



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20260016

Location: 34 The Street, Cobham, Gravesend, Kent

Description: Removal of internal raised ground floor and first floor over garage, internal replanning and conversion of garage to living room, plus new detached garage to side/rear and new front boundary wall.

Applicant: Mr Martin Gander

Site Visit Date: Desktop assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Design and Access Statement
Heritage Statement
Drawing no. 25-13-01A (Location Plan)
Drawing no. 25-13-02C (Site Layout Plan as Existing and Proposed)
Drawing no. 25-13-03A (Floor Plans as Existing and Proposed)
Drawing no. 25-13-04 (Elevations as Existing)
Drawing no. 25-13-05B (Elevations as Proposed)
Drawing no. 25-13-06A (Garage Plan and Elevations as Proposed)

Superseded drawings following revisions to plans:

~~Drawing no. 25-13-01 (Location Plan)~~
~~Drawing no. 25-13-02 (Site Layout Plan as Existing and Proposed)~~
~~Drawing no. 25-13-03 (Floor Plans as Existing and Proposed)~~
Drawing no. 25-13-04 (Elevations as Existing)
~~Drawing no. 25-13-05 (Elevations as Proposed)~~
~~Drawing no. 25-13-06 (Garage Plan and Elevations as Proposed)~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20130209	Erection of single storey rear extension to form bedroom, shower room/wc, study and garage; replacement of doors and windows in existing dwelling and replace timber cladding with painted render.	Permitted	03.07.2013
19910378	Conversion of the former stable block at the rear into a dwelling incorporating the erection of a two storey rear extension to form living room with bedroom, w.c. & bathroom over & demolition of the existing attached and detached garages with plastic canopies & oil store at front, side & rear.	Permitted	22.08.1991

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development and Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Policy for Listed Buildings
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic 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 Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)
- Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2026
- Landscape Character Assessment Update 2020
- Cobham Rural Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document (2017)

The Council has a statutory requirement under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) which states that, with respect to buildings or other land in a

conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Section 16(2) and Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) require special regard to be paid to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent or planning permission respectively.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Cobham Parish Council

Cobham Parish Council objects to this application, with regard to the new garage building.

Traffic access from the shop will be impacted due to reduced sightlines.

The character of the street would be visually intrusive with a new building so close to the road, with an overbearing presence.

Although there are properties very close to the road, this should not dictate that any new building should follow the same build line. We would therefore not like a precedent to be set here.

As a conservation area, the visual appeal of the street scene should remain with this area open. This will impact on the rural character of the village. This does not respect the heritage of the area.

Although this area is not part of the area for parking for the shop, this will have an impact on delivery lorries and other vehicles parking for the shop. This will have an impact on access safety.

Cobham Parish Council therefore objects to this application.

Internal Consultees

GBC Conservation Officer

The proposal screens the gap, car park and bungalow behind. The flint and brick wall will also contribute positively to the area. First 5m of brick/flint wall could be higher adjacent to the building fronting the street, just so it screens more of the car park. Flint wall to the left should be divided into 3 bays with vertical toothed brick piers similar to the edge piers. Similarly, the garage/wall should have a brick divider mid-way. Would need to agree materials, brick, flint, roof tiles as these will be critical to the appearance, also and mortar mix/finish. Best done with a sample panel to approve prior to commencement.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 16 properties and on site. Following revisions to the submitted plans, the overall consultation period expired on 18 March 2026.

Twenty one letters of representation were initially received from neighbouring properties, objecting on the following grounds:

- Loss of sunlight, reduction of natural light and adverse effect on outlook to neighbouring properties from scale and positioning of detached garage and wall.
- Overbearing presence of garage.
- Brick wall facing the street.
- Visually sensitive road in Conservation Area.

- Frontage development would harm established character and appearance of street.
- Design and massing would appear visually intrusive and out of keeping.
- Frontage development will worsen vehicle movements and traffic conflict, visibility issues and access safety.
- Overdevelopment of the plot.
- Frontage development will reduce open space that contributes to the character of the street.
- Does not adequately respect the heritage context of the area and risks eroding the historic streetscape.
- The development fails to preserve and enhance local character.
- Could set precedent for similar front garden developments.
- Siting of garage would make visibility difficult when leaving the car park.
- Loss of parking and turning space from siting of garage.
- No parking available in the village to use the shop.
- The parking is essential, particularly for the elderly and disabled.
- Increased difficulty for delivery lorries to gain access and turn.
- The car park is shared by the adjacent community shop under an existing lease – parking for the shop would be reduced.
- Customers of the shop would be put off by the reduction in parking.
- Loss of trade for local community store which is a vital village resource.
- Where would the bins for the shop be stored? Bins cannot be stored inside the garage, 24-hour access would be required.
- There is space elsewhere for such a development including behind No. 34.
- Previous extensions already provided adequate garage and storage provision.
- Disruption from construction.
- Concern over potential for garage to be converted to commercial or residential.

Following the revisions, a further three objections were received with the following comments:

- The high pitch of the roof will be seen from the road.
- If the dropped kerb is relocated it will affect larger vehicles entering and exiting the village store and mounting the public path opposite.
- The wall will narrow the opening used for access to the parking for the shop and create a sightline issue.
- The wall will reduce pedestrian safety and visibility.
- The visibility splays will remove some of the parking spaces in the car park.
- The wall will not mask the bungalow.
- Despite being an attempt to make the front boundary more in keeping with its surroundings, the wall will reduce safety, increase hazards and is not appropriate for the location or adjacent public use needs.
- The proposal will spoil the beauty of the village and clash with the nearby period properties.
- It will restrict access to the community shop and parking.
- Deliveries to the shop will be a problem as there are no nearby unloading points and a congestion problem in the road.

Local Ward Councillors were also consulted but no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

This application seeks permission for the removal of internal raised ground floor and first floor over garage, internal replanning and conversion of garage to living room, plus new detached garage and new front boundary wall.

The plans have been revised following initial concerns raised about the proposed detached garage being at the front of the site, which was considered to be an incongruous feature in the village centre location, out of



character with the Conservation Area and affecting the views and settings of surrounding listed buildings. Vehicle visibility was also a concern.

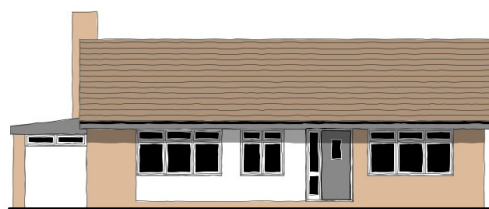
The garage has been relocated towards the rear of the dwelling and a front wall has been proposed across the site frontage.

There are two main elements to the proposal. The first largely involves internal alterations to No. 34, including converting a single storey store on the ground floor to two ensuites for two new bedrooms that will replace the existing open plan kitchen/dining/living room in the main part of the building. New stairs will be created in the rear part of the building, the floor will be lowered and a new kitchen/dining room will replace the existing dressing room and shower room. Beyond this, and a new living room will be created in place of the existing garage, where the ceiling will be removed to create a double height space.

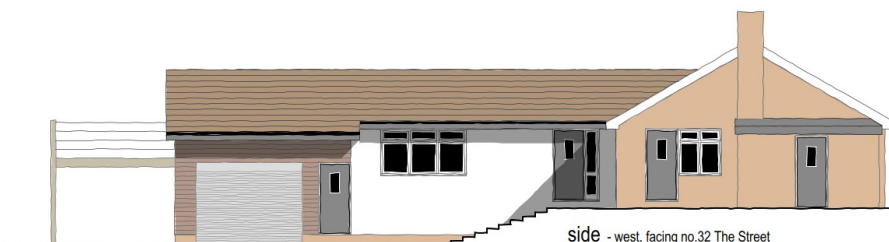
Floor Plans



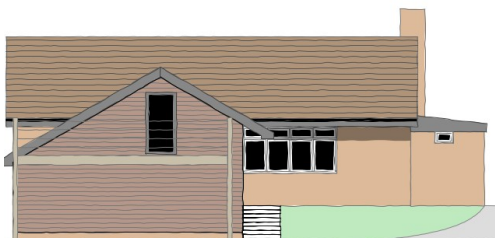
Existing Elevations:



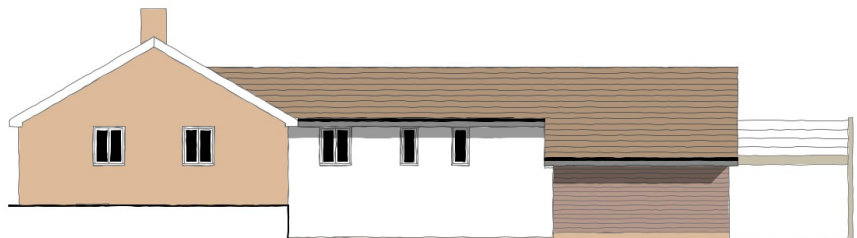
front - south, facing the parking area and The Street



side - west, facing no.32 The Street

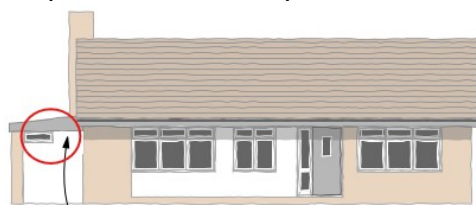


rear - north, facing the private garden



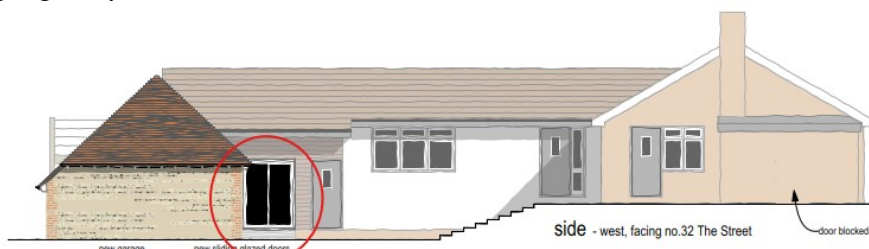
side - east, facing nos. 28-30 The Street

Proposed Elevations (with alterations highlighted):



window blocked

front - south, facing the parking area and The Street

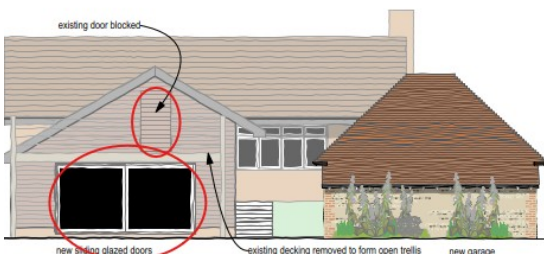


new garage

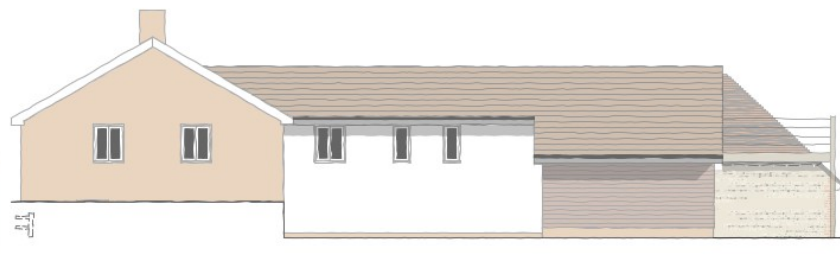
new sliding glazed doors

side - west, facing no.32 The Street

door blocked



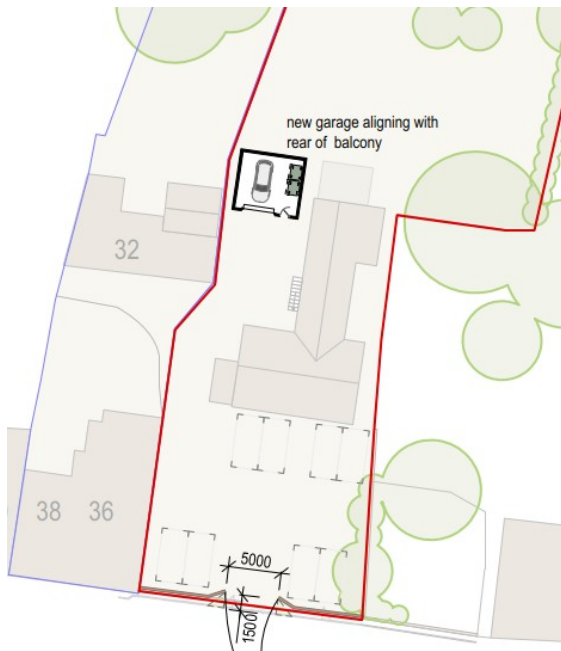
rear - north, facing the private garden



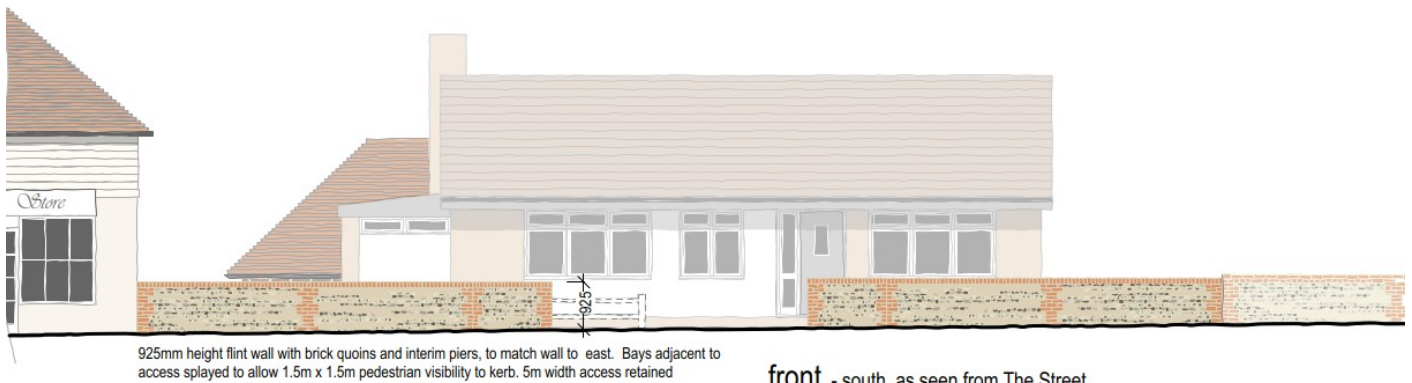
side - east, facing nos. 28-30 The Street

The second part of the proposal involves the construction of a new detached single garage towards the rear of the property, on the north-western corner. A new 925mm high flint and brick wall is also proposed to the frontage and will also be set back to allow for visibility splays.

Proposed Block Plan:

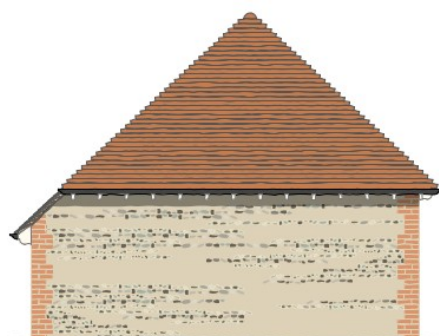


Proposed Street Scene:



front - south, as seen from The Street

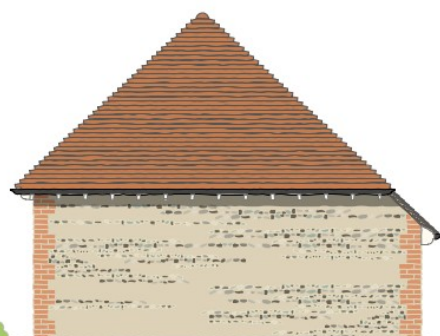
Proposed Floor Plan and Elevations:



side - east, facing side of no.32



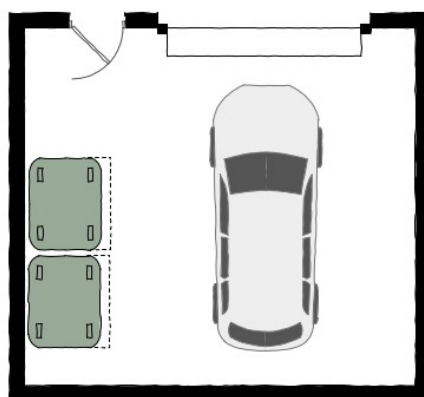
rear - north, facing rear garden



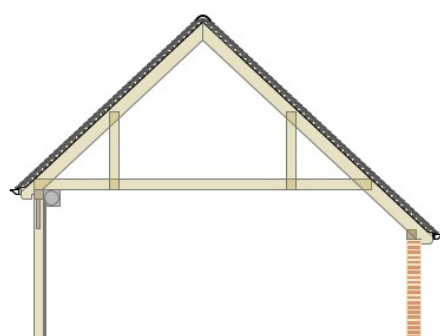
side - west, facing the existing garage



front - south, facing the access drive



plan - 31 m² internal - doors to the south, facing access drive.



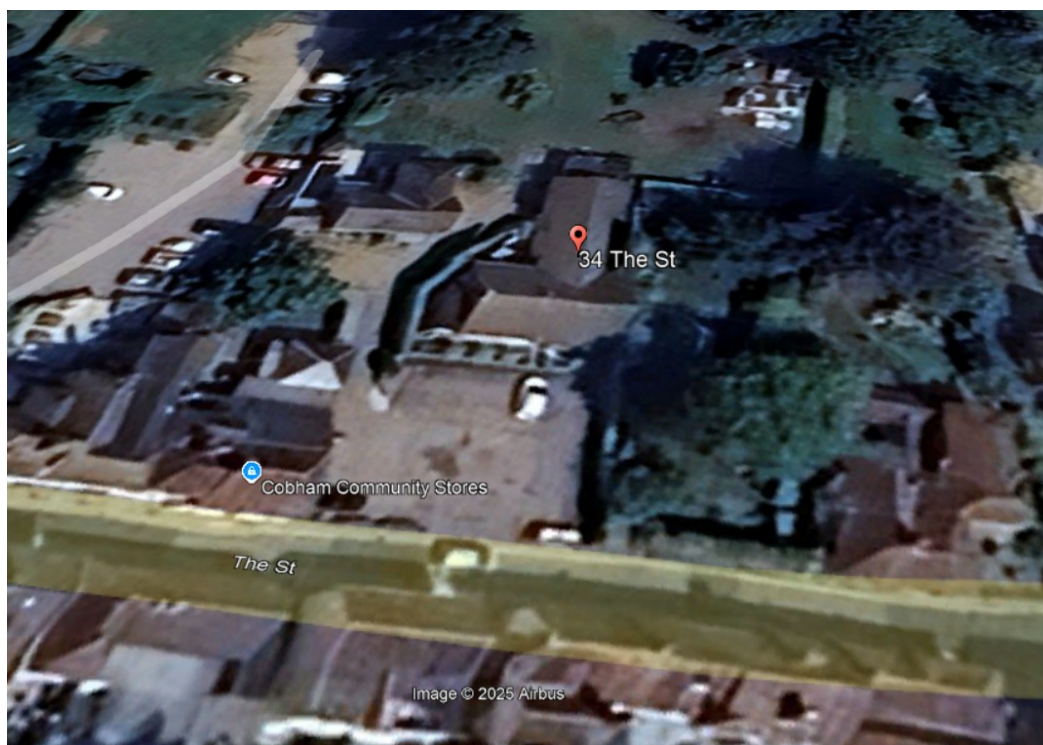
section - south to north

Principle Issues

The site lies within the rural settlement boundary of Cobham, which is inset from the Green Belt (Green Belt policies are therefore not applicable here). It is within the Cobham Conservation Area and adjacent and opposite various listed buildings on The Street. It is also within the Kent Downs National Landscape and the Ashenbank and Cobham Parkland Landscape Character Area, as well as an Area of Archaeological Potential.

Given these designations, the main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Design and Listed Building/Conservation Area impacts
- Impact on landscape character
- Residential amenity
- Parking and highways
- Archaeology



Design And Listed Building/Conservation Area Impacts

Section 12 of the NPPF 2024 relates to achieving well-designed and beautiful places and sets out the Government's requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 131 emphasises the importance of achieving high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 also seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The NPPF 2024 places great significance on the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets,

and on new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 210). This is echoed in Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that the significance of the Borough's heritage assets and their setting should always be preserved or enhanced. Saved Policy TC2 of the Local Plan 1994 sets out that for development involving alterations to listed buildings or affecting the setting of listed buildings, the primary consideration is the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals must be sympathetic in terms of their appearance and materials.

No. 34 The Street is located in the Cobham Conservation Area. There are buildings either side of the site and opposite that are listed and the proposal will therefore affect the setting of these buildings.

The Cobham Conservation Area Appraisal describes the application site as follows:

"...on what was once the site of a tiny four house terrace is the modern car park of the village shop. At the back of this stands a modern bungalow with a converted 19th century coach-house beyond it.

... With the narrowest frontages of all, was a short run of four very small brick-built identical workers terraced houses immediately east of the village shop. Slightly set back from the road, these may have been early 19th century in date. When this terrace was taken down its loss caused a street-frontage gap as it was replaced by the present car park with a new bungalow north beyond it...

Negative features:

...

• *The character of the car parks of the village's three public houses and that of the village shop... is also identified as problematic. Progress here could only be made if the commercial bodies involved were prepared to improve the appearance of these areas."*

In terms of the alterations to the bungalow No. 34 itself, the proposed external changes are minor and would have no impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or surrounding listed buildings.

The Conservation Area Appraisal describes the gaps between the buildings on The Street, including the application site, and states some of these are attractively managed, and some are not. Whilst the frontage to No. 34, which consists of a wholly tarmacked car parking area, is not considered an attractive feature as set out in the Appraisal, such areas are sought to be improved in appearance, with the implication of this being better surfacing, boundary treatments and planting. The proposed front wall is in keeping with the character and appearance of other boundary treatments along The Street and would enhance the frontage of this site, as well as help to screen the car parking area. It must be noted that the proposed wall at 925mm high could reasonably be constructed under permitted development. It is preferable to have control over the appearance of the wall through this application, and condition its materials and appearance in order to ensure its quality.

The proposed detached garage has been relocated to the side and towards the rear of the dwelling.

The Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide sets out design guidance for garages, and states:

10.17 Detached garages should reflect the design, materials, character and style of the existing property. Garages should not be located in a position which would detract from the attractiveness of the street scene. Usually, garages should be positioned to the side of a dwelling.

The proposal is in line with this guidance in relation to the position of the garage. Its set back from the front of the site will have little impact on the appearance of the street, particularly as the land slopes down away from The Street and the garage will be at a lower level. The design is more traditional than the bungalow, but it would not be at odds with its surroundings in the Conservation Area.

Overall, the proposal would comply with Saved Policies TC2 and TC3 of the Local Plan 1994, Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraphs 131 ,135 and 203 of the NPPF 2024, and the Council's design guidance.

Impact on Landscape Character

With regard to the impact on the landscape, paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 aims for development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape (KDNL - formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Reflective of paragraph 189 of the NPPF 2024, Policy SD2 of the Management Plan 2021-2026 recognises the need to conserve and enhance the local character, qualities, distinctiveness and natural resources of the KDNL.

Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 is relevant to this application, relating to green infrastructure. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (GLCA) 2009 will be taken into account in determining applications. The site is located within the Ashenbank and Cobham Parkland Landscape Character Area. However, as the site comprises an existing residential property within the rural settlement boundary of Cobham, the proposal will not have any adverse impact on the wider landscape character of the area.

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2024 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 135f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land, and avoid adverse environmental impacts.

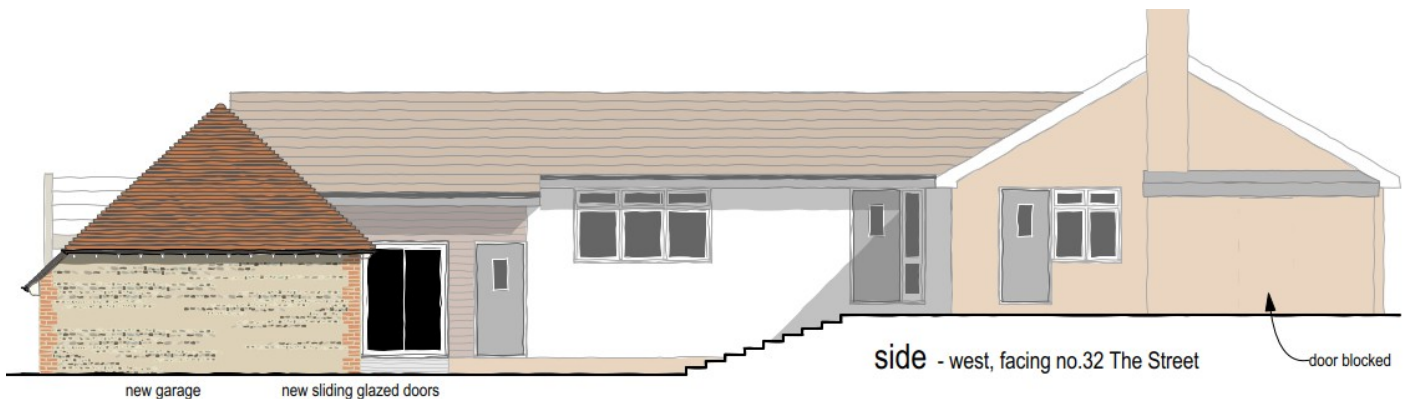
Future Occupiers

There are no conflicts with the requirements of paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy in respect of the living conditions for future occupants. The size of accommodation and garden remains acceptable.

Neighbouring Properties

As the bungalow at No. 34 is existing and well separated from neighbouring dwellings, the proposed external changes to it would not cause material harm to any adjoining properties.

The detached garage will be located between Nos. 32 and 34:



The proposed garage is single storey and set away from the shared boundary with No. 32. The building will be 2.1m to eaves level, which is only just over the height of a standard boundary fence, and the roof will then pitch away from the boundary. The proposed garage will not cause any loss of light or privacy, nor have a dominant impact on neighbours.

Overall, the proposal would not harm the amenities of neighbouring properties, and as such, would comply with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF 2024.

Parking and Highways

The proposed external alterations to No. 34 and the proposed front boundary wall would not have any adverse parking or highways impacts.

The internal changes will increase the number of bedrooms at the property from three to four and the proposal would remove a dedicated parking space from within the existing bungalow, but would replace it with the proposed detached garage. According to the Council's design guidance, the internal length would not comply with the preferred internal dimensions for a garage – the internal length is 5.3m rather than 5.5m as advised, which would potentially result in it not being able to properly function as a garage. However, the garage is wider than the advised width of 3.6m at 5.8m, plus there is other parking available on the site. The slight shortfall in the length of the proposed garage is therefore not considered to be a significant cause for concern in terms of its acceptability for parking.

There have been neighbour representations relating to the loss of parking and turning space in relation to the village shop at No. 36, and also the lack of visibility for vehicles exiting the site. At least 8 parking spaces are shown to be retained within the parking area on the site. The two houses No. 32 and No. 34 have alternative space for parking within their boundary. There would therefore appear to be ample parking space retained for the shop and two dwellings.

In relation to the visibility for vehicles exiting the car park, the proposed wall is 925mm high and pedestrian sight lines have been shown. On this basis, there would not be concerns over highway safety issues resulting from the proposal, which would comply with Saved Policies T1 of the Local Plan First Review (1994), Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy (2014) and Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG4 (2006).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Heritage

The NPPF 2024 places great significance on the desirability of sustaining and enhancing heritage assets, and on new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 203). This is echoed in Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that the significance of the Borough's heritage assets and their setting should always be preserved or enhanced. Saved Policy TC7 states that development on important archaeological sites will not normally be permitted.

The site is within an Area of Archaeological Potential. Due to the householder nature of the proposal, it is unlikely the proposal would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact.

In this respect the proposal complies with the relevant requirements of saved Policy TC7 of the Local Plan 1994, Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014 and Section 16 of the NPPF 2024.

Conclusion

The proposed internal changes, detached garage and boundary wall are acceptable in terms of the design and impact on the application site and the character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area, and with regards to residential amenity, highways and parking and heritage matters. The proposals would therefore comply with the requirements of Policies CS11, CS12, CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policies T1, P3 and TC7 of the Local Plan 1994, and paragraphs 115, 131, 135, 187, 203 and 210 of the NPPF 2024, as well as the Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide.

Recommendation

Permission subject to conditions.

(For conditions and informatives, see draft Decision.)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	30 March 2026	Dated:	30th March 2026