



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230792

Location: Home Acre Melliker Lane Meopham Gravesend

Description: 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 room and changes to fenestration.

Applicant: Marta Pocztowska

Site Visit Date: 30/08/2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form;
Drawing no. HA-R00-EX-101 – Location Map;
Drawing no. HA-R00-EX-102 – Existing Block Plan;
Drawing no. HA-R00-PR-107 – Proposed Block Plan;
Drawing no. HA-R00-EX-104 – Existing Floor Plans (Roof Plan);
Drawing no. HA-R00-PR-104 – Proposed Floor Plans (Roof Plan);
Drawing no. HA-R00-EX-103 – Existing Floor Plans (First Floor);
Drawing no. HA-R00-PR-103 – Proposed Floor Plans (First Floor);
Drawing no. HA-R00-EX-102 – Existing Floor Plans (Ground Floor);
Drawing no. HA-R00-PR-102 – Proposed Floor Plans (Ground Floor);
Drawing no. HA-R000EX0105 – Existing Elevations;
Drawing no. HA-R00-PR-106 – Proposed Sections;
Drawing no. HA-R00-PR-105 – Proposed Elevations;
CIL Form;
Fire Safety Statement;
Design & Access Statement.

~~Drawing no. HA-R00-EX-108 – Site Plan;~~
~~Drawing no. HA-R00-PR-107 – Site Plan;~~
~~Drawing no. HA-R00-PR-101 – Location Map~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19860870	Erection of single storey side extension on the east elevation to form double garage and single storey front extension to form a porch	Permitted	14.01.1987
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
- CS11 - Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

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

Gravesham Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 1 Consultation Part 2: Development Management Policies Document April 2018

The following draft policies are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Proposed Policy DM 6: Extensions, Replacement Buildings and Ancillary Development in the Green Belt
- Proposed Policy DM 26: Residential Space Standards
- Proposed Policy DM 28: Domestic Extensions, Outbuildings and Other Development
- Proposed Policy DM 35: Light Pollution
- Proposed Policy DM 36: Sunlight and Daylight within New Development

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 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 Highways Officer

No objections, the number of bedrooms remains the same and there is no encroachment onto the existing driveway and parking area.

Meopham Parish Council

Raises no objection subject to compliance with GBC's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide.

Neighbouring properties

3 surrounding properties were consulted plus site notice – no responses received. The overall consultation period expired on 22 September 2023.

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.

This proposal is for the erection of a first storey side extension above the existing single storey side extension to form a master bedroom and bathroom, removal of the existing front porch and erection of a two storey front extension to form a porch and dressing room, conversion of garage into a living room and changes to fenestration; the existing sun room would also be removed under the proposals.

To build the first floor side extension above the existing garage the front columns and doors of the garage would be removed and a new solid wall built with a window 1m back from where the columns and doors are currently located and the existing roof removed. The first floor extension would be the same width as the existing garage (5.4m) and built in line its existing rear wall. The existing front porch element is 1.3m in depth and 4.6m in width and 3.6m in height. The two storey front extension that would replace this would be 1.2m in depth, 4.5m in width and 7.3m in height.

Whether the proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt

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 147 of the NPPF 2023).

Paragraph 148 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 149 of the NPPF (2021) 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:-

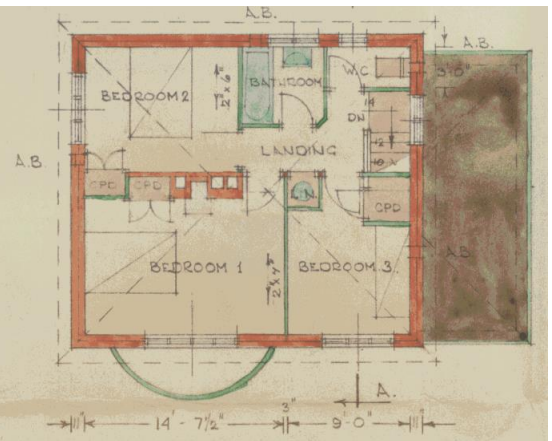
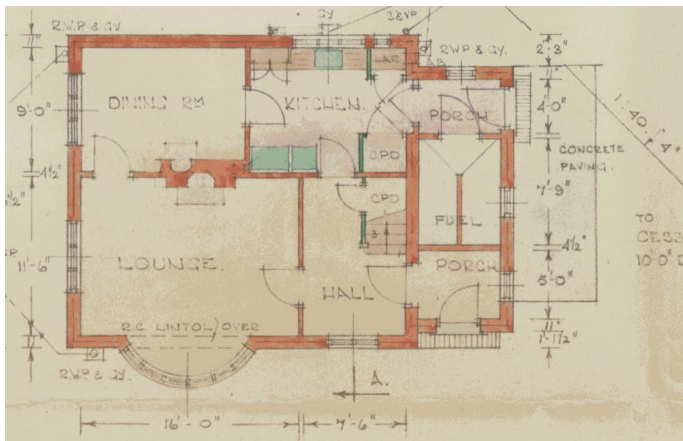
- (i) The existing dwelling must be an “original dwelling”* in permanent use as a dwelling.
- (ii) There will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall 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 and a sun room (no planning history). The sun room and porch are to be removed under the proposals including a small part of the garage so those elements will not need to be calculated in the existing extensions calculations.

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 – (minus the section that is going to be removed due to a 1m set back) = 32.9 sq. m

*The existing porch and sun room are to be demolished under the proposals so no need to calculate those under existing extensions.

Proposed extensions (Two storey front and first floor side extensions)

Ground floor proposed – 6.7 sq. m

First floor proposed – 52.4 sq. m

Total floorspace of proposed extensions = 59 sq. m

Total percentage increase of dwelling over original (91.9 divided by 121.5 x 100 = **75.6 %**)

From the above assessment the proposed extension, taking into account existing extensions which are not to be removed, would increase the floorspace of the original dwelling by 75% which is 42 % greater than the one third (33%) limit set out in saved Policy C13 (LPFR).

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 first floor extension would be built above the existing side garage and the two storey front extension would be built on the footprint of the existing porch.

In terms of footprint, the original footprint of the dwelling was 67.9 sq. m, the existing footprint of the dwelling is 117 sq. m and the proposed footprint would be 109.8 sq. m (due to existing sun room and bay window being removed and the existing garage element at ground floor being set in 1m).

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

Existing dwelling:



Proposed dwelling



The proposed first floor side extension would result in an increase in built form at the side of the dwelling at first floor level. It would increase the existing garage element which is only single storey to a full two storey height. It is extremely wide (5.4m) and would be built in line with the ridgeline of the host dwelling and the

main front wall, as such it would appear as a large and dominant first floor side extension.

The proposed two storey front extension would be built on the footprint of the existing porch which is to be removed but would increase the built form at first floor level increasing what is currently only a single storey porch to a two storey front extension. It would be of modest depth (1.2m) and width (4.5m) but would be of a not insignificant height (7.3m) due to its two storey nature. It would also have a gable roof design with a large expanse of glazing in the front elevation which would all add to the prominence of the extension.

Therefore, by virtue of an assessment of floorspace, footprint and volume as well as scale, bulk, massing and design, it is considered that proposed first floor side extension and two storey front extension would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the original building.

The proposal would therefore be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy CS02 (LPCS), Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) and paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2023).

Effect on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 137 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 by virtue of the additional form of built development at the property would erode the openness of the Green Belt. The extension would add to the built form of the building, adding significant new floorspace over and above the original dwelling and increase the width and depth of the dwelling at first floor level. This is due to the additional built form from the first floor side extension and the additional element on the front elevation at first floor level as there would be a two storey element here as opposed to the current single storey element. These additional elements to the property would increase the existing height, width and depth of the property adding dominant additions which would increase its prominence. The proposal is therefore considered to have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF (2023) state 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. It is therefore now necessary to consider whether the development causes any other harm and whether there are any other considerations that are relevant to the overall planning balance.

Design, Character and Appearance including landscape character

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.

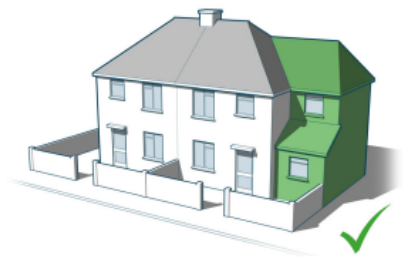
The Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) states the following in respect of two storey/first floor side extensions and front extensions:

Two storey/first floor side extensions

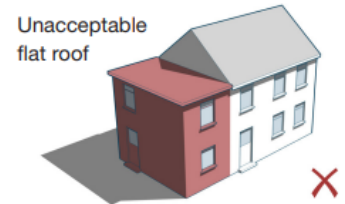
Two Storey Side

10.5 Two storey extensions can have a more significant impact on the appearance of the street. Care is also needed when considering the relationship between any proposed extension and the boundary with neighbouring properties as the separation between properties can provide access routes to the rear of the property and in some locations are part of the character of the area. Depending on the orientation of the neighbouring property, side extensions also have the potential to impact their amenity. To ensure these potential issues are resolved, two storey side extensions should be designed in accordance with the guidance below.

- **Footprint:** Extensions should generally aim to appear subservient to the host building by lying behind the main front building line, though where designed well or having regard to positive local character, other approaches can be supported. See advice of extensions to corner properties in the following section.
- **Height:** Extensions should not exceed the eaves height of the host building.
- **Width:** Extensions should generally be no greater than half the width of the host building. The existing rhythm of the street, including for example characteristic gaps between properties, the symmetry of pairs of semi-detached homes or groups of terraced houses, should not be unreasonably interrupted. A minimum gap of 1 metre should be retained between the extension and the flank boundary.
- **Design:** Extensions are of greater visibility, and should incorporate roof designs to reflect and generally be subservient to the main property's roof. The use of flat or false pitched roofs visible from the street should be avoided. Patterns of windows should reflect the host building and local character. Walls to extensions should not form the site boundary with the public highway, as these can be oppressive and encourage antisocial activities.
- **Materials:** Matching external materials and window / door frames should be used.
- **Overlooking:** Extensions should avoid inserting any flank windows where they would allow new, or significantly increased overlooking views into neighbouring gardens / properties.
- **Light / Outlook:** The 45 / 25 degree rule will be used to assess the impact of the extension on neighbouring light / outlook.

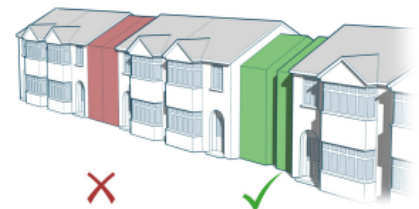


Ground floor set back 0.5m



Unacceptable flat roof

Two storey side extensions should be subordinate in scale to the original house.



Side extensions should be set back and set in to avoid the 'terrace effect'.

Front extensions

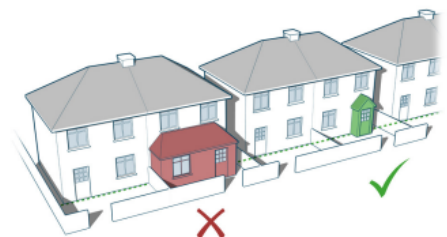
Front Extensions & Porches

10.7 Front extensions can change the character of the original building and where poorly designed have a negative impact on the appearance of the street; due to their visibility these kind of extensions are most likely to have an impact on the wider street scene and are generally discouraged. It is therefore important to invest a high level of design quality in such proposals following the guidance below:

- **Design:** Front extensions must be designed to respond to and enhance the character of the existing dwelling and street.
- **Scale:** The scale and design of new porches should respond to the existing dwelling.
- **Existing Features:** Care should be taken to preserve the appearance of existing features, such as bay windows, and avoid porches that would impact these by subsuming their form or erasing their prominence. Existing porches that are open to the street, and are an original feature that form part of a local pattern of development, should generally not be enclosed.
- **Car Parking:** Extensions or porches should not result in the retention of front parking spaces of inadequate depth.



The scale and design of a new porches should respond to the existing dwelling.



Large extensions which break the building line and do not respect the scale of the house will be rejected.

In respect of this guidance, the proposed first floor side extension would not lie behind the main front building line but would be built in line with it and the extension would be built in line with the ridgeline of the host building and not set down at all. The extension is wide at 7.5m but it would not be greater than half the width of the existing host dwelling (which is 7.6m).

However, on the basis of the extension not being set back or set down it is an overly dominant addition that would not be subservient to the host dwelling.

In respect of this guidance, the proposed two storey front extension would not be in keeping with the scale of the host dwelling due to its two storey height creating a very dominant feature on the front elevation of the dwelling. This would be exacerbated with the large gable feature and large expanse of glazing, the fenestration of which does not relate to the host building.

In respect of design, character and appearance it is considered the proposed first floor side extension and two storey front extension would both be overly dominant additions which by virtue of their size, design, bulk and massing would be contrary to Policy CS19 (LPCS).

The application site is located in the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Areas 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 development would result in an increase in the width, depth and height of the dwelling at first floor level which would consolidate and extend the level of built development on the plot and in the wider area. It is therefore considered that by virtue of the increased prominence of this residential development in the surrounding landscape and its visibility, there would be an adverse impact on the landscape character. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS12 (LPCS) and section 15 of the NPPF (2023).

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. There would also be no change to the existing garden area. As such the property would retain a garden area and rear garden depth in accordance with SPG2 (2020).

In terms of bedrooms due to the extensions and re-ordering of the first floor all three bedrooms would be increased in size. The Technical Housing Standards (2015) state that the minimum size for a single bedroom is 7.5 sq. m and for a double is 11.5 sq. m.

Bedroom 1 – 16.4 sq. m

Bedroom 2 – 16.4 sq. m

Bedroom 3 – 31.1 sq. m

As can be seen all bedrooms would vastly exceed the minimum standards for single and double bedrooms.

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

Neighbouring amenity

Due to the location of the proposed extensions on the host dwelling and the distance of the nearest neighbouring properties from these, there would be no harmful impact on any neighbouring properties with regards overshadowing, loss of outlook or overlooking. 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 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).

Very special circumstances

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

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

Conclusion and Balancing Exercise

The above discussion sets out that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of occupiers or neighbouring properties or parking or highway safety.

However, it has been found that the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, reducing its openness and compromising the objectives of the NPPF (2023) in keeping Green Belt land permanently open. The proposed first floor side extension and two storey front extension by virtue of floorspace, volume, scale, design, mass and height would be disproportionate additions to the original dwelling, which would harm the openness of the Green Belt. The extensions are also considered to be overly dominant and would be unacceptable in respect of design, character and appearance and harmful to landscape character.

The NPPF (2023) indicates that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It requires that substantial weight be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm arising from the proposal is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

As set out above the weight of all the other considerations does not outweigh the harm identified. As such very special circumstances to justify the proposal do not exist. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policies CS01, CS02, CS12 and, CS19 (LPCS) and saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan First Review.

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

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	12th October 2023	Dated:	13 October 2023