Gravesham Borough Council

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20260088

Location: 26 King Street Gravesend Kent DA12 2DU

Description: Application for Listed Building Consent; Installation of a traditional retractable external awning.

Applicant: Annie Guo

Site Visit Date: 10th February 2026

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Form
001A – Location Plan, Existing Block Plan, Proposed Block Plan
002A – Existing Front Elevation
003A – Proposed Front Elevation
004A – Proposed Awning Details
Heritage, Design and Access Statement

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20260087	Installation of a traditional retractable external awning.	Pending Consideration	
20260089	Advertisement Consent for installation of external signage identifying the premises as THE LITTLE THEATRE.	Refused	13.03.2026
20260028	Application for Listed Building Consent; Repositioning of Ground Floor Staircase to Mezzanine.	Pending Consideration	
20260029	Application for Listed Building Consent; Installation of external illuminated fascia signage.	Refused	09.03.2026
20240946	Application for Listed Building Consent; Removal of raised platform, Judge's bench and remaining court furniture and alterations to Judge's canopy. Construction of panelling between existing (retained panelling) and lower floor level following removal of platform. Construction of steps between court room and adjoining studio to address change in level following removal of platform.	Pending Consideration	
20260243	Change of use to mixed use including performing arts theatre, performing arts instruction/teaching, public activities, nursery and children's activity centre, after-school club, and cafe/canteen	Permitted	02.03.2026
20170642	Application for Listed Building Consent for the Retention of completed temporary mechanical and electrical refurbishment works	Permitted	11.06.2018
20100541	Change of use of former Court House (D1) to mixed use	Permitted	24.05.2011

	comprising cafe, meeting room, counselling rooms, open yoga area, offices, exhibition/court room, recording studio, installation of mezzanine floor to provide additional office space and demolition of cell block within central courtyard.		

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
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC9 - Shopfronts

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 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- King Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)
- Management Plan Gravesend Town Centre Conservation Areas (2009)
- Shopfront Design Guidance Sheet 6 Canopies, blinds and security (2020)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors
No comments received.

Conservation Officer
No comments received.

National Amenity Society
No comments received.

Neighbouring properties

29 surrounding properties were consulted, a site notice placed and the application was advertised in the

Gravesend Messenger. The final date to submit comments ended on 6th March 2026. 0 comments were received from members of the public.

Officer's Analysis

The site is located in the King Street Conservation Area and is a Grade II Listed building. The building was formerly used as a courthouse and retains a number of historic architectural features which contribute to its significance.

Its List entry is shown below:

Details

1. 5277 KING STREET (South Side)

No 26 (County Court) TQ 6474 SE 1/113

II

2. Dated 1870. 1 storey ashlar with stone dressings. Slate roof. Balustrade with quatrefoil motif. Triglyph frieze. 4 coupled pilasters. 2 round-headed doorcases with decorated spandrels. Double doors. Fanlights having swag moulding incorporating the date. Plinth. 3 pointed mullioned windows, 2 with 2 lights and the centre one with 3.

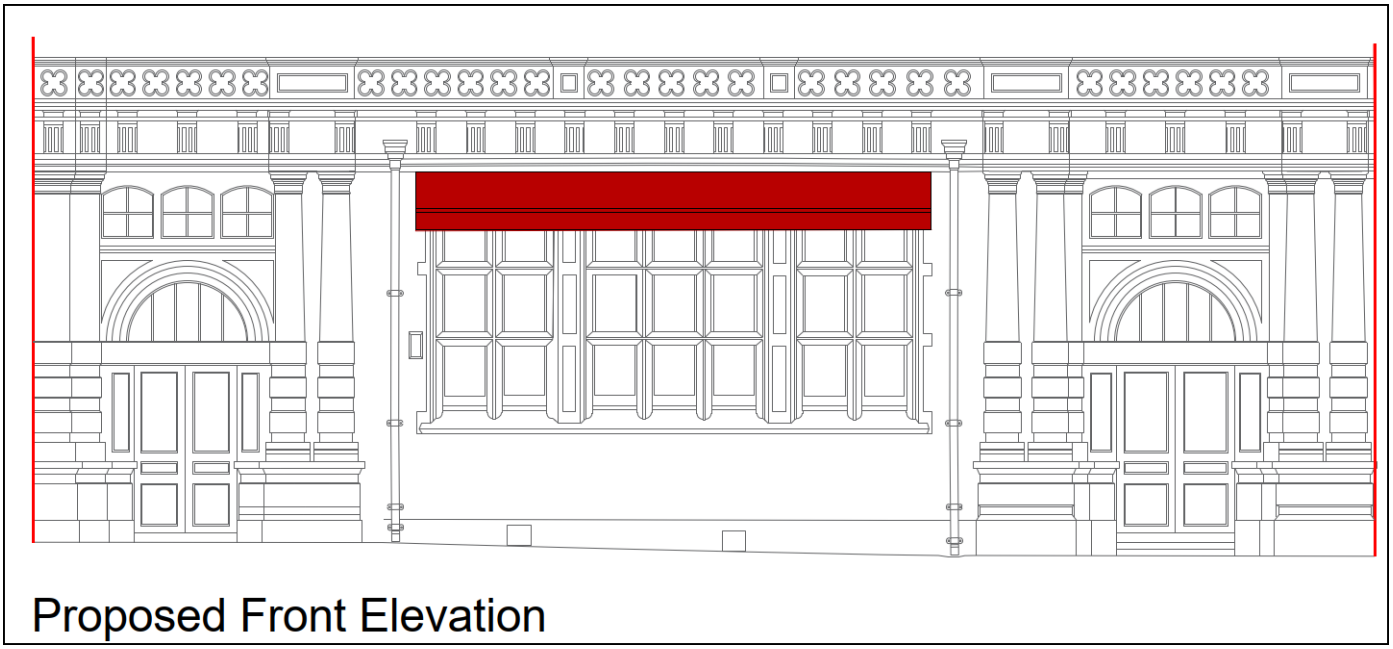
Listing NGR: TQ6481374131

It is noted that the Gravesend Town Centre Conservation Area's Management Plan, on the King Street Conservation Area makes the following statements:

Area has suffered in places from the appearance of poorly designed shopfronts and advertisement, and the incremental loss of original architectural features. The effect could be reversed by the replacement and re-instatement of such features with those of an appropriate design and material.

This building was originally a court, as reflected in its listed status and as such does not have a clear fascia for signage or an awning to be attached. It would not have been deemed necessary for the type of building. Whilst the building did have permission for alternative uses, no external signage has been used as it would obscure the original fabric of the listed building. The below image shows the building in 2017. As can be seen there is temporary signage in the window and no other permanent signage or paraphernalia (such as awning) has been affixed to the front of the property.

Image from 2017 (Google maps)



Proposed Elevation (Not to scale)

The proposed awning would be 7.1m wide and extend out to 2m deep.

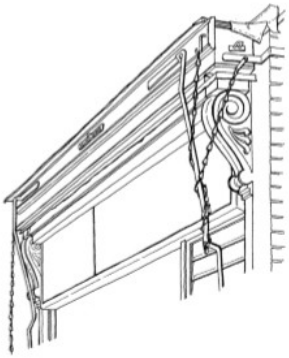
The Shopfront Design Guidance sheet 6 states the following in respect of canopies:

Canopies & Blinds

Many traditional shopfronts had retractable roller blinds to protect goods from sunlight and to provide shelter for pedestrians. In the past blinds were not used for advertisement purposes, whereas today, many modern type of blinds, such as the 'balloon' or 'Dutch' blinds, are essentially seen as a means to increase advertising. They are alien (and in many cases an obtrusive feature) in historic areas and are in general not acceptable on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas.

- Where traditional canvas blinds and blind boxes are still in place, these should be retained and restored.
- New blinds should be integrated within the design and construction of the shopfront. They should be positioned below the fascia so as not to obstruct the view of the shop name and, when retracted, should sit flush with the fascia.
- New blinds should be fixed in a way that they do not conceal any key architectural elements of the shopfront.
- New blinds should always be retractable when not required and ideally be of a traditional roller design. Fixed blinds or Dutch blinds are generally not acceptable.
- Blinds should be made of canvas or other non-reflective material. Shiny plastic materials used for fixed Dutch blinds are unlikely to find approval.
- The colour of the new blind should complement the colour scheme of the fascia and shopfront.

Traditional retractive blind. The blind should not be used to increase advertising space.



New blinds should be made of canvas and be fixed in a way that they do not conceal any key architectural features

In respect of the above, the awning would be retractable and made of a matt, woven fabric but it would not meet the other guidance for the following reasons. The proposed awning would extend across the upper portion of the traditional window openings, concealing the hood mould detailing which forms an important architectural feature of the building's façade. The red colour of the awning would appear visually prominent and would not represent a muted tone appropriate for a historic building. This would result in the awning having an unattractive and cluttered appearance. Awnings are a traditional feature of a shopfront but the one proposed here is not sympathetic for the reasons given. While the site it not a shopfront as such, in the traditional sent, the policy is still considered relevant in the high street setting. In addition, the details provided indicate that the mechanical fixing would be fixed into mortar joints where possible. However, the proposal is to install this above the window, into the hood mould, there are no mortar joints in this area, of the string course above the window appears to be made from stone. Drilling fixings into the stonework could result in physical damage to the historic fabric, including cracking or spalling. As such, the drilling of fixings into the stone would impact the historic fabric itself, with potential for greater impacts on the historic fabric.

Under Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The proposal would introduce visually intrusive modern paraphernalia which would detract from the architectural composition of the historic façade and would therefore fail to preserve the special interest of the building.

Conclusion

The proposed awning would represent visually intrusive and unsympathetic alterations which would not be in keeping with the host building and would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the King Street Conservation Area. The proposal would also harm the historic fabric and setting of the Grade II Listed Building. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS), saved Policies TC3 and TC9 (LPFR) and sections 12 & 16 (NPPF).

Recommendation

Refuse

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher	**Team Leader:**	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		**Signed:**	
Dated:	16th March 2026	**Dated:**	16 March 2026