

HERITAGE STATEMENT

25 The Avenue, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0NA

Proposed New Vehicle Crossing and Front Sash Window Replacement

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1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for a new vehicle crossing and replacement of the front sash windows at 25 The Avenue, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0NA.

The application site is within the Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area. The purpose of this statement is to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposal, the contribution made by their setting, the likely effect of the works, and the design measures proposed to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The statement has been prepared proportionately to the modest scale of the works and should be read alongside drawing Site Map and Existing Elevations, Existing Block Plan, Proposed Block Plan and Proposed elevations.

2. Heritage and Planning Context

The Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area was designated by Gravesham Borough Council in 1995 and extended in 2001. The Council's adopted character appraisal describes the area as part of the extensive nineteenth-century residential suburbs to the south of Gravesend. It identifies the area's architectural and historic interest and provides a framework for assessing alterations and new development.

The Council's published appraisal is relevant because it identifies the relationship between residential buildings, front gardens, streets and other landscape features as part of the area's character.

The current Gravesham Local Plan comprises the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), together with saved policies from the Gravesham Local Plan First Review where applicable. Policy CS20 gives high priority to preservation, protection and enhancement of the borough's heritage and historic environment. Policy CS19 is also relevant to the quality, character and appearance of development.

The Council's Conservation Areas Maintenance / Replacement Windows and Doors Guidance SPD is directly relevant to the proposed window works. It promotes repair of traditional windows where practicable and seeks replacement windows that respect the character, proportions, materials and detailing of the existing building.

National policy requires applicants to describe the significance of affected heritage assets, including the contribution of their setting, and to assess the effect of development on that significance. The current National Planning Policy Framework was published on 17 August 2026 and supersedes the December 2024 version.

3. Description of the Existing Property

The submitted drawings show 25 The Avenue as a substantial residential property positioned behind a front garden. The front elevation contains timber sash windows and presents a traditional architectural composition to The Avenue. The existing frontage includes soft landscaping, a tiled path and brick boundary features.

Drawing 01 identifies the property within the established residential frontage and records the existing front elevation and side elevation. Drawing 02 records the existing block arrangement, including the front garden, grassed areas, tiles path, dwarf brick wall and brick boundary wall.

The Council has previously considered planning applications at 25 The Avenue. In its published planning records, the Council described the property as one of a group of large semi-detached houses of identical design within the Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area. A previous application was considered to preserve the character and appearance of the application site and surrounding Conservation Area.

4. Significance of the Heritage Asset

The principal heritage asset affected by the proposal is the Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area. The individual dwelling also makes a contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

The significance of the Conservation Area is principally architectural and historic. It derives from the established nineteenth-century suburban character, the consistent residential streetscape, the architectural form of the houses and the relationship between buildings and their front gardens and boundaries.

At 25 The Avenue, the contribution of the property is principally visual and townscape-based. The traditional front elevation, sash window proportions, roof form, building scale and position behind the front garden contribute to the established character of the street.

The front garden and boundary treatment also contribute to the transition between the private dwelling and public highway. These elements are therefore of some heritage value, although the proposed works do not require demolition of the dwelling or alteration to its overall scale, height or massing.

5. Contribution of Setting

The setting of 25 The Avenue is formed principally by the surrounding residential properties, The Avenue highway, front gardens, boundary treatments and the wider streetscape.

The Council's previous planning assessment confirms that the property forms part of a group of large semi-detached houses of identical design. This group relationship is important because changes to individual front elevations or front gardens have the potential to affect the visual consistency of the street.

The proposal has therefore been considered against the immediate frontage rather than solely against the building itself. The principal objective is to retain the visual hierarchy of the house, its front garden and its relationship with the street.

6. Description of the Proposed Works

The proposal comprises two elements:

- (a) a new vehicle crossing providing vehicular access to the front garden; and
- (b) replacement of the front sash windows.

The submitted drawings identify the proposal as “New Vehicle Crossing and Front Sash Window Replacement” at 25 The Avenue. P01 shows the existing front and side elevations and P02 shows the existing block arrangement and frontage.

No increase in the height, footprint or overall massing of the dwelling is proposed as part of these works.

7. Assessment of Impact

7.1 Front sash windows

The front sash windows are a significant component of the principal elevation because their vertical proportions and repeated arrangement contribute to the traditional appearance of the house.

Replacement windows have the potential to cause harm if their proportions, frame profiles, opening arrangements or materials are substantially different from the existing windows. The proposal should therefore retain the existing sash configuration and visual proportions.

The replacement windows should be detailed to replicate the established appearance of the existing front elevation, with slim frame profiles, appropriate glazing divisions where present, and a traditional sash opening arrangement. Timber construction is preferred where practicable; if an alternative material is proposed, it should provide an equivalent traditional appearance and detailing.

Subject to this approach, replacement of the windows would have a negligible effect on the significance of the Conservation Area and would not alter the established architectural composition of the building.

7.2 New vehicle crossing

The vehicle crossing will introduce a functional change to the front garden and its relationship with the highway. The principal heritage consideration is therefore the treatment of the garden, boundary and hardstanding rather than the building itself.

The crossing should be kept visually subordinate to the house. Existing brick boundary features should be retained wherever practicable, and the extent of new hardstanding should be limited to that necessary to provide the access. Existing soft landscaping should be retained or reinstated where feasible.

The works do not alter the building's height, roof form or principal massing. The effect on the wider streetscape is consequently limited.

Overall, the proposal is considered to have a very limited effect on the heritage significance of the Conservation Area, with no substantial harm identified.

8. Design Measures to Preserve and Enhance Significance

The following measures form part of the heritage-led design approach:

- Retain the existing architectural form, scale and massing of the dwelling.
- Retain the established front elevation and sash window arrangement.
- Ensure replacement sash windows closely match the existing proportions, opening pattern and traditional appearance.
- Avoid bulky modern window profiles or detailing that would visually weaken the principal elevation.
- Retain existing brick boundary features wherever practicable.
- Keep the new vehicle crossing and associated hardstanding visually subordinate to the dwelling.
- Use materials and finishes that are sympathetic to the existing building and streetscape.
- Undertake the works carefully so that unnecessary historic fabric is not removed.

These measures are intended to ensure that the proposal preserves the elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

9. Building Regulations, Accessibility and Other Legislative Requirements

The works will be carried out in accordance with applicable Building Regulations and other statutory requirements. Where technical requirements concerning thermal performance, ventilation, safety, glazing, drainage, highway access or accessibility apply, these requirements will be addressed without unnecessary alteration to the historic character of the property.

The reference in the Council's request to the "Discrimination Act" is understood in current legislative terms as referring principally to the Equality Act 2010 and associated accessibility duties. The Equality Act and Building Regulations operate alongside, rather than replacing, heritage considerations. Where accessibility or other statutory requirements require alteration, the approach should be to meet the functional requirement while retaining the traditional appearance of the building and minimising physical and visual intervention.

For the vehicle crossing, any requirements of the highway authority will also need to be satisfied. Gravesham Borough Council advises that proposals affecting the public highway require the formal agreement of Kent County Council as highway authority.

10. Heritage Impact and Mitigation Summary

Heritage asset: Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area.

Primary significance affected: architectural character, residential townscape, front garden setting and traditional fenestration.

Nature of impact: minor alteration to the front garden and replacement of front sash windows.

Magnitude of effect: very limited.

Harm: no substantial harm is identified. Subject to the design measures set out in this statement, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The principal potential source of harm is the replacement of traditional sash windows with visually inappropriate modern units. This is avoided through retention of the sash form, proportions and traditional detailing. The vehicle crossing is similarly mitigated through limited intervention to the frontage and retention/reinstatement of boundary and landscaping features.

11. Conclusion

The proposed new vehicle crossing and front sash window replacement at 25 The Avenue are modest works which do not alter the overall height, scale or massing of the dwelling.

The property is an identified component of the Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area and forms part of a group of large semi-detached houses of identical design. The heritage value of the frontage lies principally in the established architectural composition, traditional sash windows, front garden setting and relationship with the wider streetscape.

The proposal has been designed to retain these characteristics. The replacement windows will maintain the traditional sash appearance, while the vehicle crossing will be confined to the front garden and treated as a subordinate intervention.

On the basis of the submitted drawings and the heritage evidence reviewed, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area and to avoid substantial harm to its significance. The proposal is therefore considered consistent with the heritage objectives of the Gravesham Local Plan and national planning policy, subject to the detailed implementation of the mitigation measures identified above.

12. Sources and Documents Reviewed

1. Gravesham Borough Council, Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area Appraisal (2009). 2. Gravesham Borough Council, Conservation Areas Maintenance / Replacement Windows and Doors Guidance SPD (2020). 3. Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), including Policies CS19 and CS20. 4. National Planning Policy Framework, current edition published 17 August 2026. 5. Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, including the statutory duty concerning Conservation Areas. 6. Equality Act 2010 and Building Regulations 2010, insofar as relevant to the balance between technical/access requirements and heritage conservation. 7. Gravesham Borough Council published planning records for 25 The Avenue, including applications 20211047, 20211529 and 20230294/301, where relevant to understanding the site's planning and heritage context.