

Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————

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21st November 2022

Application ref 20221108

Creation of a parking area surfaced with porous tarmac and finished with resin bound gravel.

1 Cheneys Cottages , Thong Lane, Shorne, Gravesend Kent DA12 4AA

This is a further application following the refusal by GBC of application ref 20220586, with the proposed parking area reduced in size with squaring off, but the opening enlarged.

The Parish Council continues to have some concerns about this application:

1) Retrospective application:

Regrettably, the application is largely retrospective despite the applicant being aware that the property is located in a Conservation Area and that planning permission is therefore needed. It would have been preferable not to have been put in this situation.

2) Size and layout of parking area:

The original size and entrance of the parking area (not drive as in part described) is what was applied for by the applicant. The Parish Council raised no objections. Subsequently, having that design accommodating just two parking spaces was considered acceptable to the Appeal Inspector.

In retrospect, the layout originally proposed and approved was not optimal, and if revision is required then a combined wide driveway and access path (as at Orchard House next door) would be better as the driveway would then provide turning space and visitor parking. Also, a greater hedge height could be achieved which would better screen the vehicles from sight.

The original application as approved at the Appeal had a parking area that was informally laid out, approximately 10.5m wide, with depth varying between about 4m and 6m deep, and with only a 3.8m wide opening in the hedge. The inference was that vehicles would park parallel to each other and the roadway.

The present application has a parking area that is approximately 12.5m wide by 6m deep and the opening width is 6.5m, i.e. a double vehicle width. We previously requested that a parking layout plan should also be submitted, in order to clarify and define the orientation in which vehicles are to be parked, but this has not been provided.

If vehicles will park perpendicular to the roadway, the parking area does not need to be so wide if it is only accommodating two vehicles. The same width as the proposed opening (6.5m) would be adequate and would in effect match other dwellings in the row.

If vehicles are to park parallel to the roadway, as seems to be the case, then the opening does not need to be so wide and the original 3.8m opening to a 10.5m total width would seem adequate.

The arrangement as seen on Google Streetview appears adequate save for the excess depth and that the fence has been cut back too far on the right hand side. The hedge can be replanted.



We are not convinced that making the opening even wider and more central will assist parking arrangements, rather the opposite, or that it is a requirement for two vehicles to be able to pass each other.

Traffic volume data and speed is presented but it is still the case that we are not aware of any evidence that parking on the roadside is impossible or unsafe in this location, no incidents being recorded on “CrashMap” in the last ten years.

3) Structural aspects:

There are no longer any steps shown from the parking area to the path. We had previously commented that “the parking area should be lower at the back than the front so that excess water drains back onto the property rather than the roadway, and the path (if needed) should then either be flat or at most gently sloped”.

4) Parking Area surface:

We note the comments from the GBC Highways Officer in the Officer Report for application ref 20211403, we were not made aware of the proposed change to a resin surface prior to the decision.

The applicant previously suggested that reinforced mesh with grass might be substituted. If that is acceptable to GBC Highways, then it might be more suitable for and compatible with the rural and Conservation Area location as it could appear to just be a grassed area.

5) Fencing:

Fencing off a parking area from the property it serves is unusual, we are not aware of any other residential property in the immediate area or further afield where this is the case. The appearance is visually intrusive, particularly if the roadside opening is to be wider, whereas the original informal plan was described in the Appeal decision notice that “it would not result in a notably more intensive form of development and would still maintain the character of openness that is prevalent within the site and its surroundings”. With the larger, resin surfaced area plus the fencing and pathway, this is not now the case.

6) Exterior lighting:

No exterior lighting is indicated on the plans however the Google Streetview image shows some lights affixed to fence posts, a Conditions might be appropriate.