



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20231108
Location:	3 Reynolds Cottages, Henley Street, Luddesdown, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0XB
Description:	Demolition of existing conservatory, erection of a single storey rear extension with a garage conversion to form habitable space.
Applicant:	Natalie Saunders
Site Visit:	N/A Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Application Form - dated 30 October 2023;
- Site Location Plan (scale - 1:1250);
- Drawing no. BL/DRG/D9092023/02 - Existing Block Plan (scale - 1:200);
- Drawing no. BL/DRG/D9092023/02.1 - Proposed Block Plan (scale - 1:200);
- Drawing no. BL/DRG/D9092023/03 - Existing Layouts and Elevations;
- Drawing no. BL/DRG/D9092023/04 - Proposed Layouts and Elevations;
- Drawing no. BL/DRG/D9092023/04.1 - Proposed Visuals;
- Drawing no. BL/DRG/D9092023/04.2 - Proposed Visuals;
- Drawing no. BL/DRG/D9092023/04.3 - Proposed Visuals;
- Drawing no. BL/DRG/D9092023/04.4 - Proposed Visuals.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230551	Erection of a single storey rear extension and a two-storey side extension to create a five-bedroom house.	REFUSED	07.08.2023
19900672	Erection of single storey side extension to form a garage.	PERMITTED	16.10.1990
19520302	Development of land for residential purposes.	NO OBJECTION	01.01.1900

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (September 2014):

- CS01 - Sustainable Development
- CS02 - Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 - Green Infrastructure
- CS18 - Climate Change
- CS19 - Design & Development Principles

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

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

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.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023)

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- 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

- 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)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Down AONB Management Plan (2021-2026)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Internal consultees

GBC Highways Officer - I have no objections, the property can accommodate at least two cars on the front driveway, so conforms to adopted guidance. However as two extra bedrooms are being established to conform to the parking guidance, two cycle parking spaces should be provided (One per bedroom). There is adequate space on site to provide this, so a condition should suffice.

Local Ward Councillors - No comment received.

External consultees

Luddesdown Parish Council - No comment received.

Neighbouring properties

A notice was displayed on site 16 November 2023.

In addition, two surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 13 December 2023.

Preliminary Matters

This application follows a refused development (ref. 20230551) seeking the “erection of a single storey rear extension and a two-storey side extension to create a five-bedroom house”. The application was refused on the following grounds:

- 1. The proposal, by virtue of its proposed size, scale, massing and form, would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it would result in disproportionate, dominant and bulky additions over and above the size of the original dwelling and harm the openness of the Green Belt. In the absence of any very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and to Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*
- 2. The proposed development will add significant and disproportionate bulk to the property, by virtue of extensions that are not subordinate or subservient, dominating the original property and are harmful to its character. As such the proposal is considered incongruous and poor design that is contrary Policy CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Gravesham's Householder Design Guidance SPD (2021) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*
- 3. The proposed side extension is an unneighbourly form of development that would result in material harm to the amenity of adjoining occupiers, which by virtue of its scale and height close to the boundary and ground floor flank windows on the neighbouring property would create an unacceptable sense of enclosure, poor outlook and unacceptable overshadowing of a habitable room. As such, the development is harmful to the amenity of the adjoining neighbour and is contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

Although this proposal is different and at a reduced scale, the development must be considered to have overcome the previous ground of refusal.

Analysis

Site Description

3 Reynolds Cottages is a two storey semi-detached property located on the northern side of Henley Street.



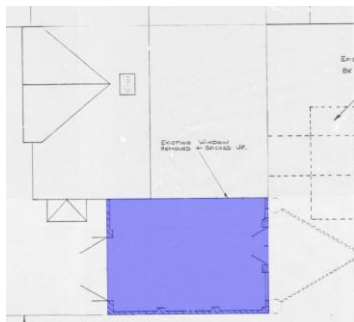
Google Street View (Jan 2021)

The property is characterised by a two storey front gable projection and a porch entrance on the flank elevation. It benefits from a large driveway and landscaped frontage, with an attached single storey garage. To the rear is a conservatory and a generous garden.

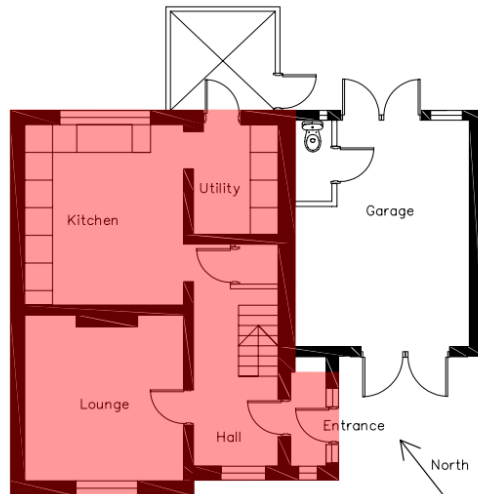
Original Dwelling

The property has been extended previously at the side and at the rear. The side extension to form a garage was permitted by the Local Planning Authority in 1990 (ref. 19900672), however there is no planning history for the conservatory or the porch enlargement.

The images below are taken from the 1990 application (ref. 19900672) and demonstrate that the new garage was separate from the porch and that there was no conservatory at the rear at that time.



Therefore, the footprint of the original cottage is considered to be 53.2m² and is highlighted in red in the screenshot below.



Proposed Development

This application proposes the demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey rear extension with a garage conversion to form habitable space. The proposed extension would have different roof forms, with the projection beyond the main dwelling having a flat roof and the part connecting to the garage would have a pitched roof, with a gable end. The development would have the following dimensions:

- Depth – 4m
- Width – 9.69m
- Height (max) – 3.35m
- Height (eave) – 2.54m



Assessment

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. Impact on the Landscape;
5. The effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
6. Other matters.

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), 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.

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 (2023), the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully, with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2023).

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 (2023) and should be afforded due weight.

	Original Dwelling	Existing Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	Difference between proposed and original (m ²)
Footprint (m²)	53.2m ²	82.2m ² (+29m ²)	112.3m ² (+30.1m ²)	+ 59.1m ²
% increase		+54.5%	+36.6%	111.1%

The calculations demonstrate that the proposed additions to the dwellinghouse exceed the one third limit set out in saved policy C13. Therefore, in purely numerical terms, the extension is contrary to the local plan Green Belt policy, potentially representing a disproportionate increase over the original floor area 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.

However the numerical calculation forms only a part of the overall assessment. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2023) 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 proposed extension is large, extending across the entire rear of the dwelling and attached garage, to a depth of 4m, which adds bulk and mass to the dwelling. This proposal, when read alongside the garage extension (ref. 19900672), could be considered to result in a cumulative development that is disproportionate to the original dwelling. However, it is acknowledged that the scale of the extensions at single storey level is subservient and a reduction in the built form to what was previously refused (ref. 20230551). Nevertheless, the cumulative additions above the original property would be inappropriate.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal and previous extension, would result in a disproportionate addition to the property and as such, cumulatively, 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 (2023).

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

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. 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 site is located within the countryside and is part of a development of semi-detached properties which benefit from fairly deep plots. The collection of properties on Henley St have a semi-urban feel, but is in a rural location on a country lane, with open fields surrounding the dwellings to the north and south.

As discussed in the above section, the proposed extension would significantly increase the footprint of the dwelling, with a width and depth greater than the conservatory it is replacing. Therefore in spatial terms, the scale of the extensions by virtue of the scale and bulk, over and above the original dwelling, and would have a harmful, eroding impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

However in visual terms, the extension is located to the rear of the dwelling and would experience little to no visibility from Henley St or the surrounding area. As a result of this, the proposed development would have limited impact on the visual openness of the Green Belt.

Reference back to paragraphs 152 and 153 of the NPPF (2023) 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.

3. Very special circumstances

As referenced above, paragraphs 152 and 153 of the NPPF (2023) states that very special circumstances tilt the balance of inappropriate development that causes harm to the Green Belt. Although no specific arguments have been put forward by the applicant in relation to the

assessment of 'very special circumstances', the property does benefit from permitted development rights which are a material planning consideration.

Part 1, Schedule 2, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended, would enable the extension of up to 3m in depth (A.1(f)). While this is subject to other criteria set out within Class A, such as the width of the extension, this would enable an extension of up to 18m² (approx.) above the existing footprint of the dwelling.

Therefore, as a material fall-back position, the extension hereby proposed offers a marginal addition over and above what could be achieved under permitted development (+12m²) as an infill to the rear of the garage. As a result, the consideration of permitted development rights, as a very special circumstance, tilts the balance of the overall planning argument and the proposed extension represents a minimal increase to a potential extension under Class A of the Order.

Furthermore, the extension is considered to be well designed and as a result has limited impact on the AONB and landscape (this is assessed in later sections of this report). Through permitted development there would be less control over the design of the extension and as such this is considered to be a benefit of this proposal and a very special circumstance.

Overall, the permitted development rights are a very special circumstance that would enable the erection of an extension which would fall marginally below the proposal in terms of footprint and would have a similar cumulative impact on the host dwelling and erosion to the openness of the Green Belt. As such, on balance the proposed extension would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, nor have any significant increased adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and it is therefore compliant with Policy CS02 (LPCS), saved Policy CS13 (LPFR) and paragraphs 142 and 154 of the NPPF (2023).

Notwithstanding the above, given that the cumulative development on the site exceeding the one third limit of saved policy C13 (LPFR), it is considered necessary to remove the permitted development rights of Class E for outbuildings through planning conditions. This will restrict further development on the site without written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

4. Impact on the Landscape

The application site falls within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. Paragraph 182 of the NPPF (2023) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

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 greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting. Proposals will take account of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009). The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan sets out that its aim is to ensure that the natural beauty and special character of the landscape and the vitality of communities are recognised, valued, enhanced and strengthened well into the future.

The site is semi-rural in character and as discussed above is located within a linear development of housing along Henley Street. The proposal in particular would increase the size of the dwelling, but this would be consolidated to the rear of the building and represents a decrease in potential

built form that could be constructed under permitted development. Given the location of the extension immediately to the rear of the dwelling, the proposed development would be considered to protect the natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and would not have an adverse impact on the landscape character in general. As such, the proposal would not be contrary to Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 182 of the NPPF (2023).

5. *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 and beautiful places) of the NPPF (2023) 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 surrounding dwellings should be considered. The SPG (2021) goes on to state that single storey rear extensions should not dominate the original property, should be at appropriate heights, should not exceed the width of the property and should be constructed using matching materials.

The extension hereby proposed is not excessive in size or scale to dominate the host dwelling and is subservient at an appropriate height. It is considered to be well designed by incorporating the pitched roof and gable of the garage and will be constructed using matching materials.



Overall, the proposed extensions will have no impact on the street scene and are proportionate to the main dwelling. Therefore, the development is considered to be well designed and in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).

6. Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires that all development should be 'fit for purpose' and be 'adaptable to allow changes to meet the need of users'. The proposed extension would provide good sized rooms for future occupiers and is in accordance with local residential layout guidelines. Therefore, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).

Neighbouring

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires new development to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land and paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2021) requires development to have a high standard of amenity for existing users (in this case surrounding properties). The proposed extensions are not considered to have any detrimental impact on the amenity of adjoining properties in terms of loss of light, privacy, loss of outlook or sense of enclosure. The extension is not excessive in height and is set in from both boundaries. To the east it will match the depth of the existing single storey rear projection on 2 Reynolds Cottages, and to the west it will also be of a similar depth to adjoining property's (4 Reynolds Cottages) part width extension. Moreover, the orientation of the gardens to the north mean that there will be no impact of overshadowing.

Overall, the proposal is considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highways issues related to this proposal. The property benefits from a driveway with adequate space for off-street parking and no objection was received from the Highways Officer.

Conclusion:

The application has been fully considered, has overcome the previous grounds of refusal, and is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

The proposed development and previous enlargements to the dwelling cumulatively represent inappropriate development that is harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, however as set out in the discussion, the permitted development rights represent a material fallback position and a very special circumstance which tilts the planning balance. The potential extension under permitted development would only fall marginally below that hereby proposed and would have similar impacts on the Green Belt through an increase in built form. Therefore, the application is compliant with Policy CS02 (LPCS), saved Policy CS13 (LPFR) and paragraphs 142 and 154 of the NPPF (2023). The extension is well designed and would have no adverse impact on the Kent Downs AONB in accordance with Policies CS12 and CS19 (LPCS) as well as Sections 12 and 15 of the NPPF (2023). Furthermore, the amenity of future occupiers and neighbouring properties are safeguarded, and there are no parking or highway issues.

Therefore, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	21 December 2023	Dated:	22 December 2023