



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250641

Location: 14 Old Road West Gravesend Kent DA11 0LJ

Description: Demolition of front wall, creation of vehicle access and driveway to front with extension of a dropped kerb, associated works to pathway and subsequent engineering operation.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Dalton

Site Visit Date: 22.08.2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form
- Drawing 01 (Site Location Map)
- Drawing 02 (Existing/Proposed Block Plans)
- Drawing 03 (Existing Plans, Elevations and Sections)
- Drawing 04 (Proposed Plans, Elevations and Sections)

Supplementary Information

- Notice Letter to KCC

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Address	Description	Outcome	Decision Date
AP 09/00048/REF	12 and 14 Old Road West	Formation of joint vehicular access on to a classified road and laying out of a hardstanding in the front gardens.	Appeal Dismissed	21.04.2010
20090499	12 and 14 Old Road West	Formation of joint vehicular access on to a classified road and laying out of a hardstanding in the front gardens.	Application Refused	18.08.2009
AP 2001/00028/REF	14 Old Road West	Widening of existing vehicular access onto a classified road.	Appeal Dismissed	21.03.2002
20010489	14 Old Road West	Widening of existing vehicular access onto a classified road.	Application Refused	16.08.2001

AP1984/00018 /REF	12 14 And 16 Old Road West	Formation of joint vehicular access and use of the front gardens for car parking	Appeal 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
AP 1981/00006/R EF	14 and 16 Old Road West	Formation of a joint vehicular access	Appeal Dismissed	26.10.1981
19810272	14 and 16 Old Road West	Formation of a joint vehicular access	Application Refused	18.05.1981
TH/2/71/169A	14 Old Road West	Formation of a Vehicle Access for parking a disabled carriage	Temporary Permission	06.09.1973
TH/2/71/169	12 and 14 Old Road West	Formation of a Vehicle Access	Application Refused	10.02.1972

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

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

I refer to the above planning application and having considered the development proposals and the effect on the highway network, raise no objection on behalf of the local highway authority.

The applicant should be aware that any planning permission granted by the LPA does not constitute permission to undertake works to the highway network. Separate consent from KCC Streetworks will be required for the proposed crossover, with further information available in the informative below.

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 Biodiversity Officer

We reviewed this application for change to the front garden to remove the grassed area and provide a predominately block paved area with a narrow planted border alongside the access path/steps and have provided the following comments below.

PROTECTED SPECIES

The application is for the removal of a grassed area to provide parking and there are limited opportunities for protected species presence. We do not require any ecological surveys.

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 of lawn will be lost for the placement of the block paved drive. This is too small an area to use within the BNG statutory metric tools to quantify the net loss for the LPA.

The plan, elevation and sections as proposed details a planted border alongside the entrance path/steps. As the small area of grass will have limited biodiversity value due to use and maintenance, the loss will be minor. The proposed new planting is limited but the applicant should ensure that opportunities for biodiversity in this space are maximised by using plants that attract pollinators, a list is provided here <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/research/plants-for-pollinators> . This can be detailed within a submitted planting plan, detailed below under enhancements

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 from hard surfacing, 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.

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 is the only green space to the front of the property. We consider that this border should have planting with plants that have a benefit to pollinators. We recommend a planting plan is submitted for this enhancement. 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. 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 4 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 significant engineering operations to facilitate the cross over due to the property frontage being above the highway level.

Background

The application site has had a five previous refusals (see planning history) for driveways of which four were joint applications with a combination of No's 12 and 16 Old Road West and one application was a sole application for No.14 Old Road West. Four of the applications were subsequently appealed and dismissed

by the Planning Inspector. The refusals and appeals were as follows:

Application Reference TH/2/71/169 was for the formation of a joint cross over with No.12 Old Road West, this application was refused, however due to the historic nature of the application the reasons for refusal cannot be located.

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 APP/5277/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 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.*

Application reference 20010489 for a vehicle cross over at 14 and Old Road West was refused on 16.08.2001 due to:

1. The front garden of 14 Old Road West is too small to provide an acceptable turning area in accordance with adopted criteria to enable vehicles to properly enter and leave in a forward direction. The development without adequate vehicle turning facilities within the site would result in vehicles reversing into and out of the site to the detriment of highway safety and the free flow of through traffic on this classified road, contrary to policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

2. The development does not provide adequate visibility to the access contrary to Kent Design and Policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review; the development would therefore be detrimental to pedestrians and highway safety.

3. The existing vehicular access was permitted only on the basis that it was to enable an invalid carriage to be parked in the front garden of 14 Old Road West, and it was personal to the applicant and for a temporary period only.

Application reference 20010489 was subsequently appealed and dismissed (Reference APP/K2230/A/01/10770158 See Appendix 3) on 21.03.2002 The appeal was dismissed due to:

- *The proposal would not provide adequate on site turning and reversing into the highway would disrupt the free flow of traffic*
- *The wall along the eastern edge of the hardstanding would disrupt the view of emerging drivers and view of any pedestrians using the footway and would cause a material threat to the safety of road users and pedestrians*

Application reference 20090499 for a joint cross over between 12 and 14 Old Road West was refused on 18.08.2010 due to:

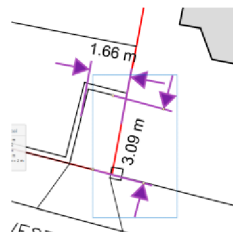
1 The proposed crossover and hardstanding would detract from the character and amenity of the street scene on this side of Old Road West This side of Old Road West is characterised with low walls and hedges to soften the frontages of these dwellings, so an undesirable precedent would be set if a crossover was allowed Therefore, this proposal would conflict with Policy TC1 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review

2 This proposed crossover would be unsafe in terms of its impact upon the highway The limited parking and turning space would lead to vehicles reversing onto the busy B261 which would be dangerous to the highway An undesirable precedent would also be set as the existing crossovers in this area are only on the opposite side of the road Therefore, this proposal would also fail to adhere to Policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review

Application reference 20090499 was subsequently appealed and dismissed (Reference APP/K2230/A/09/2115782 See Appendix 4) on 21.04.2010 The appeal was dismissed due to:

- The impact of the development on the streetscene
- Impact of the development on highway safety due to there not being sufficient on site turning

There was also a planning permission granted in 1973 which related to the parking provision of a disabled person's carriage. This permission was granted for a temporary period after which the access should have been stopped up in 1978 however the access still remains. It should be noted that the access as it stands does not have planning permission; Due to the passage of time it is however immune from enforcement action. The access in its current condition is sub standard in size and would not be capable of accommodating a modern day vehicle.



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 semidetached houses, while on the south side of the road there is more of a mixture of detached and semi-detached properties.

No 14 alongside its counterpart is positioned above the level of the public footway and vehicular carriageway of Old Road West. The front garden is laid to grass and there is a narrow crossover and a very small hardstanding which is flanked by a flint wall and an attractive brick pillar which is some 2.5m high. There are steps leading up to the front door and the garden also slopes up towards the dwelling. The soft landscaping offers much needed greening to the road, especially as there have been some losses of planting to hardstanding's which have urbanised the streetscape.

The front doors of the houses on the north side of Old Road West 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.

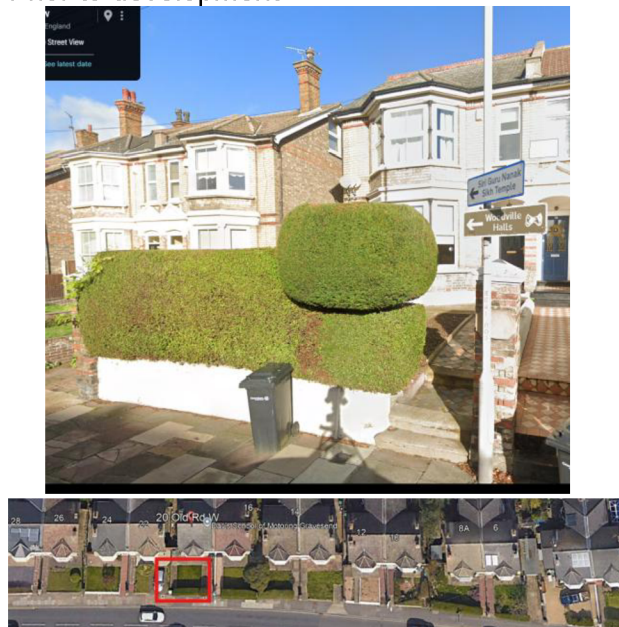
The proposed use of materials is appropriate and will utilise permeable paving to minimise rainwater run-off and the parking will meet the minimum requirements for a single parking bay.



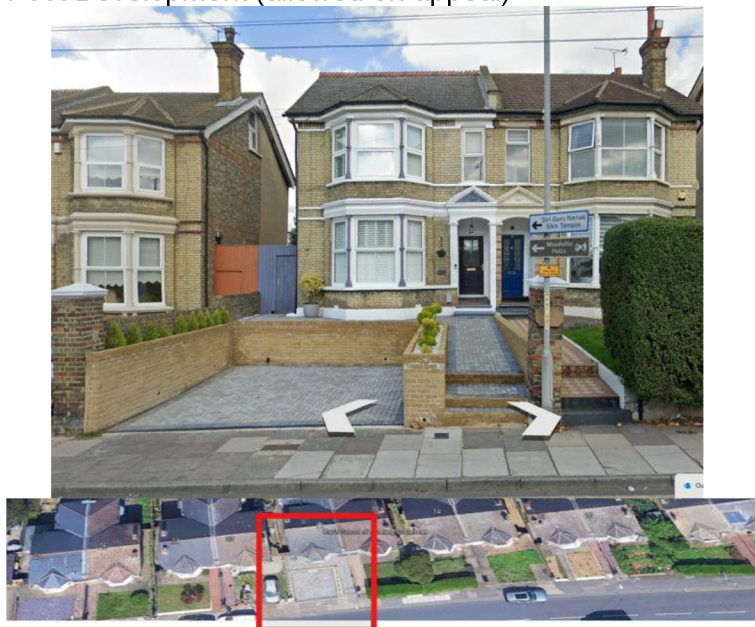
It is important to note that there is an example of a recent hardstanding and associated engineering operations which was allowed at appeal (See Appeal Reference APP/K2230/D/24/3349193 - Appendix 5). From the below image it is evident that this frontage has resulted in urbanisation of the street form 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.

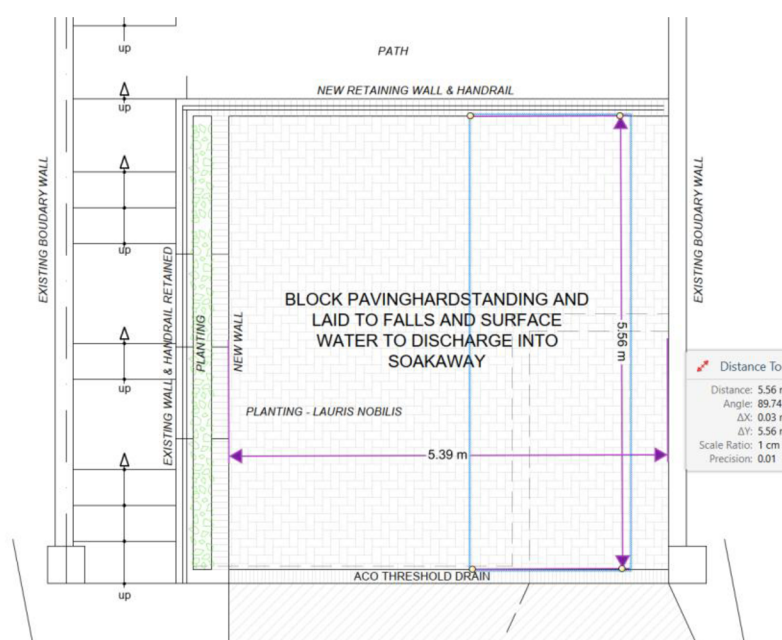
It is evident from seeing the finished development at 20 Old Road West that such frontages have a significant impact on the streetscene by way of introducing a vast expanse of unbroken and hard materials that will remain in place for the foreseeable future. The choice of materials do not complement the 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 5.38m and 5.5m depth. The existing flint wall on the eastern boundary would be maintained as would the existing brick piers which is a welcome addition. A new retaining wall would be built to the rear of this parking area which would be situated 1.3m 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 5.39m wide by 5.5m 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/84/24730/97 (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 6) 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 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 accord 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 is enclosed by a large flint ball and brick pier on the eastern edge, the below images highlight the height of this wall which would impede visibility to the east. As can be seen below a pedestrian is observed walking close to the address and it is evident that a vehicle reversing off of this drive would have a difficult time seeing him.



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.

... parking areas and vehicle access

The inspector also noted that:

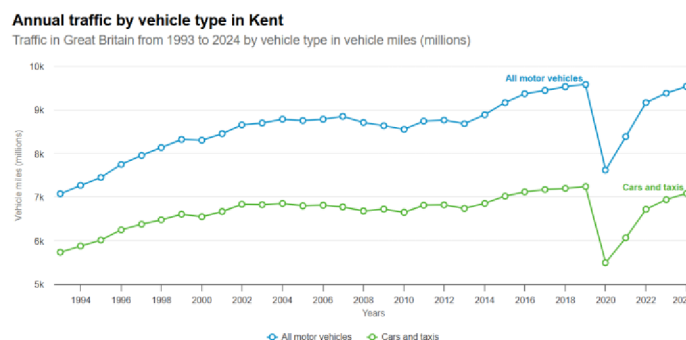
your proposed scheme.

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.

... outweighed by the

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.



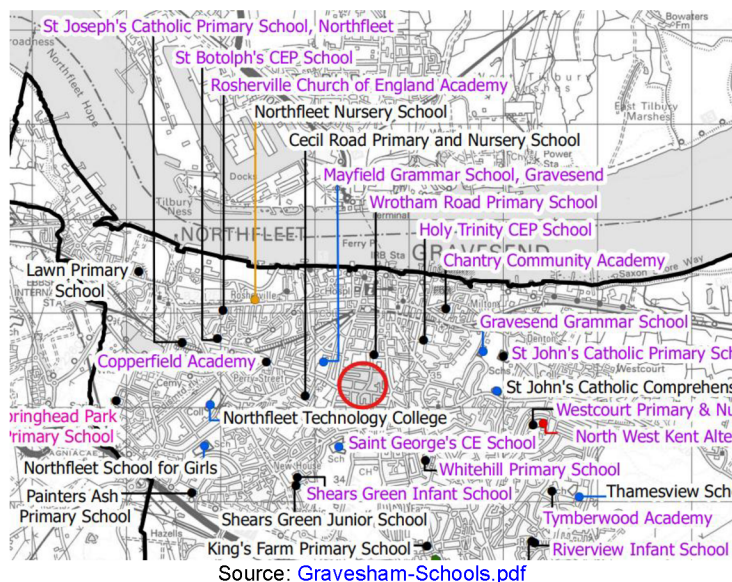
From the above information we can appreciate that Old Road West is a very busy Classified Highway which requires the free flow of traffic. The vehicles parked on the property frontage are most likely to be used during peak traffic hours which would hinder the free flow of traffic as a result of movements 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](#)

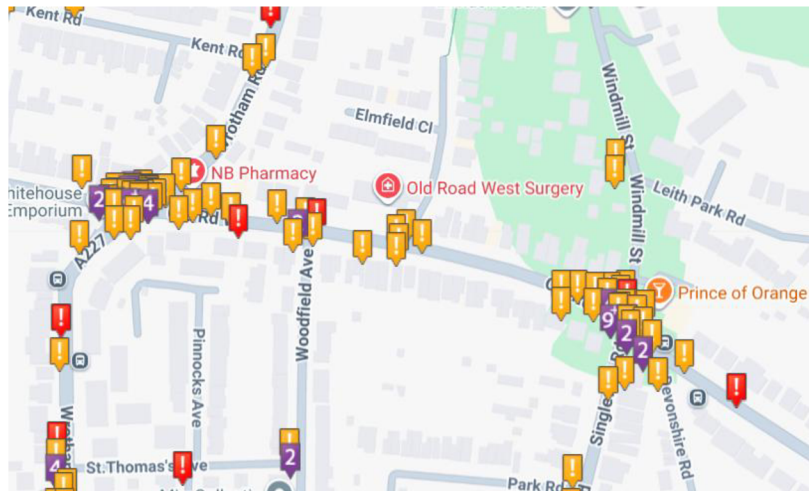


Old Road West is also located close to several local schools and therefore there are large numbers of students can be observed on foot. Given the high piers which are characteristic of the houses on the northern side of Old Road West there will also be an element of reduced visibility, especially if 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 7).

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

[f](#) [x](#) [in](#) [e](#)

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

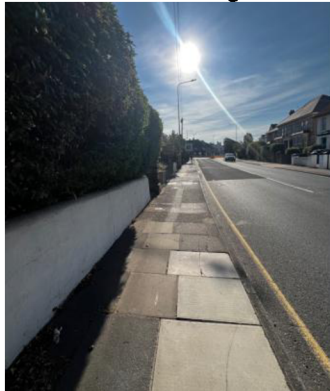
Police officers and paramedics were called to the scene outside The Prince of Orange pub at 6.16pm Sunday.

In Appeal Reference APP/K22030/A/01/1077158 (See Appendix 3) which related solely to this site the inspector echoed the concerns of previous inspectors by highlighting the danger arising from a cross over at this address. In the appeal statement they stated:

10. I observed that the pavement on the northern side of Old Road West was well used by pedestrians. However, the existing wall along the eastern boundary of the appeal site would deprive emerging drivers of any view of people using this footway close to the proposed crossover. The wall would also prevent pedestrians from seeing vehicles preparing to exit. As both pedestrians and drivers would be unable to respond to the presence of the other I consider that the proposal would be a material threat to safety.

Under the current proposal this 2.5m high wall will be retained and would continue to pose the same danger as was raised in the above appeal. This would be further exacerbated by the fact that vehicles would likely be exiting the drive in a reverse gear which would further reduce visibility.

During the 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 which supports the above findings that Old Road West is a busy classified highway. It was also noted that visibility towards the east was impacted by direct sunlight, this is particularly relevant as vehicles exiting the driveways on the Northside of the Road would be doing so into traffic which would have impaired views due to direct sunlight.



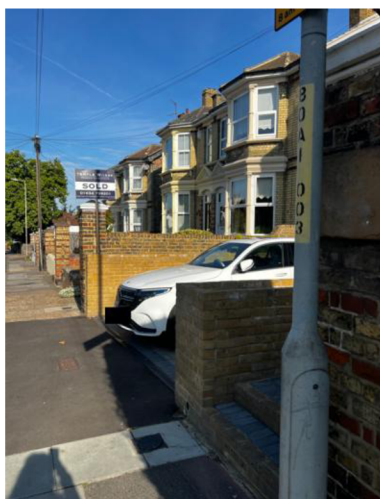
The peak volume of traffic had subsided at the time of the visit as most journeys are carried out before 9am which is the average office “core hours”. Despite this Old Road West was still busy, however what was absent was the school children who would usually be frequenting this road as part of their 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

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