
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2025

by **C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/25/3367552
5 Forge Lane, Higham, Kent ME3 7AS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Hamada Aqlan against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. is 20250079.
 - The development proposed is for a crossover to the front, ground floor rear extension, loft conversion, rear annex.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. An application for a full award of costs has been made by Mr Hamada Aqlan against Gravesham Borough Council. This application will be the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area; and
 - highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site relates to a detached bungalow on the east side of Forge Lane in a village-centre setting. The neighbourhood generally comprises of residential properties of varying size and design with a public house and library opposite and a convenience store in close proximity.
5. The rear element at first floor level would be visible within the local area from adjacent gardens and patio areas, projecting from the back of the roof slope of the existing dwelling. To my mind the proposed design solution, combining pitched sections and vertical walls, would appear discordant and visually jarring in the context of the existing hipped roof slopes of the bungalow. The adverse impact would be exacerbated by the unattractive, elongated crowned roof, introducing an awkward, disjointed form of development. Overall, I consider that this part of the

scheme would lack architectural subtlety, which would be detrimental to the existing dwelling and surrounds.

6. I observed a similar arrangement at 9 Forge Close; whilst I acknowledge that this is an established part of the rear garden scene, in my view such a design approach should not be seen as the benchmark for future extensions in the area.
7. The ground floor rear extension is shown to be constructed with a flat roof. Whilst relatively large in footprint, it would be low level in nature and would be set away from the boundary with 3 Forge Lane. It would not project beyond the hindmost elevation of the neighbouring property at no.7. Taken in the round, I find that the addition would assimilate with the host dwelling, without dominating it or resulting in a cramped over-development of the site, and would integrate with immediate environs.
8. Turning to the vehicular access, I saw that hardscaping has already been laid across the entire frontage of the appeal site, which appears harsh and bleak in nature. Although I am satisfied that the proposed additional parking space could be accommodated, there is nothing on the layout plan or from my observations on site to show that an area would be made available for vegetation to soften the appearance of the forecourt.
9. Although other existing frontages are similarly bereft of planting in the street scene, I am of the view that this should not be encouraged as cumulatively such urbanisation detracts from the locality. In the absence of any indication of beds for shrubs or hedges to establish and mature, I consider that this element of the scheme represents an intrusive form of development.
10. In summary on this matter, whilst the single storey rear extension is acceptable, the first floor element and frontage works would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area. This would contravene Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (CS) and the Council's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) Supplementary Planning Document, which together seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. They would also be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Highway safety

11. There are numerous dropped kerbs serving frontage parking areas to dwellings in the street scene; they are approached with caution, with any manoeuvres being infrequent, of short duration and at low speed. I also note that during the course of the application, additional information was provided such that the Highway Authority withdrew its original objection subject to the imposition of conditions. Furthermore, I have not been provided with any accident data from the Council to support the issues raised or to suggest that there are public safety matters locally.
12. On balance, I find that highway safety would not be unduly compromised in this particular instance. There would be no conflict with CS Policy CS11, the Council's Front Driveway Guidance 2023 and Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance 2023, Kent County Council's Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self Assessment 2023 or the Framework insofar as they relate to development and mitigating impacts upon the highway.

Other matters

13. The appellant alludes to permitted development rights and a fallback position; however, I have no further information before me to this effect. I am also aware that no objections have been raised by the Council in relation to overlooking or amenity; the increase in internal accommodation is needed for the appellant and his family; room sizes meet National Standards; means of access will be improved for elderly relatives and friends; the parking area accords with Sustainable Drainage Systems guidance and will permit the future charging of electrical vehicles off road; and the extensions will accord with the recently revised Building Regulations, including energy efficient heating and energy conservation relating to the fabric of the new build, windows and insulation used in the roof and walls. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified above.

Conclusion

14. In respect of all outstanding issues and based on the above reasoning, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR