



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 May 2006

By Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for
Communities and Local Government**

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Date: 8 June 2006

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/A/06/2008466

122 Singlewell Road, Gravesend DA11 7PT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr David Rice against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
- The application (Ref:GR/20050819), dated 20 July 2005, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2005.
- The development proposed is to use the front garden for off road car parking for one car by replacing the grass with paving and creating an access across the pavement via a dropped kerb.

Preliminary Matters

1. In addition to the description given above the proposal would also involve the removal of the front boundary wall. It is on the basis of this amendment to the description that I shall consider the appeal.

Decision

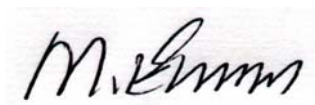
2. I dismiss the appeal.

Reasons for the Decision

3. The appeal concerns a dwelling located on the eastern side of Singlewell Road, which is a C class road subject to a 30mph speed limit. This is part of a relatively heavily used local distributor route helping to link Gravesend town centre with residential areas and the A2 further to the south. In such locations adopted Local Plan policy T5 seeks to prevent the creation of new accesses onto the main highway network except where no danger would arise and where a properly formed access can be created in an acceptable location and to an acceptable standard. In the explanatory text to the policy it is stated that it is particularly important that the main highway network of primary, district and local distributors should remain free of new accesses. In urban areas turning movements account for a significant proportion of accidents. Advice is also found in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), *Vehicle Accesses on Classified Highways Planning Guidance Note 6, August 2003*.
4. There are double yellow lines immediately outside the appeal site but to the north of this there is on street parking available on the eastern side of the street. There is similar on road parking on the opposite side of the street. This effectively reduces the carriageway to single vehicle width. Any vehicle parked at the appeal site would therefore have to reverse into or out of the carriageway where visibility and the flow of traffic are already restricted. I consider that in this context such a manoeuvre would be inherently unsafe. This would be so to an appreciably greater degree than merely parking in the street, which would be a less unexpected movement for other motorists to perceive. Even if the necessary vehicle and

pedestrian sight lines set out in the Council's SPG could be achieved, as the Appellant has claimed, this would not overcome the safety concerns that I have found.

5. Due to all these factors, I conclude that the proposal would be unduly harmful to the interest of highway safety. I am strongly reinforced in this view by the record of accidents in Singlewell Road and in reaching this conclusion I have had particular regard to the personal safety of the Appellant and his family. In consequence of the above findings the proposal would be contrary to policy T5.
6. The dwelling at no. 122 is part of an attractive two storey terrace which the Council indicates dates from the Edwardian period. There is a low boundary wall at the front with a prominent hedge behind and a lawn beyond this. These features give a sense of enclosure and visual interest to the street scene, which is characteristic of the terrace as a whole. Shrubs and plants are present in many front gardens, which enhance the street scene. The proposal would result in an uncharacteristic open frontage apparently devoid of vegetation where even one parked car would result in a cluttered appearance.
7. As a consequence the scheme would harm the street scene and the character and appearance of the terrace and locality. This would be contrary to the aims of adopted Local Plan policy TC1. The Appellant argues that the proposed works could be carried out under permitted development rights. However, the alterations are part of the proposal before me and it seems less likely to me that they would be implemented other than in association with the provision of off road parking and vehicular access.
8. There is no other frontage off road parking on this side of the street between Ferndale Road and Cross Lane East. Although there are properties with off road parking in the wider locality, there are also a significant number that do not have such a facility. I note the parking at 128 Singlewell Road. However, the Council indicates that this is longstanding in nature and was originally created in breach of planning control. In any case, I do not consider that such examples of disharmonious development should be used to justify additional works that would result in the harmful effects that I have found.
9. I have considered the consultation response of the Highway Authority. This does not address character and appearance but in respect of highway safety I take a different view for the reasons given above. The Appellant has indicated the difficulty of finding space to park in the carriageway in Singlewell Road. Nevertheless, I am not satisfied that this inconvenience can be accorded such weight as to overcome the harm that I have found to both highway safety and character and appearance.
10. I conclude that none of the above, or any other matter, is sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have found. I therefore determine that the appeal fails.



INSPECTOR