



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20241013

Location: 135 Astra Drive Gravesend Kent DA12 4QF

Description: Retention of single storey rear extension and demolition of existing garage to form additional amenity space.

Applicant: Mr A Khayer

Site Visit Date: Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form Dated 06/11/2024;
Drawing Number S03 (Floor Plans and Elevations – Existing and Proposed);
Drawing Number S02 (Block Plan – Proposed); and
Drawing Number S01 (OS Plan and Block Plan – Existing).

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20200137	Erection of first floor front and side extensions	Refused	24.04.2020
20190938	Erection of first floor side and front extensions.	Refused	12.11.2019
20190390	Erection of a single storey rear extension with a pitched roof, and erection of first floor side and front extensions.	Refused	18.06.2019
19890738	Erection of single storey front and side extension to form study, porch and wc.	Permitted	18.09.1989
19890524	Erection of single storey front and side extension to form study and porch.	Permitted	12.07.1989
19810204	Erection of first floor extension at the rear to form an enlarged bedroom and an additional bedroom	Permitted	12.05.1981
19791038	Erection of single storey extension at the rear to form enlarged kitchen dining room	Permitted	19.12.1979

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- 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 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

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)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Shorne Parish Council

Retention of single storey rear extension and demolition of existing garage to form additional amenity space.

The Parish Council wishes to OBJECT to this application on the grounds of overdevelopment of the property and site, and impact on other residents.

We note that regrettably the application is retrospective despite the applicant being aware of the planning applications processes.

Planning History:

The property has been subject to a number of extensions and planning applications over the past few years:

Previously had a full width two-storey rear extension and a single storey front and side extension.

20190390 Erection of a single storey rear extension with a pitched roof, and erection of first floor side and front extensions - Refused

20190938 Erection of a single storey rear extension with a pitched roof, and erection of first floor side and front extensions (but plans show only front and two-storey side extensions) - Refused

20200137 Erection of first floor front and side extensions (Same plans as 20190938) - Refused and Appeal Dismissed

Since 2020 the property has been subject to further alteration and extension, without planning permission, parts of which are the subject of this present application.

Alterations presently under consideration:

Single storey rear extension:

This is an extension added to the rear of a previous two storey extension, the total depth from the rear wall of the original house is within the 8m currently allowed as permitted development.

However, the extension is effectively the same proposal that was refused in 20190390 but is actually of greater depth. It now joins onto the garage and there is no longer any way to the rear of the property except through buildings.

The amenity space (garden) has been reduced to approximately 5m by 6m, which is inadequate for a property of this size.

We would have objected/raised concerns about this part of the application.

Demolition of existing garage and replacement with larger amenity building:

On the plans, the semi-detached garage appears to be the same dimensions as previously but no elevations or internal layout are provided detailing its use as "amenity space".

On aerial views the garage roof appears to have been extended back to the rear fenceline, an increase in area of approximately 50%.

We are unable to form a proper opinion on this element until further details of the elevations and internal layout and proposed use are provided.

Loft conversion with front rooflights and rear box dormer:

The box dormer extends wider and further towards the rear wall of the original property than would normally have been permitted.

It is unclear whether the box dormer roof is subsidiary to the roof ridge height, the plans do not show a side view of the dormer. Lateral views from nearby streets suggest that it may be higher than the ridge line.

We would have objected to/raised concerns about this design.

Parking:

Conversion of the garage has reduced the amount of on-site parking and this may now be inadequate for what has become a 4-bedroom house.

Summary:

The applicant has made alterations to the property without planning permission, including a single storey rear extension that had previously been refused permission. The overall situation is now of unattractive overdevelopment of the site with available amenity space (garden) and parking both being inadequate and substandard for the area. Adverse impact on neighbouring properties is also a consideration.

We are unable to evaluate the garage enlargement and conversion without proper plans but request that if it is to be permitted then strong Conditions should be attached that it is only an annex to the house and cannot be used as sleeping accommodation, as a separate dwelling or to operate a business.

In view of the planning infringements, enforcement action should be considered and taken if deemed appropriate.

Neighbouring properties

8 surrounding properties were consulted and one representation was received.

Comment was made regarding the demolition process of the existing garage. This is not considered to be a material planning concern and as such will not be addressed within the following report.

Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

135 Astra Drive is a two storey semi-detached dwellinghouse located on the Southern side of the highway. The property has previously been extended to the rear by two storeys with additional loft conversion with rear dormer window. Further extensions have been made to the front and side. There is hardstanding to the frontage to provide off road parking with side access to garage.



The application seeks retrospective permission for a single storey extension to the rear and the demolition of the existing garage.

The single storey rear extension has a shallow pitch roof at a maximum height of 3.5m and an eaves height of 2.75m. The extension projects 6.5m from the original rear elevation and 3.88m from the existing two storey rear extension.

The extension creates space for an extended kitchen area with a window and doors leading to the rear garden. The extension has a brick finish to match the existing dwelling.

Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance (SPD) (2021) states *it is important to ensure that any extensions or alterations to a home are well designed, well-built and sympathetic to their surroundings. By doing so we can ensure that there are no adverse effects on the original house, immediate neighbours, the local view of the street, as well as the character and appearance of the local area.*

The key principles in Gravesham's Householder Design Guide (2021) sets out the design expectations within the Borough:

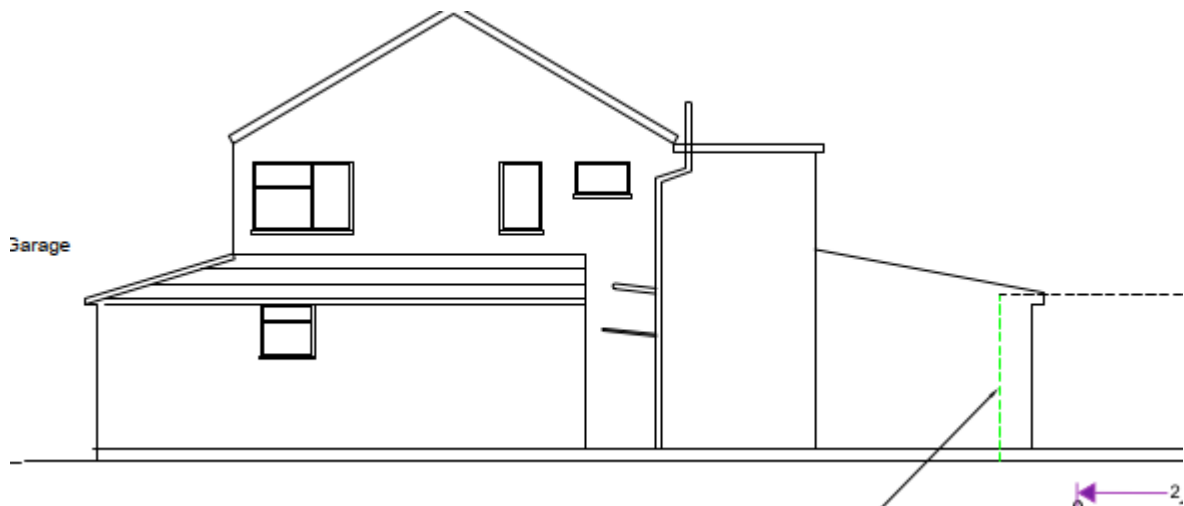
Character and design quality

Any proposed extensions and alterations to a house should respect the original character of the existing dwelling, complement and correspond with the character of neighbouring properties and the local area. It should be noted that this does not always mean an exact replication of the existing character.

9.2 Your proposal should reflect and respect the original character and respond to its features. In order to achieve this as a starting point all residential extensions and alterations should be subordinate to the host property/building, allowing the original building to remain dominant.

Whilst the principal of a single storey rear extension to a semi-detached dwellinghouse is acceptable as a sole development, the property has previously been extended several times, most notably by two storeys to the rear. The additional single storey rear extension projects from the rear elevation of the existing two storey extension, the resultant scale and visual appearance of which is considered undesirable.

Side Elevation



Furthermore, when additional existing extensions to the front, side and roof are also taken into account, the original semi-detached dwelling, which is situated on a modest site, constitutes overdevelopment, resulting in a bulky, disproportionate, incongruous addition that is not sympathetic to the existing property.

Ariel View of Application Site taken from Google Earth



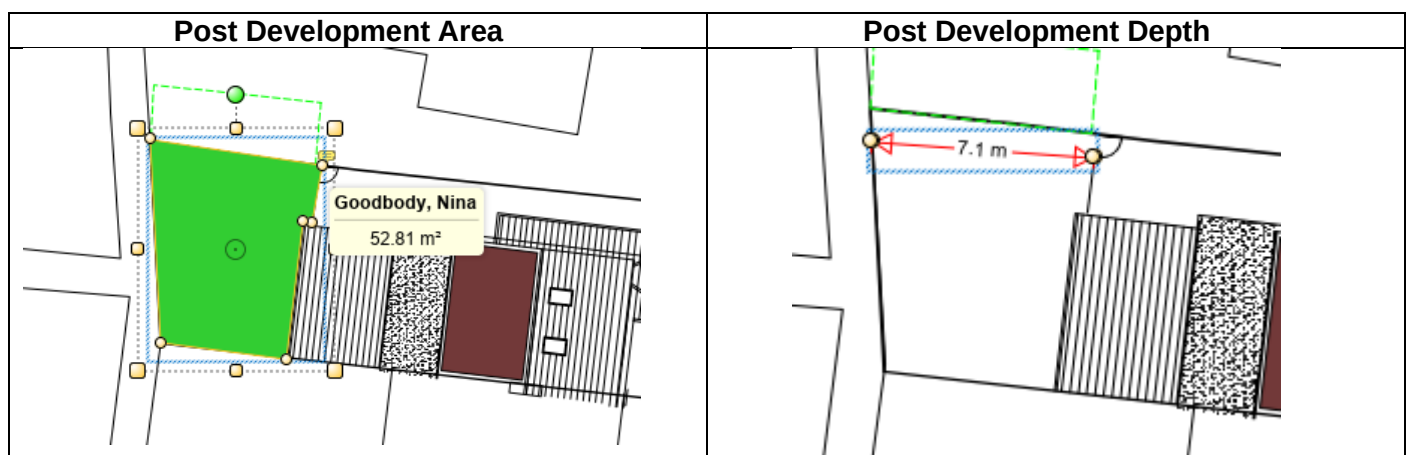
Overall, by virtue of the existing extensions to the host dwelling, the development cannot be considered to be subservient or sympathetic to the existing character of the dwelling and is therefore contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, 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. The impact on neighbours will be assessed in the next section of the report.

Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines state that the garden space for a four-bedroom property should have a minimum depth of 10m from the rear elevation and a minimum useable area of 100m².

Post development, with the proposed demolition of the existing garage, the garden would have an area of approx. 52.81m² and a maximum depth of 7.1m which is considered to be substantially below the recommended guidelines:



A recent appeal case APP/K2230/D/23/3326998 for the refusal of a rear extension at 1 Harvest Lane, Gravesend, due to substandard amenity space has also been dismissed as follows:

If the proposed extension was constructed, the resultant garden would be undersized and impractical for a dwelling of its size. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not provide appropriate living conditions for residents of the appeal property, with regard to the provision of external amenity space. The proposal would also be contrary to CS Policy CS19 which indicates that new development will provide appropriate levels of private amenity space. Furthermore, it would be contrary to paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) where it advises that planning decisions should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Please see appendix 1 for full appeal documentation.

As such, the proposal would result in an undersized garden area remaining which detrimentally limits the available usable area, subsequently providing unacceptable living conditions for existing and future occupiers. As such the proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Neighbouring Amenity

The application does not introduce any windows to the flank elevation and is therefore not considered to detrimentally affect the privacy of neighbouring properties.

Furthermore, due to the modest height of the proposed extension, the development will not have any detrimental impact on this property in terms of loss of light, outlook or sense of enclosure.

Overall, the development is not considered to have any detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and is in accordance with Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Parking and Highways

The application looks to demolish the existing garage which would result in a loss of parking. However, there would remain sufficient off road parking within the curtilage of the application site and as such there are no parking or highways concerns in relation to the application.

Conclusion

By virtue of the existing extensions to the host dwelling, the development cannot be considered to be subservient or sympathetic to the existing character of the dwelling and is therefore contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

The proposal would result in an undersized garden area remaining which detrimentally limits the available usable area, subsequently providing unacceptable living conditions for existing and future occupiers. As such the proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Recommendation

Refusal

(For detailed reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Nina Goodbody	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>N Goodbody</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	7th January 2025	Dated:	7th January 2025