

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Application No:	20250199
Location:	31 Manor Road, Sole Street, Cobham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 9BW
Description:	Demolition of existing lean-to structures. Erection of 2no. self build detached houses on land rear of no.'s 29 and 31 Manor Road with associated works. Proposed vehicle crossover. Installation of shared access drive and gates.
Applicant:	Mrs A Peterson-Pearce
Site Visit:	29 May 2025

Positive and Proactive Decision Making

In accordance with Article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), and paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), the Local Planning Authority has approached the assessment and determination of this application in a positive manner.

The Local Planning Authority engaged with the applicant regarding the access, expressing concern with its impact on amenity. Following the initial discussions, additional information was provided through side elevations, updated floor plans, TRICs data to enable an accurate assessment of the impact of the development on neighbours. However, the lack of scope for any mitigation and proximity of the access to habitable windows is unneighbourly and contrary to local and national planning policy.

The applicant put forward an option to reduce the number of dwellings and remove the chimney stack on no.31 Manor Road to increase the width of the access. These changes were considered by the Local Planning Authority but were not found to satisfactorily mitigate the impact and the access is unsuitable. As such, the proposed development is contrary local or national planning policy requirements, and the application cannot be supported.

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form – dated 14 March 2025;
- Design & Access Statement (ref. 5453) – dated March 2025;
- Supplementary Information – Custom Self Build Form;
- Supplementary Information – Letter of Notice to KCC Highways;
- Supplementary Information – TRICS Residential Sub-Category Comparative Analysis;
- Drawing no. D-01 – Rev. B – Site Location Plan;
- Drawing no. D-02 – Rev. C – Existing Block Plan;
- Drawing no. D-03 – Rev. J – Proposed Block Plan;
- Drawing no. D-04 – Rev. B – Proposed Plans and Elevations
- Drawing no. D-06 – Side Elevations of Existing Houses.

• ~~Drawing no. D-01 – Rev. A – Site Location Plan (scale 1:1250) – SUPERSEDED;~~

- ~~Drawing no. D-03 – Rev. D – Proposed Block Plan – SUPERSEDED;~~
- ~~Drawing no. D-03 – Rev. E – Proposed Block Plan – SUPERSEDED;~~
- ~~Drawing no. D-03 – Rev. F – Proposed Block Plan – SUPERSEDED;~~
- ~~Drawing no. D-03 – Rev. G – Proposed Block Plan – SUPERSEDED;~~
- ~~Drawing no. D003 – Rev. K – Proposed Block Plan – SUPERSEDED;~~
- ~~Drawing no. D-04 – Rev. A – Proposed Plans and Elevations – SUPERSEDED.~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20150825	Erection of railings around existing first floor sun terrace.	PERMITTED	13.10.2015
20060962	Erection of two storey side extension to form garage, utility room and boiler room at ground floor level with two bedrooms and en-suite bathroom at first floor level; construction of dormer extension in existing rear roof slope and conversion of roof space into bedroom and bathroom/w.c incorporating two no. front dormer windows and replacement of existing rear dormer window.	PERMITTED	04.01.2007
20050713	Erection of two storey side extension incorporating roof extension and construction of dormer window in proposed front roof slope to form a garage, utility room and boiler room at ground floor level with two bedrooms, additional room and ensuite bathroom/wc at first floor level.	REFUSED	18.10.2005
19750119	Erection of single storey extension at rear to form kitchen bathroom and enlargement of lounge diner	PERMITTED	28.04.1975

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS14 – Housing Type and Size
- CS15 – Housing Density
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

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 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
- Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
- 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)
- SPG 4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Other Relevant Guidance

- Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2023)
- Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)
- Gravesham Front Driveway Design Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Kent County Council Heritage – The area has some general background archaeological potential, but I would not recommend the need for any archaeological work in this case, so no planning condition would be required. This is because the area of the site has been defined as a Level 2 – relatively low potential area and the proposed works are relatively small scale.

Kent Fire and Rescue Service – Following my assessment of Fire and Rescue Service emergency access provisions for application number 20250199 I would like to make the following observations. Upon reviewing the available plans on Gravesham planning portal, I can confirm that the emergency access requirements under the above act, appear to have been met at this stage.

Please be aware that should this proposal be successful it would then be subject to a Building Regulations consultation where the access arrangements would again be examined under section B5.

Fire Service access and facility provisions are a requirement under B5 of the Building Regulations 2010 and must be complied with to the satisfaction of the Building Control Authority. A full plans submission should be made to the relevant building control body who have a statutory obligation to consult with the Fire and Rescue Service.

Cobham Parish Council – Cobham Parish Council is not against a new development here. However, we would like to note that all the properties in the nearby vicinity are either bungalows or chalet bungalow style properties. We would therefore consider something of a similar style to the neighbouring properties to be more in keeping with the area.

Cobham Parish Council therefore objects to this application.

Dickens Protection Society – The Society wish to object to this application on the grounds that the proposal

is for an undesirable form of backland development. The proposal would result in a cramped form of development with poor amenities.

Internal Consultees

GBC Waste – The waste collection vehicle would not be taken up this type of road. On collection days occupiers would need to present their bins the Manor Road side of the gates.

Neighbouring properties

A notice was displayed on site 03 April 2025.

In addition, fourteen surrounding properties were consulted and twelve representations were received, with nine registering support and three objecting to the development.

The supportive comments are set out below:

Support

- Good design
- Appropriate scale
- Appropriate development for the area
- Similar to other infill developments in the area
- Deliver much needed housing
- Utilising large garden for housing
- Adequate parking
- More appropriate use of brownfield land, than developing on the Green Belt

The objections have been separated into material and non-material planning considerations:

Note – only material planning considerations are relevant to this decision.

Material Planning Considerations

- Out of character with the area (two storey dwellings)
- Overdevelopment
- Proximity to boundary
- Impact on privacy
- Loss of light
- Not suitable for emergency service access
- Removal of biodiversity and trees

Non-Material Planning Considerations

- Civil matters between neighbours (damaged fencing – in need of repair)

The consultation period expired 05 June 2025.

Preliminary Matters

The application originally proposed the construction of 2no. two storey dwellings and a shared access road entrance between 4no. properties. During the process of the application, amendments have been submitted to reduce the scale of the new dwellings to chalet style bungalows and amendment made to the access road to reduce conflict by limiting the number of dwellings using it.

These are considered by the Local Planning Authority to be positive amendments.

In the interest of clarity, the images below show the original proposal:



Officer's Analysis

Site Context

31 Manor Road is a detached chalet style bungalow location on the southern side of the highway. The property benefits from a large garden extending approx. 74m.



The application site is adjoined on the western boundary by 29 Manor Road, which is a semi-detached chalet bungalow. This dwelling formerly had lean-to structures on the western elevation, which have been removed.



There is a gap between the two properties, measuring approx. 3.525m at the narrowest point.



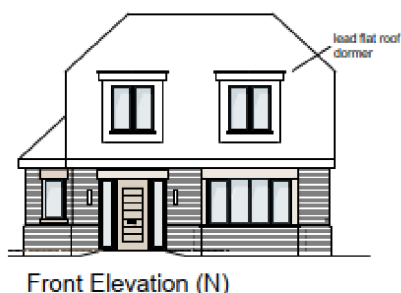
Proposed Development

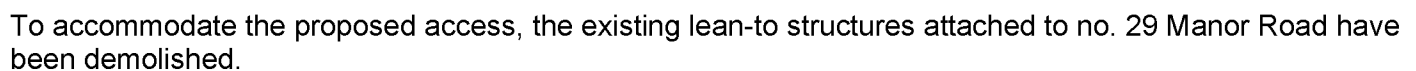
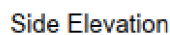
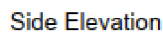
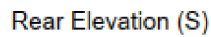
This application proposes the erection of 2no. detached four bedroom houses on land to the rear of nos. 29 and 31 Manor Road.

The proposed dwellings are chalet style bungalows with dormer windows and single storey side projections, with the following dimensions:

- Depth – 11.9m
- Width – 8.85m
- Height (max) – 7m
- Height (eave) – 3.35m

The below screenshots show the proposed site layout and elevations:





Principle of the Development

The principle considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- Housing Need
- Design, Character and Appearance
- Residential Amenity
- Parking and Highways
- Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Housing Need

In *Hopkins Homes Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2017] 1 W.L.R. 1865, Lord Carnwath reemphasised that the National Planning Policy Framework is only a material consideration in planning decisions and that that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan. Paragraph 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) expressly states that the starting point for decision-making is the development plan. Lord Carnwath as part of the Supreme Court decision stated:

“It is important, however, in assessing the effect of the Framework, not to overstate the scope of this policy-making role. The Framework itself makes clear that as respects the determination of planning applications (by contrast with plan-making in which it has statutory recognition), it is no more than “guidance” and as such a “material consideration” for the purposes of section 70(2) of the 1990 Act... It cannot, and does not purport to, displace the primacy given by the statute and policy to the statutory development plan. It must be exercised consistently with, and not so as to displace or distort, the statutory scheme.”

It is a matter of law that all planning applications need to be considered in accordance with the legislation and relevant policy that applies at the point a decision is taken. The Council published a revised 5 year housing land supply statement in February 2025, it demonstrates that based on data up for the period 2024-2029, the Council can only demonstrate a land supply of 2.9 years.

Given the Council's current inability to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, and as the delivery of housing was substantially below (less than 75%) that required by the Housing Delivery Test, the housing delivery element of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) Policy CS02 must be regarded to be out of date, as required by the Paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024). This requires that in regard to housing development, planning permission should be granted unless:

- *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

In the Gravesham context, the policies referred to in paragraph 11(d)(i) above are those set out in the NPPF at footnote 7 (rather than those in development plans) relating to any of the following:

- Habitats sites (and those sites listed in NPPF paragraph 194)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Green Belt
- Local Green Space
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Irreplaceable habitats
- Designated heritage assets (& other heritage assets of archaeological interest, see NPPF footnote 75)
- Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change

In determining applications for planning permission involving housing, the Council will therefore apply a weighted balance in favour of granting planning permission in accordance with relevant case law and guidance, having regard to the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals when evaluated against development plan policy, the need to make efficient use of land (paragraph 129(c)) in context, the relative contribution the proposal makes towards the alleviation of any shortfall in housing delivery at that time and any other considerations material to the proposed development.

The proposed development for a net increase of '2' residential units would offer a minimal contribution towards meeting this local need and, accordingly, officers considers that this should be accorded appropriate weight in support of the application. However, this has to be balanced against other requirements of the Development Plan and NPPF (2024) which requires new development to contribute

positively to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and create acceptable amenity for future occupiers.

Design, Character and Appearance

The application site falls within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2024) states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) (LPCS) states that new development will be visually attractive and locally distinctive. It should also conserve and enhance the character of the local built and natural environment and integrate well with the surrounding area. The NPPF (2024) sets out that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. The NPPF (2024) makes it clear that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies (e.g. Local Plan Policy CS19 and the associated Supplementary Planning Document adopted by the Council, Design for Gravesham) and government guidance on design (contained in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code).

Gravesham's Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guidance SPD (2021) set out key principles for developments. Generally, the SPD highlights the importance of new development complimenting and corresponding to existing character and the wider context. In this case, the rural character of the area and other surrounding dwellings should be considered. This is corroborated by the Borough's recently adopted design code; Design for Gravesham (2024), which expects new development to reflect the prevailing pattern of built form in rural villages, meet a minimum density of 30dph in rural areas and pay close attention to materiality amongst other key design concepts.

Density of the Development

Development on this site should meet the requirements of Policy CS14 (LPCS), where the Council expects new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes, taking into account the existing character of the area.

Policy CS15 (LPCS) requires that all new housing will be developed at a density, which is consistent with achieving good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated. Subject to this overriding consideration, new residential development within the urban area will be expected to achieve a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare. It is clear that whilst Policy CS15 (LPCS) seeks to achieve this minimum density, this should not be at the expense of compromising the character of the surrounding area.

Policies CS14 and CS15 (LPCS) are expanded upon by Design for Gravesham, which also requires applicants to follow a design-led approach to achieve an appropriate density, to deliver a level of density that is contextual to area and to deliver a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the rural area.

As set out in Design for Gravesham, the context of the site and surrounding character form part of the consideration for low to medium density development. The pattern of development on Manor Road is of a low density, with detached properties on large plots. Therefore, in this specific context and low density is acceptable and the proposal is in accordance with Policies CS14 and CS15 (LPCS).

Housing Type, Mix and Size

Policy CS14 (LPCS) seeks to ensure that new housing development provides a range of dwelling types and sizes. The proposed scheme will deliver 2no. four bedroom family dwellings. Although the proposal would not deliver a range of dwelling types or houses, the provision of family homes is considered to be

acceptable and in accordance with Policy CS14 (LPCS).

Design and Impact on the Landscape

Development Plan policy places considerable emphasis on the importance of achieving high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024) seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 (LPCS) reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The proposed dwellings are set-back from the highway by approx. 72.7m and are screened from view by nos. 29 and 31 Manor Road. The dwellings, being redesigned as chalet style bungalows, are appropriate in the immediate context given nos. 29 and 31 Manor Road and the back land form of development, adjoining the site known as Baker Close. The dormer windows are similar to those on the adjoining development on Baker Close.

Although the Local Planning Authority do not generally support development with flat roof sections above single storey level, the proposed dwellings are significantly set-back from the highway and not directly visible from any public vantage point. From the glancing views through the access, the properties would have the perception of standard pitched, ridged roof dwellings. Therefore, the introduction of table-top roof form in this backland location is not considered to have any impact on the character or appearance of the street scene or wider area.

The proposed dwellings would be finished in a grey multi-stock brick, with slate roof tiles and lead flat roof dormers. While these materials are not common in the immediate area, there is variety in materiality and character on Manor Road and the set-back of the dwellings means only glancing views would be afforded from public vantage points. Therefore, in principle the materials are considered to be acceptable, however conditions would be attached to any permission to ensure that full details and samples are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Given the site's location within the rural settlement of Sole Street, the development would have limited impact on the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. However, the scale and massing of the proposal is considered to be appropriate for a rural location and therefore there is no conflict with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Conclusion of Design

Overall, the proposal is considered to be well-designed and at an appropriate scale and density to relate to the surrounding character of Manor Road. The two detached chalet style properties would mirror the existing backland development on Baker Close, and are set-back significantly from public vantage point to limit direct views. Therefore, subject to conditions, the proposal is in accordance with local and national design guidance and policy.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires that all development should be 'fit for purpose' and be 'adaptable to allow changes to meet the need of users' and that 'the design and layout of new residential development, including conversion, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines' (RLG) (2020). Moreover, on 25 March 2015 the Government issued a written ministerial statement, which introduced new technical housing standards in England and set out how these would be applied through planning policy. These standards came into effect on 1 October 2015.

The proposed dwellings are four bedroom, five person units. The national housing standards guidance provides minimum gross floor areas for two storey dwellings, breaking down the number of bedrooms and bed spaces (persons). These figures have been compared to the proposed units and are shown in the table below:

Plot no.	Bedroom(s) /Person(s)	National Housing Standard Guidance	Unit Floor space
1	4 (5 person)	97m ²	143.6m ²
2	4 (5 person)	97m ²	143.6m ²

Table 1 - Unit Floor Area Breakdown (GIA)

As shown in Table 1, the dwellings comply with the recommendations within the National Space Standards. Therefore, it is suggested that the units would provide acceptable accommodation and safeguard the amenity of future occupiers.

Notwithstanding the National Space Standards, Gravesham's RLG breaks down the Council's individual requirements for certain rooms, these have been formulated into a table to compare with the floor area of rooms within the proposed flats.

	Gravesham RLG (2020)	Plot 1	Plot 2
Living Room	11.2m ²	18.8m ²	18.8m ²
Kitchen/Dining	12m ²	34.3m ²	34.3m ²
Utility	N/A	3.8m ²	3.8m ²
w.c.	1.3m ²	2.1m ²	2.1m ²
Bedroom (double)	11.5m ²	13.9m ²	13.9m ²
Bedroom (single)	7.5m ²	10.9m ²	10.9m ²
		9.9m ²	9.9m ²
		8.3m ²	8.3m ²
Ensuite	3.5m ²	2m ²	2m ²
Bathroom & w.c.	3.5m ²	4.5m ²	4.5m ²

Table 2 - Floor Area Breakdown

Table 2 has been colour coded to show which rooms within each dwelling meet the guidance within the RLG. The table shows that all rooms within the new dwellings comply with the minimum floor area, with the exception of the ensuite bathrooms. Although failing to meet the RLG minimum, the ensuite bathrooms are detailed on the plans as containing shower basins, which occupying less floor area than a bath and would therefore be acceptable. As such, the proposed dwellings would provide good quality living environments for future occupiers.

In terms of external amenity space, each new dwelling would benefit from private gardens with a minimum

area of 132m² and a depth of 12m. Gravesham's RLG states that a four-bedroom dwelling should have a private garden area of 100m² and a minimum depth of 10m. Therefore, the proposal secures good quality external amenity space for future occupiers.

Notwithstanding the above, the proposed development is located in close proximity to a railway line connecting Sole Street to London and Kent. Given that the development is within 20m of the railway line and the associated noise, a condition will be attached to ensure that as part of any hard landscaping condition, details of an acoustic barrier is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This is consistent with the planning conditions attached to ref. 20070716 for the Baker Close development.

Overall, subject to conditions, the development is considered to safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2024).

Neighbouring Amenity

The NPPF (2024) states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 135f). Paragraph 198 of the NPPF (2024) seeks to ensure that new development takes into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 (LPCS), which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of neighbouring properties and land and avoid adverse impacts from pollution.

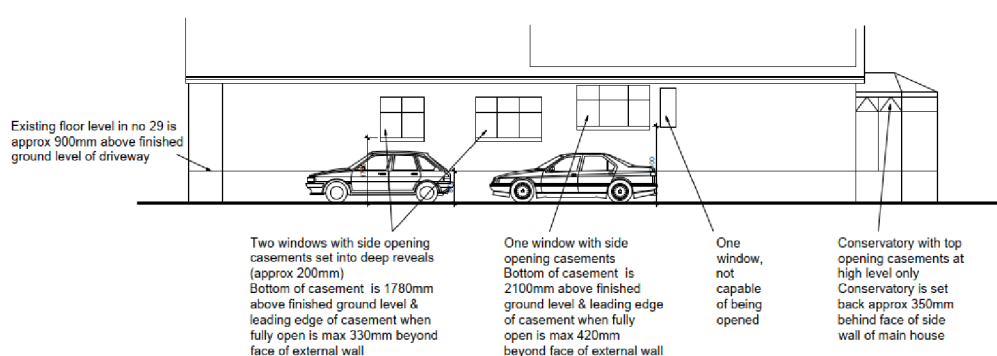
This section will consider the neighbouring properties separately, with nos. 29 and 31 Manor Road assessed before the neighbours on Baker Close.

Nos. 29 and 31 Manor Road

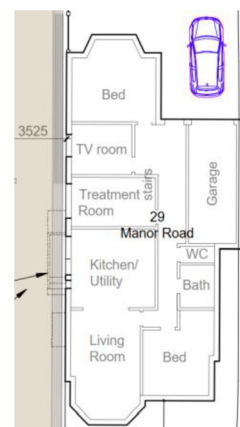
The proposed development is set back from the dwellings fronting Manor Road (nos. 29 and 31) by approx. 37.2m and 44.9m respectively. This is sufficient distance to mitigate direct overlooking into any habitable rooms or private amenity space. Moreover, the low scale and height of the new dwellings would serve to limit the perceived overlooking from the dormer windows.

The proposed access would run between nos. 29 and 31 Manor Road, at a minimum width of 3.525m. The 'Parking and Highways' section will consider the suitability of the access, however the narrow nature of the roadway between the properties is a concern for amenity.

The neighbour no.29 is a semi-detached property, with flank windows facing directly onto the proposed access. The agent was contacted by the Local Planning Authority, due to the concerns with the impact on no.29 and a side elevation plan was submitted:



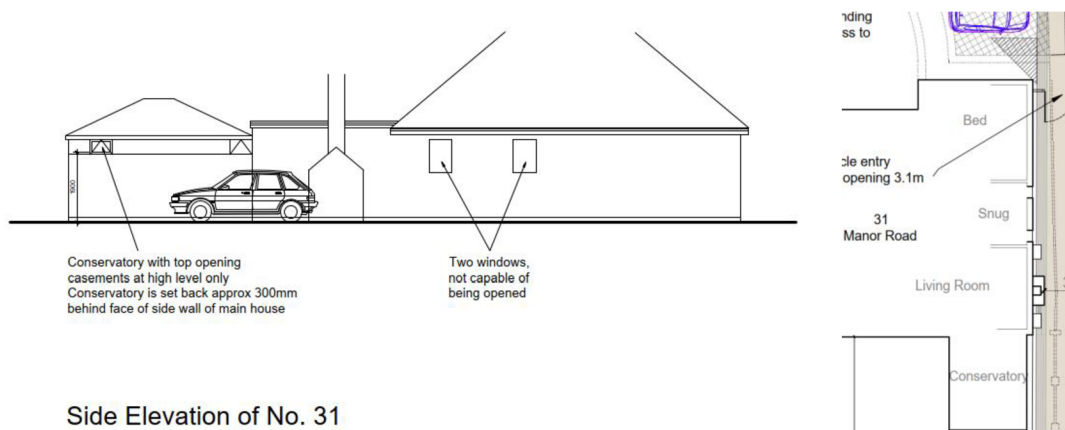
Side Elevation of No. 29



As demonstrated above, the flank windows on no.29 are mostly side opening casement windows and would be directly above the access roadway. The rooms shown in the block plan demonstrate a TV room, treatment room, kitchen/utility and living room being served by the windows and conservatory. These differ from the recent sales history of the property, but nevertheless are or could be habitable rooms which would be impacted through noise disturbance and odour from the access, with no mitigation possible by virtue of the narrow nature of the access road.

The applicant has provided a general TRICS guidance to support the proposal, however the data does not clearly define a number of vehicle movements. Using a general assumption for a single property of 0.5 vehicle movements per dwelling during peak hours, the number of trips from the development could be assumed as 4-5 per day. Although this is low, the proximity of the passing vehicles to the windows of no.29 would be noticeable and there would be an impact on the amenity of future occupiers through noise and odours. Therefore, the development is considered to be unneighbourly and harmful to the amenity of no.29 Manor Road.

No.31 Manor Road is located on the west of the access and has two flank windows and a conservatory facing onto the roadway. The two windows on the main property are fixed shut and the conservatory windows are high-level (as shown in the plan excerpts below), as such the amenity of occupiers of no.31 is not considered to be impacted by the proposed development.



Overall, the constrained access roadway is narrow and adjacent to openable windows that serve habitable rooms and would result in noise disturbance and odour impacts from vehicles accessing the new dwellings, without any means or scope for any mitigation. Therefore, the proposal fails to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Baker Close

Adjoining the site to the west is the Baker Close development, with Plot 2 being approx. 2.913m from the flank wall of no.1 Baker Close. The design of the new dwelling is such that the closest wall is a single storey side projection, with the 1.5 storey height (5.3m) wall separated by approx. 3.86m. It is noted that Plot 2 would be set forward of the principle elevation of 1 Baker Close, however would be at an oblique angle and not impact on outlook as a result. Furthermore, the orientation of the new dwellings to the neighbour on Baker Close as well as the limited height mean that there would be no detrimental impact in terms of overshadowing or loss of light, and no flank windows mean that there would be no impact on privacy.

It is noted that concerns were raised from surrounding residents to the impact on amenity, however as considered above, the scale, orientation and layout of the development will mitigate impact on amenity in accordance with local and national planning policy.

Summary of Neighbouring Amenity

Therefore, the development is not considered to safeguard the amenity of surrounding properties and is an

unneighbourly form of development with the narrow access and passing vehicles impacting habitable rooms, contrary to Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2024).

Parking and Highways

The proposed development needs to be considered against Policy CS11 (LPCS) which states that new development should mitigate their impact on the public highway and that transport assessments should be provided and implemented to ensure delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunities for travel. Furthermore, it states that sufficient car parking in new developments will be provided in accordance with adopted standards which will reflect the availability of alternative means of transport accessibility to services and facilities. This is also reflected by Saved Policy T1 (LPFR) which requires proposed development to be adequately served by the highway network and Saved Policy P3 (LPFR) which sets out highways parking standards for development.

At a national level the NPPF (2024) states at paragraph 110, significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. The NPPF (2024) goes on to state development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the cumulative impact of development is severe.

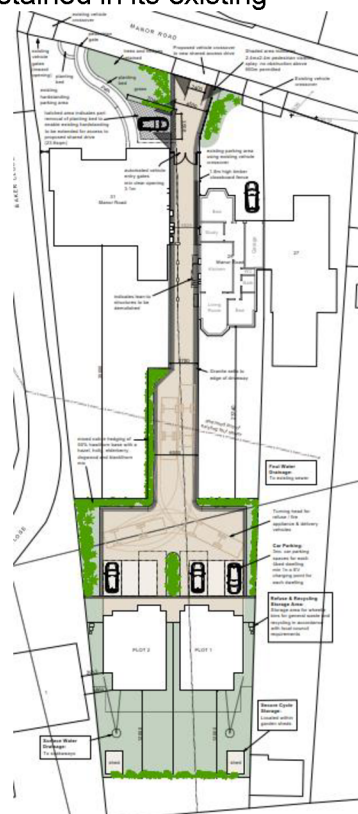
The proposed dwellings are set-back approx. 72.7m from the edge of the highway, and would be accessed by a vehicular access road from a new dropped kerb onto Manor Road. The access road has a minimum width of 3.525m and an average width of 3.7m, the access includes a passing, an automated gated entrance and a turning area to ensure that all vehicles egress in forward gear. Each new dwelling would benefit from 3no. off-street parking spaces, set out in bays to the front and cycle storage is provided in the new dwellings rear gardens.

As part of the development, the driveway for 31 Manor Road would be opened into the new access, creating an in-out arrangement. The vehicles would egress from 31 Manor Road in first gear, 2.8m from the automated gates and 5.8m from the crossover. There are also 2m x 2m visibility splays from the access point at no. 31.

During negotiations, the driveway at 29 Manor Road has been amended to be retained in its existing format, with the dropped kerb retained. The arrangement as originally proposed required a tight exit onto the access road and an awkward layout. This is considered to be positive. However, the access roadway is considered to be harmful to neighbouring amenity and is unsuitable (as set out above).

The development would provide sufficient off-street parking spaces for four bedroom dwellings and adequate cycle storage, in accordance with Gravesham's adopted parking standards (SPG 4) (2006). There would be adequate passing space on the access to mitigate conflict and sufficient visibility splays on the crossover to safeguard pedestrian and vehicular safety. Although the in-out driveway for 31 Manor Road creates conflict on the new access, this is set-back a sufficient distance from the automated gates and the crossover to avoid the risk of collision. Moreover, only 3no. dwellings utilising the access is not considered to create sufficient movements to impact the safety of users.

Lastly, concerns were raised by neighbouring residents in relation to the access being inadequate for emergency service vehicles. Kent Fire & Rescue Service were consulted on the application and consider that the emergency services access requirements appear to have been met, raising no objection. This is caveated by Kent Fire & Rescue, but will be a requirement for Building Regulations. Therefore, there is no concern with the access' suitability at the planning stage.



Overall, the proposed development is considered to mitigate impact on the highway network, provide an access road for the new development and deliver sufficient parking provision in accordance with Gravesham's adopted parking standards (SPG 4) (2006), as well as Policy CS11 (LPCS), Saved Policy T1 (LPFR) and Section 9 of the NPPF (2024). Notwithstanding this, the narrow access fails to safeguard amenity and is unsuitable as a result.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Refuse Arrangements

Policy CS19 (LPCS) requires new development to incorporate appropriate facilities for the storage and recycling of waste. The plans show refuse/recycling storage areas to the side of each property with sufficient space for bin storage. The new occupiers would be required to drag the bins to the footway on collection days and return these to their properties on collection day, which is a similar arrangement to other properties in the area. Therefore, the refuse arrangements are acceptable and in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Emergency Service Access

The proposal is a backland development, set back from the highway by approx. 72.7m with a relatively narrow access road. This has been raised as a concern by neighbouring residents for emergency service access into the site. The application has been reviewed by Kent Fire and Rescue who have raised no concerns with the access for emergency service vehicles, which is caveated by Building Regulation compliance. Therefore, subject to compliance with Building Regulations, the site is suitable for emergency service access.

Archaeology

Policy CS20 (LPCS) gives a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place. Particular attention in this regard will be focused on those heritage assets most at risk. When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset's conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset. For non-designated assets, decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The proposal has been reviewed by Kent County Council Heritage who do not recommend any further archaeological work on the site, due to the relatively low potential of the area and the minor scale of the development proposed. Therefore, the proposed development is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

Recreational Pressures on the Thames Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA) and SAMMS

The Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar site and Special Protection Area (SPA) are internationally important for nature conservation as the area is a wetland and supports important numbers of wintering water birds and migrating birds. There has been a decline in the number of birds using these sites in recent years. Studies show that this could be due to people using the estuary and marshes for recreation purposes. The North Kent Bird Disturbance Report concludes that all new housing development within 6km of the North Kent Ramsar Sites or Special Protection Areas (including the Thames Estuary and Marshes) and larger housing development beyond 6km from the sites could have an adverse impact on them. This is because new housing development is likely to lead to further increases in recreational use of the sites, which means that further declines in the bird population cannot be ruled out. Possible mitigation measures are set out in the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy. Having considered a number of options, the Council have decided to impose a tariff on new housing development. Developers will need to pay £337.49 for every new dwelling provided within 6km of the Ramsar site and SPA and for larger housing developments beyond 6km from them. The money raised

will be used to pay for schemes to avoid the adverse impacts of new housing development on the birds.

In this instance, the proposed development would result in the creation of an additional residential properties and as such, additional recreational activity would result. Therefore, it is considered that there would be an adverse impact to the Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar Buffer Zone, which should be mitigated in line with Policy CS12 (LPCS). In such cases the Borough Council has adopted a tariff that is payable for each new dwelling unit within 6km of the SPA/Ramsar site of £337.49 per new dwelling unit.

The applicant has paid the SAMMS Mitigation Contribution Agreement for the new residential property and therefore has met the requirements of the Habitat Regulations and Section 15 (specifically paragraphs 192 and 193) of the NPPF (2024) and Policy CS12 (LPCS) (2014).

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is a way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity.

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This statutory framework is referred to as 'biodiversity net gain' in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains.

Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

The application is for a custom self-build housing development and has been supported by a self-build statement. As such, the self-build BNG exemption has been met and the 10% net gain is not relevant.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is contrary to local and national planning policy.

The development is constrained by a narrow access road between two existing residential dwellings, with no scope for mitigation and a resultant direct impact on habitable rooms through noise disturbance and odour from passing vehicles accessing the proposed dwellings. Therefore, the proposal is an unneighbourly form of development, harmful to amenity by virtue of the unsuitable access road and contrary to Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) as well as Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Therefore, it is recommended that planning permission is refused.

Recommendation

Refusal

(For detailed reasons of refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mr Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
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Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	26 th August 2025	Dated:	05 September 2025