

Delegated Report

Application No:	20250692
Location:	4 New Dairy Farm Cottages Church Street Higham Rochester Kent ME3 7LE
Description:	Demolition of conservatory and erection of a single storey side extension. Erection of a single storey rear extension with roof light.
Applicant:	Mr Miles Brooke

Submitted Documents/Plans

The application comprises the following documents and plans:

- Application form.
- Location plan (1:1250) (dated 20 June 2024).
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)001 Rev. P1 – Existing Block Plan.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)002 Rev. P1 – Proposed Block Plan.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)100 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed Ground Floor Plan.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)101 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed First Floor Plan.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)102 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed Roof Plan.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)201 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed Front Elevation.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)202 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed South Elevation.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)203 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed Rear Elevation.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)204 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed North Elevation.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)301 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed Section.
- Drawing no. 253 (PL)401 Rev. P1 – Existing and Proposed Volume Calculation.
- Design Statement (Rev P1).

Relevant Planning History

The planning history relating to this site is summarised below.

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Decision</u>
20240560	Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey extension to the rear and side.	Refused	14 October 2024
19860089	Section 53 determination as to whether planning permission is required for the erection of a single storey side extension to form a lounge extension.	Certificate Granted	24 February 1986

Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Courts have held that it is a matter of planning judgement as to whether a proposal is in accordance with the development plan when 'read as a whole' and conflict with a particular policy or policies may not pass that threshold.

Where there are other material considerations, the development plan should be the starting point, and other material considerations should be taken into account in reaching a decision. One such consideration will be whether the plan policies are relevant and up to date.

In this instance the development plan for Gravesham currently comprises: -

- The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014);
- Remaining Saved Policies of the Local Plan First Review (1994); and
- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013 - 2030 (2016, revised 2020).

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development.
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development.
- CS11 – Transport.
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure.
- CS19 – Design & Development Principles.

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards.
- C13 – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside.
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites.

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 First Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 - Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020.

- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2021).
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code SPD (2024).
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006).
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Higham Parish Council

No comments received.

Neighbouring properties

One neighbour consulted and no comments have been received. The overall consultation period expired on 05 August 2025.

Analysis

The application site lies on the eastern side of Church Street. It comprises a two-storey, end of terrace dwelling which benefits from a conservatory to the side. The site is located in a rural area, the Metropolitan Green Belt, the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area and an Area of Archaeological Potential.

The property can be seen in the following image:



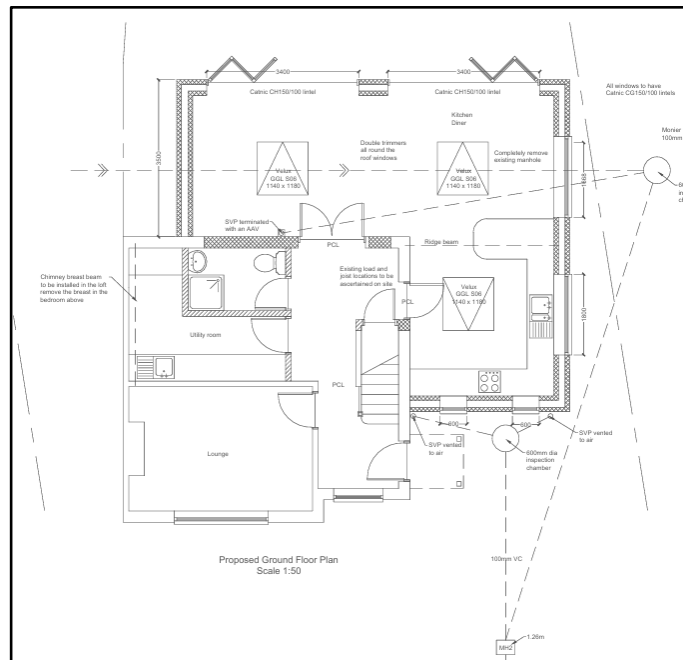
In October 2024 planning permission was refused for “demolition of existing conservatory and erection of a single storey extension to the rear and side” (Gravesham planning reference

20240560) for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal, by virtue of its proposed size, scale, massing and form, would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, as it would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling and harm the openness of the Green Belt. It would therefore would not comply with paragraph 154(c) and 154(g) of the NPPF (2023) and, Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) and Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy Local Plan (2014). No very special circumstances have been submitted which would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. As such, as per paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023), this inappropriate development should not be approved.*
- 2. The proposed development by reason of its excessive scale and disproportional appearance would result in significant harm to the character of this area, constituting over-development of the site. The development would not contribute to the character of the area and would as a result fail to comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023), in terms of design, character and appearance.*

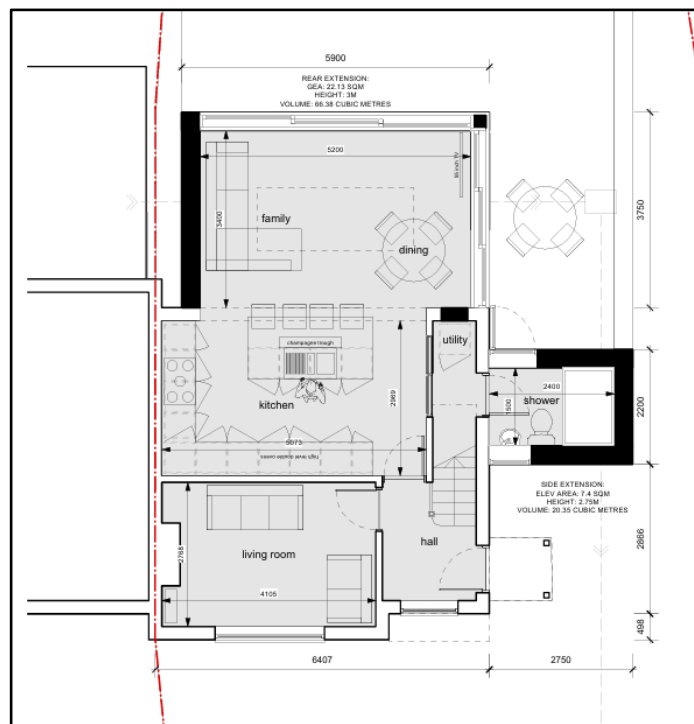
The proposed elevations and floor layout relating to that application are shown below:

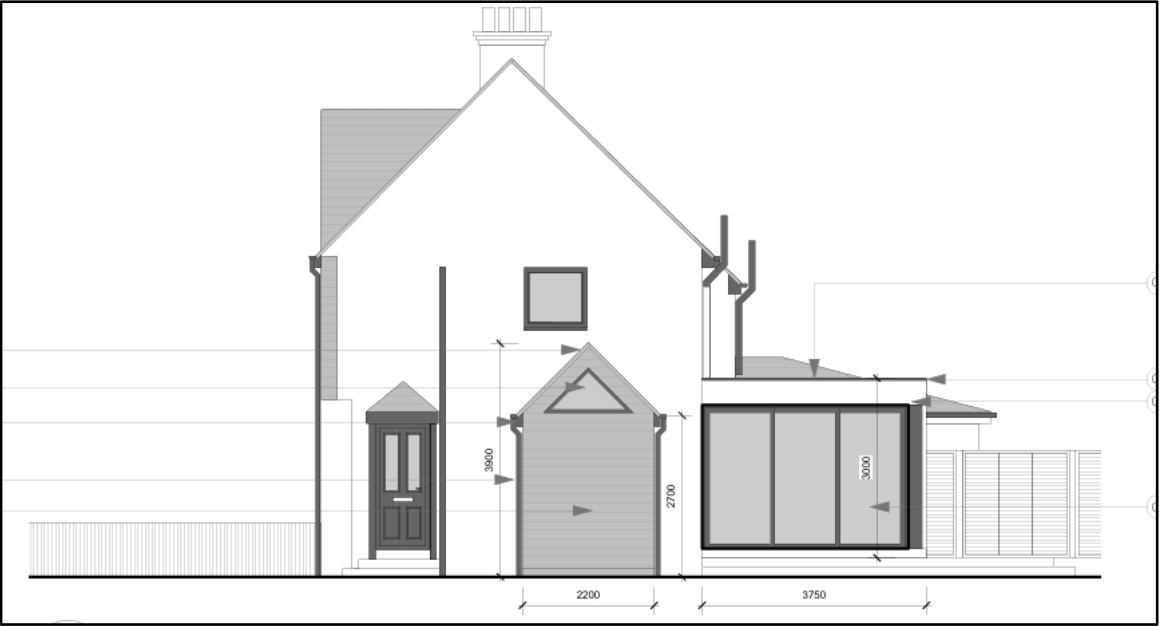




The current application proposes two separate extensions rather than a single extension that wraps around the side and rear of the property.

A single storey rear extension is proposed which would extend almost the entire width of the original property. It would be inset from the boundary with the adjoining property by approximately 0.5m and would occupy a footprint of 5.9m x 3.75m. It would be of a modern design with a flat roof and large glazed doors on the southern and eastern elevations. A second extension would be provided adjoining the southern elevation of the property. This would replace the existing conservatory. This would have a pitched roof and would occupy a footprint of 2.2m x 2.75m. The proposed elevations and floor layouts relating to the current application are shown below:







In the consideration of this application, Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 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 Local Plan Core Strategy.

The application site is located within the Green Belt and outside any rural settlements that are inset from the Green Belt.

The main planning considerations relating to this application are as follows:

1. Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?
2. The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt
3. Design and visual impact
4. Impact on landscape
5. Impact on residential amenity
6. Highway issues
7. Archaeology

These issues are assessed below:

Is the proposed development appropriate in the Green Belt?

National policies for protecting the Green Belt are set out in Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 153 is particularly relevant in the consideration of planning applications within the Green Belt:

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states development in the Green Belt is inappropriate it comprises one of a number of excepted forms of development, including:

- 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;*

Saved Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review, which relates to extensions to dwellings in the countryside, is also relevant to this determination. It sets out a number of criteria that should be met when considering proposals for domestic extensions. As the policy pre-dates the NPPF, the weight attached to the policy must be considered carefully, with greater weight being given where the approach is consistent with the NPPF.

Policy C13 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 in relation to the original building as they require looking at size in the round. As such, these aspects of the policy are broadly in line with the NPPF and should be afforded weight.

The following calculations compare the floor areas of the original dwelling and the dwelling incorporating the proposed extensions (it should be noted that as the existing conservatory did not form part of the original dwelling and is to be removed as part of this proposal, its floor area is not included in these calculations):

Floor area of original dwelling (as built)

Ground Floor: 40.0m²

First Floor: 40.0m²

Total: 80.0m²

Floor area of original dwelling incorporating the proposed extensions

Ground floor: 61.28m²

First Floor: 40.0m²

Total: 101.28m²

The total percentage increase of the floor area of the original dwelling would be 26.6%. This is significantly less than the one third allowance prescribed in Policy C13. In this respect this proposal would meet the tests set out in Policy C13 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

As well as floorspace there are other factors which play a part in assessing whether a proposal is a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. This includes assessing whether the massing, scale and form are appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.

The proposed extensions would result in an increase in the massing of the property. However, due to the modest size of the extensions in comparison to the original dwelling they would remain subservient to the host property.

The application is accompanied by calculations comparing the volume of the proposed extensions with that of the original dwelling. These calculations indicate that the extensions would result in a slightly less than 30% increase in the volume of the original dwelling. This

provides a further indicator that the proposal would not result in “disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building”

Although there is no definition of the term “disproportionate additions” within the NPPF, Policy C13, provides a useful guide. It places an overall limit on extensions of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling and also requires the massing, scale and form of any extension to be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting. For the reasons set out above, this proposal would meet these tests and as such it is considered that this proposal would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt

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

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF relates to the openness of the Green Belt:

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. 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 their permanence.

For the reasons set out above, the increase in the massing and scale of the proposed development would be modest compared to the existing dwelling. Furthermore, the proposal would only result in a limited increase in the footprint of the existing dwelling. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Design and visual impact

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to “achieving well-designed places” and sets out the Government’s requirements in relation to design issues. Paragraph 131 is particularly relevant:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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.

The aims set out in paragraph 131 of the NPPF are reflected in Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy. This requires new development to be “visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive” and to “conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment”. It also requires new development to “integrate well with the surrounding local area”. In addition, Policy CS19 requires the following:

“....the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings.”

Design for Gravesham (2024) expands on the Core Strategy, and Policy CS19 in particular, to provide additional clarity on what is expected of applicants when submitting design proposals, setting out the minimum requirements to achieve design quality.

The Council’s Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides design guidance on extensions and alterations and requires that any such proposals “should respect the original character of the existing dwelling, complement and correspond with the character of neighbouring properties and the local area”.

Although the proposed rear extension is of a contemporary design, it would complement the character of the main dwelling. It would be of a similar size and scale to the single storey rear extension on the neighbouring property. As the extension would be located to the rear of the property it would not be subject to widespread view.

The proposed side extension has been appropriately designed to complement the character of the main dwelling. It incorporates a pitched roof and is stepped back from the front elevation. Due to its modest size, it would remain subservient to the host property. The existing conservatory is larger than the proposed extension and visually dominant in this location. The proposed side extension, which would replace this conservatory, would be smaller in size, of a more appropriate design and therefore would result in an improvement to the visual amenity of the immediate locality.

In summary the design and visual impact of the proposed extensions is considered to be acceptable. Their combined size and scale are less than that proposed as part of the previously refused planning application (Gravesham planning reference 20240560). The current proposal would be more appropriate in terms of its scale and design and would overcome the concerns set out in the second reason for refusal relating to application 20240560.

In light of the above analysis it is considered that the proposal would meet the tests set out in the NPPF, Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy, Design for Gravesham and the Householder Alterations/Extensions Design Guide SPD.

Impact on landscape

Section 15 of the NPPF highlights the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, one aspect of which is the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes. Policy CS12 of Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy states that the overall landscape character and valued landscapes within the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that proposals will take account of the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment.

The site is located within the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area. The key characteristics of this Landscape Character Area are described as:

- Gently undulating topography with open arable fields
- Fields divided by tracks, roads and occasional hedgerows
- Orchards to the east
- Minor native woodland clumps
- Few roads, which are open in character
- Istead Rise modern housing development
- Clusters of properties and farmsteads
- Large pylons

Whilst the proposals would result in some new built development in the form of residential extensions, this would not represent a significant change in the mixed rural/residential character and appearance of the site and would not therefore result in any adverse visual impact on landscape character.

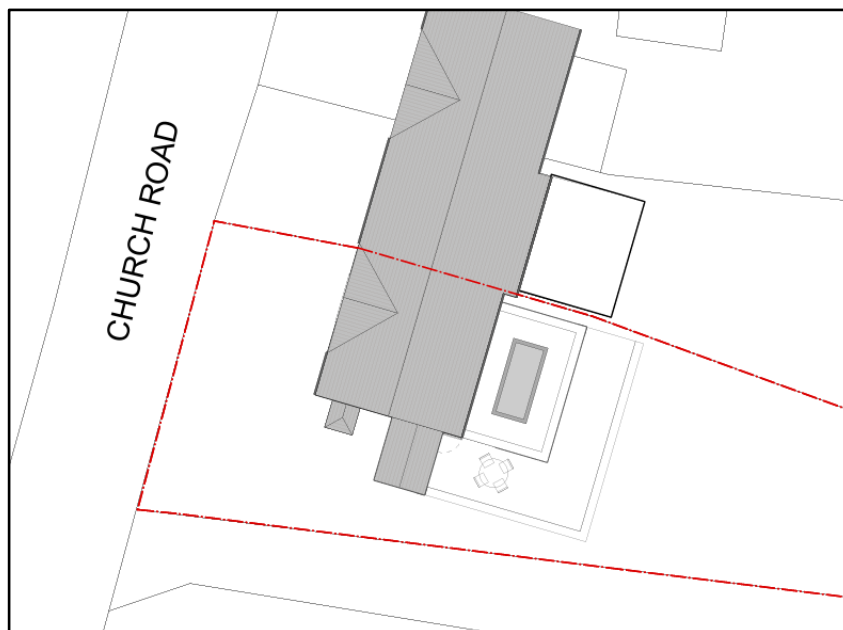
Overall, the proposals comprise appropriate alterations in terms of their size, scale and appearance, and would maintain the character and appearance of the site and landscape quality of the surrounding rural area. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in design and landscape terms and would comply with the requirements of the NPPF and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on residential amenity

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF requires planning decisions to, *inter alia*, provide “a high standard of amenity for existing and future users”. In addition, Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy requires new development to be located, designed and constructed to “safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land”.

There is one adjoining neighbour to the north, no. 5 New Dairy Farm Cottages. None of the windows in the new extensions would face this property and as such there would not be a loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers. Given that the proposed extensions are single storey, this would further ensure that there would be no overlooking of the neighbouring dwelling.

No. 5 New Dairy Farm Cottages has a single storey rear extension which has a similar depth to the one currently proposed. This can be seen on the following extract from the proposed block plan:



As a result of the design, scale, massing, location and orientation of the proposed extensions, and the presence of the neighbouring extension, this proposal would not result in a loss of sunlight/daylight or outlook to the occupiers of no. 5 New Dairy Farm Cottages.

In light of these considerations, the proposed extensions would not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers and would meet the tests set out in the NPPF and Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy.

Highway issues

This proposal would not create a requirement for additional on-site parking. As such there would be no significant impacts in terms of highways safety.

Archaeology

The site is located in an Area of Archaeological Potential. Given the modest size of the proposed extensions, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant below-ground

archaeological impact. This is consistent with the consultation response of KCC Heritage relating to the previous application for this site (Gravesham planning reference 20240560) which was as follows:

The site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential. However, based on existing Historic Environment Record data for the area and the relatively limited extent of the proposed works, I consider it unlikely that these proposals would have a significant below-ground archaeological impact and have no further comments to make in this case.

In respect of archaeology the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy TC7 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

Conclusion

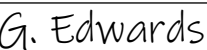
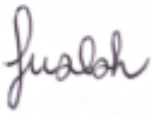
For the reasons set out in this report, this development would not result in “disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building” and as such would not constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Furthermore, it would not impact the openness of the Green Belt.

In all other respects the proposal is also seen as acceptable. It has been shown to be appropriate in terms of its design and visual impact, its impact upon the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area and its impact upon residential amenity. It is also considered acceptable in terms of highway safety and archaeological issues.

Recommendation:

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to conditions:

See draft Decision

Case Officer: Gary Edwards	Team Leader: Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed: 	Signed: 
Dated: 22 September 2025	Dated: 29 September 2025