



Planning Statement

St Andrews Gardens, Royal Pier Road, Gravesend, Kent.



On behalf of

Gravesend Borough Council

February 2026

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1. Introduction

Situ8 Ltd have been instructed to act on behalf of Gravesend Borough Council, to write a supporting Planning Policy Statement for the Proposed Hard and Soft Landscaping scheme at St Andrews Gardens, Royal Pier Road, Gravesend, Kent address) (hereinafter referred to as 'the site').

This policy statement which provides some insight into the guidance and policies which support this proposal. It is to be read alongside the Design and Access Statement and accompanying surveys and proposed plans submitted as part of this application.

St Andrews Gardens was a new recreational space created in the 1960s following the demolition of a densely urban area of river frontage. It replaced a myriad of different buildings and uses including housing, two further public houses and a brewery as well as the river-related jetties, wharves and warehouses.

The Gardens lie adjacent to the River Thames and is the home to the Victorian Church premises of St Andrew's Arts Centre and the adjoining Mission House. The area is also the site of a significant statue of Squadron Leader Puji, one of the first Indian Sikh pilots to volunteer with the Royal Air Force during the Second World War.

Opposite the site there is a large housing development under construction. With the relatively recent purchase of the town's pier by Thames Clippers and their plans for an Uber Boat river service between London and Gravesend, St Andrew's Gardens will be the perfect location for arriving visitors.

The gardens are under utilised and this proposal is aimed at regenerating this space making it more accessible and attractive.

2.Planning policy & guidance appraisal

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2024

Para 40 encourages early engagement between public and private sectors to improve outcomes for the community. Through the design process we hope to provide opportunities for sculptural and design input delivered through ongoing community consultation and workshops. This proposal has

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been the subject of a public consultation event held in the Three Doors Pub next door to the site on 5 February 2026 and questionnaires have been available online for the previous 2 weeks and another event held at the Light Festival earlier this year. We intend to keep engagement live throughout the planning and delivery process.

Para 96 encourages safe, inclusive and healthy environments through promoting social interaction and creating strong neighbourhood centres. The intention of this proposal is to create an attractive space that provides flexibility for events, markets, performance and general use, helping to include the gardens successfully into the wider townscape.

Para 131 requires the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable places.

Para 135 expects effective landscaping which are sympathetic to local character and history. We have aimed to achieve this through careful design and use of high-quality materials to ensure a distinctive and strong sense of place. The hard and soft landscaped scheme has been designed to create a place which is more accessible, safe, inclusive and one which will be used by the community for social gathering and community uses adding to the quality of life, community cohesion and resilience. We propose high quality materials to include reclaimed Yorkstone Pavers, Resin Bond surfacing, Corten steel edging to planting terraces and new concrete bench seating to match phase 1. The latter material allows for design interpretations to be embedded through sand blasting or etched detailing.

Para 136 emphasises the important contribution that trees can make to the quality of the urban environment. The site contains a mix of exotic and native trees which have been assessed for their health and protection during landscape works. No trees are to be removed.

Para 187 requires that proposals should seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity. We propose a careful approach to ground works and vegetation removal and as stated in the accompanying Ecology assessment and BNG reports we would be delivering a net biodiversity gain of 15.29% habitat units and 60.83% of hedgerow units, both in excess with of the policy minimum of 10% net gain

Para 207 The Heritage Impact assess has described the significance of this site within in it context which includes The High Street Conservation Area and notable listed buildings and locally listed buildings in the vicinity and the site contains a 2010 statue in commemoration to Mahinder Singh

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Pujji.

Para 214 and 215. The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment states that the proposed scheme complies with paragraph 214 of the NPPF and it certainly does not lead to 'substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset' it also complies with Paragraph 215 in that any harm has been weighed against public benefits securing an optimum viable use which benefits the community.

2.2 Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014:

CS01 – Sustainable Development

CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development – this proposal harnesses the opportunity to revitalise an under utilised public realm area.

CS05 – Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area – pedestrian access through and around the site is improved by this proposal and sits well alongside the aspirations of the Council to encourage use and also serve as an attractive public realm not only for the community but arriving visitors off the pier.

CS12 – Green Infrastructure – the purpose of this policy is to enhance the network of green spaces and links between them and enhance the biodiversity where possible. This proposal has increased Biodiversity net gain in excess of the policy minimum and it improves accessibility into and around the site. The existing steep steps have been relocated to remove an unusable space and decrease the chances of antisocial behaviour. This is only a very minor amendment to route of The National Trail.

Levels around the amphitheatre seating have been raised to accommodate tiered seating and some existing grassed areas have been replaced by additional hardstanding in front of the seating. This will create a flexible space for pop-ups, performances and events.

CS18 – Climate Change – Flood risk assessment has been carried out, and full details are contained within the MBA Consulting Report Ref 25304. The site is within Flood Zone 3 associated with tidal flooding from the Thames. The report concludes that the site is protected by the existing tidal flood defence and the proposals represent a net betterment in flood risk terms by improving accessibility and flood compatible public use of a defended riverside space without increasing risk to people, property or flood defence infrastructure.

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CS19 – Design and Development Principle – we have demonstrated that the design and layout of the proposal enhances the character of the area, retaining many of trees and integrating hard landscaping which improves access and functionality of the public space.

CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment - the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment provides more detail of the historic setting and the potential impacts of the proposal. The report concludes that any harm caused is far outweighed by the substantial public benefits.

2.3 Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994

T1 – Impact of Development on the Highway Network – we are comfortable that this proposal will be an improvement to the pedestrian network and brings with it additional safety and crime prevention measures.

TC2 – Policy for Listed Buildings – The accompanying Heritage impact Assessment concludes that any potential harm is outweighed by public benefits.

TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas - High Street Conservation Area will be enhanced by these proposals as they make a positive contribution to the area.

TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites – we are liaising with the Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Team who are arranging a dig on site as part of the social value and community works.

3. Conclusion

We trust you have all the necessary plans, surveys and reports accompanying this Planning Statement to make an informed decision about this proposal. We have demonstrated that the proposal is policy compliant and the Planning Authority should have all they ned to make a positive decision which will allow the delivery of this much needed facility.