

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250234

Location: 1 Nansen Road, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5DA

Description: Retrospective retaining wall and area of hardstanding; proposed dropped kerb to allow vehicle access.

Applicant: Ms Laimute Carkiniene

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application form
Supporting Statement
Drawing no. 02-01 rev P2 (proposed block plan)
Drawing no. 02-01 (existing plans, location, block plan and section)

Relevant Planning History

20231261	Retrospective retaining wall and area of hardstanding; proposed dropped kerb to allow vehicle access.	Refused	25.01.2024
20230334	Retrospective retaining wall and area of hardstanding, and proposed dropped kerb to allow vehicle access.	Refused	18.07.2023

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (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 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 4 – Decision-making
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

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);
- Design for Gravesham: Design Code (2024);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Neighbouring properties

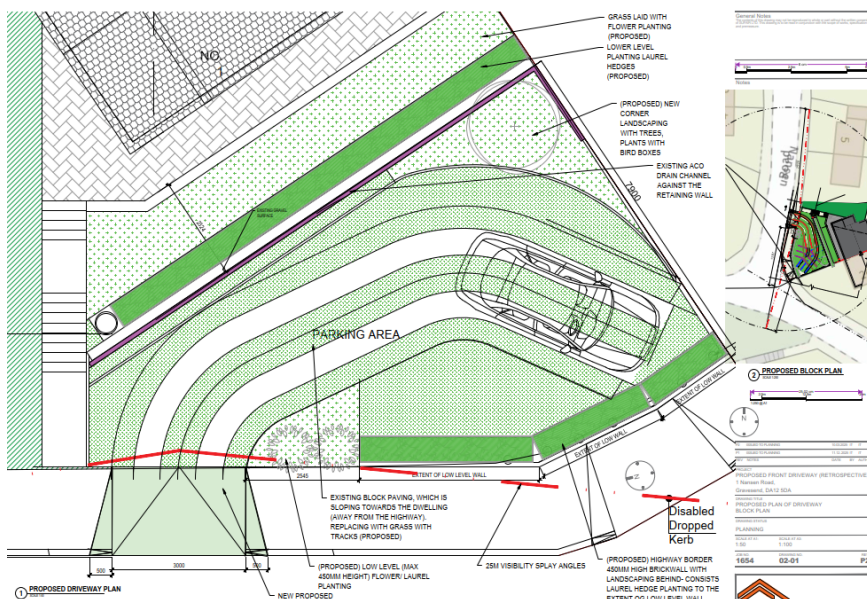
The application has been advertised by individual letters to five properties and the overall consultation period expired on 10 April 2025. One letter of support was received.

Officer's Analysis

Proposal

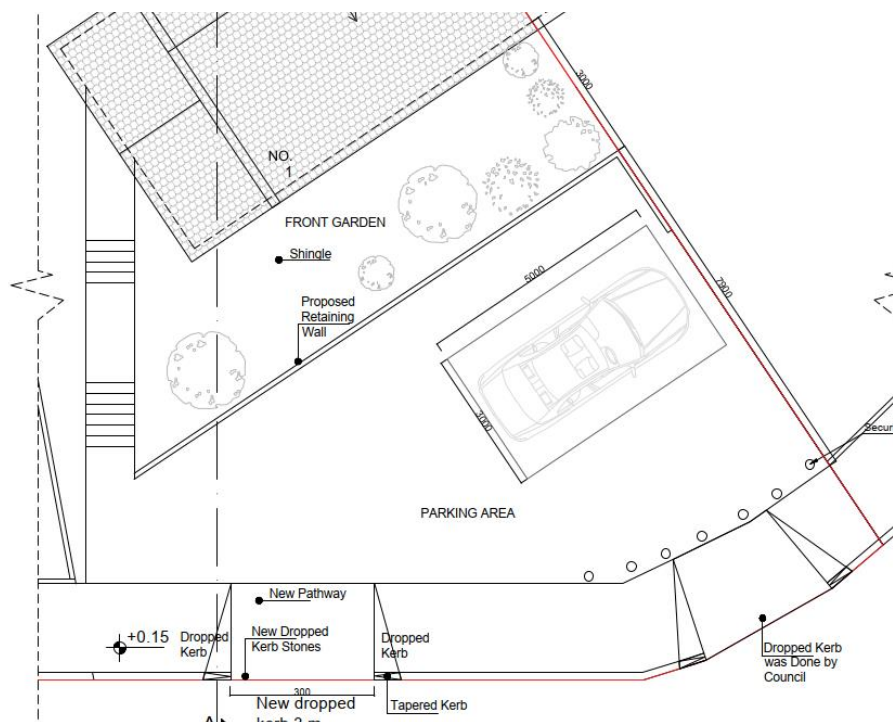
This application seeks retrospective planning permission for a retaining wall and area of hardstanding and proposed dropped kerb to allow vehicle access.

The proposed plan is shown below:



Background

A planning application was initially submitted under reference 20230334 to seek retrospective permission for the below;

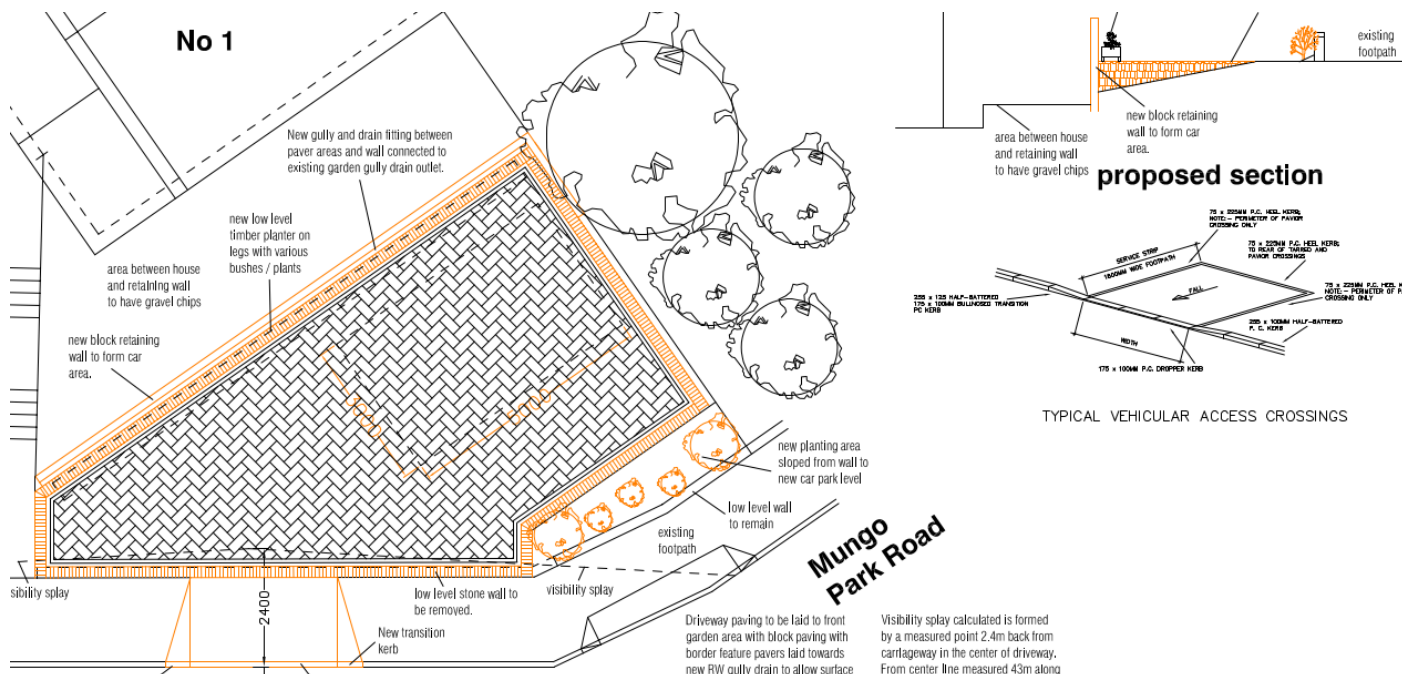


This was refused for the following reasons:

1. The existing works to the front garden result in a hardening of the streetscene, detrimental to the visual amenity of the application property, streetscene and character of the area as a whole. The development is therefore contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).
2. The existing works have resulted in the removal of a substantial amount of soft landscaping to the

frontage and therefore has resulted in a loss of biodiversity. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2001).

A following up planning application was submitted under reference 20231261 for the below:



This was refused for the following reasons:

1 By virtue of the design, character and appearance, the proposed works to the front garden would result in a hardening of the streetscene, detrimental to the visual amenity of the application property, streetscene and character of the area as a whole. The development is therefore contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principals) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023).

2. The proposed soft landscaping is not considered to sufficiently mitigate the extent of biodiversity which has been previously removed. As such, the proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023).

Design, Character and Appearance

1 Nansen Road is a two storey semi-detached property located on the eastern side of the Highway. The property has been block paved to the frontage to create off road parking as shown below:



There is vehicular access and a garage to the rear:



The application proposes the retention of a retaining wall and area of hardstanding to the front and proposed dropped kerb to allow vehicle access. The dropped kerb is now shown in a different position to the previous two applications and results in a longer curved drive that could accommodate two cars. In order to attempt to overcome previous concerns the plans now show an area of grass and planting directly in front of the dwelling in place of the existing gravel, landscaping to the corner with trees, plants and bird boxes and the replacement of the existing block paving with grass and tracks. There is also shown a planted area adjacent to the driveway access and a low-level wall along the boundary with a laurel hedge behind.

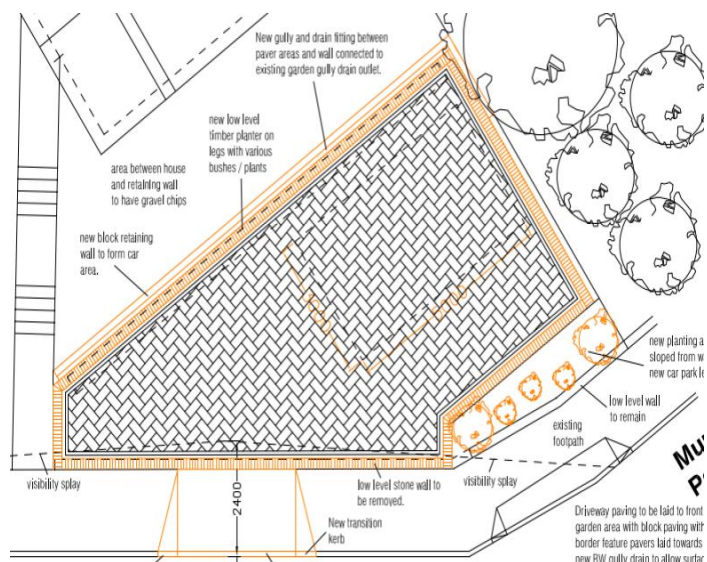
Prior to the existing works the frontage benefitted from a low-level boundary wall, mature hedging/trees and landscaping with a front garden laid to lawn. This had a positive contribution to the visual amenity to the street scene and surrounding area:



The initial removal of the soft landscaping and the laying of hardstanding has resulted in a hardening of the street scene which generally benefits from pockets of soft landscaping in the form of boundary hedging and laid to lawn front gardens.

The proposed application looks to soften the appearance of the existing frontage by way of replacing the existing bollards with a low level wall and planting. The proposed planting has been increased since the previously refused application where the levels of planting were considered insufficient.

Previously a planter with legs, shown below, was also proposed but not deemed to be a permanent feature in terms of soft landscaping.



The currently proposed plans show more planting than previous applications. The low level wall is in keeping with the surrounding street scene and replaces that which was removed. A hedge behind this wall, once matured, would reinstate a feature of this site which complemented the site and surrounding street scene.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed soft landscaping has been increased since the last refusal, the extent of hardstanding, albeit shown as a form of grass with tracks, remains extensive. The position of the

proposed crossover results in a longer, convoluted drive that could accommodate two cars. The visual impact of two cars directly in front of the dwelling at an elevated position will be out of character with the area. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a driveway at the neighbouring property (26 Mungo Park Road), this does not have the benefit of planning permission but also does not involve the removal of the entire front garden. There is another driveway at number 22 Mungo Park Road which also does not have planning permission but is no longer enforceable as it has been there since 2017. The Council Front Driveway Guidance states that:

'Individually paving over a front garden may not make a significant difference, but collectively, paved driveways decrease wildlife, by taking away their natural habitat, and increases the risk of flooding and pollution of our waterways.'

The paving of number 1 Nansen Road therefore cannot be justified by the presence of driveways at these neighbouring properties.

The Guidance 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' and 'Avoid removing any existing trees or established hedges and introduce new planting wherever possible'.

The proposed driveway results in a significant amount of the forecourt being used for car parking and trees, grass and planting have been removed. In addition to this, parking at a high level results in a dominant form of development.

A similar scheme has recently been dismissed at 22A Old Road East (APP/K2230/D/24/3358170 – appendix 1). This scheme proposed a driveway to one side of the front garden with a low level wall and boundary hedging. The Inspector found that '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'.

Another recent appeal at 241 Wrotham Road (APP/K2230/D/25/3360751 – appendix 2) was also dismissed for a driveway and dropped kerb. In this appeal part of the front garden was to remain however the Inspector stated that the 'appearance of the property would notably change to a predominately open frontage through the removal of most of the wall, behind which would be the wide parking area that would contain parked vehicles. This appearance would be distinctly at odds with the uniformity of the area.'

In both these cases the applicant's had access to parking to the rear of the property to which the Inspector referred to. In the case of Old Road East the Inspector had no evidence provided why this rear access and garage could not be utilised. In the case of Wrotham Road the Inspector found that it was personal choice that the applicants did not use the rear access. In the case of this planning application no reference has been made to the rear access which appears to be easily accessible:



The proposed development is similar to both of these sites and is considered to be harmful to the setting of the application site and the character of the surrounding area and is therefore considered to conflict with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Amenity

Future Occupiers

The driveway has been elevated in front of the dwelling. There is a window to the front of the property. However as can be see below, this is a sufficient distance and of a low height to ensure no significant impact in terms of loss of outlook or daylight and therefore no concerns are raised:



Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed development, due to its position in front of the dwelling, will have no detrimental impact on any neighbouring dwelling in terms of loss of outlook, privacy, sunlight or daylight.

The proposed development therefore accords with policy CS19 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 135f of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 in terms of amenity.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Concerns were raised with regards to the substantial loss of biodiversity within the previous application. This current application shows an increase to the proposed soft landscaping but still results in a loss. The proposal therefore conflicts with policy CS12 of the Gravesham Core Strategy 2014 and section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Parking and Highways

Previous applications showed the dropped kerb in a different position closer to the middle of the frontage. These proposed plans now show the dropped kerb to be closer to the boundary with number 3 Nansen Road. This change results in a convoluted parking area that curves and allows the potential for two cars to be parked which raises concerns relating to highway safety in an area of high levels of on street parking. It would not be possible to condition such an application to restrict the parking area to one car.

The proposed driveway, due to its length and curved nature, will result in a convoluted arrangement that could result in two cars either reversing onto the highway or the driveway whilst navigating the high amount of on street parking in the area which would be to the detriment of vehicle and pedestrian safety therefore conflicting with policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994.

Conclusion

1. By virtue of the design, character and appearance, the proposed works to the front garden would result in a hardening of the streetscene, detrimental to the visual amenity of the application property, streetscene and character of the area as a whole. The development is therefore contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principals) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

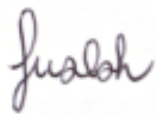
2. The proposed soft landscaping is not considered to sufficiently mitigate the extent of biodiversity which has been previously removed. As such, the proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

3. The proposed driveway, due to its length and curved nature, will result in a convoluted arrangement that could result in two cars either reversing onto the highway or the driveway whilst navigating the high amount of on street parking in the area which would be to the detriment of vehicle and pedestrian safety therefore conflicting with policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan 1994.

Recommendation:

Refuse.

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	7 May 2025	Dated:	08 May 2025