

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250519

Location: 16 Old Road West Gravesend Kent DA11 0LJ

Description: Formation of a vehicle crossover and creation of associated hard standing.

Applicant: Mr John Fahey

Site Visit Date: 22nd August 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form
- Planning Statement
- Drawing No: 01 (Site Location Map)
- Drawing No: 02 (Existing Block Plan)
- Drawing No: 03 (Existing Site Plan and Elevations/Sections)
- Drawing No: 04 REV A (Proposed Block Plan)
- Drawing No: 05 REV A (Proposed Site Plan and Elevations/Sections)

Superseded

- ~~Drawing No: 05 (Proposed Site Plan and Elevations/Sections)~~
- ~~Drawing No: 04 (Proposed Block Plan)~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Address	Description	Outcome	Decision Date
1984/00018/REF	12, 14 and 16 Old Road West	Formation of joint vehicular access and use of the front gardens for car parking	Dismissed	23.07.1985
19840698	12, 14 and 16 Old Road West	Formation of joint vehicular access and use of the front gardens for car parking	Refused	16.08.1984
1981/00006/REF	14 and 16 Old Road West	Formation of a joint vehicular access	Dismissed	26.10.1981
19810272	14 and 16 Old Road West	Formation of a joint vehicular access	Refused	18.05.1981

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

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

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

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) sets out those 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 The review 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 a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) general conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- SPD4 - Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- SPG 2 – Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020

Other Relevant Guidance

- Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025)
- Kent County Council's Parking Standards (January 2025)
- Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)
- Gravesham Front Driveway Design Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Local Ward Councillors

No comments received.

KCC - Highways & Transportation (25.07.2025)

Thank you for your further consultation in relation to the above planning application and for providing the revised plans, in response to my comments. I am satisfied that the additional information submitted addresses the concerns raised in my previous response.

Consequently, I can confirm that provided the following requirements are secured by condition or planning obligation, then I would raise no objection on behalf of the local highway authority:-

- *Provision and permanent retention of the vehicle parking space shown on the submitted plans prior to the use of the site commencing.*
- *Use of a bound surface for the first 5 metres of the access from the edge of the highway.*
- *Provision of measures to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the highway.*
- *Provision and maintenance of 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility splays behind the footway on both sides of the access with no obstructions over 0.6m above footway level, prior to the use of the site commencing.*

Planning permission does not convey any approval for construction of the required vehicular crossing, or any other works within the highway for which a statutory licence must be obtained. Applicants should contact Kent County Council - Highways and Transportation (web: www.kent.gov.uk/roads_and_transport.aspx or telephone: 03000 418181) in order to obtain the necessary application pack.

It is important to note that Local Planning Authority (LPA) permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Any changes to or affecting the public highway in Kent require the formal agreement of the Highway Authority, Kent County Council (KCC), and it should not be assumed that this will be a given because LPA planning permission has been granted. For this reason, anyone considering works which may affect the

public highway, including any highway-owned street furniture or landscape assets such as grass, shrubs and trees, is advised to engage with KCC Highways and Transportation at an early stage in the design process.

Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens and near the highway that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the public highway.

Some of this highway land is owned by Kent County Council whilst some is owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have 'highway rights' over the topsoil.

Works on private land may also affect the public highway. These include works to cellars, to retaining walls which support the highway or land above the highway, and to balconies, signs or other structures which project over the highway. Such works also require the approval of the Highway Authority.

Kent County Council has now introduced a pre-application advice service in addition to a full formal technical approval process for new or altered highway assets, with the aim of improving future maintainability. Further details are available on our website below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>.

This process applies to all development works affecting the public highway other than applications for vehicle crossings, which are covered by a separate approval process. Further details on this are available on our website below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/apply-for-a-dropped-kerb/dropped-kerb-contractor-information>

Once planning approval for any development has been granted by the LPA, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that before development commences, all necessary highway approvals and consents have been obtained, and that the limits of the highway boundary have been clearly established, since failure to do so may result in enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority.

The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under the relevant legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Further guidance for applicants, including information about how to clarify the highway boundary and links to application forms for vehicular crossings and other highway matters, may be found on Kent County Council's website:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>.

Alternatively, KCC Highways and Transportation may be contacted by telephone: 03000 418181.

KCC Highways (received 03.07.2025) – Updated as set out above

Thank you for your consultation in relation to the above planning application. I have the following comments to make with respect to highway matters :-

The application proposes the creation of a vehicle access from Old West Road which is a classified 'B' road.

One parking space is proposed and the dimensions of the block paved parking space, as

shown on the submitted plans, are acceptable.

Pedestrian visibility splays of 2m x 2m are required on either side of the access. Whilst pedestrian splays have been shown on the proposed plans, these have been drawn incorrectly and a revised plan should be submitted. Pedestrian splays should be drawn behind the footway on both sides of the access, with no obstructions over 0.6m above footway level, within the splays. To ensure that the required pedestrian visibility can be achieved, any walls/vegetation either side of the access must be under 0.6m high.

The applicant should be advised that should a full planning application be approved, they will still need to apply to the Vehicle Crossing Team at KCC, to gain the relevant permissions to install the approved crossover.

I look forward to the additional information being provided, to assist me in determining this application from a highway perspective.

KCC Biodiversity Officer

We reviewed this application for formation of vehicular access and provision of one parking space in front garden and have provided the following comments below.

PROTECTED SPECIES

The application is for the removal of an ornamental lawn and hedge to provide parking and there are limited opportunities for protected species presence, other than breeding birds that may be using the hedge and shrubs during breeding season. We do not require any ecological surveys.

If planning permission is approved, we recommend a precautionary method statement is in place for clearance and construction to provide measures to protect breeding birds and the retained Laurustinus tree. A condition wording is provided below.

Suggested condition wording:

From commencement of works (including site clearance), to avoid impacts to protected and priority species, and retained trees and hedgerow, the following precautionary mitigation should be implemented:

- 1. Any hedgerow and trees to be retained, including its roots, will be protected from damage;*
- 2. Any work to vegetation that may provide suitable bird nesting habitats should be carried out outside of the bird breeding season (1st March to 31st August inclusive) to avoid destroying or damaging bird nests in use or being built. If within the breeding bird season a survey by a suitably qualified person needs to be conducted to confirm absence, prior to commencing works.*
- 3. If at any time a protected species is discovered within the works area all works must stop while a suitably qualified ecologist and/or Natural England are consulted. Works will not resume until any required surveys and/or mitigation are complete*

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Under the Environment Act 2021 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), all planning applications¹ for development (unless exempt^{2,3}), must deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), shown via use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric prior to commencement of any development.

We consider this application exempt from statutory BNG because it is a householder application as defined within article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

The front garden vegetation within the front of the dwelling, approximately 20m² will be lost for the placement of the block paved drive. This will include the loss of lawn, approximately a 5m length of ornamental hedgerow to the roadside and other planting. A 'Laurustinus' tree present is of value to pollinators and is to be retained. This is too small an area to use within the BNG statutory metric tools to quantify the net loss for the LPA.

We highlight to the LPA that the planning statement has referred to small areas of garden loss and previous appeals.

The proposed plans show that a section of 1.8m high hedge and a small linear area of proposed planting is proposed. Benefits from new planting will be somewhat limited and we anticipate a minor loss will occur.

Gravesham Borough Council need to consider this application under Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure – Policy seeks to create, protect, enhance and maintain a multifunctional network of green spaces, footpaths, cycle routes and wildlife stepping stones and corridors within the Borough. As well as protecting the overall landscape character of the Borough and sites designated for their biodiversity value and ensuring no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough.

We consider the biodiversity value of the application site is currently limited but suggest that Gravesham consider this application with the cumulative effect of loss of front gardens within this area

To reduce the loss, we consider that the block driveway could be replaced with a 'grasscrete' type system which would retain some vegetation and could be planted with low growing pollinator friendly species. The border and hedge planting should be of pollinator friendly species. Information is here <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/research/plants-for-pollinators> .

ENHANCEMENTS

Under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and paragraphs 187 and 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, biodiversity should be maintained and enhanced through the planning system. Enhancement refers to providing net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for BNG, avoidance, mitigation and compensation.

The proposed border and 1.8m high hedge are proposed to the west of the new driveway. We consider that this border and hedge should have planting with plants that have a benefit to pollinators to compensate for the loss from the removal of other plants. We recommend a planting plan is submitted for this enhancement and consideration if the inclusion of insect homes can be achieved in this space. A recommended condition wording is below.

Within three months of works commencing a plan detailing how the development will enhance biodiversity will be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This will include a pollinator friendly planting plan and other measures where possible. The approved measures will be implemented and retained thereafter.

If you have any queries regarding our comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Neighbouring properties

The application was advertised by way of letters to three surrounding properties. The consultation period expired on 01.09.2025 and no comments were received.

Analysis

Proposal

The proposal seeks the formation of a vehicle crossover and creation of associated hard standing onto a

classified road. The proposal would require a significant engineering operation to facilitate the cross over due to the property frontage being above the highway level.

Background

The application site has had two previous refusals for driveways of which both were refused and dismissed at appeal. These were both joint applications with the neighbouring properties known as No's 12 and 14 Old Road West. The refusals and appeals were as follows:

Application reference 19810272 for a joint cross over between 14 and 16 Old Road West was refused on 18.05.1981 due to:

The proposal would result in additional hazards to road safety.

Application reference 19810272 was appealed (Reference /APP5277/A/81/09149/09 See Appendix 1) and dismissed on 26.10.1981. The appeal was dismissed due to:

- 1. The parking proposed would result in danger to pedestrians or vehicles and obstruct the free flow of traffic due to Insufficient turning on site which would not allow for vehicles to enter/exit the site in a forward gear.*
- 2. The inspector also made note of reduced visibility as a result of the high walls either side of the driveways which would mean it would be impossible for the emerging driver to see pedestrians on the footpath and vehicles on the carriageway.*

The inspector also referred to a previously allowed appeal at No's 15 and 38 Old Road West. He noted that at the time of these appeals being upheld traffic flows were lighter and at the time of his visit on 7th October 1981 the road was carrying a heavy flow of traffic.

Application reference 19840698 for a joint vehicle cross over between 12, 14 and 16 Old Road West was refused on 16.08.1984 due to:

- (i) In the interests of traffic safety and ensuring the free flow of traffic along classified highways, it is necessary to keep the number of access points to a minimum. The proposed access arrangements do not ensure that vehicles would enter and leave the site in a forward direction only and it is considered that the proposal would be seriously detrimental both to road safety and to the free flow of traffic along the main road network of the town.
- (ii) The formation of a wide parking area in this prominent area would be detrimental to visual amenity.

Application reference 19840698 was subsequently appealed and dismissed (Reference T/APP/K2230/A/84/24730/P7 See Appendix 2) on 23.07.1985. The appeal was dismissed due to:

- 1. Reduced visibility due to the neighbouring properties' boundary walls resulting in danger to vehicles and pedestrians.*
- 2. The potential for vehicles not entering/exiting the joint parallel driveway in a forward gear thus resulting in danger to pedestrians and other road users.*
- 3. Impact on the character and appearance of Old Road West as a result of excavation works, demolition of walls and loss of attractive plants.*

Character and Appearance

Paragraph 135(a) of the NPPF (2024) seeks to ensure that development will add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This policy is expanded upon by the Borough's Design Code, Design for Gravesham.

The Design for Gravesham Guide States that *"Accesses to parking should also be of safe design, incorporating adequate sight line visibility to avoid vehicular/pedestrian and other potential conflicts"*

Gravesham SPD4 – Householder Alterations and Extensions Guidance 2021 states that *"Boundary treatments visible from the street should be consistent with the height of other enclosures on the road"*. It also goes on to say:

- *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. 1 metre should be the minimum space between or around car parking spaces.*
- *Front garden parking must be designed to avoid cars overhanging the pavement. Car parking spaces a minimum of 2.5m wide (2.7m where spaces adjoin an enclosed boundary) and 5m deep should be provided.*
- *Should not include gates. Where gates already exist, they must not open outwards and should allow enough space for them to be opened inwardly (if relevant) whilst a car is parked.*
- *Gates should enable a pedestrian on the footway to have clear visibility of any vehicle exiting (i.e. they should be railings or have some form of transparency) and should not be of a height that blocks visibility of passing pedestrians and should enable visibility from the footway.*
- *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, as per the requirements of Permitted Development.*
- *There should be no water run-off from the forecourt onto the public highway.*
- *Where loose surfacing is proposed, a minimum of 1m depth of non-loose hardstanding should be provided at the front edge of the driveway with the public highway*
- *Repair or restore any original decorative tiled paths that are a characteristic or historic feature of the existing dwelling.*
- *Pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays should be provided.*

Gravesham's Front Driveway Design Guidance provides the below examples for acceptable frontages:



Avoid removing existing trees and shrubs and paving over a significant amount of the forecourt.



Boundary treatment responding to the style of the dwelling with planting to enhance biodiversity and increase wildlife habitat.



Consider the original garden layout and maintain a sense of place.

The below examples are considered unacceptable and contrary to guidance:



The guidance continues to say:

“Your property can have a significant visual impact and should be designed to take account of any dominant form of boundary treatment in your street, taking into consideration materials and detailing.

Boundaries define the relationship between your dwelling and the street and include garden walls, fences, and hedges. Existing boundary treatments and garden walls should be retained where they allow sufficient visibility splays to avoid open planned front gardens. A strong front boundary treatment should be incorporated into proposals, particularly where this is characteristic of the street. Where hedges and trees are an important feature, these should be kept maintaining the character of the street and sustaining biodiversity.”

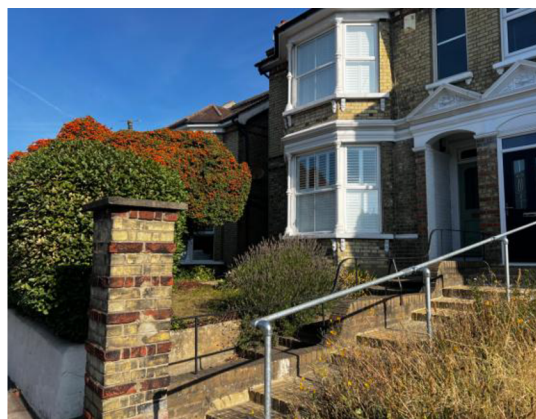
The proposal will be assessed in accordance with the above local and national planning policies to ascertain whether it complies.

The application site is a Victorian two storey semi-detached house located along the north side of Old Road West. This stretch of the north side of Old Road West comprises seven pairs of semi-detached houses, while on the south side of the road there is more of a mixture of detached and semi-detached properties.



No 16 alongside its counterpart is positioned well above the level of the public footway and vehicular carriageway of Old Road West, with a retaining wall along the back edge of the pavement from which the land in front of the house slopes gently upward. The wall is flanked by attractive brick pillars and broken by a pedestrian access point. A high frontage hedge extends above it which softens and contributes positively to a road which is otherwise accommodating large volumes of traffic which in turn results in an impact to the air quality of an area. The high hedges provide screening for the property whilst softening the streetscape and complements the existing and surrounding properties.

The front doors of the houses on the north side are above the level of the highway and are approached either by sloping pathways or steps. The frontages on this side of the highway largely retain their front garden areas which comprise soft landscaping set behind retaining walls, these contribute positively to the streetscene.



It should be acknowledged that having parking to the property frontage provides occupants with a number of benefits for modern day lifestyles, however it is important to ensure that the parking would comply with

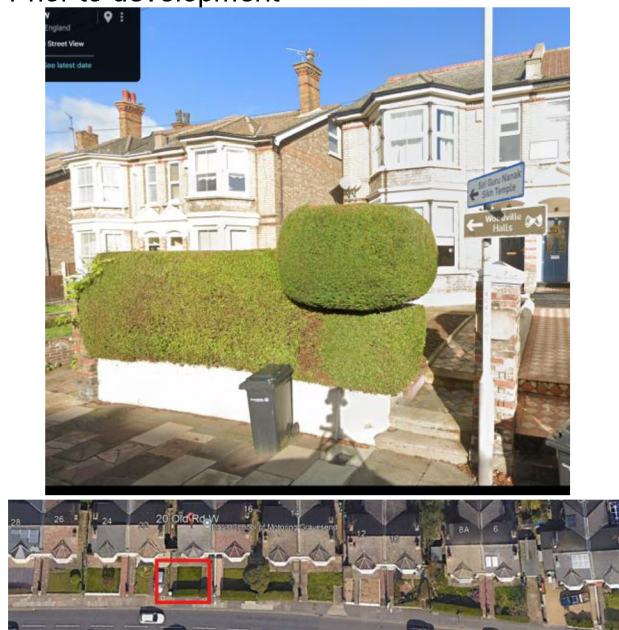
the Council's adopted policies to so ensure that there is no harm to the character of an area and that the proposal would not result in danger to road users and pedestrians.

The proposed use of materials is appropriate and will utilise permeable paving to minimise rainwater run-off and the Parking will meet the minimum requirements for a single parking bay. The proposal will also retain a Laurustinus tree which is a positive aspect to this proposal.

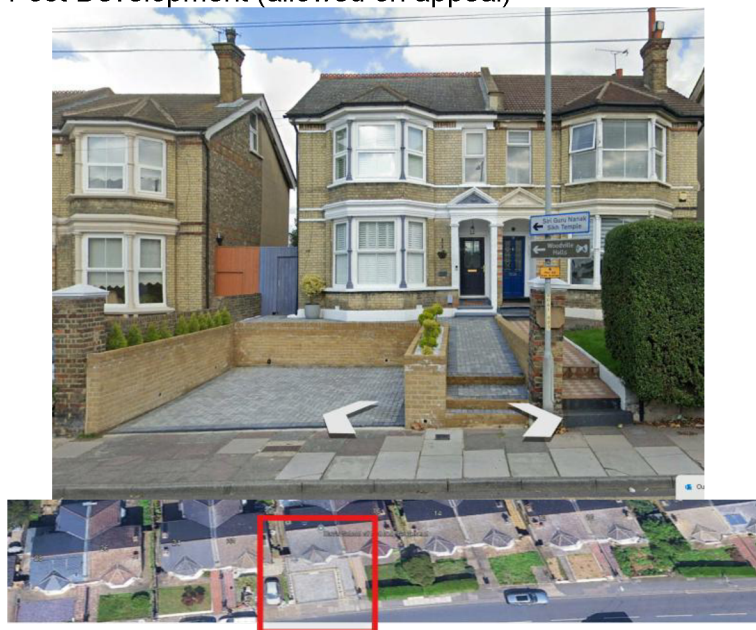
It is important to note there is an example of a recent hardstanding which was allowed at appeal (See Appeal Reference APP/K2230/D/24/3349193 Appendix 3), from the below image it is evident that this frontage has resulted in urbanisation of the street form and detracts from the character of this group of properties.

The below images show the site prior to development vs post development:

Prior to development



Post Development (allowed on appeal)



Below images taken during an officer site visit.



In the above appeal report in paragraph 5 the inspector states that the “*Loss of the previous brick wall, hedge and lawn are **regrettable***” but their reasoning for permitting in design terms was related to the fact that there are other types of similar development nearby.

It is evident from seeing the finished development at 20 Old Road West that such frontages have a significant impact on the streetscene by way of introducing a vast expanse of unbroken and hard materials that will remain in place for the foreseeable future. The choice of materials do not complement the

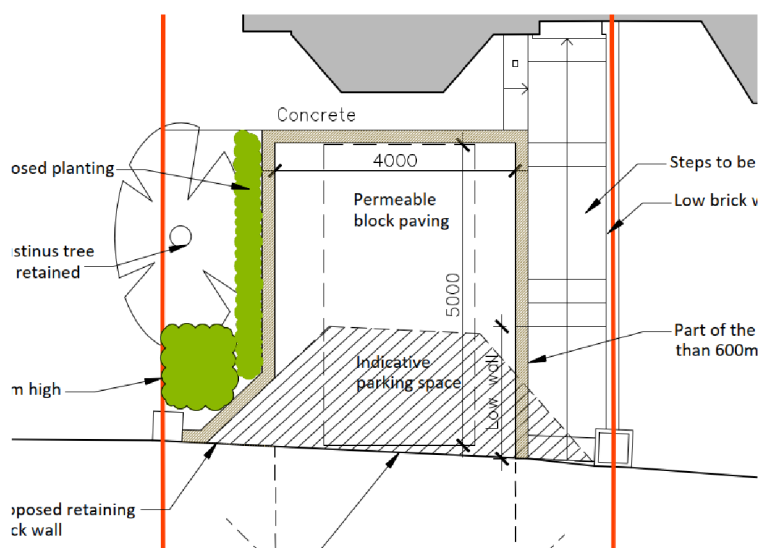
traditional yellow brick finish of the main and surrounding dwellings which are characteristic of Old Road West. The previous green frontage maintained the existing character alongside the original tiled path which lead to the front door, this was a strong feature of Old Road West and its loss has damaged the visual amenity. The current drive also introduces a tokenistic level of soft landscaping which is a far cry from the vast green hedges that previously adorned the frontage.

The proposal would create an access by way of a significant engineering operation which will see the removal of the entire grassed area and the creation of an access with a width of 4.0m and 5.0m depth. The existing brick piers which are positive features of the frontage would be retained. A new retaining wall would be built to the rear of this parking area which would be situated 0.6m from the bay. Little would remain of the front garden and the relatively consistent soft landscaping to the property frontages in this the row of properties would be lost.

Below is an extract from the Driveway Design Guidance which states:

- *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.*

KCC Parking standards state that a parking space for one vehicle should measure 5.0m deep with a width of 2.5m however the width of end spaces abutting an enclosed boundary should be increased to 2.7m. **In this instance the space will be 4.0m wide and 5.0m deep which is significantly above the standards and will result in unnecessary paving over additional frontage.**



It is important to make note of the below appeals at the application site and surrounding properties in relation to the impact of the loss of frontage and their impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene:

In appeal reference APP/K2230/A/84/24730/P7 (See Appendix 2) at No's 12, 14 and 16 Old Road West the appeal inspector made note of the harmful affect as a result of excavation, demolition and loss of plants on the appearance of the area.

8. To the north of Old Road West there is a slope and the gardens and houses are much higher than the road. There would therefore have to be a great deal of excavation, demolition of walls, loss of attractive plants, construction of new retaining walls, steps and access ramp and surfacing of the new 68 ft wide car parking area. No details of the materials to be used are shown and, bearing in mind that the areas in front of 3 houses would be altered out of all recognition, I believe the proposals would be likely to have a very bad effect on the appearance of this part of Old Road West.

A further appeal under reference APP/K2230/A/09/2115782 (See Appendix 4) at No's 12 and 14 Old Road West an appeal inspector once again referred to the positive features provided by the frontages and on this occasion spoke of the harmful effects of other properties replicating such works on the character of the area.

Paragraph 7:

"I consider that the walled and landscaped areas to the front of the properties on the north side of Old Road West provide a distinctive feature of the street scene of this part of the road. Given the pressure on parking space within the immediate area, if the approach proposed in the appeal application were to be allowed, it could lead to pressure for it to be followed at an uncertain number of the other properties on the north side of the road. The impact of the change at the appeal properties alone, even if there were no attempt to replicate it elsewhere on the north side of the road, would be much greater to my mind than the change which has taken place at the properties on the south side because of the need to excavate the gardens on the north in order to provide a level parking area without an unacceptable upward gradient from the road."

A further dismissed appeal at No. 12 Old Road West under reference APP/K2230/D/11/2144419 (See Appendix 5) saw the appeal inspector comment on the impact of the loss of a frontage, in this instance relating to an application which only involved one property.

"The relative continuity of this type of frontage treatment contributes significantly to a pleasing sense of enclosure and thus the attractiveness of the local townscape"

There are a number of appeals which uphold the Council's concern relating to a loss of frontages and subsequent impacts on the character of the area. The isolated decision in which an inspector has allowed an appeal also notes that the loss of frontage is "**regrettable**" which implies that this loss is not a positive alteration, this permission has now resulted in a wave of new applications for similar development which if permitted would have a cumulative impact on the area that will reduce large sections of soft landscaping something which has been supported in comments received by the KCC Biodiversity Officer.

The introduction of hardstanding, loss of soft landscaping and subsequent alterations of the land levels in front of the application site would detract from the character and amenity of the wider street scene. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS12 and CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, Design for Gravesham (2024), Householder extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) supplementary Planning Document, GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023 and Para 135 (a) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 Achieving Well-Designed Places.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposal would not result in any harm to the amenity of future occupiers of the property. As such in respect of amenity of future occupiers the proposal is considered to comply with SPG2 and Policy CS19 of the Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

Neighbouring Amenity

The proposal would not result in any harm to the amenity of occupiers of surrounding properties. There would be no loss of sunlight, overlooking, overbearing or loss of outlook as a result of the proposal. As such in respect of amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

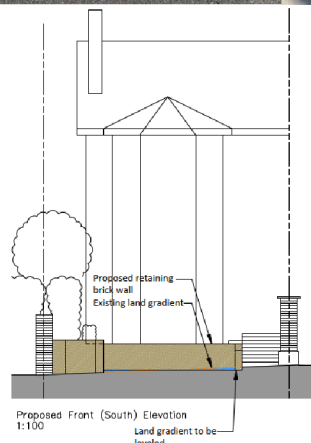
Therefore, in terms of neighbouring amenity, the proposal would accords with the objectives of Policy CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135f of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

Parking and Highways

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024) indicates that development relating to highway matters should only be prevented or refused if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Policy CS11 (Transport) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out that new developments should mitigate their impact on the highway. Saved Policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994 indicates that the formation of new accesses to classified roads will not normally be permitted except where no danger would arise.

The application site currently has two brick pillars to the front, the one the eastern boundary is slightly higher due to the road sloping up towards the east. These pillar will be retained post development which may impede visibility when exiting the driveway.



The proposed cross over is located close to a set of traffic lights on a cross road junction. Old Road West is a 'B' Classified Highway, which is busy with through traffic, including buses and large HGV's. The road can

be particularly busier at peak travel periods, this was noted in Appeal Reference APP/5277/A/81/09149/09 (See Appendix 1) whereby the inspector stated:

or vehicles, or to obstruct the free flow of traffic.

3. Old Road West, the B261, is classified as a District Distributor. It was carrying a heavy flow of traffic at the time of my site visit in the middle of the afternoon, much of it apparently moving it well up to the permitted 30 mph. It is likely to be heavier at other times of the day, and I accept the council's evidence that the volume of traffic at peak hours is approaching the road's capacity. Continuous yellow lines on both sides of the road prohibit parking between 0700 and 1900 hrs.

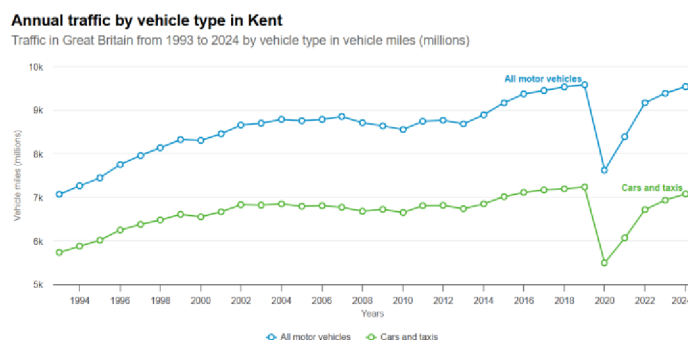
The inspector also noted that:

your proposed scheme.

9. You quoted earlier appeal decisions in favour of allowing parking in what you regard as comparable situations, but there are differences. In the case of No. 15, the Inspector considered the visibility adequate, and the appeal at No. 38 was decided some 6 years ago when traffic flows were lighter than they are today.

The inspector noted that some 40 years ago at the time of the appeal that Old Road West was "carrying a heavy flow of traffic" of which "much of it was moving well up to the permitted 30mph". The inspector also noted in paragraph 9 of this appeal that traffic levels 6 years prior to his appeal in 1981 the traffic flows were much lighter.

The below graph shows annual traffic levels between 1994-2024. The graph clearly shows that there has been a steady increase in traffic over time, except during the covid pandemic where there was a sharp drop off, however since the pandemic traffic volumes have rebounded and continue to steadily increase¹.



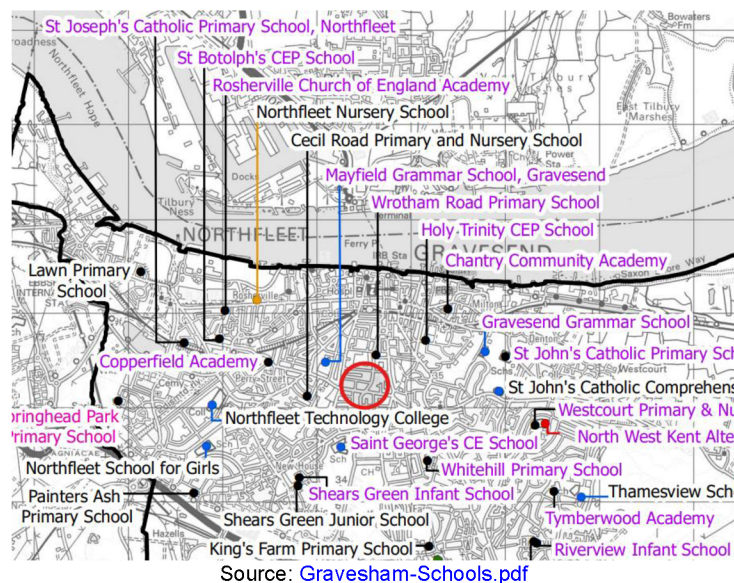
From the above information we can appreciate that Old Road West is a very busy Classified Highway which requires the free flow of traffic. The vehicles parked on the property frontage are most likely to be used during peak traffic hours which would hinder the free flow of traffic as a result of movements on and off the site. Given that there is no onsite turning available the vehicle would either enter or exit the drive in a reverse gear which is particularly dangerous to other road users and pedestrians. The below google image shows how most vehicles enter the drive in a forward gear and due to the lack of onsite turning will have to reverse onto the highway into oncoming traffic.

¹ [Road traffic statistics - Local authority: Kent](#)

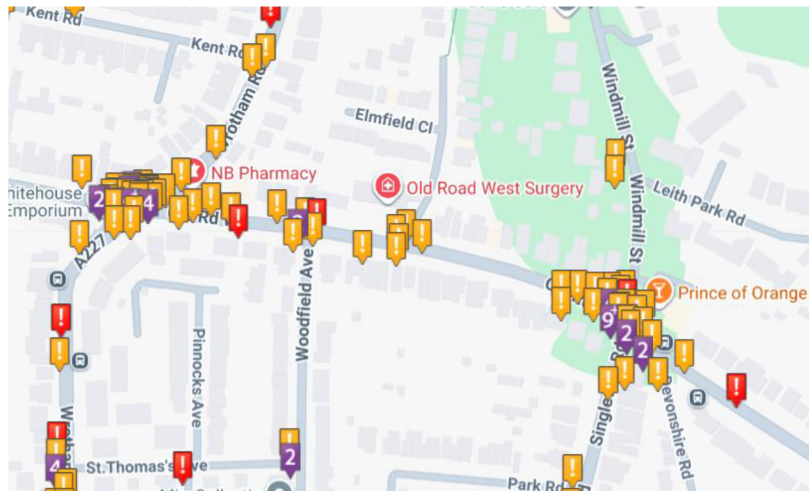


Old Road West is also located close to several local schools and therefore there are large numbers of students can be observed on foot. Given the high piers which are characteristic of the houses on the northern side of Old Road West there will also be an element of reduced visibility, especially if the vehicle is having to reverse onto the highway, this poses a significant danger to the safety of pedestrians.

The below image indicates the approximate area of the application site and its proximity to nearby schools.



With regards to accidents in the vicinity, crash data map below shows a significant volume of road traffic collisions on this B Classified highway, in close proximity to the property. This data raises concerns in relation to highway safety, and the addition of an unsafe access which would result in further accidents, adding to the delays on this B classified road.



Source: [CrashMap](#)

The below local news article highlights that accidents on this section of Old Road West are not isolated incidents and are still occurring in more recent times (See Appendix 6).

Old Road East, Gravesend, partially blocked following crash outside The Prince of Orange pub

Alex Langridge alangridge@thekmggroup.co.uk
Published: 19:19, 03 August 2025 | Updated: 10:29, 04 August 2025



A car has crashed into a roadside barrier outside a pub.

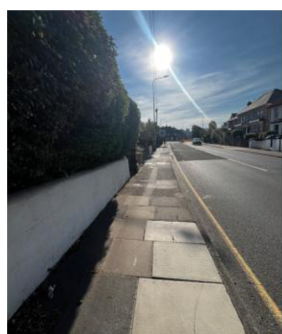
Old Road East, in Gravesend, was partially blocked near its junction with Old Road West, Singlewell Road and Windmill Street.



Police officers and paramedics have been called. Picture: Chloe Morris

Police officers and paramedics were called to the scene outside The Prince of Orange pub at 6.16pm Sunday.

During an officer site visit on 22.08.2025 at 09:00am it was observed that Old Road West was carrying a fair volume of traffic and pedestrians. It was noted that visibility towards the east was impacted by direct sunlight.



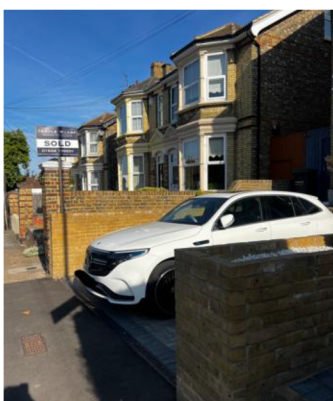
The peak volume of traffic had subsided as most journeys are carried out before 9am which is the average office "core hours". Despite this Old Road West was still busy, however what was absent was the school children who would usually be frequenting this road as part of their school journey. However there were still a fair number of pedestrians observed during the short site visit as can be seen in the image below.



During the officer visit a vehicle exiting a drive on the southern side of Old Road West was observed, despite this vehicle leaving in a forward gear it still resulted in traffic being stopped up. This was particularly dangerous as the property was in close proximity to the traffic light junction where vehicles can be expected to pick up speed when turning into Old Road West from Singlewell Road.



The below image is a driveway permitted at 20 Old Road West, from this image it is evident that the enclosed boundary walls mean that visibility for the driver is poor, especially to the west, furthermore if the resident changes their vehicle to a standard car which will be lower in height then visibility will be further impacted.



The proposed vehicular access and front garden hardstanding would pose a significant highway hazard on highway and pedestrian safety due to vehicles reversing into the busy highway. Movements on and off of the driveway would also impact the free flow of traffic on this busy road which is a district distributor route. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS11 (Transport) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, September 2014, saved Policy T5 (New Accesses onto Highway Network) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 and Design for Gravesham (2024).

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposal is recommended for refusal owing to the below grounds:

1. The introduction of hardstanding, loss of soft landscaping and subsequent alterations of the land levels in front of the application site would detract from the character and amenity of the wider street scene. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS12 and CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, Design for Gravesham (2024), Householder extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) supplementary Planning Document, GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023 and Para 135 (a) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 Achieving Well-Designed Places.
2. The proposed vehicular access and front garden hardstanding would pose a significant highway hazard on highway and pedestrian safety and the free flow of traffic on this busy road and which is a district distributor route. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS11 (Transport) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, September 2014, saved Policy T5 (New Accesses onto Highway Network) of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994, Design for Gravesham (2024) and Householder Extensions/ Alterations Design Guide (2021) supplementary Planning Documents.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Sharon Sahota	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	05.09.2025	Dated:	5 th September 2025