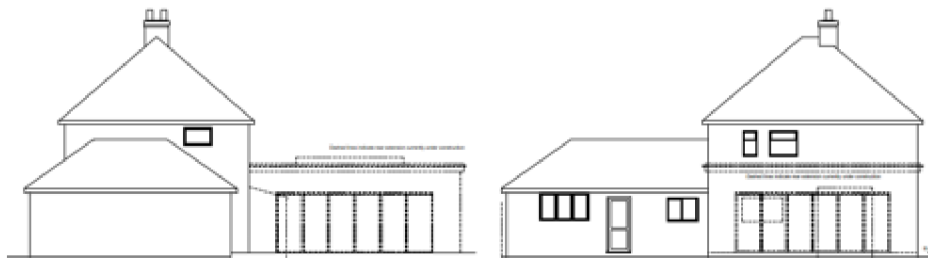
For ease of reference the existing, refused and proposed plans are as follows:

Existing



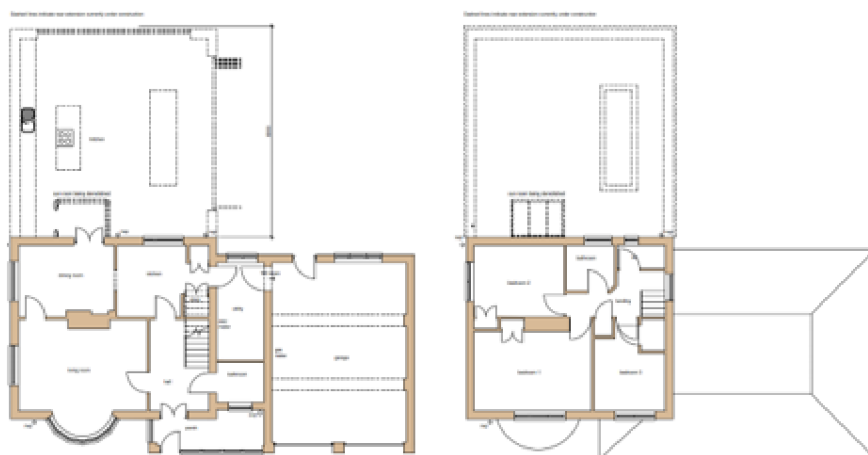
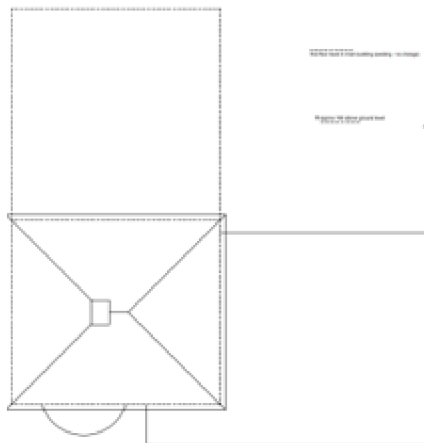
Front

Side

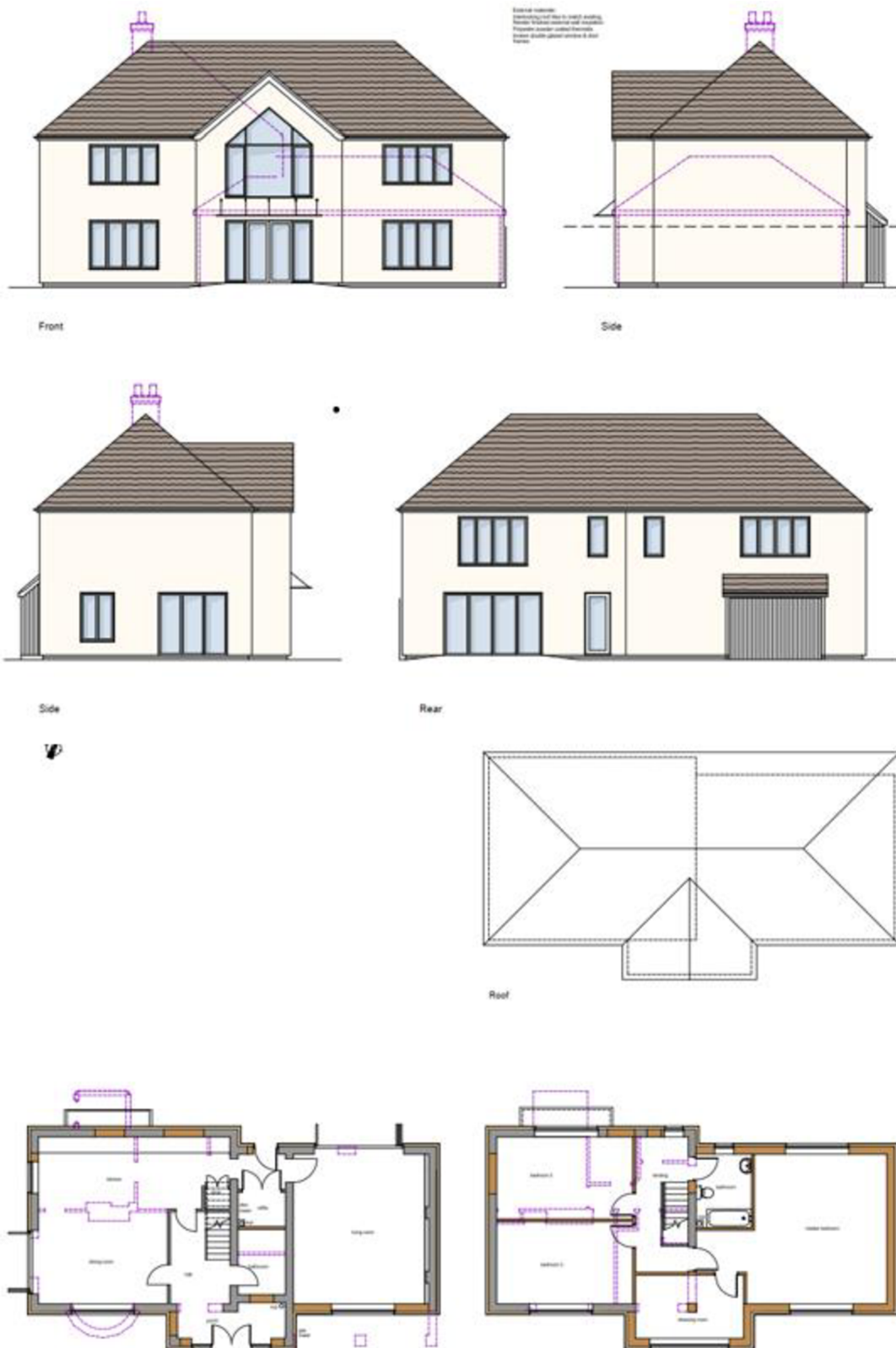


Side

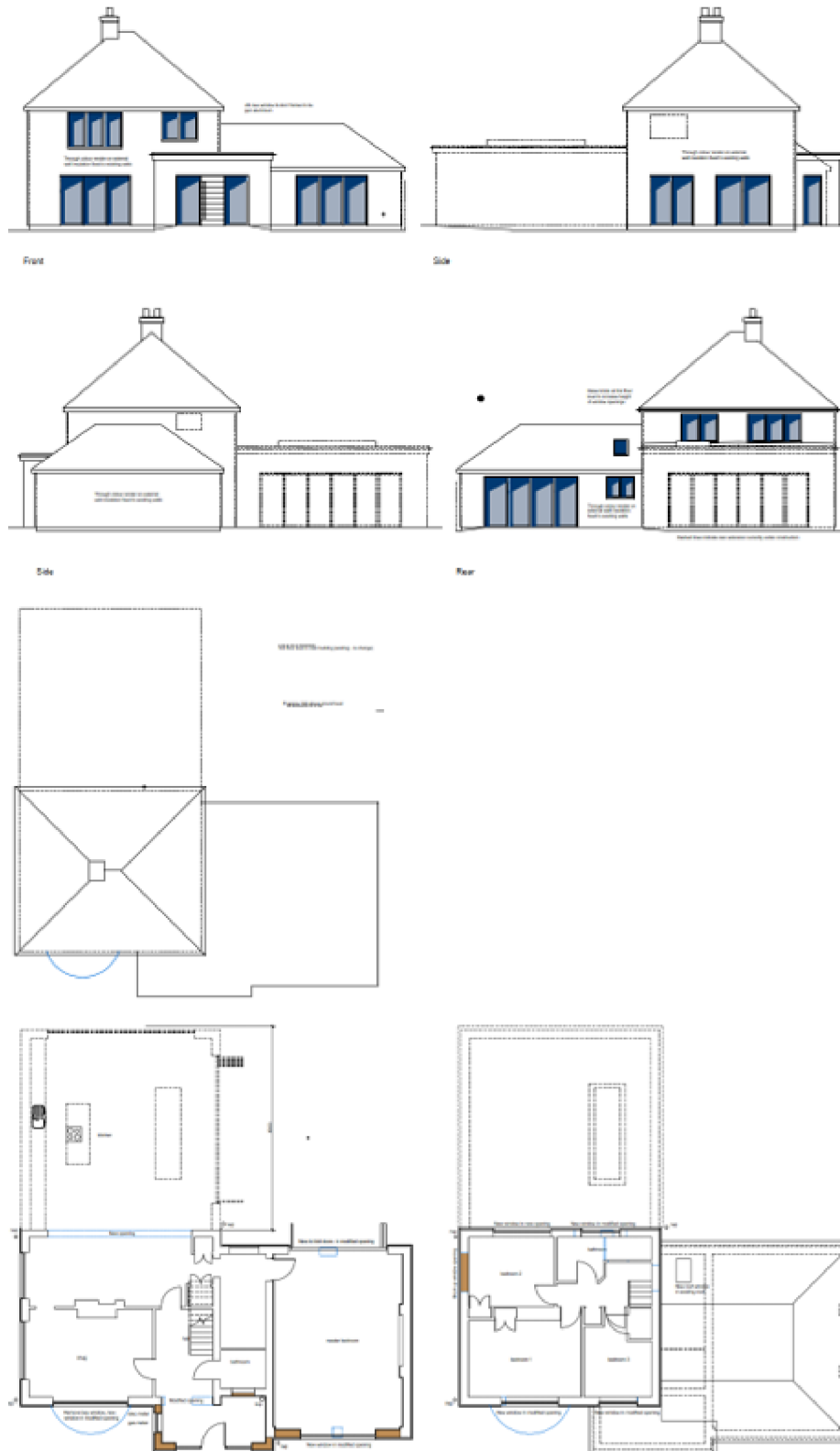
Rear



Previous refused application (ref. 20240309)



Proposed (current application ref. 20240667)



The principle considerations in the assessment of the application are:

Whether the proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt

This matter related to ground of refusal no. 1 of previous application ref. 20240309.

The application site is located within the Green Belt where inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (Paragraph 152 of the NPPF 2023).

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2023) 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.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2023) states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) 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;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

In this case point (c) is relevant. Any extension to the property must not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building.

Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 states:

Extensions to dwellings will be considered on their merits but the Borough Council will expect the following criteria to be satisfied:-

- (i) The existing dwelling must be an "original dwelling"* in permanent use as a dwelling.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Those extensions which provide essential basic amenities such as a bathroom, toilet or kitchen, which are currently not available or are clearly inadequate, will normally be permitted.
- (iv) The extension shall not be in a form which would facilitate the future formation of a separate residential curtilage.
- (v) The dwelling to be enlarged must have sufficient curtilage to accommodate the extension without undue visual intrusion into the open countryside.
- (vi) The appearance, massing, scale, form and materials of any extension shall be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.
- (vii) Proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits

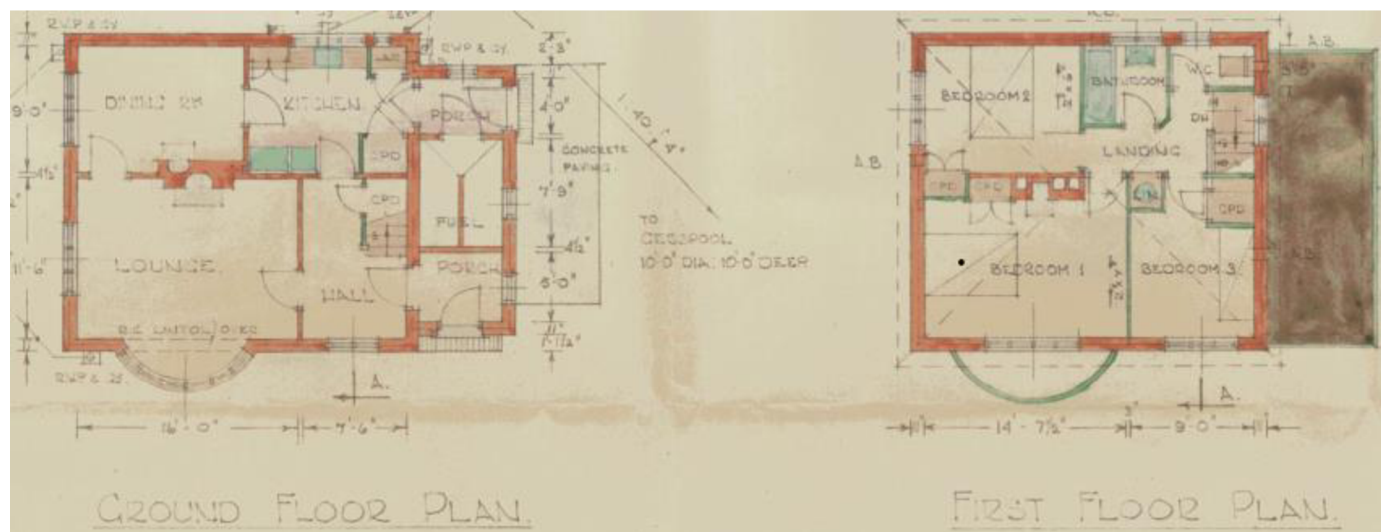
but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.

Development Management Policies Document April 2018 (a document that has been subject to consultation but is not adopted) contains Proposed Policy DM 6 which relates to extensions, replacement buildings and ancillary development in the Green Belt. Although the weight that can be attached to this document/policy is limited, it does illustrate the Borough Council's most recent approach to the type of development proposed at the application site.

With regard to extensions, Proposed Policy DM 6 outlines that the following will be taken into account in determining whether an extension in the Green Belt is proportionate;

- its footprint, floorspace and volume compared to the original building; and whether its scale, mass and height is subservient to the original building.

In the case of Home Acre, from a search of the planning history it can be seen that the original dwelling is the property as per that granted under planning permission ref. 19520182:





The property has been extended with an attached garage and front porch which were added in the late 1980s under planning permission reference 19860870. The existing front porch is to be removed under the proposals so will not need to be calculated in the existing extensions calculations. There was also previously a sun room for which there was no planning history but this has recently been removed and a single storey rear extension is currently under construction (prior approval application ref. 20231267). The garage will need to be calculated as it is to remain and the single storey rear extension will need to be calculated as it is being constructed.

Floorspace calculations

Original Dwelling

Ground floor original floorspace – 67.9 sq. m

First floor original floorspace – 53.6 sq. m

Total floorspace of original dwelling = 121.5 sq. m

Existing Extensions

Garage – 39 sq. m

Single storey rear extension – 61.1 sq. m

Note - porch has not been included as an existing extension as it is to be removed.

Total existing extensions = 100.1 sq. m

Proposed extensions

Porch – 8.4 sq. m

Total existing and proposed extensions = 100.1 sq. m

Total percentage increase of dwelling over original (100.1 divided by 121.5 x 100 = **82%**)

From the above assessment the proposed replacement porch, taking into account the existing extensions at the property which are not to be removed, including the single storey rear extension which is currently being constructed, would increase the floorspace of the original dwelling by 82% which is greater than the one third (33%) limit set out in saved Policy C13 (LPFR). This is more than the previous application which was to 79.3% increase over the original dwelling; even though the first floor side extension is no longer proposed and it is just a single storey front extension proposed instead of a two storey side extension, the existing extensions are a larger figure as the single storey rear extension is now being constructed.

Floorspace is just one calculation which can be used to assess whether a development is a disproportionate addition, other such measures include footprint, volume etc.

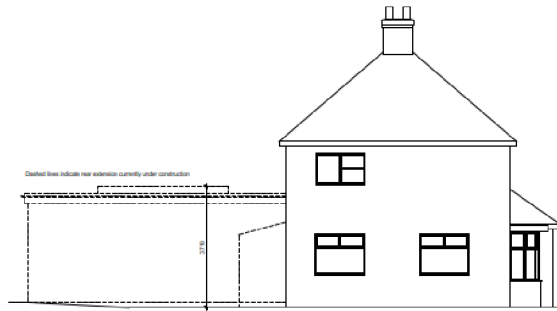
The proposed replacement porch would be built on the site of the existing porch. The existing porch has a footprint of 6.8 sq. m and the proposed porch would have a footprint of 9 sq. m. The actual increase in footprint would therefore be 2.2 sq. m.

In terms of volume, below is the existing and proposed dwelling;

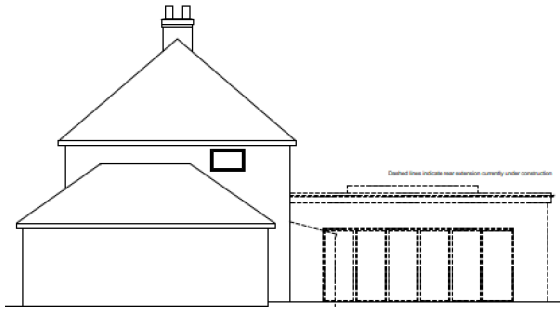
Existing dwelling:



Front



Side



Side

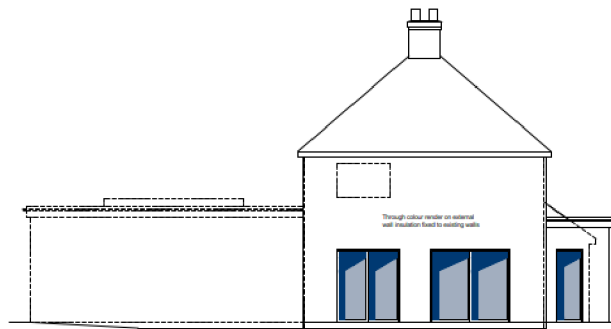


Rear

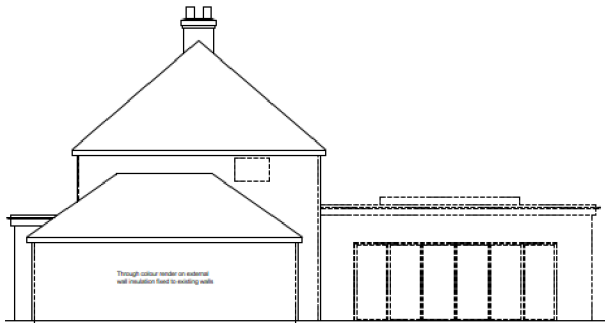
Proposed dwelling:



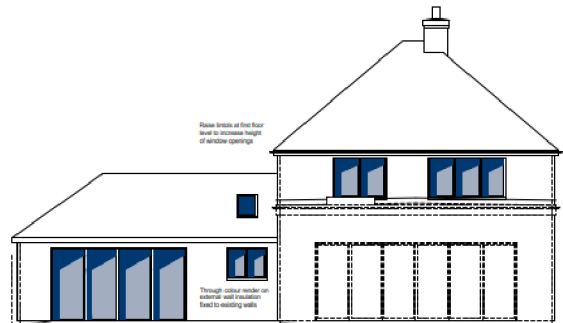
Front



Side



Side



Rear

The existing porch is 1.2m in depth, 4.6m in width and 3.6m – 4.3m in height due to the stepped roof. The proposed porch would be 1.8m in depth, 4.7m in width and 3m in height with a flat roof. It would therefore be 600mm greater in depth, 100mm greater in width and 600mm – 1.3m less in height than the existing extension.

The proposal when taking into account existing extensions which the property has had, and which are currently being constructed would result in an increase in the floor area of the dwelling by 82% which is over the one third. However, the proposed porch extension would be built on the site of the existing porch and would only be slightly greater in depth and width and would be of less height. It would not appear any more prominent than the existing porch. The proposed replacement porch is of less size, bulk and massing than two storey front extension which was proposed in previous application ref, 20240309.

Therefore, by virtue of an assessment of floorspace, footprint and volume as well as scale, bulk, massing and design it is considered that the proposed replacement porch extension would not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the original building.

The changes to the fenestration and external render including thermal insulation would not have any effect in respect of the whether the proposal is a disproportionate addition or not.

The proposal would not therefore be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such, the proposal is compliant with Policy CS02 (LPCS), Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) and paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2023) and ground of refusal no. 1 of previous application ref. 20240309 has been resolved.

Effect on the openness of the Green Belt

This matter also related to ground of refusal no. 1 of previous application ref. 20240309.

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF (2023) states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

The proposed development would be built on the site of the existing porch and would only be slightly greater in depth and width and would actually be of less height. It would not be a dominant addition in comparison to the existing porch and would not increase its prominence.

The changes to the fenestration and external render including thermal insulation would not have any effect the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposal is not therefore considered to have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. In respect of openness ground of refusal no. 1 of previous application ref. 20240309 has been resolved.

Design, Character and Appearance including Landscape Character

This matter related to ground of refusal no. 2 of previous application ref. 20240309.

Policy CS19 (LPCS) states that the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. The NPPF (2023) sets out that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

The Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) states the scale and design of porches should respond to the existing dwelling and should avoid impacting on existing features such as bay windows. In this case there is already a porch which is to be removed and replaced by a new porch. It would be of slightly larger depth and width but essentially would still be a modest addition in keeping with

the scale of the dwelling. The flat roof is not in keeping with the roof form of the main dwelling which is pitched but is considered acceptable given it is a single storey level and the dwelling is detached and not in a road with a uniform style of dwellings. The porch would be rendered as is proposed for the rest of the dwelling which is considered acceptable.

The proposed replacement porch would be much more in keeping with the scale of the dwelling than the two storey front extension proposed in the previous application.

In respect of the changes to the fenestration, the majority of the existing windows on all elevations would be altered into larger glazed openings including the garage doors being replaced with sliding doors. Given the dwelling is a detached property not situated in any road with a uniform pattern of development, it is considered that the changes to the fenestration are acceptable. With regards the rendering of the property, this is considered acceptable as it is a detached dwelling with no uniform pattern of development along Melliker Lane in respect of materials and there are other examples of rendering along the road. No specific details of the colour of the render have been submitted with the application. In order to ensure that a colour is used which is in keeping it is considered that if permission were to be forthcoming a condition would be required in order to request details of the colour of the render to be used.

In respect of design, character and appearance it is considered the proposal is compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

The application site is located in the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area and as such, Policy CS12 (LPCS) is relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications.

In relation to the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, the document highlights that the key landscape characteristics are gently undulating topography with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland, neat pattern of small square fields in the south, broader irregular shaped fields to the north and narrow lanes and roads lined with hedgerows. It states that the overall condition of the landscape is good and it has moderate sensitivity. It recommends that the landscape characteristics should be conserved and reinforced.

The area the site is located is rural in character with only sporadic development at this western end of Melliker Lane. There is a large area of farmland to the north-west, a large area with trees and shrubland to the east and a field to the south. The site itself contains a dwelling and garage with a large garden to the rear.

The proposed porch replacement would result in a slight increase in the depth and width compared to the existing porch but would be of less height. As it would not increase the prominence of the dwelling in the surrounding landscape or its visibility, it would not have an adverse impact on the landscape character. The changes to the fenestration and the rendering are considered acceptable as explained above and not considered to impact on the landscape character. As such, the proposal would be compliant with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and section 15 of the NPPF (2023).

In respect of design, character and appearance including landscape character the proposal is compliant with Policies CS12 & CS19 (LPCS) and ground of refusal no. 2 of previous application ref. 20240309 has been resolved.

Amenity of occupiers

The dwelling is currently three bedrooms and as a result of the proposal would remain a three bedroom property therefore no increase in bedrooms. The property would retain a garden area and rear garden depth which would exceed the minimum garden area and rear garden depth as set out in SPG2 (2020).

In respect of the amenity of occupiers it is considered the proposal is compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Neighbouring amenity

Due to the scale and location of the proposed replacement porch extension and the distance to the nearest neighbouring properties there would be no harmful impact on any neighbouring properties with regards overshadowing, loss of outlook or overlooking.

There are new and enlarged window openings with the changes to the fenestration but given the distance to the nearest neighbouring properties (97m to the west and 117m to the south-west) there would be no overlooking as it exceeds the minimum privacy distances of 26m.

In respect of neighbouring amenity the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Parking and highway safety

The proposal would not increase the number of bedrooms at the property which would remain at three but it would remove the existing double garage. The front garden is hardsurfaced where there is space for a number of vehicles which would therefore meet the parking requirements for a three bedroom dwelling as set out in SPG4 (2006). In respect of parking and highway safety the proposal would therefore be compliant with Policy CS11 (LPCS) and saved Policy P3 (LPFR).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The above discussion sets out that the proposed development would now not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, would not impact on the openness of the Green Belt, would not impact on the amenity of occupier or neighbouring amenity, would be acceptable in respect of design, character and appearance, would not impact on landscape character and would be acceptable in respect of parking and highway safety.

As such the proposed development is therefore compliant with Policies CS01, CS02, CS12 and, CS19 (LPCS) and saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan First Review and grounds of refusal nos. 1 & 2 of previous application ref. 20240309 have been resolved.

Recommendation: Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	11th September 2024	Dated:	12 September 2024