

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240609

Location: 30 St Hildas Way Gravesend Kent DA12 4AP

Description: Formation of a hardstanding to the front garden.

Applicant: Mrs Katy Peek

Site Visit Date: 05 September 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Application for Planning Permission form;
Drawing no. 01/024 Existing layout;
Drawing no. 02/024 Proposed layout;
Drawing no. TQRQM24232111448709 Existing block plan;
Drawing no. TQRQM24186185627689 Proposed block plan;
Site location plan received 29 July 2024;
Schedule of works; and
Details of materials.

Relevant Planning History

None.

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
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

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.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)

Other Relevant Guidance

- Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2023)
- Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (2023)
- Front Driveway Guidance (2023)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

GBC Service Manager (Housing Landlord Services)

No response received.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by a site notice and to four neighbouring properties by letter. No representations have been received.

Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) sets out various design requirements and includes the need for the development to add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive; and be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF 2023 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the built environment and take account of the scale, height, building lines and other architectural features of buildings. Account should also be taken of strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.

Relevant considerations in the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and the GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023 are that;

- Hardstanding should be proportionate to the size of the dwelling and the relevant car parking standards and avoid paving over a significant amount of the forecourt.
- Soft landscaped planted border along all boundaries should be provided in all spaces not specifically defined as parking or turning spaces.
- Allow sufficient space between the car and the dwelling to allow access to the front door and side of

the property.

- Must be designed to avoid cars overhanging the pavement.
- Avoid removing any existing trees or established hedges and introduce new planting wherever possible.
- Introduce permeable paving to new areas of hardstanding to minimise rainwater run-off issues.
- There should be no water run-off from the forecourt onto the public highway.
- Pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays should be provided.

The application property is a semi-detached dwelling located on the southern side of St Hildas Drive. The site frontage is raised above the height of the adjacent footpath and is mainly laid to grass with a low concrete block wall at the back edge of the pavement with two paths and steps within the garden. The dwelling is faced with red brick and has a small rendered and painted first floor panel.

Properties in the surrounding area typically have low front walls of red brick with landscaped front gardens, which are positive features of the street scene and contribute significantly to visual amenity. Existing driveways for immediately surrounding dwellings do not typically extend across the full width of the site frontage, are softened with planting, surfaced with red or grey block paving and have red brick walls.

The proposal development would create a hardstanding of autumn gold block paving and a charcoal boarder, surrounded by one metre tall, rendered and cream painted retaining walls, with charcoal coping stone. The existing grassed area would be removed completely.

The proposed development would result in the paving of the entire site frontage, with no landscaping to soften the harsh impact of the large expanse of paving and walls. The proposed surfacing and wall materials would not match sufficiently with the existing building or those in the surrounding area. As such, the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the application property and the visual amenities of the surrounding street scene and be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), to paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2023, to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and to the GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a mandatory requirement for all new development and proposals must deliver a BNG of at least 10% unless they are exempt. In this instance, the proposed development is a householder proposal and therefore is exempt from BNG.

Notwithstanding the BNG exemption, biodiversity is an important consideration in all new development. Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) states that there will be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough and that opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create and maintain habitats will be sought, in particular within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and within new development.

The proposed development would result in the loss of all existing planting from the site frontage, which would be detrimental to biodiversity and contrary to Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed development would not impact upon the private amenity space or internal layout of the application property and would not adversely impact on the privacy, daylight or sunlight of its occupants. As such, the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of future occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Neighbouring Amenity

Due to the design of the proposed development and to the layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings. As such, the proposed development would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Parking and Highways

Paragraph 114(b) of the NPPF 2023 requires new development to ensure that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users and paragraph 115 sets out that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) requires new development to mitigate its impact on the highway and public transport networks and to provide sufficient parking in accordance with adopted parking standards.

Saved Policy T1 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) sets out that the impact on the transport system and environment of traffic generated by new development will be considered and Saved Policy T5 requires new accesses to be in an acceptable location and to an acceptable standard and to not give rise to danger.

To ensure pedestrian safety, driveway design should incorporate 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility splays on either side, where there can be no obstruction in excess of 0.6 metres height.

The proposed development would provide a parking area with sufficient dimensions to accommodate two vehicles. However, due to the one metre height of the proposed retaining walls, the proposal would not provide adequate pedestrian visibility.

It should be noted that with some amendment, it may be possible to achieve the required pedestrian visibility. However, this is something that the applicant may or may not be agreeable to. If the proposal was acceptable in all other aspects, this issue could be resolved via negotiations, but given the concerns raised in the sections above, the application should be determined as submitted.

Overall, the proposed development would make insufficient provision for safe egress from the application site, leading to drivers having poor visibility and presenting dangers to passing pedestrians. As such, the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety and contrary to Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), to Saved Policies T1 and T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), to paragraph 114(b) of the NPPF 2023, to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and to the GBC Front Driveway Design Guidance 2023.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The application site is located within an area of multi-period archaeological potential and Groundwater Source Protection Zone 2. However, as the proposed development is within the confines of an existing residential garden and only a relatively small amount of groundworks would occur, then it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts to groundwater or archaeology. As such, the proposal would be in line with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC7 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development would have no adverse impacts on residential amenity, groundwater or archaeology. However, the proposal would be out of character with the application property and its surroundings, harm biodiversity and provide inadequate pedestrian visibility, which would be detrimental to highway safety.

Overall, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the proposed development attract significant weight and would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal. Therefore, following a thorough assessment of the application and all material planning considerations, it is considered that the proposed development cannot be supported and that planning permission should be refused on the following grounds;

1. The proposed development would make insufficient provision for safe egress from the application

site, leading to drivers having poor visibility and presenting dangers to passing pedestrians. As such, the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety and contrary to Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, to Saved Policies T1 and T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), to paragraph 114(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and to the GBC Front Driveway Design Guidance 2023.

2. The proposed development would result in the removal of all existing soft landscaping on the site frontage and its replacement with a large expanse of built development that would not match with the character or appearance of the application property or the surrounding area and would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene and to biodiversity. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS12 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, to paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023, to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and to the GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>K Joyce</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	9th October 2024	Dated:	9th October 2024