



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20230858
Location:	Ashley, Wilsons Way, Meopham Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0DW
Description:	Conversion of existing garage, erection of single storey front and side extension to form habitable rooms with roof lights and changes to fenestration.
Applicant:	Mr Isaac Eade
Site Visit:	26 th October 2023

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Application Form - dated 09/08/2023;
- Un-numbered Location Plan - Site Location Plan (scale 1:1250);
- Un-numbered Location Plan - Existing Block Plan (scale 1:500);
- Drawing no. MAD-469-10 - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations.
- ~~Un-numbered Location Plan - Proposed Block Plan (scale 1:500) - SUPERSEDED;~~
- ~~Drawing no. MAD-469-08 - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations - SUPERSEDED.~~

Plan Note

The proposed block plan has been superseded and will not be included in the approved plans list. This is due to the drawing not being up to date with the reduced size of the outbuilding as shown in 'drawing no. MAD-469-10'.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20130473	Variation of condition 8 attached to planning permission reference number 20020353 for use of chalet for storage purposes.	REFUSED	20.08.2013
2013/00026 /REF		APPEAL DISMISSED	29.04.2014
20020353	Erection of detached dwelling with habitable rooms in the roofspace.	PERMITTED	03.07.2002

19910052	Erection of single storey side extension to form lounge & porch, and erection of detached garage.	PERMITTED	31.07.1991
19870101	Retention of chalet for weekend and holiday purposes requiring alterations and partial demolition and erection of single storey side extension to form bathroom the total floorspace then being less than 500 square feet	PERMITTED	29.06.1987

Planning History Note

The 2002 permission for the erection of a new detached dwelling (ref. 20020353) included a condition that removed permitted development rights for outbuildings. The condition reads as follows:

6 No outbuildings or garages, other than those identified on the approved plans, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, or any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order, shall be constructed on the site, without the prior permission, in writing, of the District Planning Authority

Therefore, the Class E (Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended) fallback position is not a material consideration for this development.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (September 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 (LPFR) (November 1994):

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards
- C13 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) 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 (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023):

- 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

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 Guidance (SPD) (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External consultees

Meopham Parish Council – Object to the application on the basis on inappropriate development and in accordance with the condition applied in decision 19910052. (Reference corrected from inaccurate 19910152).

KCC Public Right of Way Officer – no comment received.

Internal consultees

GBC Highways - This proposal gives some concern as the converted and extended garage has the potential to be used as an independent property. However, the garden is large with space to provide additional parking if required.

It is suggested the annex created by these works is restricted to be ancillary to the occupation of the main dwelling and cannot be used for any commercial purposes, which would require the car parking to be reassessed and potential improvements to the sight lines at the access, if there is an increase in traffic generation.

Local Ward Councillors - No comment received.

Neighbouring properties

An advert was published in the Gravesend messenger and a notice was displayed on site 11th October 2023.

In addition, five surrounding properties were consulted and no representation were received. The consultation period expired 3rd November 2023.

Preliminary Matters

The application originally proposed substantial extensions to the width and depth of the garage, which were considered to be harmful to the Green Belt. There were also concerns with the layout and size of the rooms within the outbuilding, which could become a separate planning unit which would conflict with Policy CS02 (LPCS).

The agent was contacted regarding the concerns and revised plans were submitted with a reduced scale of development and the size of the internal rooms was also reduced.

Analysis

Site Description

The site is located within the Culverstone Valley and Metropolitan Green Belt.



Ashely is a detached chalet style property located on the corner of Heron Hill Road and Wilsons Way. It benefits from a detached garage, which is the subject of this application, and is served by two accesses, one from Heron Hill Road and another from Wilsons Way.

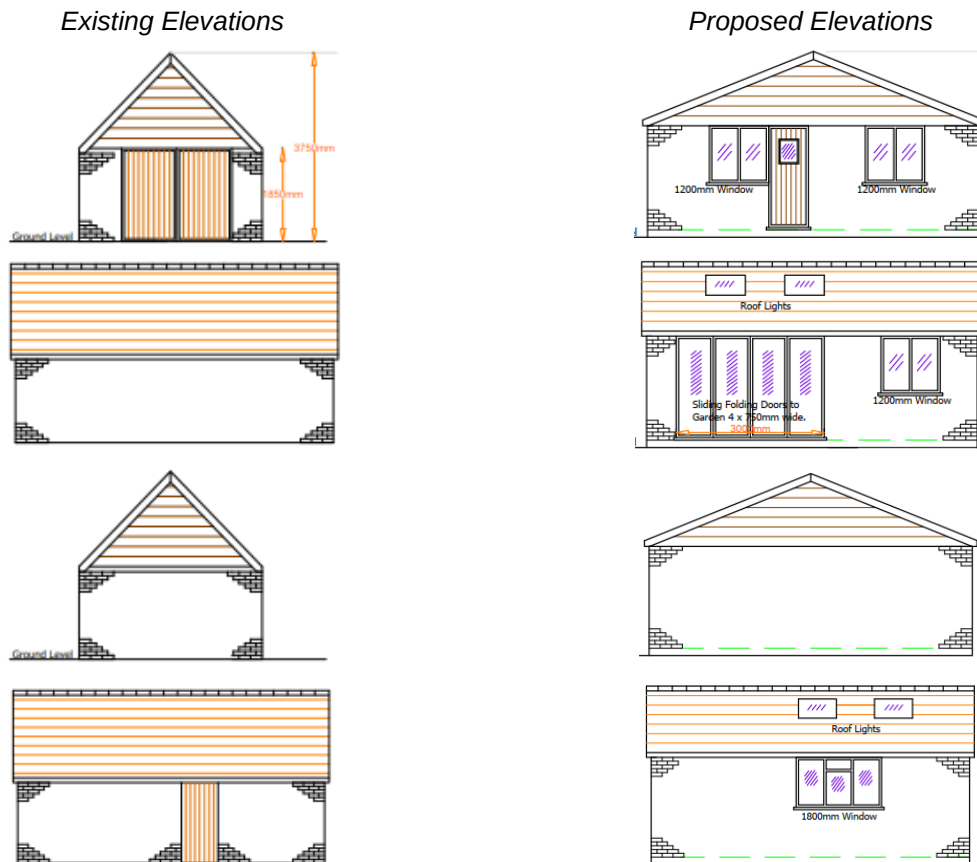
The property benefits from a detached single garage.



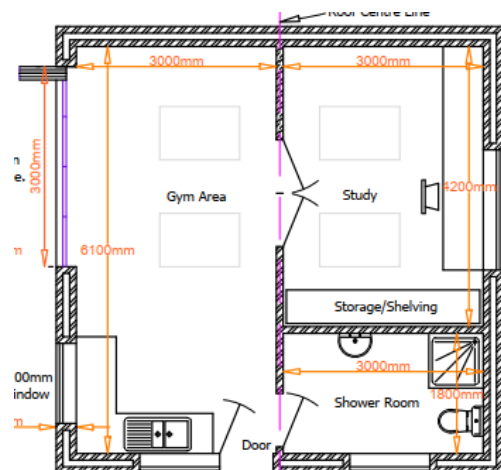
Proposed Development

This application proposes extensions to the existing garage and to convert it into habitable rooms. The existing garage building would be extended to the side and rear. The width would be

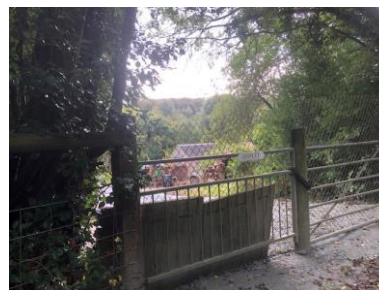
increased by 3.05m (total width 6.7m). The depth and roof height will remain unchanged, at 6.7m and 3.75m respectively.



The converted outbuilding would have a footprint of 44.9m². It would be used as habitable rooms, containing a kitchenette, gym, shower room, study and store room.



It should be noted that the property has two accesses, with the main access into the site from Heron Hill Lane. The secondary access into the site is from Wilsons Way and is highlighted in the images below:



Green Belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt and as such Policy CS02 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) is relevant. Development in the urban area is prioritised as the sustainable location for development. In the rural area, Policy CS02 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, i.e. in the Green Belt, will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS.

There are five principle issues in determining this application;

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
3. Any very special circumstances?
4. Impact on the Landscape;
5. The effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
6. Other matters.

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

There are strict policy considerations within the Green Belt whereby paragraph 147 of the NPPF (2023) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, 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. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it falls within the specified exceptions. The relevant exception to consider for this

application is part c of paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2023), which states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Policy CS02 (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 the LPCS.

Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt (paragraph 149 of the NPPF). However, there are exceptions to this which, as in the case of this proposal, include:

- (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;*
- (d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- (e) the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development or would not cause substantial harm to openness and would contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need.*

With regards to 149 (c), this application proposes extensions and alterations to a building within the Green Belt. The proposed outbuilding would be incidental to the main dwelling, as it lies within its clearly defined curtilage. Its use as principally a gym and study, would be domestic and ancillary to the main house. The proposal can therefore be treated as an extension to the dwelling; which essentially considers the size of the resultant building when assessing the impact on the Green Belt.

Saved Policy C13 of the Local Plan First Review (LPFR) (1994) relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, and generally seeks to maintain the open character of the Green Belt and retain a stock of rural dwellings of modest size. In relation to this proposal, criteria ii) states there will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling. Criteria (vii) is also relevant, which states that proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.

Turning to the matter of whether the extended outbuilding would be a disproportionate addition, the table below compares the original size and proposed extensions:

	Original gross external floor area (m²) - incl. garage	Proposed gross external floor area (m²)	Difference in gross external floor area between existing and proposed (m²)
Dwelling	116.52	136.92	+20.4
Percentage			<u>+17.5%</u>

The calculations demonstrate that the proposed additions to the garage, when treated as an extension to the dwelling, how result in an increase in the total size of the dwelling by 20.4m², or

17.5%. Therefore, in purely numerical terms the extension is in accordance with the one third limit of saved policy C13 (LPFR) and does not represent a disproportionate increase over the original floor area of the building.

The extension proposed would not exceed the height or depth of the existing building and are considered to be proportionate in terms of scale, bulk and massing. This is in accordance with paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2023), which states that it may be acceptable to extend or alter a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and does not provide a figure.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in a disproportionate addition to the building and as such the proposal would not be inappropriate development which is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is therefore complies to Policy CS02 (LPCS), Policy C13 (LPFR) and to paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2023).

2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF (2023) states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Any new built form of development is likely to impact on the openness of the Green Belt, however it is important to establish the degree of harm. As aforementioned in this report, the extension to the outbuilding is not excessive in size or bulk. It would involve an increase in footprint but would not have any uplift in height or depth and would therefore have a limited impact on the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, although introducing additional built form of development into the Green Belt, the extensions have been designed appropriately and at an acceptable scale and are therefore not considered to result in any significant harm to the openness.

Reference back to paragraphs 147 and 148 of the NPPF (2023) informs us that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be approved except in very special circumstances and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Whether the development causes any other harm and whether there are any other relevant considerations to balance the overall planning argument, should now be considered.

3. Very special circumstances

No specific arguments have been put forward by the applicant in relation to the assessment of 'very special circumstances' and they are not considered necessary in this instance.

4. Impact on the Landscape

In addition to being within the Green Belt, the site is located within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by varied topography, ancient wood and haphazard mosaic resident plots and small holdings. The style of properties is varied in terms of scale and style, with many plots being derelict caravans and small brick bungalows.

The Landscape Character Assessment (2009) continues to state that incongruous elements within the area involve replacing more traditional features through to modernisation of vernacular buildings. This is continued in the guidelines which set out how to conserve strong elements and "halt the erosion of the area with inappropriate development", and include the following points:

- Conserve and maintain traditional and distinct buildings, materials and elements;

- Assess development proposals through the area to modify variety in building styles and materials;
- Resist proposals that introduce inappropriate designs and materials.

Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed outbuilding would conserve the rural landscape context of this site through its modest scale and appropriate materials, and the fact it is an extension of an existing structure, extending only in footprint and not height. As such, the proposal would comply with the relevant requirements of Policies CS02 and CS12 (LPCS), and paragraphs 130, 174 and 176 of the NPPF (2023).

5. The effect on the character and appearance of the area

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) states that new development will be visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area. Moreover, Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the NPPF (2023) sets out that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

Gravesham's newly published Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for developments. Generally, the SPD highlights the importance of new development complimenting and corresponding to existing character and the wider context. In this case, the rural character of the area and other surrounding dwellings should be considered.

In terms of the design, the size of the extended outbuilding will be subordinate to the main dwelling in terms of scale and by virtue of it being set-back towards the rear of the curtilage will be viewed as subservient to the main dwelling. The height of the ridge will be unchanged, which creates a more balanced appearance and the extended building will be finished in matching materials to the existing garage.

Therefore, the proposed garage is subservient to the main dwelling and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the dwelling on the site and rural location, and in accordance with the requirements of saved policy C13 (LPFR), as well as Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).

6. Other matters

Amenity of Future Occupiers

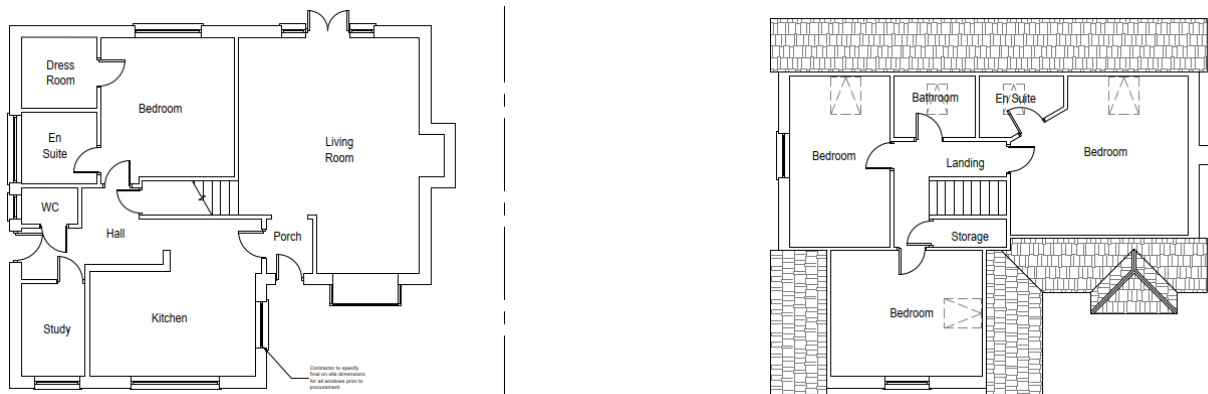
Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires that all development should be 'fit for purpose' and be 'adaptable to allow changes to meet the need of users'. The proposed outbuilding is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers.

Neighbouring

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires new development to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land and paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2023) requires development to have a high standard of amenity for existing users (in this case surrounding properties).

The proposed outbuilding is not considered to impact the amenity of any adjoining property. The

garage will create more development along the flank elevation of the neighbouring property known as 'Ashden Point'. The garage will be 8.5m away from the flank elevation of this property and the following plan extracts indicate the floorplan;



Floorplan of Ashden Point

The ground floor windows serve non-habitable spaces, and the first floor flank window serves a bedroom. As the garage is single storey, it will not effect the bedroom, which is also served by a rooflight. No objection have been received from this neighbour.

As such, the proposal is considered to safeguard surrounding occupier amenity in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).

Parking and Highways

There are no parking or highway issues related to this proposal. Although the existing garage would be lost and there would be no secure parking as a result, there is sufficient space on the site for parking to accord with Gravesham's adopted parking standards (SPG4) (2006).

Use of the Outbuilding

The proposed outbuilding contains a gym, study, shower room and small kitchenette. It is unclear from the information provided what facilities will be provided within the kitchenette and the layout of the outbuilding could be converted into habitable living accommodation. However, the plans do indicate an ancillary use and there will be conditions attached to the decision notice to ensure that:

- the building is not let or sold and no business use operates at any time;
- the rooms provided within the building are only used as a gym, study, shower room and kitchenette;
- the site is not subdivided at any time.

Conclusion:

The application has been fully considered and is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

The proposed outbuilding is not excessive in size, is subservient to and reflects the character of the existing building and is good design. The scale of the outbuilding is not considered to result in any impact of the Green Belt and wider landscape character. There would be no impact on the amenity of future occupiers or surrounding residents and there are no parking or highway issues.

Therefore, the application has overcome the previous grounds of refusal and it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	6 th November 2023	Dated:	06 November 2023