

Planning Briefing Note

Introduction

This briefing note has been prepared to support application submission in relation to the site at Wonky Log, Valley Lane, Culverstone Gravesend, and is submitted on behalf of Paul & Elaine Mayes for the following proposed development:

“Erection of detached garage with a low pitched roof and solar panels”

This planning note sets out the merits of the proposal and should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans.

The planning assessment is made in the context of the adopted Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014), supporting policy documents including GBC Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021), and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the site characteristics and local planning history.

Site context

The site is located on the eastern side of Valley Road. The site comprises a two-storey detached dwelling, set within a verdant plot with raised rear amenity space. The front of the site includes space for a detached garage (previously approved, not implemented – see planning history below).

The immediate surrounding area is residential in use, characterised by detached dwellings of varying design, form and built footprint. Several properties have detached outbuildings, often with garage structures located in the front of the site, close to the highway. The site is located within the Green Belt.



Fig. 1 Site Location (© Landstack)

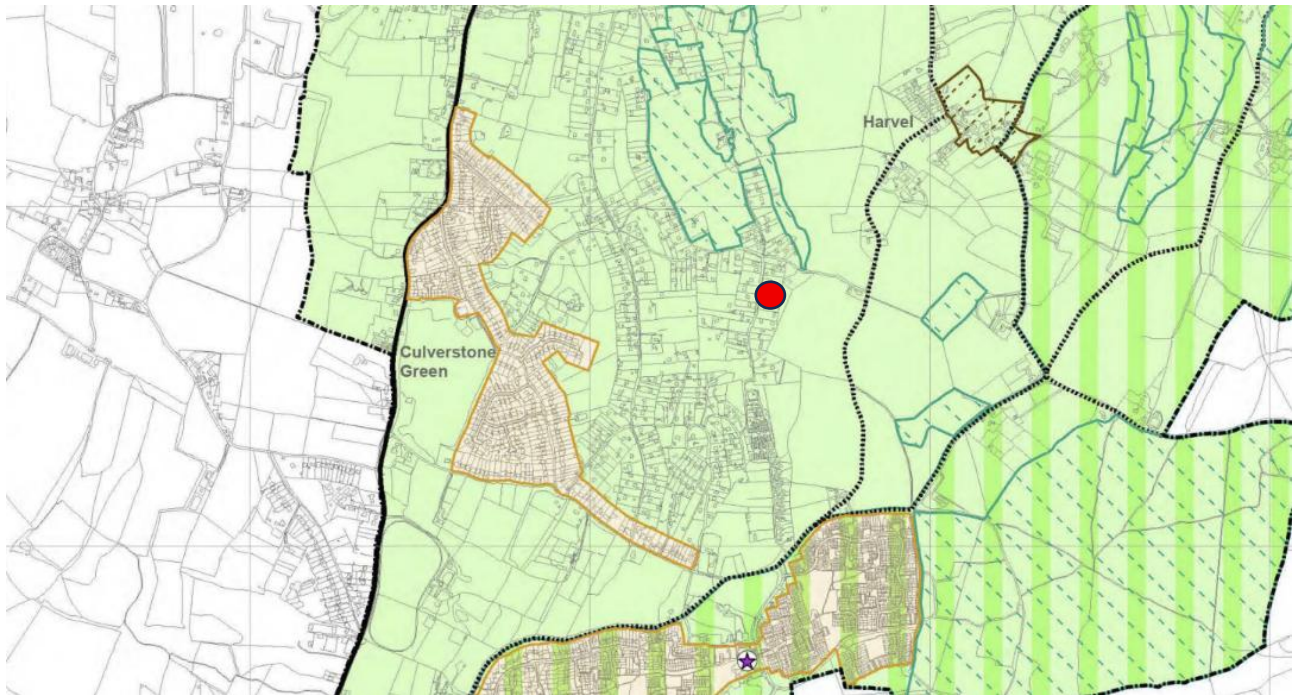


Fig. 2 Local Plan Core Strategy – Green Belt designation (© GBC)

Planning history

Application site

A search of GBC's planning register shows the following relevant planning history for the site.

Ref No.	Proposal	Decision
19520133	Erection of a chalet.	Granted 04.07.1952
19520204	Erection of a chalet	Granted 03.10.1952
19600060	Erection of chalet for weekend and holiday use.	Granted 06.04.1960
19890808	Erection of a single storey rear extension to from bathroom and	Granted 02.02.1990
20161107	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a detached two storey 2no. bedroom dwelling.	Refused 12.01.2017
20170383	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a detached single storey split level 2 no. bedroom dwelling.	Granted 30.06.2017
20171321	Erection of detached garage with a low pitched roof and solar panels.	Granted 13.04.2018

Table 1: Relevant planning history

Surrounding area

Ref No.	Proposal	Decision
20220188	La Clef Valley Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG Demolition of existing carport and erection of a double garage at lower ground level.	Granted 10.08.2022
20210887	Longacre Valley Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG Erection of a timber constructed carport.	Granted 08.09.2021
20221257	Rosebank Valley Lane Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0DG Erection of detached garage with storage in roof space over	Granted 16.03.2023
20201115	50 Southfield Shaw Park Homes Harvel Road Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0RH Erection of a double garage to replace two existing garages to store disability equipment.	Granted 26.10.2023

Table 2: Surrounding area relevant planning history

Planning policy context

The development plan for GBC comprises the Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014). The key GBC policies are as follows:

GBC adopted policies	Supplementary Planning Guidance
Local Plan Core Strategy (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 (1994): • P3 -Vehicle Parking Standards C13 -Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside	• SPG 2 Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 - amended June 2020; • SPG 4 KCC Parking Standards (2006); • Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021) • Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Table 3: Planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

NPPF is a material consideration. Key sections are as follows:

- 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

Development management considerations

Site history context

The application has been subject to recent planning history for the development of the erection of the main residential dwelling (as approved and built under planning permission ref. 20170383) and the erection of a detached garage (as approved and not implemented under planning permission ref. 20171321).

In approving the detached garage ref. 20171321, the delegated report undertook a detailed analysis of the proposed development, planning history and policy framework of GBC and NPPF and concluded the following:

“Therefore overall it can be concluded that definitional and actual harm to the openness and purpose of the Green Belt would be outweighed by the benefits arising from the proposed development and that this would amount to the very special circumstances required to justify an exception to the adopted Green Belt policy”.

The current proposal seeks to marginally increase the proposed garage structure by the following dimensions:

	Approved April 2018 (20171321)	Proposed July 2025
Proposal	Single garage	Double garage
Dimensions	3.8m (w) x 5.6m (d) and 3.7m (h)	6m (w) x 6m (d) x 3.6 (h)
Area (sqm)	22.04	36
Distance from highway	3m	3m

The proposed increase in footprint would not result in a materially significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt or general character of the area.

Significantly, the garage would retain a 3m distance from the highway and not increase in height. The additional width of 2.2m would extend further towards the main dwelling, whilst retaining a significant separation distance, and soft landscaped area between the built form. This will allow the applicant to create space for two vehicles and would accord with KCC design standards for a double garage.

The analysis and conclusions drawn by the previous case officer remain relevant in that the proposal would be subservient in size to the main dwelling, be an appropriate size for its proposed function and be located on the lowest part of the application site.

Furthermore, it is confirmed that the three existing built structures which were to be removed by condition (no. 8 ref. 20171321) will continue to all be removed from the site. Two of three have already been removed,

with one remaining on site until the garage is built (in order to securely store tools). The removal of structures should continue to be acknowledged in reference to the overall site context.

Inappropriate development – Green Belt Exception

Notwithstanding above, it is also relevant to note surrounding area site history which has approved several detached garage structures in the immediate locality.

Of particular note is the change in stance of GBC's assessment of outbuildings as 'inappropriate' or not when it comes to development in the Green Belt. As noted in the delegated officer reports for ref. 20220188 at the neighbouring site 'La Clef' and ref. 20221257 'Rosebank', appeal decisions are cited where Planning Inspectors have not agreed with GBC's interpretation and application of Green Belt policy for outbuildings within residential curtilage.

The proposed development is an outbuilding within a residential curtilage, used for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse. The proposal therefore falls within NPPF paragraph 154 on Green Belt policy as an exception:

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;

The key component is therefore whether the garage is a proportionate addition. For the reasons stated above, the marginal increase to the garage of 2.2m width does not amount to being disproportionate in the context of the site history and previous approval, the relationship with the main dwelling, and the removal of structures on site.

In approving the previous garage structure, the officer report set out the following:

"The proposed development would constitute new built development at the application site and by its very nature as additional built form, the proposal would erode the openness of the Green Belt. This is because the proposal would introduce a new structure in a prominent location on the site frontage, which is currently open and free from built development.

However, it is noted that the proposed garage has been designed to provide only the minimum acceptable internal dimensions, the roof would be mono-pitched and relatively low in height, the building would be sited on the lowest part of the application site and would be partially screened by mature vegetation. As such, it is considered that the adverse impacts on the openness of the Green Belt would be moderate".

It remains the case that there would be an impact on openness. However, this remains at a moderate level. The siting on the lowest part of the site remains, the mono-pitch roof is retained, and additional boundary screening would be planted.

The previous officer report also acknowledged the need for a garage to park vehicles and safely store tools and garden equipment. These all remain relevant and the additional space will allow two vehicles to be parking securely.

The development would accord with Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 and NPPF Section 13.

Other planning considerations

The additional space to create a double garage would have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the area. As noted in the previous application officer report:



“It is noted that in the wider Culverstone Valley Area large, brick built double garages located on the site frontage are a relatively common feature. In the immediate vicinity of the application site, there are a number of existing garages. These vary in terms of size, materials and location within the plot”.

“....Therefore the area immediately surrounding the application site frontage has a relatively open, rural character. The proposed garage would be timber clad and relatively small in comparison to the surrounding garages. Therefore it is arguable that the proposed development would not be out of character with the surroundings.

“The design of the proposed development in terms of facing materials and the roof style, would respect the form and architectural style of the proposed replacement dwelling. It would be of a size that is subservient to that dwelling and appropriate to its proposed function, be located on the lowest part of the site and be softened and partially screened by existing mature vegetation”.

The siting, form and appearance of the garage structure would remain as previously consented. Whilst it would extend the width, the orientation ensures that this additional footprint extends into the plot, away from the main highway. It would remain subservient and in keeping with the design of the main dwelling, and not be an unduly dominant addition to the overall plot. The vegetation screening would further soften the appearance.

The development would introduce no new issues in terms of impact towards the neighbouring occupiers, ensuring amenity is protected.

The proposal would be in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 in terms of design & development principles.

As a wider double garage, access would be provided for two vehicles in accordance with KCC standards (2006). Access would be via the permeable gravel surface driveway.

Solar panels would be installed on the roof, as per the previous approval Policy CS18 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out the Borough Council’s requirements in relation to climate change.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the extension to the previously consented garage to create a double width garage would be acceptable and accord with planning policy framework. It would not constitute inappropriate development and the impact of the extended structure would be minimal.

The proposal is in compliance with the NPPF and the relevant adopted Local Plan policies discussed in section above. Therefore, this application should be approved without delay in accordance with NPPF paragraph 11.