

# Planning Statement

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Halfacre, Round Street, Sole Street,  
Kent, DA13 9BA

Proposed front extension and the  
erection of a front porch.

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For: Stanhill Farms Ltd

Project reference: PR4112



**RTPI**

Chartered Town Planners



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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been submitted in support of a planning application for the following development at Halfacre, Round Street, Sole Street, Kent, DA13 9BA (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'):

**Proposed front extension and the erection of a front porch.**

- 1.2 The proposed development affects the following Land Registry title(s). It is understood that all of the land is under the ownership of the applicant:

| Land Registry Title | Description                                                      |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| K71593              | HALFACRE, ROUND STREET, SOLE STREET, COBHAM, GRAVESEND, DA13 9BA |

- 1.3 The application is accompanied by the following plans and documents:

- 4112-01 – Site Location Plan
- 4112-02 – Existing Block Plan
- 4112-03 – Existing Floor Plan
- 4112-04 – Existing Elevations 1
- 4112-05 – Existing Elevations 2
- 4112-06 – Proposed Block Plan
- 4112-07 – Proposed Floor Plan
- 4112-09 – Proposed Elevations 1
- 4112-10 – Proposed Elevations 2

## 2 Site Context

- 2.1 This Site is approximately 0.2 hectares in area and is situated on the southwest side of Round Street in the village of Sole Street with the building being offset from the road with a long driveway.
- 2.2 The property is accessed via the 43m driveway from Round Street between the two properties named Ingleton and Chatelaine. The property has an extensive parking area to the front of the property.
- 2.3 The dwelling also has a domestic outbuilding and a swimming pool in the rear garden.
- 2.4 Sole Street is a small village that consists of low-density, large-scale housing along with various amenities such as a railway-station and public house.
- 2.5 The single storey dwelling has white render walls with clay roof tiles as well as white UPVC down pipes and guttering with white UPVC windows that incorporate a stone surround.
- 2.6 This Site is the subject of the following planning constraints and designations:
- Inset from the Metropolitan Green Belt
  - Close proximity to National Landscape (previously called Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONBs)
  - Flood Zone 1
  - South side of the site is bordered by a public footpath (0063/NS192/1).

## 3 Relevant History

3.1 The following records are understood to be relevant to the Site:

**Replacement of existing conservatory with a bespoke garden room.**

Ref. No: 20231320 | Received: Thu 21 Dec 2023 | Validated: Thu 21 Dec 2023 | Status: Application Permitted

**Erection of single storey front extension to form four bedrooms with en-suite shower rooms/bathroom and a garage and a single storey extension on the east side elevation to form a conservatory.**

Ref. No: 20030146 | Received: Status: Application Permitted

**Erection of a detached two storey dwelling with integral double garage at the front.**

Ref. No: 20020418 | Received: Fri 17 May 2002 | Validated: Fri 17 May 2002 | Status: Application Permitted

**Erection of bungalow and garage**

Ref. No: 19590092 | Received: Fri 13 Mar 1959 | Validated: Fri 13 Mar 1959 | Status: Application Permitted

## 4 Proposed Development

- 4.1 The application entails a small front extension to the existing bathroom as well as a front porch where the existing step and canopy is situated leading to the front door.
- 4.2 The existing bathroom measures 1.7m in length with a small window. The proposal aims to extend the bathroom by an additional 2m to a total of 3.7m whilst retaining the window in order to retain the character of the property as well as to keep the symmetry and balance with all other windows on the front elevation. The proposed window however will be slightly larger in size than existing to allow more natural light into the bathroom.
- 4.3 The bathroom extension will have a gable roof which will join creating two small valleys. This will be of a similar fashion to the erection of the porch as it will also create a small gable roof.
- 4.4 Furthermore, the porch will extend 1.5m from a wall that forms the principle elevation. There will be an east facing window to allow in light and the door to be used will be the same as the existing.
- 4.5 In terms of materials, the roof and ridges will have clay tiles to match the existing roof of Halfacre, the new windows will have a matching stone surround in order to match the existing windows. and lastly, the bathroom extension will have white plastic gutters and down pipes to coincide with the existing drainage at the property.

## 5 Planning Policy

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Court of Appeal has clarified that for a decision maker this means establishing whether a proposal is in accordance with the development plan as a whole. The question of compliance with one policy should not dictate the outcome of a proposal in the absence of considering compliance with all other relevant policies. Decision makers are therefore tasked with identifying and understanding all relevant policies and material considerations in order to reach a properly informed planning judgment on a proposal, and to avoid an irrational or vulnerable decision that may be subject to criticism in a public law challenge.
- 5.2 Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') reiterates what is said in Section 38(6), whilst paragraph 12 of the Framework is clear that the development plan is the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.3 Paragraph 38 of the Framework encourages local planning authorities to approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. It also encourages working proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area, adding that decision-makers should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 5.4 Annex 1 of the Framework confirms that for the purposes of decision-taking, the policies in the plan should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of the Framework. It adds that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the Framework, with greater weight being given to those policies that are closer to the policies in the Framework.

## Development Plan

- 5.5 It is understood that the Development Plan for Gravesham within which the Site is located comprises the following documents:
- Core Strategy (2014) (CS)
  - Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) – Saved Policies
- 5.6 The CS sets out a long-term vision for the future of Gravesham based on evidence of the need to support communities and outline what makes Gravesham a distinctive and attractive place to live and work. Furthermore, it helps to support and inform sustainable development via investment in infrastructure, economic development, and regeneration proposals within the borough, while promoting healthy communities. Lastly it aims to provide a consistent basis for planning application decisions. The following policies are considered as relevant:
- Policy CS01 – Sustainable Development
  - Policy CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
  - Policy CS19 – Development and Design Principles
- 5.7 The Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) was replaced by the adopted Local Plan (2014). In September 2007, the Secretary of State issued a direction on policies to be saved and deleted. The following are policies that have been saved, remain operational and are relevant to your proposal.
- Policy C13 – Extensions to dwellings

## Other Material Considerations

### *The Framework*

- 5.8 Section 12 of The Framework highlights the importance of achieving well-designed and beautiful places. It states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 Paragraph 132 makes clear that plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much

certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities, so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.

5.11 Furthermore, paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

#### *National Design Guide*

5.12 The National Design Guide sets out the characteristics that are in place in order to achieve beautiful places. It states well-designed places contribute to local distinctiveness. This may include:

- a) adopting typical building forms, composition, articulation, proportions, features, materials, details, patterns, and colours of an area;
- b) drawing upon the architectural precedents that are prevalent in the local area, including the proportions of buildings and their openings;
- c) using local building, landscape or topographical features, materials, or planting types;
- d) introducing built form and appearance that adds new character and difference to places, with particular attention to how buildings meet the ground and sky;

- e) creating a positive and coherent identity that residents and local communities can identify with.

*Gravesham Householder Extension/Alteration Design Guide (2021)*

- 5.13 The document makes clear that extensions and alterations can be an economical way of ensuring it can meet a householders present and future needs. In seeking to meet such needs it is important to ensure that any extensions or alterations to a home are well designed, well-built, and sympathetic to their surroundings.
- 5.14 This in turn ensures that there are no adverse effects on the original house, immediate neighbours, the local view of the street as well as to the character and appearance of the local area.
- 5.15 It also aims to expand on the planning policies set out in the Development Plan as well as the NPPF, raise awareness of the value of good design and lastly to protect the residential amenity of neighbours.
- 5.16 It makes clear in the section labelled *Front Extensions and Porches* that they can change the character of the original building and where poorly designed have a negative impact on the appearance of the street. Point 10.7 provides guidance on high level design quality which is as follows:
  - a) Design: Front extensions must be designed to respond to and enhance the character of the existing dwelling and street.
  - b) Scale: The scale and design of new porches should respond to the existing dwelling.
  - c) 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.
  - d) Car Parking: Extensions or porches should not result in the retention of front parking spaces of inadequate depth.

*Gravesham SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)*

- 5.17 The Gravesham SPG2 states that all planning applications for new dwellings, extensions to dwellings, flats, maisonettes, and bedsitters must comply with the Borough Councils adopted Residential Layout Guidelines.

- 5.18 The minimum requirement for a bathroom and WC floorspace 3.6sqm, which is set out in table 1 below, whilst there are no requirements for a porch.
- 5.19 Furthermore, paragraph 5 states that access to a bedroom, bathroom and WC should be arranged without having to pass through another room on a separate floor.
- 5.20 In relation to natural light, the WC should be provided with an openable window with obscure glazing in order to retain privacy.

Table 1

| Function of room | Floorspace sq.m |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Double bedroom   | 11.2            |
| Single bedroom   | 6.5             |
| Living room      | 13.2            |
| Dining room      | 9.5             |
| Kitchen          | 7.2             |
| Kitchen/diner    | 12.0            |
| Lounge/diner     | 18.0            |
| Bathroom and WC  | 3.6             |
| Bathroom only    | 2.8             |
| WC only          | 1.3             |

## 6 Planning Assessment

### Key Issues

6.1 The following are considered to be the key issues in the assessment of this application:

- Principle of Development
- Design, Character, and Appearance
- Amenity of Future Occupiers and Neighbours

### Principle of Development

6.2 Policy Cs19 provides details of a range of aspects to which all development within the Borough should adhere to. All proposals for development should consider the factors within this policy and ensure that there are no conflicts wherever possible. In terms of this proposal, the design and layout accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines.

6.3 Policy CS19 also sets out that development should be '...visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic, and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area, and meet anti-crime standards'.

6.4 The proposed development aims to enhance the local character of Halfacre as well as integrate well into the surrounding area, despite being some 50m from Round Street itself. This will be achieved by matching the local built form and scale of Round Steet

6.5 Furthermore, the proposal will ensure that the privacy regulations set out in the Residential Layout Guidelines (2020) will be met. This will be achieved by the use of obscured windows in the proposed bathroom extension. In relation to the porch, it will be some 20m from the boundary to the next nearest property.

6.6 In addition to this, the proposed bathroom extension will have no effect on overshadowing or privacy as it will remain under the overall height of the existing dwelling and remains well sheltered by the existing hedge.

6.7 In turn, the proposal positively responds to the material considerations set out above and should respectfully be considered for approval.

## **Design, Character, and Appearance**

- 6.8 Paragraph 10.7 of the Gravesham Householder Extension/Alteration Design Guide (2021) sets out the guidance for high level design quality specifically for front extensions as they have the ability to change the character of the original building and if they are designed poorly, then can negatively impact the street scene.
- 6.9 The proposal aims to enhance the character of the existing building by matching the design and materials used at Halfacre to ensure the development does not overpower the property.
- 6.10 Scale is also mentioned as part of paragraph 10.7. It states that they should respond to the existing property. Both the front extension and porch elements of the proposal will not exceed the eaves height or the ridge height and aim to be seamlessly incorporated into the existing roof.
- 6.11 Lastly, it states that the existing features of the property should be retained and enhanced. As previously mentioned, the existing window in the bathroom will be retained and enlarged as well as retaining the stone surround in order to match the rest of the property.
- 6.12 As set out by the Gravesham SPG2, the minimum requirement for a bathroom and WC is 3.6sqm. The existing bathroom as well as the extension will come to a total of 10.5sqm, well exceeding the required limit.
- 6.13 Furthermore, the proposed development will abide by paragraph 8 of the SPG2 whereby the window looking into the bathroom will be obscure, ensuring all privacy is retained.
- 6.14 The proposed development will also abide by the NDG. By using the same materials of the existing property, it in turn adopts the typical building form and composition of the surrounding area.
- 6.15 Furthermore, the development draws upon the architectural precedents that are prevalent in Sole Street as well as those demonstrated by the existing property.
- 6.16 Paragraph 66 of the NDG then further goes on to state that built form is determined by good urban design principles that combine layout, form, and scale in a way that responds positively to the context.

- 6.17 As the proposal has been designed to match the context of Halfacre as well as the surrounding area, it in turn adheres to section B1 of the NDG.

### **Amenity of Future Occupiers and Neighbours**

- 6.18 Policy CS19, SPG2 – Residential Layout Guidelines (2020), and the Council's Householder Extension/Alteration Design Guide (2021) all highlight the importance of safeguarding the amenity of neighbouring properties as well as the amenity of future occupiers.
- 6.19 In terms of amenity to future occupiers, the proposal will further increase the living space whilst improving the appearance of the front of the property. The proposal therefore improves the amenity.
- 6.20 In terms of the amenity of the neighbouring properties, the proposal will not cause any loss of day or sunlight, loss of privacy or create any additional noise, odours, or disturbance.

## 7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposal will create an attractive and suitable area for the occupant's daily lives as well as create further space in the bathroom.
- 7.2 The principle of the development is acceptable and in accordance with the relevant adopted planning policies, the design, character, and appearance will fit in well with the area and is in line with the guidance set out by the Council's documents.
- 7.3 There will also be no harm to the amenity of future occupiers or the neighbouring properties. Therefore, this development proposal is suitable and in line with the policy aspirations.
- 7.4 In consideration of all the relevant document plan policies and material considerations, this application should be viewed positively by the authority, and it is respectfully requested that this submission is approved.