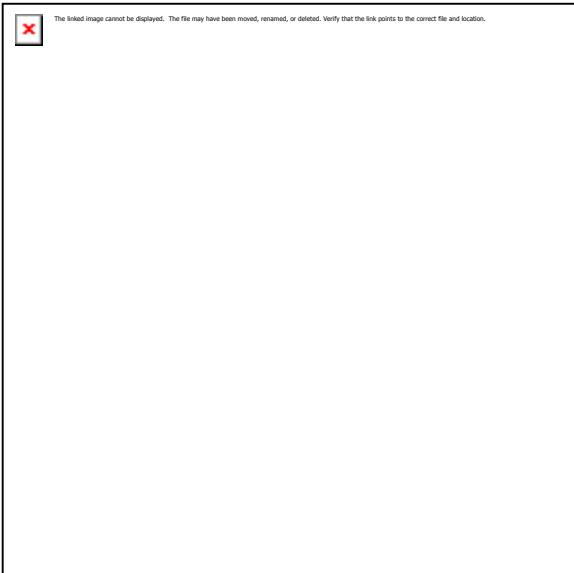




Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20220792

Location: Nutfield Farm Priestwood Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Demolition of the existing 4 bed dwelling along with garages and outbuildings, and its replacement with a chalet style bungalow and garage.

Applicant: Mr Stephen Church

Site Visit Date: 4th August 2022

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

Planning Application Form;
Planning, Design and Access Statement;
Drawing No. 001 - Rev. A - Site Location and Proposed Block Plan;
Drawing No. 002 - Rev. A - Existing Floor Plans and Elevations;
Drawing no. 003 - Rev. A - Proposed Floor Plans; and
Drawing No. 004 - Rev. A - Proposed Elevations.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20100364	Retention of bungalow without complying with condition (iii) attached to planning permission reference number GR/80/421 to allow the unrestricted occupancy of the dwelling.	Permission	20.04.2011
20020753	Erection of 3 bedroom dwelling as a replacement for existing mobile home/dwelling.	Permission	08.04.2003

19830409	Erection of single storey extension to east elevation to form sitting room study and bedroom	Permission	28.09.1983
19800840	Retention of a residential caravan for a temporary period of one year	Permission	30.10.1980
19800813	Extension to existing chalet annexe to form agricultural dwelling	Permission	17.11.1980
19800421	Erection of a replacement agricultural bungalow	Permission	28.07.1980
19800176	Erection of single storey side and rear extension to form bedroom passageway and hall	Refused	28.05.1980
19780964	Retention of a residential caravan	Refused	20.12.1978
19510006	Erection of a bungalow	Permission	05.02.1951

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

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

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

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards
- C12 - Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
- C13 - Extensions in the Countryside

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

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

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 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

- 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 Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2021-2026).

As the site lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the adopted Kent Downs AONB Management Plan is also relevant, particularly;

- SD2 - The local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, siting, landscaping and materials of new development, redevelopment and infrastructure and will be pursued through the application of appropriate design guidance and position statements.
- SD7 - New projects, proposals and programmes shall conserve and enhance tranquillity and where possible dark night skies.
- SD8 - Ensure proposals, projects and programmes do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the Kent Downs AONB.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Internal consultees

GBC - Highways - I have no highway objections; this is a replacement dwelling using an existing access.

However, the applicant should provide secure parking for 4 cycles to comply with the SPG4 requirement of one space per bedroom.

External consultees

Meopham Parish Council - No objection to this planning application.

Neighbouring properties

A notice was displayed on site 4th August 2022.

In addition, two surrounding properties were consulted and two representations were received supporting the proposal. No objections were received. The consultation period expired 26th August 2022.

Officer Analysis

Site Description

Nutfield Farm is a detached modest four bedroom bungalow located on the eastern side of Priestwood Road. The property is characterised by its shallow pitched roof, is clad and has a small flat roof porch extension to the side.



There is a metal building to the side of the property and a number of outbuilding in the garden area.

Development Proposed

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of replacement dwelling, detached garage and associated works.

Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations



The dwelling would have a width of 15.99m, a depth of 10.4m, with a maximum height of 7.07m and a predominant eave height of 3.97m for the pitch roof, and 4.8 on the front and rear gables. There is also a small front canopy with a 1.45m projection and 2.67m wide. It will be set back further from road than the existing dwelling. Internally, at ground floor, there would be a large entrance hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, utility, wc and storage. At first floor there would be four bedrooms, one with en-suite and walk-in wardrobe and family bathroom.



As part of the application all existing outbuildings, including the detached metal building, will be demolished and the erection of a detached double garage. The garage would have a width of 7.1m, a depth of 6m, a maximum height of 5.47m and an eave height of 2.95m. There will be space for parking for two vehicles.



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. The effect on the character and appearance of the area;
4. Other matters;
5. Any very special circumstances?; and
6. Impact on the Landscape and AONB.

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

Replacement Dwelling

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 goes on to say that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the specified exceptions. An exception given within the NPPF includes (d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Therefore, it is important to first establish the extent of the original property and then consider any additions

or extensions. Nutfield Farm was given planning permission for its original construction in 1980 (Ref. 19800421) and it appears that the property was built in accordance with the original plans. Therefore the existing building is considered by the Local Planning Authority to be original. Planning permission was given in 2003 (Ref. 20020753) for a replacement dwelling, however this was not implemented.

The proposed replacement dwelling has an external footprint of 129.17m², which is a decrease of 19.26m². In terms of dimensions, the proposed dwelling is an increase in height of 2.48m, an increase in depth of 1.28m and an increase in width of 0.06m.

	Original Dwelling	Proposed Extended Dwelling	decrease
Footprint (m²)	148.43m ²	129.17m ²	19.26m ²

In terms of gross internal floor area, the existing property has a total GIA of 133.34m² due to it being single storey. The proposed dwelling being laid out over two floors has a total GIA of 207.23m². This would result in an increase of internal floor area of 55.41% over the existing.

Furthermore, the existing property is single storey with no habitable rooms within the roofspace. The proposed replacement property whilst described as a chalet bungalow, lends itself to a two-storey dwelling due to the large central gables within the front and rear elevations.

Saved Policy C12 of the Gravesham's Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (1994) relates to replacement dwellings in the countryside. This states that there will be a strong presumption against allowing the replacement of existing dwellings, which will only be set aside if the listed criteria are met. Criteria (iii) states that the 'replacement dwelling must be of similar scale and mass to the existing dwelling and must be no larger than the existing dwelling, unless it can be demonstrated that modest enlargement is required to allow the provision of essential basic amenities such as a bathroom, toilet or kitchen, which currently do not exist or are clearly inadequate or to meet the special needs of the occupants'.

The proposed replacement dwelling, whilst not having a greater external footprint, has much greater eaves and ridge height and increases from a single storey modest bungalow to a two-storey dwelling. Saved policy C13 (LPFR) allows a one third limit increase on extensions to properties within the Green Belt, an increase in footprint by 55.41% above the original is not considered to be a modest enlargement. Therefore, the proposed replacement dwelling is considered to be contrary to saved policy C12 (LPFR).

Erection of a Garage

The principle consideration of this part of the application is that the property falls within the Green Belt which is subject to strict policy constraints. Unfortunately, there are no specific development plan policies on the provision of outbuildings in the green belt. However, adopted Core Strategy policy CS02 requires development to be compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt.

It is noted that while saved Policy C13 (vii) of the Local Plan First Review sets out the Council's approach to assessing proposals for outbuildings in the countryside and makes clear that they will be considered on their individual merits, it is out of step with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Therefore, it should be attributed minimal weight for the following reasons;

National Green Belt planning policies are detailed under Section 13 of the NPPF "Protecting Green Belt land". Paragraph 149 states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate development. It goes on to list six exceptions to this, however ancillary residential outbuildings do not form one of the exceptions specifically listed.

Paragraph 149(c) has some relevance, starting that the construction of new buildings (paragraph 149) is considered to be 'inappropriate' development in the Green Belt except where this involves (amongst other

things) the:

- *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;*

However, it is clear that domestic outbuildings, including garages, do not specifically fall within this list and as such they are considered to be inappropriate development per se.

In line with paragraph 147, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 sets out that substantial weight should be given to that harm and 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.

In relation to saved policy C13 (vii) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review, paragraph 219 of the NPPF sets out that 'Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given). Core Strategy policy CS01 also sets out in paragraph 4.1.8;

Where there are no policies relevant to the application for relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

This second bullet point is in line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Examples of the policies that indicate that development should be restricted are set out in a footnote in the NPPF and include land designated as Green Belt.

In addition, when considering proposals in the rural area, Policy CS02 gives further support to the policy approach set out in the NPPF stating that development outside those settlements, including affordable housing and proposals to maintain and diversify the rural economy, will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that only minimal weight can be given to this part of saved policy C13.

The garage would have a ridge height of 5.47m and an eave height of 2.95m which is 880mm and 130mm greater than the existing house respectively and as such is considered to be imbalanced and disproportionate. It would also have an external footprint of 42.6m² which is a 31.5% increase over the existing host dwelling. Furthermore, by virtue of its closer proximity to the highway than the replacement dwelling, it will perceptively disrupt the hierarchy of heights between outbuilding and dwelling. As such, the garage is considered to be an incongruous and dominant addition, constituting inappropriate development in the green belt.

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

Paragraph 137 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.

The openness of the Green Belt has both spatial and visual aspects, and any new built form of development is harmful to its open character. Although the replacement dwelling has a decrease in external

footprint, the existing dwelling is a modest shallow pitch bungalow with a ridge height of 4.59m. The proposed dwelling is two-storey dwelling with ridge height of 7.07m with large gables and 2no. gable dormers on both the front and rear elevations. Therefore the scale, bulk and massing of the new dwelling is significantly greater.

The increase in height of the building alone creates significant new additional bulk in the Green Belt, which has an adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt.

In addition, the garage by virtue of its height, bulk and massing represents a significant increase in built form within the Green Belt and is harmful to its open character. The garage is large in size and has a ridge height 880mm greater than the existing property that is being replaced.

Separately the new dwelling and garage would negatively impact the openness of the Green Belt. Together, the cumulative impact of both the proposed dwelling and detached garage, by virtue of their scale and perceived bulk, would be even more significant, eroding the spatial and visual open character of the Green Belt, contrary to local and national planning policy.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the existing outbuildings would be removed, these buildings are much smaller in height and scale than the proposed replacement dwelling and garage, and even cumulatively they do not have a greater impact than what is being proposed.

Reference back to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF 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. 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.

The proposed dwelling is designed with a large central gable end with steep pitch roof and two smaller gable dormers both to the front and rear. There is a canopy porch framing the entrance, with seven windows of varying sizes at ground floor level. There are two ground floor windows, one set of French doors and a set of bi-fold doors on the eastern elevation. The description of the development states that the property is a chalet style bungalow, however is considered to be a two storey dwelling.

Gravesham's newly published Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for new developments. Generally, the SPD highlights the importance of new development complimenting and corresponding to existing character and the wider context. In this case, the existing character of the dwelling is less relevant given that the application proposes a replacement. However, the rural character of the area and other surrounding dwellings should be considered.

The surrounding properties on Priestwood Road are varied in size and appearance, but a predominantly rural character. It is noted however, that there have been more modern additions within the immediate area, in particular Priesthood to the south which was originally granted permission in 2013 (ref. 20130892) and later varied in 2017 (ref. 20170545). The original permission or significant extensions that altered its character and modernised its appearance, was implemented then amended in the 2017 application. While this is a consideration for this proposal, the development was originally permitted under a historic policy context and prior to the adoption of the design SPD. The subsequent permission was granted under the current policy context, however this followed an implemented planning permission that was a strong consideration in the planning balance. Therefore, although some aspects of the current proposed, are similar, this cannot be considered a precedent given the history of that site. Notwithstanding this, the materials selected for the new dwelling would be considered appropriate and not out of character with its

rural setting, however there are concerns with the overall bulk, scale and design.

The size of the replacement dwelling whilst is not considered to be out of character with some of the more recent developments in the area and would not result in an increase in external footprint, the overall height and bulk of the proposed dwelling is excessive when compared to the existing dwelling.

The garage building is also considered to be imbalanced and disproportionate especially in terms of ridge height as this would be greater than the existing property. Furthermore, by virtue of its closer proximity to the highway than the replacement dwelling, will perceptively disrupt the hierarchy of heights between outbuilding and dwelling. An outbuilding should appear subservient to the main dwelling and according to the SPD should reflect its design, character and style, which is not achieved in this proposal. As such, the garage is considered to be an incongruous and dominant addition.

Overall, the design of the proposed dwelling and garage are imbalanced and disproportionate when compared to the existing built form of the site and would be highly visible from the street scene. As such, the proposal in contrary to Gravesham's Design Guidance SPD (2021), Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2021).

4. 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' and that 'the design and layout of new residential development, including conversion, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines (RLG) (2020).

Moreover, on 25 March 2015 the Government issued a written ministerial statement, which introduced new technical housing standards in England and set out how these would be applied through planning policy. These standards came into effect on 1 October 2015.

The Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) (2015) require a two-storey dwelling, with different floor areas depending on the number of occupants. The proposed dwelling has four double bedrooms and would therefore have a maximum capacity of eight persons, however for the purpose of this assessment will be compared to the five person dwellings within the NDSS. For a five person dwelling the floor area should have a minimum 93m², with built in storage space of 2.5m². Given that the gross internal floor area of 207.23m², the proposed dwelling would accord with the recommendations within the Nationally Described Space Standards (2015).

Notwithstanding this, Gravesham's RLG breaks down the measurements further, recommending minimum floor areas for specific rooms as shown in the table below. These recommended minimum floor areas have been compared to the proposed room sizes within the property for comparison.

	RLG (minimum floor area)	Proposed Room Size
Kitchen/Diner	12m ²	33.97m ²
Living Room	13.2m ²	28.44m ²
WC	1.3m ²	3.44m ²
Double Bedroom	11.2m ²	19m ²
		14.15m ²
		16.28m ²
		12.21m ²
Ensuite	3.5m ²	4.04m ²
Bathroom and WC	3.6m ²	8.31m ²
Utility / Boot Room	-	9.6m ²

The table demonstrates that all the rooms provided within the dwelling are in accordance with the RLG.

Further to the room sizes, the RLG states that new developments should provide acceptable private amenity space. The RLG states that a garden area for a three bedroom property should have a minimum depth of 10m and a minimum area of 60m. The garden for proposed development significantly exceeds the guidance, with a total area of 3,447m² and a depth of 54.46m. Therefore, the amenity space provided is in accordance with the RLG.

In addition, the new property will not be overlooked or overshadowed.

The replacement dwelling will provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers, sufficient private amenity space as well as good levels of natural lighting and ventilation. As such, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers and is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

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 dwelling is not considered to impact on the amenity of any neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing, sense of enclosure or outlook. The proposed new location of the replacement dwelling would not be set further to the rear than Nutfields to the south or Merryhill Farm to the north. Whilst the replacement dwelling would be set closer to Nutfields to the south, there would be a gap of over 5m between the flank elevations and the proposed dwelling would not have any windows within the south facing flank elevation.

Therefore, the proposed dwelling would safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties using planning conditions, and the flank window is not considered sufficient to refuse the application. As such, the development is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highways issues related to this proposal. The driveway for the property is large with sufficient space for vehicular parking and the garage can accommodate vehicles. As such, the development accords with Gravesham's adopted parking standards (SPG 4) (2006).

5. Very special circumstances

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

6. Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by varied topography, ancient wood and haphazard mosaic resident plots and small holdings.

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.

By virtue of the additional height and bulk of the replacement dwelling, together with the inclusion of a large detached garage, it is considered that the proposed dwelling and garage would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Harvel Wooded Downs.

Impact on an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The site is also located with an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The adopted Kent Downs AONB Management Plan states that the local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, siting, landscaping and materials of new development, redevelopment and infrastructure and will be pursued through the application of appropriate design guidance and position statements. It also states that it should be ensured that proposals do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the Kent Downs AONB.

The proposed development due to the increase height would have greater visibility from the surrounding countryside than the existing property. However, taking into account the surrounding properties, some being two storey, it is not considered that the proposal would have a negative impact on the Kent Downs AONB.

Conclusion

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

The proposed replacement dwelling and garage will have an adverse cumulative impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area, by virtue of disproportionate scale and increase in overall height and bulk which would be highly visible from the street scene and surrounding area. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to the Design Guidance SPD (2021), Policy CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), as well as Sections 12 and 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

Recommendation:

Refusal

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Amanda Grout	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	<i>A Grout</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	8 th September 2022	Dated:	09 September 2022