

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support a full planning application for the property at 9 Lawrence Drive, Cobham, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 3BU.

The site is located within the village of Cobham, approximately 1.5 miles from Sole Street railway station, and is accessed from Lawrence Drive. The property is a two-storey terraced dwelling, positioned slightly higher than the level of the public highway and benefiting from an existing pedestrian access from the street.

The dwelling is traditionally constructed, with brick elevations and a tiled pitched roof, which are typical of properties along Lawrence Drive. The front of the property includes a small porch and a modest front garden, currently enclosed by a low brick boundary wall.



The property is not listed, however it lies within the Cobham Conservation Area, which was designated on 1 January 1970. A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management proposals document, including amendments to the conservation area boundary, was adopted by the Council in October 1999. The conservation area encompasses a number of historic streets, including parts of Lawrence Drive, and is characterised by its residential form, traditional materials, and varied boundary treatments.

Planning History

- Description: Application for a Proposed Lawful Development Certificate; Erection of drop kerb and creation of hardstanding.
Decision: Certificate Refused
Reference: 20251031
Date: 02 Dec 2025

Proposal

The proposal seeks planning permission for the formation of a dropped kerb and the creation of a permeable hardstanding within the existing front garden to allow off-street parking for up to two vehicles.

The proposal includes the following key elements:

- Formation of a vehicular crossover (dropped kerb) to provide safe and direct access from Lawrence Drive.
- Regrading of the front garden to gently reduce the level difference between the dwelling and the highway, allowing vehicles to park safely and conveniently.
- Installation of permeable paving to form the new driveway, ensuring appropriate surface water drainage and reducing runoff onto the public highway.
- Removal of the existing front boundary wall, with the front access steps repositioned slightly further back within the site to maintain a safe separation from the footpath and ensure convenient pedestrian access to the dwelling.
- Retention of a portion of soft landscaping at the front of the property to soften the visual impact and maintain a green frontage.

The proposal reflects the existing character of the street, where a number of neighbouring properties already benefit from dropped kerbs and front driveways, accommodating one or two vehicles. As such, the development is consistent with the prevailing pattern of development along Lawrence Drive.

Design Considerations

The design has been carefully considered to ensure that it is subordinate, functional, and visually appropriate, particularly given the site's location within a conservation area.

The use of permeable paving has been selected not only for its practical drainage benefits, but also because it can be finished in a restrained and neutral appearance that complements the traditional materials of the dwelling and surrounding properties.

The modest scale of the works, combined with the retention of some soft landscaping, ensures that the proposal does not appear overly dominant. The relocation of the access steps improves pedestrian safety while maintaining a clear and logical approach to the front entrance.

Access

The proposal provides improved and safer access to the property by allowing vehicles to enter and exit the site directly, without the need for on-street parking.

Vehicular access will be taken from Lawrence Drive via the proposed dropped kerb. Pedestrian access will remain clear and unobstructed, with the revised steps providing a safe and convenient route from the public footway to the front door.

The proposal does not interfere with neighbouring accesses, visibility splays, or pedestrian movement along the footway.

Sustainability and Drainage

The use of permeable paving ensures that surface water is managed sustainably within the site, reducing runoff and avoiding pressure on the existing drainage infrastructure. This approach accords with current best practice for front-garden hardstandings and contributes positively to sustainable development objectives

Heritage Statement

The proposal has been designed to preserve the character and appearance of the Cobham Conservation Area.

The works are modest in scale and limited to alterations within the front garden. Similar dropped kerbs, driveways, and boundary treatments are already present along Lawrence Drive, and the proposal reflects this established pattern.

The removal of the boundary wall and introduction of a permeable driveway will not result in harm to the significance of the conservation area. On the contrary, the proposal will reduce on-street parking, resulting in a less cluttered street scene and a more orderly appearance.

The development therefore preserves the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area, in accordance with national and local heritage policies.

Conclusion

The proposal represents a simple, modest, and well-considered form of development that responds to the character of the site and its surroundings.

The creation of a private driveway will allow the occupiers to park within their own property rather than on the public highway, improving convenience and highway safety without causing harm to neighbouring properties or the wider street scene.

The use of permeable paving, retention of some soft landscaping, and careful consideration of access and levels ensure that the proposal is sustainable, visually appropriate, and compliant with conservation area principles.

For these reasons, the proposed development is considered acceptable and planning permission is respectfully requested.