

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230254

Location: Hope House Ridge Lane Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of two storey side extension including loft conversion and dormers.

Applicant: Mr Fairwather-Oates

Site Visit Date: 20th March 2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

Planning Application Form;

Drawing No. 2022-06-02-001 Rev B – Existing Plans Elevations; and
Drawing No. 2022-06-02-002 Rev D – Proposed Plans Elevations.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20221199	Erection of two storey side extension including loft conversion and dormers	Refused	13.02.2023
20040496	Erection of a detached three bedroom dwelling with rooms in roof space, a detached double garage at the front and a summer house and a shed at the rear.	Permission	12.07.2004
20000151	Erection of detached dwelling with rooms in the roof space and erection of detached double garage with storage area in the roof space.	Refused	24.04.2000
19881166	Erection of chalet for weekend and holiday use and installation of septic tank.	Permission	02.02.1990

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
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) 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 (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 4 – Decision making
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- 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

Meopham Parish Council

Meopham Parish Council objects to this planning application as if permitted the extension would be inappropriate development in and undermine the openness of the the Green Belt.

KCC – Public Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way NS285 lies to the east of the application area and I therefore enclose a copy of the Public Rights of Way network map showing the definitive line of the path for your information.

It is important to advise the applicants that a public right of way must not be stopped up, diverted, obstructed or the surface disturbed and there must be no encroachment on the current width, at any time now or in future. This includes any building materials or waste generated during any of the construction phases. Please note that no furniture or fixtures may be erected on or across Public Rights of Way without the express consent of the Highways Authority.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by a site notice and individual neighbour letters to 8 properties with an overall consultation expiry date of 21st April 2023. One letter of representation has been received objecting to the proposal, making the following summarised comments:

- Excessive overdevelopment
- Not in keeping with the surrounding area
- Would result in an urban 'locked in' setting
- Overlooking
- Overbearing

- Detrimental impact on semi-rural area
- Contrary to Green Belt policy
- Contrary to Local Plan
- Contrary to Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD.

A number of photos were also submitted showing the changes to property and highlighting the impact.

The Local Ward Councillors were also consulted and no responses were received.

Officer's Analysis

Background

This application is a resubmission of a previously refused scheme for the erection of two storey side extension including loft conversion and dormers (App. Ref. 20221199). The application was refused for the following reasons;

1. The proposal represents a disproportionate addition and exceeds the one third limit to the original dwelling, which will harm the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, contrary to saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), Policies CS01 (Sustainable Development), CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Sections 12 and 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).
2. By virtue of the bulk, scale and design, the proposed extension is considered to be unacceptable, as it is a bulky, dominant and un-subservient addition to the application property, that is considered to be detrimental to the character and appearance of the property itself. The development is therefore contrary to the requirements of section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, Policies CS02 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD, October 2021.

The current application seeks to overcome these reasons for refusal. The main differences between the previous application and the current submission are a reduction in projection from the side elevation from 4.95m to 3.55m (a reduction of 1.4m) and the replacement of the 2no. single front facing ground floor windows with 1no. larger window. All other details remain the same.

Refused Application Proposed Elevations (20221199)



Current Scheme



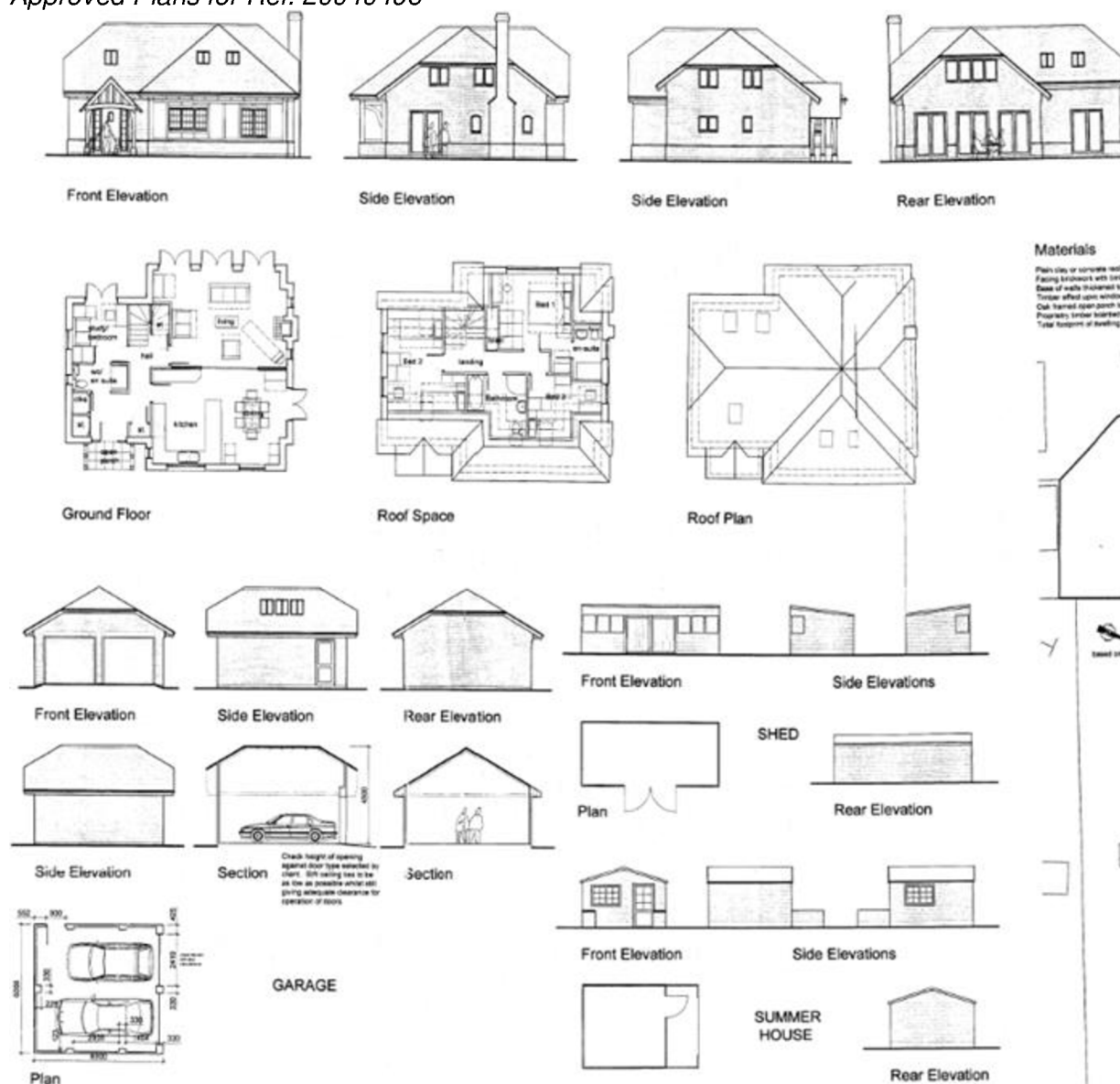
'Original' Dwelling

It would appear that the original dwelling was constructed some time after 2004, following planning permission dated 12th July 2004 (Planning Ref. 20040496). Looking at the planning history, together with historic maps and plans, it would appear that the property has not been extended since its construction and

therefore the dwelling that is on the site is considered to be the 'original' dwelling.

The detached garage to the east of the property formed part of the 2004 planning permission and was constructed at similar time to the original dwelling.

Approved Plans for Ref. 20040496



The key issues in consideration of this application is whether;

- the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if inappropriate its effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land with it;
- the proposal would impact on adjoining properties;
- the proposal would impact the living conditions of future occupiers
- the proposal would result in any parking and highway safety issues;
- the proposal would adversely impact on the landscape character of the site;

Site and Surrounding Area

The site is located in the Green Belt and in the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area as defined on the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy policies map and this must be the starting point for determining this application.

The application site at Hope House, Ridge Lane is a detached two storey dwelling set in a large plot. The property is set back from the highway by approximately 16.76m, with a detached double garage to the front with tall entrance gates. The property benefits from a large detached double garage to the front and driveway providing road parking for more than three cars.



The proposal is for the erection of two storey side extension including loft conversion and dormers. The extension would project 3.55m from the side of the existing dwelling, 7.4m in depth, 3.1m in height to the eaves and 6.4m to the ridge with a pitch roof with barn hip dormer to the front and barn hip dormer with Juliet balcony to the rear.

The proposal would create a new open plan dining and living room on the ground floor and extension to the existing 4th bedroom with new en-suite facility.

Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations



The appropriateness of the development within the Green Belt

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt is development that by definition, is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 goes on to say that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The NPPF (2021) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. At paragraph 138 the NPPF (2021) lists the 5 purposes which the Green Belt serves. Of particular relevance in this case is that it assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

The NPPF (2021) makes it clear that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, with a small number of exceptions (paragraph 149). The listed exceptions include 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.

Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) (LPCS) prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. In the rural area it states that development will be supported within rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements (which is the case here), will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in (LPCS).

Furthermore, Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994) (LPFR), which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF (2021), the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully; with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with paragraph 149 the NPPF (2021).

In particular Policy C13 (LPFR) places an overall limit on extensions of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling, unless the increased floor space has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling (criteria (ii)). It also requires the massing, scale and form of any extension to be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting (criteria (vi)). It is considered that these factors are relevant in determining whether the size of an extension is proportionate and as such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF (2021) and should be afforded weight.

In determining proposals for residential extensions in the Green Belt an assessment will be made against the impact of the 'original' existing development. The original building is the building as it existed on 1 July 1948, however, for older homes constructed prior to July 1st, 1948, the 'original dwelling' refers to the floorspace of the dwelling as it was on this date. Any additions that have occurred since the 'original' dwelling date are considered cumulatively and will be counted as part of the overall increase in floorspace of the dwelling when new additions are being assessed. The reason for this is small reductions in openness, repeated many times, can have a cumulatively detrimental effect.

The existing dwelling in this case has not been extended since its original construction, as laid out within the Background section. The following calculations show the dwelling as built and the proposed.

Existing dwelling (as built)

Ground Floor: 76.34m²

First Floor: 57.43m²

Total: 133.77m²

Proposed Extension

Ground Floor: 23.69m²

First Floor: 21.61m²

Total: 45.3m²

Total floor space proposed: **179.07m²**

Total floor space increase of proposed extension over original dwelling: **33.86%**

Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) provides the local interpretation of national policy and states 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.

In this case the increased floorspace only marginally exceeds the one third limit and taking into

consideration any minor discrepancies with scaling, would fall within the parameters set by Policy C13 (LPFR).

Whilst the proposal would now technically fall within the 33% allowance, the calculations alone are not necessarily the most appropriate means of considering the issue of material size of a development. Ultimately the purpose of Green Belt policy is to protect the openness of the countryside and therefore it is still necessary to assess the proposal on the overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling and the Green Belt as a whole.

The original dwelling is a two storey detached barn hip dwelling with the first floor windows being located to the rear and side elevations only with rooflights to the front and rear. The proposed two storey side extension would have an external footprint of 28.15m² and would have a pitch roof and gable end arrangement with a ridge height being in line with the host dwelling. In addition, there would be dormers to the front and rear with a rear balcony with small platform. The height and roof design, together with the dormers front and rear would create additional bulk to the roof, together with an unbalancing of the original dwelling. Therefore the proposal would not appear as a modest extension/alteration and would not have a subservient appearance to the host dwelling. It is therefore considered that the proposed extension, whilst sitting within the parameters of the one third limit set out in Policy C13 (LPFR), would however result in an increase in the bulk and appearance of the dwelling which is contrary to paragraph 149(c) of the NPPF (2021). As such it is considered that the proposed development would result in a detrimental impact in terms of bulk or appearance of the dwelling and would be an inappropriate development within the Green Belt, contrary to paragraph 149(c) of the NPPF (2021).

In summary it is considered that this extension is contrary to local and national planning policy.

Impact on openness and the purposes of the Green Belt

Having determined that the proposal is an inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is necessary to assess the effect on the openness and the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The NPPF (2021) notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

The proposed side extension would project approx. 3.55m from the existing side elevation. Looking at the original property, which has an external footprint of 88.57m², the proposed external footprint, would be 116.72m², a cumulative increase of over 31.78% above the original property. Whilst the minor reduction in external footprint is welcome and attempts to address the previous reasons for refusal, the design of extension has largely remained the same as the previous submission, with the roof design, height and dormers and balcony being unchanged. This can be clearly demonstrated in the Background section which shows the previous submission against the current and when viewed together, there is very little change, and the resultant dwelling would still look the same as the refused scheme.

As such, the proposed extension would still result in an increase in the bulk and massing of what is a modest property and would therefore have a material harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would represent encroachment into the countryside.

Therefore, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy CS02 (LPCS) and Section 13 of the NPPF (2021).

External works

It has been stated on the application form and submitted drawings, that external wall materials would match the existing.

Character and appearance

The application property is located on the corner of Ridge Lane within the Green Belt. The property is

highly visible from Ridge Lane due to the open nature of the frontage. The proposed extension would have a gable end on the eastern elevation which would unbalance the barn hip on the western side of the property. The dormers to the front and rear would also introduce new features to the dwelling which also unbalances the existing property. Paragraph 10.5 of the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021) states that in relation to footprint and width, *extensions should generally aim to appear subservient to the host building by lying behind the main front building line and should generally be no greater than half the width of the host building*. In terms of design, *extensions are of greater visibility, and should incorporate roof designs to reflect and generally be subservient to the main property's roof*. The proposed two storey side extension would appear as a continuation of the front and ridge height and the combination of the gable end design and dormers differ from the host dwelling, resulting in a prominent addition to the property. As such, it is considered that the proposal does not accord with the guidance laid out in the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021). Overall it is considered that the proposed extension would result in an increase in the bulk and scale of the host property and would not result in modest addition to the host dwelling as originally constructed.

Taking account of all the above, it is considered that the current proposal has not overcome the refusal reason 2 of the previous application and would be contrary to Policies CS02 and CS19 (LPCS), Section 12 of the NPPF (2021) and the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021).

Impact on future occupiers

The revised NPPF (2021) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the living space of the main dwelling and as such accords with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Impact on neighbouring properties

The impact on neighbouring properties is considered with regard to criteria specified within Policy CS19, which states 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.

The proposed extension would bring the property closer to the adjacent dwelling, Burnt Ash, however it would not project further to the rear than the host or adjacent dwelling. There are no windows proposed in the east facing elevation, however the rear dormer would have a small balcony which would afford views over the rear. Taking into consideration the separation distance between properties, together with the existing first floor rear windows and the scale of the proposal, it is considered the proposal would not result in loss of light, privacy, outlook and increased overshadowing. As such the development is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) in respect of the living conditions for neighbouring properties.

Parking and Highways

The proposal would not result in any additional bedrooms, and the existing garage and driveway provide parking for more than three vehicles and therefore the development would accord with KCC Vehicle Parking Standards, and the proposals would therefore comply with Saved Policy P3 of the Local Plan and Policy CS11 (LPCS).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Landscape Character Area

Section 15 of the NPPF (2021) highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced and the greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting.

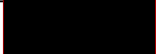
The application site is located within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. The topography is very undulating with farmland used as arable and pasture. The area is characterised by irregular field pattern, with fields of various shapes and sizes, divided by native hedgerows. The condition is good and the guidelines are to conserve.

Due to the layout of the site, position of the proposed extension and surrounding built form, it is considered that there would be no direct impact on the landscape character area. As such the proposal would accord with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the NPPF (2021).

Conclusion & Recommendation

For the reasons given above, the proposed extension would result in a detrimental impact on the dwelling and character of the area, in particular the Green Belt and is considered to be contrary to local or national planning policy and is therefore recommended for refusal.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Amanda Grout	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	10 th May 2023	Dated:	12 th May 2023