

Site:

Prepared

Approved

Date:

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This technical note has been prepared on behalf of Mr & Mrs M Greene in respect of a planning application for the conversion of existing garages and stores to a 2 bedroom single storey dwelling at Rockley House, located on Wrotham Road, Culverstone, Gravesend, DA13 0QN. The dwelling would utilise an existing point of access.
- 1.2 The site is accessed via the A227 to the east of the site, which leads south towards connections with the M20 motorway. Snodland is some 6.8 kilometres east of the site, whilst Gravesend is some 10 kilometres to the north.
- 1.3 A previous planning application and subsequent appeal were dismissed, partly on the grounds of highway safety. A review of the planning history is summarised in the following paragraphs.

Planning History

- 1.4 The previous planning appeal (Ref: APP/K2230/W/21/3282227) included commentary from the Inspector in respect of highways. This is set out below:

'The submitted plans indicate that a new vehicular access would be created giving access to the A227, South Street, a classified A road with a 30mph speed restriction. In doing so, visibility splays in the region of 43 metres by 2.4 metres in each direction from the access point would be required to ensure highway safety was not unduly compromised and thereafter maintained to ensure that there would be no obstruction over 1.05 metres above carriageway level within the splays.'

Setting aside the issue of character and appearance, which I have addressed above, to achieve the required sight lines it would be necessary to remove large sections of hedgerow to either side of the access. Whilst I note that the Highway Authority did not object to the scheme on the grounds of highway safety, this was subject to the requisite visibility splays being achieved and maintained.

On the basis of the evidence and the plans before me it has not been demonstrated that the visibility splays could be achieved. My observations showed that visibility from the proposed access is reduced by existing vegetation and the curve of the road. Furthermore, given the length of the splay that is required, it has not been adequately demonstrated that the land required for the necessary visibility splays is within the ownership or control of the appellants. I therefore cannot be satisfied that the splays could be provided and kept free of obstruction thereafter.

In the absence of adequate visibility and in order to egress the site, vehicles are likely to edge into the highway without a clear view of oncoming traffic. This would be likely to materially compromise highway safety.

Overall, on the basis of the evidence before me, I conclude that the proposed development fails to demonstrate that safe and suitable access to the site could be achieved. Consequently, it has not been shown that there would not be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. This would be contrary to CS Policy CS11 and Policies T1 and T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) insofar as these policies seek to require acceptable access that preserves safe access to the highway network for all users. Similarly, the scheme would conflict with the guidance of Gravesham's Planning Guidance Note 6 for Vehicle Accesses on Classified Highways (2009) and it would fail to accord with the provisions of the Framework insofar as these seek to prevent development on highways grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.'

- 1.5 A second appeal was also dismissed at the same time for the extension of an existing stable use, with two holiday lets located above (Ref: APP/K2230/W/21/3282228). This appeal sought the use of the existing access junction.

- 1.6 The Inspector made the following observations:

"At the time of my site visit, I observed the existing driveway opening to be limited in width. Visibility to the south is restricted by existing hedgerow vegetation and the curve of the road. It would be difficult for two vehicles to pass simultaneously at the access and along the driveway. Given the increase in vehicular movements, albeit not a significant increase, there is the potential for vehicular conflict. In my view, it is likely that there would be instances of vehicular conflict and this could lead to a vehicle having to wait within the highway whilst accessing the site, or for a vehicle to have to reverse along the driveway which could lead to conflict with pedestrians within the site.

To overcome this conflict and avoid a vehicle having to wait within the highway, the access and driveway would require enlargement to a minimum width of some 4.8 metres for the initial 6 metres of driveway. Additionally, visibility splays in the region of 43 metres by 2.4 metres in each direction from the point of access would be required."

The remainder of this Technical Note reviews the above commentary, and seeks to demonstrate that the existing access junction is suitable to serve the proposals.

2.0 Visibility Splays

- 2.1 Wrotham Road is subject to a 30 miles per hour speed limit. Visibility Splays measuring 2.4 metres by 43 metres are shown within **Appendix A**. No vegetation will need to be cut back to allow visibility to be achieved, which is demonstrated within the above drawing.
- 2.2 Visibility can be achieved without impacting on third party land, with the splays falling either within the site or highway land. The bend located to the north of the site does not obstruct visibility of vehicles heading southbound.

3.0 Access Junction Design

- 3.1 The existing access to the site is located to the north east of the development and will be widened to measure approximately 4.8 metres in width, allowing two passenger vehicles to easily pass each other.
- 3.2 The mouth of the access widens to approximate 13 metres to allow for sufficient turning space as well as helping with visibility for vehicles accessing and leaving the site. Swept path Analysis has been undertaken to show two cars passing each other at the access, indicating that there is sufficient space for two vehicles to pass each other as well as turn in/ out of the site at the same time. The swept path is presented in **Appendix B**.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The visibility splay and swept path analysis indicate that sufficient visibility of 2.4 metres by 43 metres can be seen from the access in both directions without being obstructed by vegetation or passing over third party land. The swept path analysis allows for two vehicles to cross paths at the access of the site without any issue and has clear visibility.
- 4.2 The above addresses concerns raised by the Inspector as part of previous applications, and demonstrates that the proposed development should not be refused on highway grounds.

Appendix A

Visibility Splays at the Site Access

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Project:
Rockley House, Wrotham Road

Title:
Visibility Splay

Scale: 1:500 (@ A3)

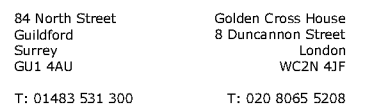
Drawing:
2305059-01

Revision:

Appendix B

Swept Path Analysis

	meters
Width	: 1.80
Track	: 1.75
Lock to Lock Time	: 6.0
Steering Angle	: 35.9



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