

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250517

Location: Waterworks Cottage Crutches Lane Higham Rochester

Description: Erection of a two storey side and rear extension with rear balcony.
Erection of a single storey side extension and canopy porch.

Applicant: Mr Ben Harvey

Site Visit Date: Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form
- Site Location Map
- Existing Block Plan
- Proposed Block Plan
- Drawing No: BH/05/25/4 (Proposed Elevations)
- Drawing No: BH/05/25/3 (Existing Elevations)
- Drawing No: BH/05/25/2 (Existing Plans)
- Drawing No: BH/05/25/1 (Proposed Plans)

Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history.

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
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Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) sets out those 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 The review 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 a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) general conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 - Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- SPD4 - Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Local Ward Councillors

No objections.

Shorne Parish Council

No comments received.

Higham Parish Council

No comments received.

Neighbouring properties

The application was advertised by way of site notice and letters to 1 neighbouring property. The consultation period expired on 02.07.2025 and no comments were received.

Analysis

Proposal

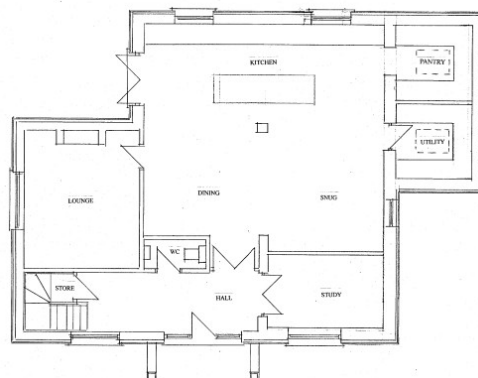
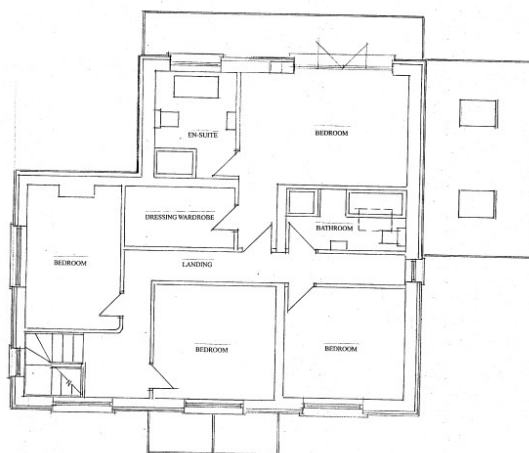
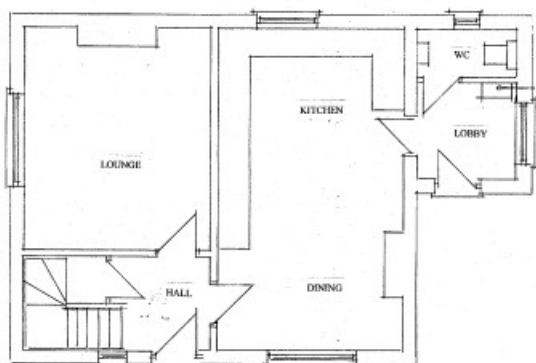
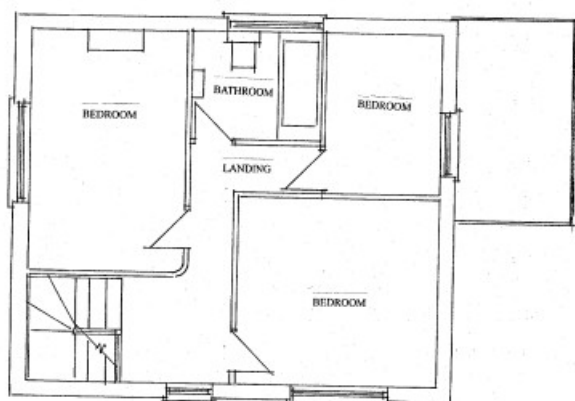
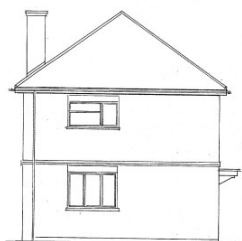
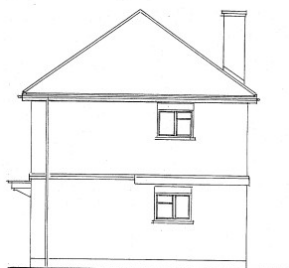
The proposal seeks to erect a two storey side and rear extension with a rear balcony. It also seeks to erection a single storey side extension and canopy porch.

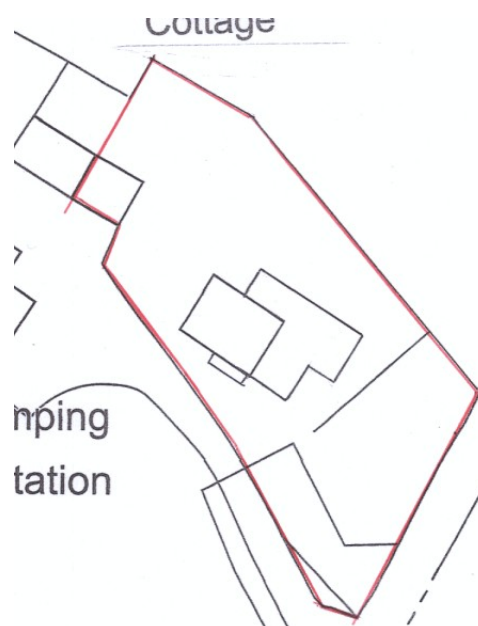
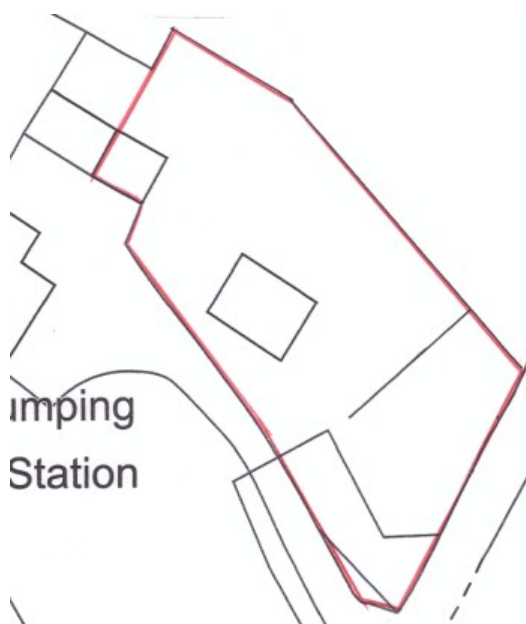
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Proposed







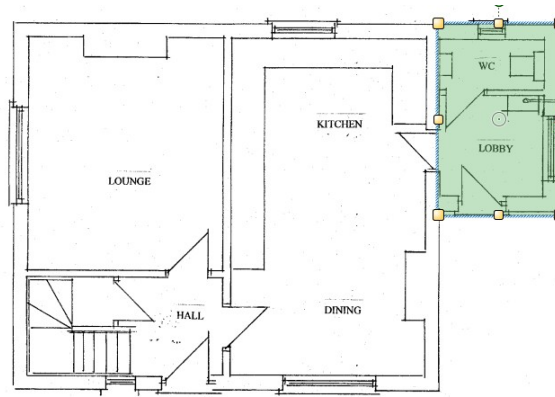
Analysis

Site Description and context

Waterworks Cottage is a two storey detached home situated within the rural Parish of Higham. The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is elevated above Crutches Lane. It is within a remote location, adjacent to a Pumping Station which is thought to be owned by southern water.



The existing property is considered to be the original dwelling, with the exception of the single storey side extension (highlighted in green on the plans below). Whilst there are no formal planning records for this address, it is important to note that the side extension may have been constructed under permitted development rules and does not require a grant of planning consent. Therefore, for the purpose of this application the existing property is considered to be original.



Green Belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt and as such Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) is relevant. Development in the urban area is prioritised as the sustainable location for development. In the rural area, Policy CS02 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, i.e. in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS.

There are five principle issues in determining this application;

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
3. Any very special circumstances?
4. The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
5. Other matters; and
6. Impact on the Landscape. Principle Issues

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 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. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the specified exceptions. The relevant exception to consider for this application is part c of paragraph 154 of the NPPF, which states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

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In determining this proposal account will be taken of Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (1994) which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside. It sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully, with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 153 of the NPPF.

In particular Policy C13 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 and should be afforded due weight.

	Original gross external floor area (m²)	Gross external floor area (m²) post-1948 extensions	Current proposed gross external floor area (m²)	Difference in gross external floor area between existing and proposed (m²)
Dwelling	56.03	0	136.21	80.18
Percentage				143.1% Increase

The calculations demonstrate that the proposed additions to the dwellinghouse exceed the one third limit set out in saved policy C13. Therefore the extension is contrary to the local plan Green Belt policy and represents a disproportionate increase over the original footprint of the building. The volume calculations of the extensions, over the original dwelling, have not been calculated in this application and will instead be visually assessed.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2024 states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. It does not provide a figure. The extensions hereby proposed are disproportionate additions to the original dwelling. The two storey side extension is considered to be disproportionate, it would be constructed up to the ridge of the property without any subservience and would have a further 3.8m deep two storey rear extension which would add significant bulk and mass.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would result in a disproportionate addition to the property and as such the proposal would be inappropriate development, which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is therefore contrary to Policy CS02 (LPCS), Policy C13 (LPFR) and to Paragraph 154 of the NPPF 2024.

The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 142 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.

Any new built form of development is likely to impact on the openness of the Green Belt, however it is important to establish the degree of harm. Openness of the Green Belt has both a spatial and visual aspect.

The development will enlarge the dwelling substantially, with the extensions doubling the overall floor area of the property and the extensions lacking subservience to the original dwelling. As discussed above, the development will add significant bulk and has been poorly designed without subservience, which substantially adds to the overall mass of the extensions. The rear extension would be constructed up to the ridge of the property, the side extension would continue the existing roof design, serving to add to the overall mass of the proposal. Therefore, the significant increase in bulk and massing will have a harmful

impact on the spatial openness of the Green Belt.

In visual terms, the site is located in a remote rural setting which is set above the highway, however the entrance to the site offer a clear view of the dwelling. The visual prominence of this isolated development from the highway would cause considerable harm to the visual openness of the Green Belt.

Therefore, the proposed development is considered to cause an unacceptable degree of harm to the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt.

Reference back to paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2024) informs us that inappropriate development in the green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Whether the development causes any other harm and whether there are any other relevant considerations to balance the overall planning argument, should now be considered.

Very special circumstances

No specific arguments have been put forward by the applicant in relation to the assessment of 'very special circumstances'.

The effect on the character and appearance of the area

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) states that new development will be visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area. Moreover, Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the NPPF (2024) sets out that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for developments. Generally, the SPD highlights the importance of new development complimenting and corresponding to existing character and the wider context. In this case, the rural character of the area and other neighbouring dwelling should be considered. Furthermore, the SPD states that two storey extensions should be subservient and subordinate, should incorporate similar roof designs and should not dominate the property. In addition, the SPD asserts that roof extensions should be lower than the ridgeline and should not overwhelm the roof slope.

The extensions are considered to be poor design by virtue of the lack of subservience or subordination. The front and rear extensions are large and disproportionate additions, that dominate the dwelling. Neither extensions have been designed with subservience or subordination, and are contrary to the principles set out within Gravesham's SPD. Therefore, the proposed extensions are bulky and incongruous additions to the property, and are poor design contrary to Gravesham's Design Guidance SPD (2021), Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2024).

Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposal will safeguard the amenity of future occupiers. The garden is large and will not be significantly reduced as part of this development. The rooms proposed are in accordance with Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines (2020) and will receive sufficient natural light. Therefore, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2024).

Neighbouring

The proposal will introduce a balcony in the rear elevation of the development which will overlook the

private garden area of the application site only. There will be no impact on the amenity of adjoining properties in terms of loss of light, overlooking, sense of enclosure or loss of outlook. As such the proposal is considered to safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2024).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highway issues related to this proposal.

Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Shorne Woodland Landscape Character Area. Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

The poor design of the proposed extensions are considered to have an adverse impact on the Shorne Woodland. Therefore, the development is contrary with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Conclusion:

The application has been fully considered and is contrary to local and national planning policy.

The site is within the approved Metropolitan Green Belt. National Planning Policy Framework Section 13 (2024) (Protecting Green Belt Land) indicates that the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. The proposed development is inappropriate development as it would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling and harm the openness of the Green Belt. As such the proposal is considered to be contrary to the advice in National Planning Policy Framework Section 13 (2024) (Protecting Green Belt Land), and Policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

The proposal fails to constitute good design and lacks subservience and would result in an incongruous harmful addition to the property which will result in the appearance of excessive bulk and massing to the property, contrary to CS19 of The Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, SPD4 - Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Sharon Sahota	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	01.12.2025	Dated:	3rd December 2025