



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2026

by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 February 2026

Appeal Ref: 6001068

50 Lewis Road, Istead Rise, Gravesend, Kent DA13 9JG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Wareing against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 20250533.
 - The development proposed is a replacement dwelling including the demolition of an existing bungalow and erection of a detached 2-storey house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 16 December 2025, the Government published a consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Whilst broad changes to the structure of the Framework are proposed as part of this consultation, these proposals could be subject to further change and can only be given very limited weight at this stage. It has therefore not been necessary to consult the parties on the changes, and in reaching my decision, I have had regard to the Framework published in December 2024.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings, with particular regard to privacy and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises a detached bungalow set back from the road behind an open front garden and driveway, with a large garden extending to the rear. The dwelling is single storey with accommodation wholly at ground floor level beneath a modest hipped roof. The building is of no particular architectural merit and has been subject to various later additions, including a large rear conservatory and a detached outbuilding. Lewis Road is characterised by a mix of detached bungalows, chalet-type 1.5 storey dwellings and occasional two-storey dwellings,

typically arranged on regular, generously sized plots with deep rear gardens and open frontages.

5. The plot widths and architectural detailing of individual dwellings on Lewis Road vary. However, there is a notable proportion of bungalows and dwellings that are single-storey or 1.5 storeys in height, with first-floor accommodation commonly contained within the roof via dormers rather than by full-height two-storey walls. Hipped roofs are characteristic, and where front gables are present, they tend to be modest in scale and number and often finished with a barn hipped roof. These features combine to deliver a generally low and subdued built form that reads as visually restrained and contributes to a spacious suburban character. The rhythm of buildings with mostly low profiles produces a sense of balance and hierarchy, with no single dwelling appearing unduly dominant in the streetscene.
6. The proposal would replace the existing bungalow with a two-storey five-bedroom dwelling of substantially greater height and massing. The design incorporates two large full height front facing gables, with a roof ridge line that would rise above the neighbouring dwelling to the south. In contrast to the subdued and often hipped roofscape that defines much of Lewis Road, the proposed roof form would be assertive in its presentation to the street. The resultant mass, two-storey height and prominent front gables would result in a far more substantial frontage than is typical in the locality.
7. The contextual street elevation submitted by the appellant illustrates the extent of this increase when compared with the neighbouring dwellings to the south-east of the site and demonstrates that the proposed dwelling would noticeably exceed the prevailing scale and visual mass of built form in this part of Lewis Road. In approaching views along the road, the building's overall bulk would remain conspicuous for appreciable distances, interrupting the established rhythm of lower-profile dwellings.
8. The appellant submits that two-storey dwellings are present within the wider area and that the proposal would therefore be in keeping with local character. However, whilst there are indeed some taller properties nearby, these do not alter the fact that the dominant character of this part of Lewis Road is formed by bungalows and chalet-type dwellings with more subdued roof forms and reduced visual massing. The presence of taller buildings elsewhere does not, in itself, establish a character of large dwellings in the immediate context, nor does it justify a form that excessively exceeds the height and bulk of its nearest neighbours.
9. I note also the appellant's contention that the proposed dwelling would represent an architectural improvement over the existing bungalow and that it employs traditional materials. However, the use of sympathetic materials and the quality of individual detailing, as well as the removal of a building of limited merit, would not offset the effect of the proposal's scale and form on the established character of the streetscene. High-quality materials and traditional detailing would not mitigate the excessive visual massing, the dominant profile or the discordant roofscape that would arise.
10. Taking these matters together, the proposal would result in a dwelling that would be incongruous within the streetscene due to its excessive height, massing and roof form. It would fail to respect the prevailing character of the area and would

erode the established sense of spaciousness that derives from the modest scale and subdued roofscape of neighbouring dwellings.

11. Given this, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policy CS19 of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) insofar as it seeks to ensure proposals are well-designed, integrate well with the surrounding area and make a positive contribution to the streetscene.

Living conditions

12. The appeal site is situated between two detached dwellings, Nos. 48 and 52 Lewis Road, with relatively limited separation at the side boundaries, a relationship that is characteristic of this part of the street. The proposed building would be positioned close to the shared boundary of No. 52 and would project forward of its principal elevation, resulting in a more imposing and visually prominent structure in views from the neighbouring property.
13. From the front driveway of No. 52, the proposed dwelling would be readily apparent due to its increased height and forward projection, altering the spatial relationship between the two properties and introducing a more enclosing presence. To the rear, the bulk and height of the proposed building would be particularly noticeable when viewed from the rear patio and garden of No. 52, replacing the currently more open relationship with a taller and more imposing structure. This would give rise to an increased sense of enclosure and would materially diminish the quality of outlook currently enjoyed from these parts of the neighbouring property.
14. I also note the presence of a first-floor side dormer window at No. 52 facing towards the appeal site. Whilst the internal layout of that property is not before me and it is unclear whether it serves a habitable room, even when assessed on a precautionary basis the proposed two-storey building would be read as dominant when viewed from this opening due to its proximity to the boundary, increased height and overall mass. The proposed extent of solar panels attached to the roof slope would also have an adverse visual impact. The cumulative effect of the building's height, depth and forward projection would result in an overbearing relationship that would be oppressive in visual terms.
15. A balcony would be positioned at first-floor level on the rear elevation and would sit close to the northern shared boundary with No 48. From this elevated position, there would be the potential for views across the neighbouring rear garden, including the patio area. Whilst the balcony would primarily afford views towards the appeal site's own garden, it is likely that the proposed hit-and-miss brickwork would not fully prevent lateral views and that glimpses toward neighbouring amenity space could occur. Nevertheless, the angled relationship between the two properties would limit the degree of direct overlooking. I am satisfied that any residual privacy concerns could be appropriately addressed through a condition requiring additional screening at the balcony's side, such as obscure glazed panels, to ensure that views toward the neighbouring patio and garden are effectively mitigated.
16. In relation to the raised rear deck, this would elevate some outdoor activity above existing ground levels and could allow oblique views toward the neighbouring garden. However, the deck would not introduce viewing opportunities materially

different from those typically experienced between neighbouring properties in this suburban context. Given the depth of the plots and the presence of boundary features, I do not find that the deck would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy.

17. The appellant has submitted a daylight and sunlight assessment demonstrating that the proposal would comply with the numerical guidelines set out in BRE guidance. I have had regard to this evidence and accept that the development would not result in an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring properties. However, the harm I have identified would arise from the overbearing nature of the development and its adverse effect on outlook and enclosure. These matters are not addressed by BRE testing. Compliance with daylight and sunlight guidelines does not, in this case, overcome the harmful visual and spatial relationship that would result.
18. Given this, the proposal would harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 52 Lewis Road due to an adverse impact on outlook and an overbearing effect that would result in an adverse sense of enclosure. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS19 of the LPCS insofar as it seeks to ensure new development safeguards the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

19. The appellant highlights that the proposal would incorporate sustainable features, including photovoltaic panels and an air source heat pump, and would provide a modern, energy-efficient home. Whilst such measures are supported in principle and weigh modestly in favour of the development, they do not carry sufficient weight to outweigh the identified harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene and living conditions of neighbours.
20. In addition, the appellant emphasises that the replacement dwelling would meet contemporary living standards and provide improved accommodation for future occupiers. Whilst I do not dispute that the proposal would deliver a high standard of internal amenity, the development would replace a single dwelling with another and would not result in a net increase in housing provision. As such, this factor attracts limited weight in the overall planning balance.
21. I have also had regard to the appellant's view that the proposal would not give rise to highway safety concerns and would make use of the existing access arrangements. The absence of harm regarding this matter and other aspects of the scheme is a neutral consideration which neither weighs against or in favour of the appeal scheme.
22. The appeal site is located within a 6km zone of influence of the Thames Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA). I have a duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to assess any impact the proposed development would have upon the SPA, which is a designated European site. The Council state that development at this site does not have the potential to cause disturbance to the SPA because it is a replacement dwelling. Therefore, the appellant has not provided a financial contribution towards mitigation as part of the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS). As I am dismissing the appeal for the reasons given above, I do not need to conduct any further assessment in relation to the SPA.

Conclusion

23. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
24. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

INSPECTOR