



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250306

Location: 69 Central Avenue Gravesend Kent DA12 5AW

Description: Application for retrospective hardstanding area in the front garden, and proposed creation of a vehicle crossover.

Applicant: Mr Harikant Awotorsing

Site Visit Date: 10.04.25

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form;
Site Location Plan (received on 31.03.2025);
Block Plan (received on 31.03.2025);
Drawing No. ES01 – Elevations and Sections – Pre-Existing and Proposed;
Drawing No. PEP01 – Front Layout Plan – Pre-Existing; and
Drawing No. PP01 – Front Layout Plan – Proposed.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20201358	Application for Lawful Development Certificate for a proposed loft conversion.	Certificate Granted	12.02.2021
20201357	Erection of a single storey rear extension.	Permitted	09.02.2021

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 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- 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)

Other Relevant Guidance

- Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025)
- Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)
- Gravesham Front Driveway Design Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Local Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Kent County Council (Highways)

During the course of the application, with reference to the Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2023), it was noted that there may be some highways concerns with the proposal. As such, KCC were contacted and provided the following comments:

This would not be approved for a vehicle crossover due to the proximity of the tree. Judging by the photo the tree would need a root protection area of at least 2m. The residents are currently crossing an un strengthened footway illegally, which will cause damage to the iron drainage channel and the slabs , resulting in trip hazards and remedial work.

Neighbouring properties

Two surrounding properties were consulted, a site notice was displayed on 10.04.25 and no representations were received. The overall consultation period expired on 02.05.25.

Site Description

69 Central Avenue is a two storey terraced property fronting the eastern side of Central Avenue.

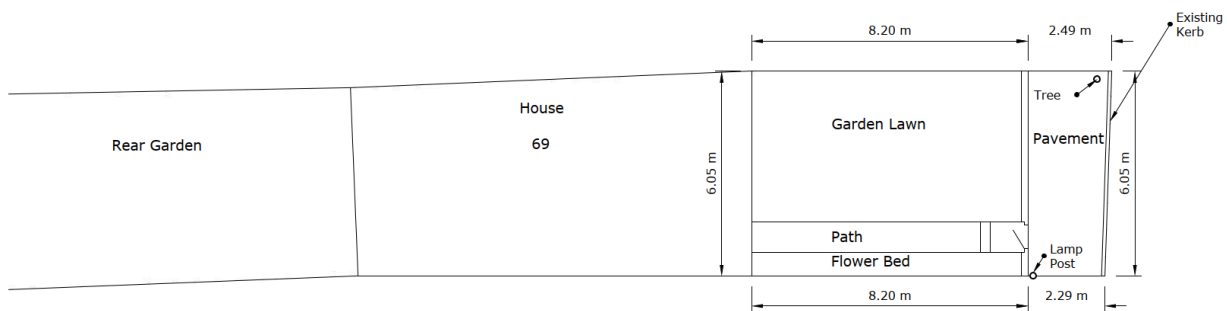


This is an application for the retrospective hardstanding area in the front garden, along with the proposed creation of a vehicle crossover.

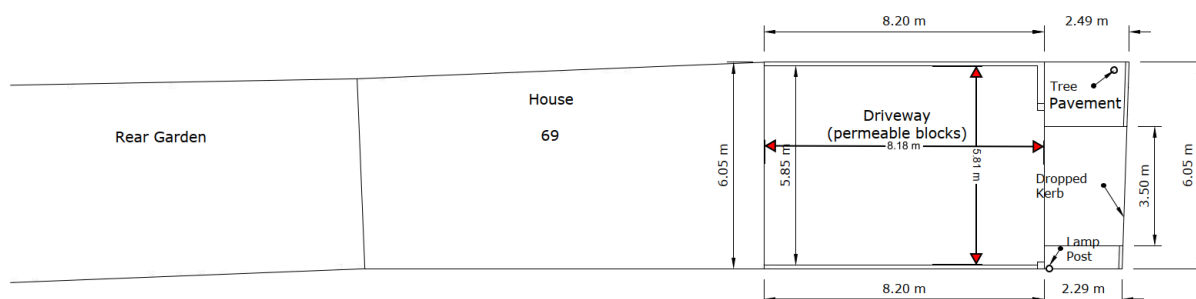
Proposed Development

The development would create space for off-street parking. Case officer measurements are indicated in red and black below:

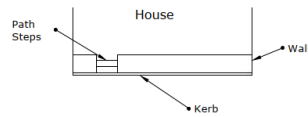
Existing:



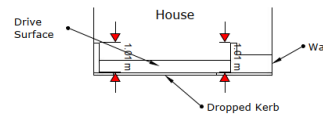
Proposed:



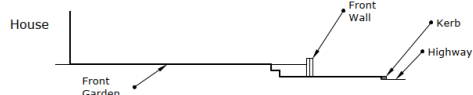
Pre-Existing West Elevation
(Principle)



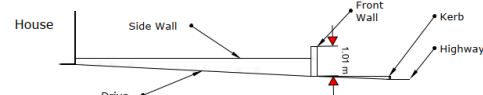
Proposed West Elevation
(Principle)



Pre-Existing Section



Proposed Section



Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) (2014) 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 (2024) sets out that the creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It states developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

The Design For Gravesham Design Code (2024) is a strategic document that sets out Gravesham's vision and expectation for quality place-making. Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for new developments. Generally, the SPD (2021) highlights the importance of new development complimenting and corresponding to existing character and the wider context.

The hardstanding area has already been created, works amount to an engineering operation, and as such, planning permission is required for the development.

Prior to the installation of the hardstanding area, the property frontage consisted of a lawn area, various planting, a stepped pathway leading to the house and dwarf wall/gate:

2018 Google Image



2022 Google Image



As evidenced by the above, the property had a pleasant, verdant frontage which contributed positively to the appearance of the host dwelling and street scene. Following the installation of the hardstanding area, the property frontage is now largely devoid of any planting and lacks character:



The plans, read in conjunction with the site visit, show that the hardstanding area and new retaining/facing walls would somewhat compliment the appearance of the dwelling house in terms of materials used and colour palette. In addition, the driveway has been constructed using permeable blocks, which is desirable. However, the property frontage now has a severe and hardened appearance with insufficient soft landscaping/planting. It therefore fails to accord with Gravesham's Design Guidance, including Gravesham's Householder Extensions and Alterations Design Guide (2021), and the Front Driveway Design Guidance (2023), which requires, amongst other things, for; hardstanding to be proportionate and to avoid paving over a significant amount of the forecourt, avoid removing any existing trees or established hedges and introduce new planting wherever possible. It is noted that there are other accesses and areas of hardstanding along Central Avenue, many of which do not have planning approval, but may have been carried out under permitted development rights. Accesses and hardstanding areas that have been approved do incorporate soft landscaping into their design. However, many of these unapproved accesses are to the detriment of the character of the area. As ascertained by the inspector during a recent appeal decision (APP/K2230/D/24/3358170 – Crantock House, 22a Old Road East, Gravesend) (Appendix 1), *"where there are openings to the road at other properties these are evidently historic, and in places lead to a detriment to the appearance of the area due to the parking that has been created. These examples therefore do not support the creation of a new area of hardstanding in the road"*. The Inspector also stated, *"I saw that low boundary walls and garden areas behind are characteristic of this area, and contribute to a*

residential feel to the road in this part of the town. New planting on the site would not sufficiently mitigate the harm arising from the opening up of the frontage and the degree of hardstanding created". In terms of this current application, no soft landscaping or planting has been proposed, the frontage has been entirely hard paved, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene, and it is unclear whether soft landscaping would be able to sufficiently mitigate this harm. As such, the proposal fails to accord with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) in terms of design, character and appearance.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposal would result in off-road parking provision for future occupiers. Overall, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

Neighbouring Amenity

No neighbour responses were received as a result of the consultation carried out for the proposal. In situ, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

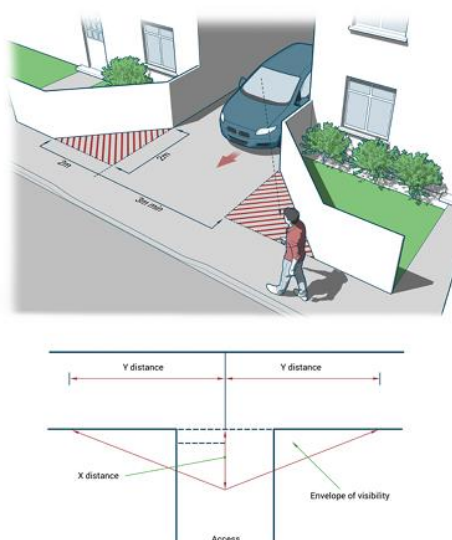
Parking and Highways

As aforementioned above, planning permission is required for the development. SPG 4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006) and Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) sets out that front garden parking must be designed to avoid cars overhanging the pavement. Car parking spaces a minimum of 2.50m wide (2.70m where spaces adjoin an enclosed boundary) and 5.00m deep should be provided. The plans indicate there would be sufficient space for two cars.

In addition to the space requirements, pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays should be provided and the crossover should not be within 10.00m of a junction:

Visibility Splay as per the Gravesham Design Guide (2021)

Visibility Splay



Requirements as per the KCC Residential Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025)

6/ Visibility & Sightline Requirements

Will you be able to see pedestrians and vehicles clearly enough to drive out of the driveway without causing danger to yourself or other road users? In order to determine if the visibility and sightlines meets the required standard, a site inspection will be needed from an experienced officer.

Footway Visibility - For pedestrian visibility, **a splay of at least 2m x 2m with a maximum height of 0.6m from the back of footway will be required.** Greater visibility may be required on faster and busier roads and therefore your application will be assessed on site specific criteria.

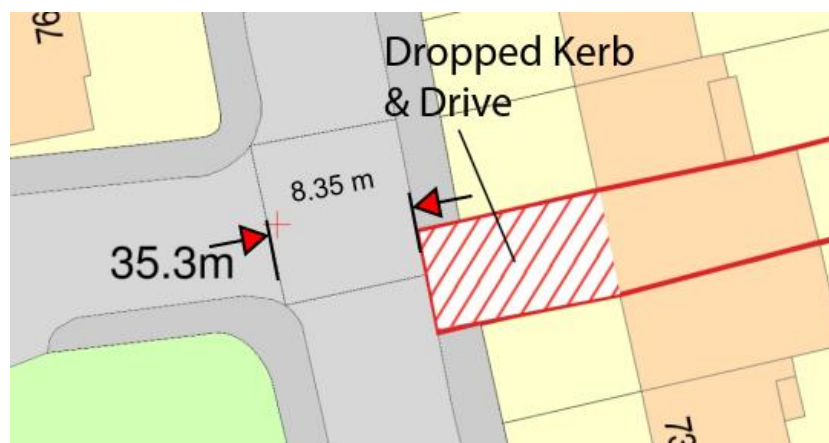
There should be no obstruction to visibility (walls, vegetation, fencing, etc) over the height of 0.6m above footway level.

Proximity to junction as per the KCC Residential Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025)

5/ Distance from Road Junction

If the location of the proposed crossing is closer than 10 metres to a road junction and creates a hazard, the application will be refused. This dimension may be increased to 15 metres on major roads or near busy junctions.

Block Plan with measurement to junction



There are concerns with the proposal due to the height of the wall (which at 1.01m exceeds the 600mm KCC requirements), the lack of pedestrian visibility splays, and the proximity to the junction. In addition, it is noted that the site is within close proximity to a school and new care home. The overall visibility and highways concerns are considered to be detrimental to highways safety.

In addition, as aforementioned above, although it would not necessarily be a GBC planning matter, KCC have confirmed in their comments that the crossover would not be approved due to the proximity of the tree.

Reference back to the appeal decision (APP/K2230/D/24/3358170 – Crantock House, 22a Old Road East, Gravesend) (Appendix 1), informs us of the Planning Inspectorates decision with regards to highways safety. Whilst Central Avenue is not a classified highway, many of the Inspectors observations are relevant and supports the concerns with this proposal. The Inspector refers to concerns with visibility and manoeuvrability (in the case of this application, vehicles would need to reverse on or off the driveway in close proximity to the junction). As per the appeal decision, *“Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (CS) requires new development to mitigate their impact on the highway. The Council’s Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2021 (SPD) requires adequate visibility splays to be provided for parking areas”* .. and *“the National Planning Policy Framework states planning permission should be refused if there is an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The proposal does not satisfy these requirements and so would be contrary to the development plan and national planning policy”*.

As such, this application should be refused.

Biodiversity

The proposed hardstanding area has resulted in the loss of soft landscaping and planting. Whilst this is unfortunate, these works are retrospective and as such there is no conflict with planning policy in this regard.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is contrary to local and national planning policy.

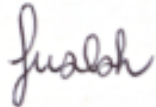
The development would result in the property frontage having a severe and hardened appearance, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024.)

The proposed development requires planning permission. As aforementioned above, KCC Highways have confirmed that the crossover would not be approved. The proposal would compromise highway safety in terms of lack of visibility and proximity to a junction, further accentuated by the high proportion of on-street parking. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (LPCS), Gravesham’s Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021), the Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025) and paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Recommendation

Refusal

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Lucy Hankin	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:	L Hankin	Signed:	
Dated:	7 th May 2025	Dated:	20 May 2025