

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240298

Location: Seathwaite Church Street Higham Rochester

Description: Erection of single storey front extension with pitched roof, along with enlargement of rear window.

Applicant: Andrew and Lindsey Searles and Platt

Site Visit Date: 23 April 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Location Plan;
- Drawing no. 2403 PL02 – Existing and Proposed Site Layout Plans;
- Drawing no. PL03 – Existing Plans;
- Drawing no. PL04 – Existing Elevations;
- Drawing no. PL05 – Proposed Plans;
- Drawing no. PL06 – Proposed Elevations;
- Design & Access Statement; and
- Flood Risk Assessment.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19810214	Erection of replacement garage at the side	Permitted	18.05.1981

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

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 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009).

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

No response from:

- Higham Parish Council
- GBC Conservation Officer

Neighbouring properties

3 surrounding properties were consulted plus site notice – overall consultation expiry date was 17.05.2024 – no responses received.

Officer's Analysis

The site is located in the Green Belt, Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area, Church Street Conservation Area, Area of Archaeological Potential and Flood Zone 3.

The proposal is for erection of a single storey front extension. It also includes enlargement of the ground floor rear window.

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 152 of the NPPF 2023).

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2023) states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

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

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

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

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

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

- (i) The existing dwelling must be an “original dwelling”* in permanent use as a dwelling.
- (ii) There will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.
- (iii) Those extensions which provide essential basic amenities such as a bathroom, toilet or kitchen, which are currently not available or are clearly inadequate, will normally be permitted.
- (iv) The extension shall not be in a form which would facilitate the future formation of a separate residential curtilage.
- (v) The dwelling to be enlarged must have sufficient curtilage to accommodate the extension without undue visual intrusion into the open countryside.
- (vi) The appearance, massing, scale, form and materials of any extension shall be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.
- (vii) Proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.

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

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

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

In the case of Seathwaite, 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. 19680072. The property has only been extended with a single storey attached garage permitted under application ref. 19810214.

Floorspace calculations

Original Dwelling

Ground floor original floorspace – 75.67 sq. m

First floor original floorspace – 67.86 sq. m

Total floorspace of original dwelling = 143.53

Existing Extensions

Side garage – 14.7 sq. m

Proposed extensions

Single storey front extension – 6 sq. m

Total existing and proposed extensions = 20.7 sq. m

Total percentage increase of dwelling over original (20.7 divided by 143.53 x 100 = **14.4%**)

From the above assessment the proposed extension, taking into account the existing extension at the property would increase the floorspace of the original dwelling by 14.4% which is less 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.

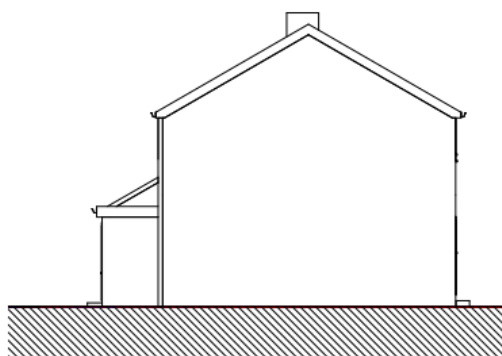
In terms of footprint, the original footprint of the dwelling was 75.6 sq. m, the existing footprint of the dwelling is 90.4 sq. m and the proposed footprint would be 96.9 sq. m. The footprint would therefore be increased but it would only be to a minimal degree.

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

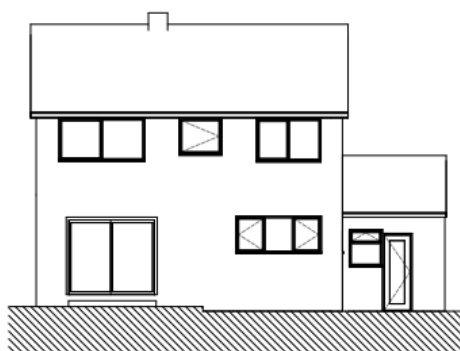
Existing:



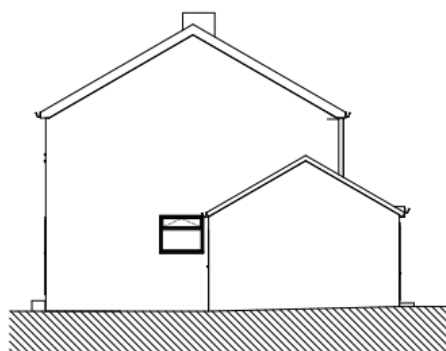
00 Existing Front Elevation
1:50



00 Existing Side Elevation (North)
1:50



00 Existing Rear Elevation
1:50

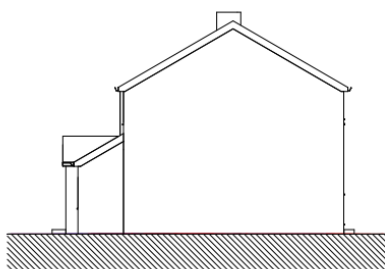


00 Existing Side Elevation (South)
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Proposed:



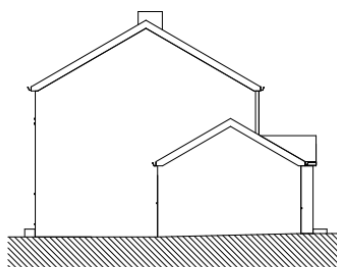
01 Proposed Front Elevation
1:50



01 Proposed Side Elevation (North)
1:50



01 Proposed Rear Elevation
1:50



01 Proposed Side Elevation (South)
1:50

The proposed single storey front extension would be built on the front of the house but it would be built alongside the existing single storey front projection which is original to the house and so it would not increase the overall depth of the dwelling. It would be built in line with the flank wall so would not increase its width.

Therefore, by virtue of an assessment of floorspace, footprint and volume as well as scale, bulk, massing

and design, it is considered that the proposed single storey front extension would not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the original building.

The proposal would therefore not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As such, the proposal is compliant with Policy CS02 (LPCS), Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) and paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2023).

Effect 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.

The proposed extension would be a modest addition which although it would increase floorspace and footprint of the dwelling this would only be to a minimal degree and the overall depth, width or height of the dwelling would not be increased. It is considered the addition would not increase the prominence of the dwelling and the proposal would therefore not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Design, Character and Appearance including Heritage

The Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) states the following in respect of front extensions and porches:

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 the design guidance, the proposed single storey front extension would be modest in depth and width and would be built in line with the depth of the existing original single storey forward projection on the house. It would have a mono pitched roof and a gable feature over the front door; brick and tiles would match the existing. The extension is modest in scale and would be a subservient addition which is in keeping with the scale and character of the host dwelling and the streetscene. It would therefore also preserve the character and appearance of the Church Street Conservation Area. There are no issues with the enlargement of the ground floor rear window. In respect of design, character and appearance the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS), saved Policy TC3 (LPFR) and sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF (2023).

Landscape Character

The application site is located in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area and as such, Policy CS12 (LPCS) is relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications. In this case the proposed extension is a modest and subservient addition which would not increase the prominence of the dwelling. It is therefore considered there would be no adverse impact on the landscape character. As such in respect of landscape character the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS12 (LPCS) and section 15 of the NPPF (2023).

Amenity of Occupiers

The front extension would not impact on the rear garden area or rear garden depth and so no issues with the amenity of occupiers; in respect of amenity of occupiers the proposal is compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Neighbouring Amenity

Due to the scale and siting of the single storey front extension it would not cause any overshadowing, loss of light or loss of outlook to either of the neighbouring properties at Yew Trees to the north or no. 3 Black Cottages to the south. The enlargement of the ground floor rear window also would also cause no issues. In respect of neighbouring amenity the proposal is therefore compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Parking and Highway Safety

The proposed single storey front extension would not impact on the existing parking provision which consists of an attached garage and driveway in front. The proposed extension would not extend out any further than the existing single storey front projection so would not impact on the parking space depth. In respect of parking and highway safety the proposal is compliant with saved Policy P3 (LPFR).

Flooding

The site is located in flood zone 3 and a flood risk assessment has been submitted with the application. This sets out the house is accessed via a couple of steps to the front and rear, with a ground level of 320mm compared to the ground level, the ground floor will be liveable spaces not sleeping spaces therefore ensuring the overall flood risk remains consistent with existing conditions, the small extension will be positioned on existing hardstanding and will therefore have no impact on further flooding elsewhere and the ground floor level will be retained as existing and will be no lower than the existing ground floor level. The Environment Agency's (EA) Mitigation Note 9 states that the EA do not wish to be consulted unless the site is within 20m of a main river (the site is not). It states finished floor levels shall be set no lower than existing floor levels and that opportunities should be explored to raise floor levels or incorporate passive flood resistance measures. In this case finished floor levels would be no lower than the existing floor levels; although floor levels would not be raised it is not stipulated by the EA that this has to be the case. The proposal is for a small front extension to extend an existing room. As the finished floor levels would be the same as existing and no lower it is considered the proposal would not lead to any increased harm to the occupiers of the dwelling. In respect of flooding the proposal is considered compliant with Policy CS18 (LPCS) and section 14 of the NPPF (2023).

Archaeology

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential however, it is considered unlikely that these proposals would have had a significant below-ground archaeological impact due to the likely past impact of development at the site. In respect of archaeology the proposal is therefore considered compliant with saved Policy TC7 (LPFR).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposal is acceptable in respect of design, character and appearance including heritage, landscape character, occupier and neighbouring amenity, parking and highway safety and archaeology. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with local and national planning policy.

Recommendation: Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	4th June 2024	Dated:	04 June 2024