

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250570

Location: 5 Forge Lane Higham Rochester Kent

Description: Formation of frontage parking space and vehicle crossover.

Applicant: Mr Hamada Aqlan

Site Visit Date: 06 August 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Application for Planning Permission form;
Drawing no. TAB/06/46F Existing and proposed block plans;
Drawing no. TAB/06/80 Site location plan;
Drawing no. TAB/06/85A Existing layout;
Drawing no. TAB/06/86A Site location plan with surrounding parking illustrated;
Drawing no. TAB/06/102 Existing elevations;
Drawing no. TAB/06/104 Proposed elevations;
Drawing no. TAB/06/208A Proposed layout with vehicle tracking;
Drawing no. TAB/06/209B Proposed layout;
Drawing issue register no. 7 30 July 2025;
Visibility Sight Lines Guidance for Architects and Engineers April 2023;
House of Commons Transport Committee Pavement Parking 05 September 2019;
Decision notice for planning application 20250079;
Letter from the agent dated 03 June 2025;
Letter from the agent dated 26 June 2025;
Letter from the agent dated 04 July 2025;
Letter from the agent dated 30 July 2025; and
Email from the agent with three attachments received 13 August 2025.

Superseded Documents/Plans

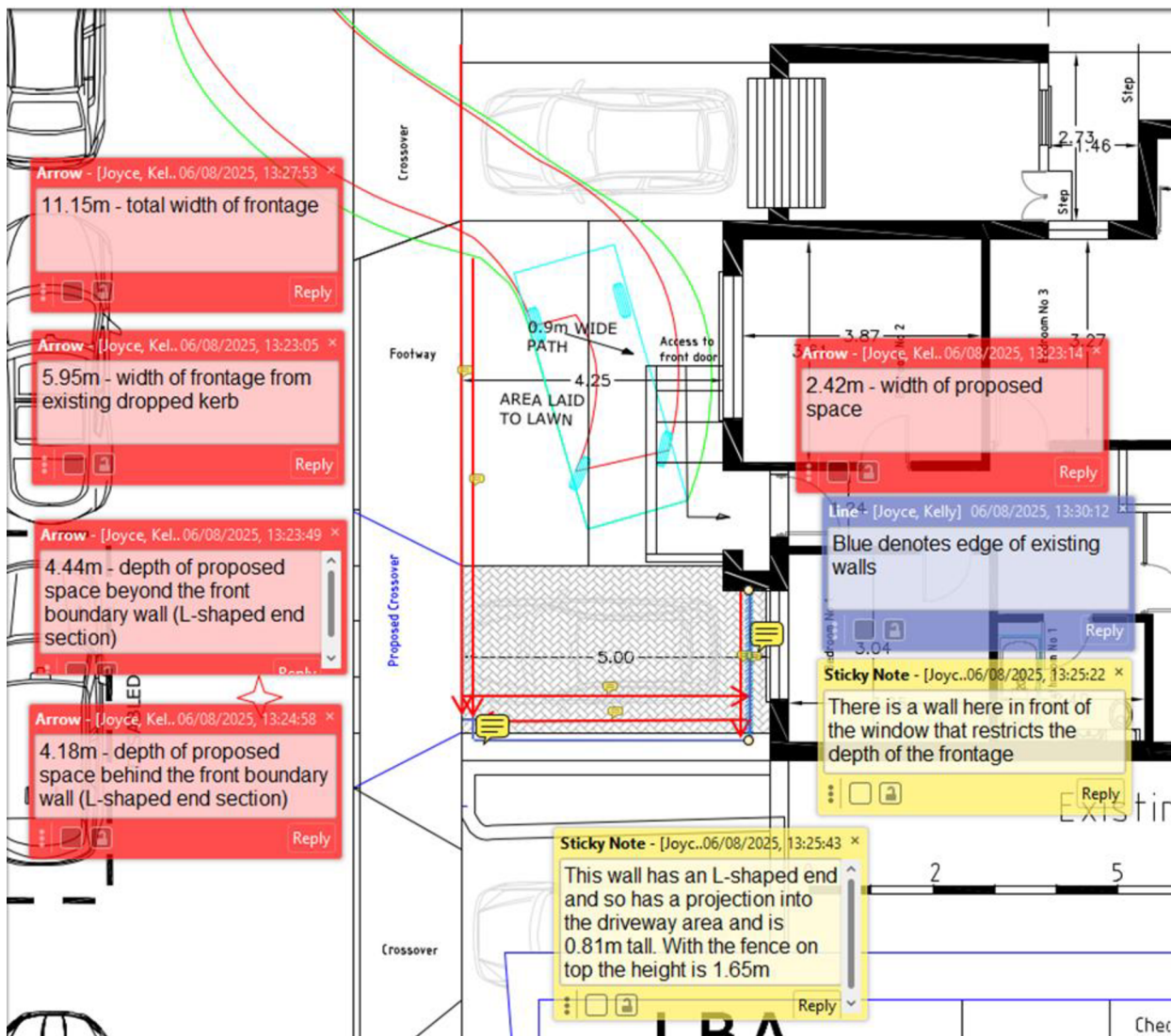
~~Drawing no. TAB/06/209A Proposed layout;~~
~~Drawing no. TAB/06/209 Proposed layout;~~
~~Drawing issue register no. 5 26 June 2025;~~
~~Drawing issue register no. 6 04 July 2025;~~

Procedural Issues

The submitted drawings do not show the site frontage accurately. An existing wall located on the side boundary with no. 7 Forge Lane (which has an L-shaped end that projects slightly across the frontage) is not illustrated nor is a wall located at the rear of the proposed parking space. The following images illustrate the existing walls (of red brick construction) and the dimensions measured at the site visit;



Photographs taken 06 August 2025



Annotated (by the case officer) extract from drawing no. TAB/06/208A (not to scale)

Whilst drawing no. TAB/06/209B illustrates a wall on the southern side of the application site, the accuracy of this drawing is questioned because it does not include the wall's L-shaped end, there is no wall at the rear of the parking space and also the depiction of the existing wall/access at no. 7 Forge Lane appears incorrect.

It is noted that the agent has provided a number of amended drawings and documents during the course of the processing of this application. Although not requested by the case officer, they have all been included as part of the submission and taken into consideration during the determination process.

Because there are in principle, highway safety and design issues with the proposed development, the applicant has not been asked to provide any further amended drawings. It is considered that the proposal can be appropriately determined with reference to site photographs, measurements and the submitted documents.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20250507	Application for a Proposed Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed siting of a caravan for ancillary residential use in the rear garden.	Certificate Granted	24.07.2025
20250079	Erection of single storey rear extension and rear dormer; Conversion of loft space into habitable rooms; Formation of frontage parking space and vehicle crossover. AP 2025/031/REF Appeal against refusal	Refused In progress	10.04.2025
20070419	Erection of single storey rear extension to form dining room/living room, kitchen, utility room and ensuite bathroom/wc.	Permitted	25.06.2007

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

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 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 – Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020
- 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 (2025)
- Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)
- Gravesham Front Driveway Design Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

KCC - Highways & Transportation

Initial response:

No vehicle or pedestrian visibility splays have been provided and these are required.

There appears to be a discrepancy between drawing TAB/06/85A and TAB06/209 with the former showing approximately 10m between the two crossovers and the latter showing approximately 4m. Clarification is required. Please note, planning permission does not convey approval for construction of the crossing, it would require separate approval from the vehicle crossover team. It is unlikely that the vehicle crossover team would approve this application if the required 4.5m minimum width of raised kerbs between the two crossovers cannot be achieved. This is because you would be unable to park a vehicle between the two crossovers, further reducing on street provision, in a street that is heavily parked.

I wish to place a holding objection on the application until the above information is provided. Should the LPA be minded to grant planning permission prior to the above information being provided and approved, the following conditions should be attached:

- Provision and maintenance of 2 metres x metres pedestrian visibility splays behind the footway on both sides of the access with no obstructions over 0.6 metres above footway level, prior to the use of the site commencing.
- Use of a bound surface for the first 5 metres of the access from the edge of the highway.
- Provision of measures to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the highway.

Please note all street lamp columns and utility plant needs to be situated at least 1.5m from the location of the top of the ramped kerb of the proposed crossover. Any street furniture, lamp columns and utility plant within 1.5m must be relocated at the expense of the applicant.

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.

Second response:

The vehicle visibility splay has not been provided for review and is required.

In re-visiting this application it is noted that whilst the length of the driveway is shown to be 5m in length, the presence of the wall in the north-eastern corner (adjacent to the front door), reduces the length to 4.25m x 2.4m (or 5m x 2m). This does not meet the required 4.8m x 2.4m dimensions set out in the KCC vehicle crossover guidance, nor the required 5m x 2.5m set out in SPG4 (the current adopted parking standards in Gravesham). As set out in the previous response, the KCC vehicle crossover team is also unlikely to accept the proposal as it would not meet the minimum 4.5m of full height kerb between the crossovers.

As it is unlikely that the driveway can be extended / amended to resolve the above issues, it is recommended that this application be refused.

[The information in the first response, following the paragraph that reads '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.' is reiterated.]

Third response:

Whilst the Applicant has provided a document related to visibility splays, a vehicle visibility splay (2.4m x 43m) has not been provided for review and is required.

Pedestrian splays are shown on plan TAB/06/209B, although the insert is of DMRB, which is not appropriate for this residential setting. The splay to the north / west is shown as 2m x 2m from the northern side of the driveway, and is correct and acceptable. The splay to the south / east is incorrect as it is within the driveway itself, instead of adjacent to it. It is noted that a relaxation of the standard to 1m x 1m splays is sometimes acceptable to KCC, although it is unclear from the plans what level of splay is achievable as the site boundary is not shown on the plan. It is also unclear whether the third-party land (likely to be needed for the splay), is over 0.6m in height. This should be confirmed.

Measurements taken by KCC from the submitted plan confirm that the driveway would be 5m x 2.4m at its narrowest point. Whilst this would meet the KCC vehicle crossover guidance, it does not meet Gravesham's standards (SPG 4), which requires 5m x 2.5m.

Should the application be permitted, the Applicant should be aware that separate permission would be needed from the KCC vehicle crossover team. The vehicle crossovers team requires a minimum of 4.5m of full height kerb between two crossovers. The plan shows only 4m of full height kerb between no.5's existing and proposed dropped kerbs.

There is a highway pole and a bollard located within close proximity of the proposed driveway, although the distance is not shown. Should these assets be located within 1.5m of the proposed crossover, they may need to be relocated and this would be at the applicant's expense.

I wish to place a holding objection on the application until the above information is provided. Should the LPA be minded to grant planning permission prior to the above information being provided and approved, the following conditions should be attached:

- Provision and maintenance of 2 metres x metres pedestrian visibility splays behind the footway on both sides of the access with no obstructions over 0.6 metres above footway level, prior to the use of the site commencing.
- Use of a bound surface for the first 5.5 metres of the access from the edge of the highway.
- Provision of measures to prevent the discharge of surface water onto the highway.

[The information in the first and second responses, following the paragraph that reads '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.' is reiterated.]

Ward Councillor (Higham and Shorne)

I have no objections providing the Borough Council is satisfied that the development does not contravene any green belt status or materially impact on the amenity of the adjoining neighbouring properties.

Higham Parish Council

No response received.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by a site notice and to five neighbouring properties by letter. Three representations (all in support) have been received and are summarised as follows;

- Supports the application because when he visited the applicant he parked on Forge Lane and his car's wing mirror was damaged.
- When visiting the applicant, very little parking is available on Forge Lane so they park on a different street.
- If the crossover is available, the applicant's son can bring his disabled grandfather to visit.

Officer's Analysis

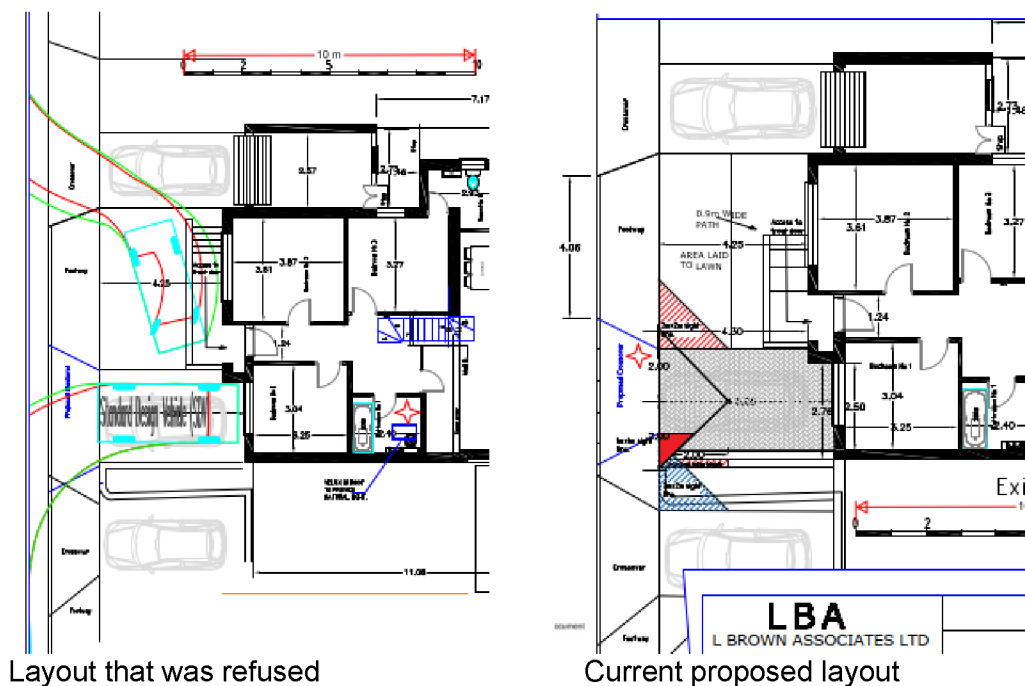
Background

In April 2025, planning permission was refused for the erection of a single storey rear extension and rear dormer; the conversion of loft space into habitable rooms; and the formation of frontage parking space and vehicle crossover at the application site (reference 20250079). That application is the subject of an ongoing appeal against the refusal (reference APP/K2230/D/25/3367552).

The ground of refusal relating to the proposed parking space was;

2. The formation of a frontage parking space would undermine the verdant nature of the site frontage, to the detriment of visual amenity and would result in an increased potential for traffic conflict and hazardous manoeuvres, which would impede traffic flows and cause dangers to passing pedestrians and vehicles. As such, the proposed development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the application property, to the visual amenities of the surrounding street scene and to highway safety and would be contrary to Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), to paragraphs 115(b) and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021), to the GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023, to the Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (2023) and to the Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2023).

The following are images illustrating the proposed layout for the new access in application 20250079 and the current application;



The refused proposal is very similar to the development that is the subject of the current application. The main alterations are that an area of the frontage would be laid to grass, the new parking area would be surfaced with porous block paving, the parking space would be slightly less wide and a wall on the southern side would be lowered in height.

Design, Character and Appearance

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF 2024) sets out various design requirements and includes the need for the development to add to the overall quality of an area; be visually attractive; and be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF 2024 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially

where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the built environment and take account of the scale, height, building lines and other architectural features of buildings. Account should also be taken of strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.

In relation to frontage parking, relevant considerations in the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and the GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023 are that;

- 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.
- Must be designed to avoid cars overhanging the pavement. Minimum car parking space dimensions of 2.5 metres wide (or 2.7 metres where adjoining an enclosed boundary) and 5 metres deep.
- Should not include gates but if so, they should not open outwards, have sufficient space to open inwards whilst a car is parked and should not block visibility.
- 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.
- There should be no water run-off from the forecourt onto the public highway.
- Where loose surfacing is proposed, include a minimum of one metre depth non-loose hardstanding at the front edge of the driveway.
- Repair or restore any original decorative tiled paths.
- Pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays should be provided.

It is noted that the site frontage has already been subject to development work, which would require planning permission in itself. The following images highlight the changes that have been made without the benefit of planning permission;



Google street view May 2023



Site visit photograph 06 August 2025

The works undertaken appear to be generally in line with the proposed development, except that a block paved finish has not been put in place and there is no grassed area between the two parking areas. Notably, some of the existing walls are shown inaccurately on the submitted drawings. Overall, it is noted that the existing frontage is a breach of planning control, which has been brought to the attention of the GBC Planning Enforcement Team.

As illustrated in the photographs above, the loss of the original grassed area and front boundary wall has undermined the verdant nature of the site frontage and has been detrimental to the character and appearance of the application property and to the visual amenities of the surrounding street scene.

The proposed development would result in the frontage being partially block paved and partially grassed and a single parking space would be provided. No specific details have been provided in relation to the drainage for the parking area (the proposal, although stated to include porous block paving, may well lead to surface water run off onto the public highway) and there would be no planting except grass.

Despite the dimensions shown on the submitted drawings (and the applicant's reference to a 5 metre depth in his letter dated 03 June 2025), the maximum available dimensions for the proposed parking space are 2.42 metres (width) by 4.44 metres (depth). These dimensions were measured by the case officer on 06 August 2025 and are as a result of the locations of existing red brick walls at the application site (the walls are illustrated in the above image and are at the rear and sides of the proposed parking area).

Due to the restrictions of the existing walls, the proposal would not have minimum dimensions of 2.5 metres wide (or 2.7 metres where adjoining an enclosed boundary) and 5 metres deep and would result in vehicles overhanging the footway and there being poor accessibility around them. Indeed, some vehicles may be precluded from parking there altogether. This would not accord with the GBC design guidance and would be a negative visual and safety feature of the proposal. When this adverse impact is considered in conjunction with the other adverse highway safety impacts set out below, significant questions can be raised about the appropriateness of this proposal in principle.

The provision of a grassed area would reduce the extent of the hard surfacing at the application site and provide a visual improvement over the existing unauthorised situation but in order to balance the loss of the original verdant garden and in line with the GBC design guidance, it would be preferable for other vegetation to be incorporated into the proposal and for the landscaping to surround the proposed parking

space. Such amendments could be the subject of a suitably worded landscaping condition but the limited available space would be likely to preclude this. Details of the proposed drainage (to show that no surface water run off would occur) could be required by planning condition.

The application site is located in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA) and as such, Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 is relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications. In relation to the Higham Arable Farmlands LCA, this document states that the overall condition of the landscape is poor and that it has moderate sensitivity. It recommends that the key landscape elements in poor condition should be restored and that the whole area should be safeguarded as a prominent landscape feature in the wider landscape.

The application site is located in Higham village and the proposed development would be within an existing residential curtilage. The proposal would result in an increase in the amount of built development but would not adversely affect the overall landscape character of the surrounding area. As such, it would be in line with Policy CS12 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Overall, by virtue of the substandard size of the proposed parking space, the proposed development would lead to vehicles overhanging the footway and be unacceptable in terms of design. As such, the proposal would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area and would not be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014), paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021) and the GBC Front Driveway Guidance (2023).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed development would not impact upon the private amenity space or internal layout of the application property and would not adversely impact on the privacy, daylight or sunlight of its occupants. As such, the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of future occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Neighbouring Amenity

Due to the design of the proposed development and to the layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing impacts to the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings. As such, the proposed development would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Parking and Highways

Paragraph 115(b) of the NPPF 2024 requires new development to ensure that safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users and paragraph 116 sets out that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) require new development to mitigate its impact on the highway and public transport networks and to provide sufficient parking in accordance with adopted parking standards.

Saved Policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) requires new accesses to be in an acceptable location and to an acceptable standard and to not give rise to danger.

According to the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards, a three bedroom dwelling should have two vehicle parking spaces and according to the KCC Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025) document, parking spaces located perpendicular to the roadway should be a minimum of 2.4 metres (width) by 4.8 or 6 metres (depth). Six metres depth would be required if the space is in front of an access door or garage. Furthermore, according to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design

Guide (2021), vehicle parking spaces should be a minimum of 2.5 metres in width (2.7 metres where they adjoin an enclosed boundary) and 5 metres depth.

KCC Highways & Transportation have raised an objection to the proposal due to the lack of a vehicle visibility splay (2.4m x 43m) being illustrated and due to a pedestrian visibility splay being shown incorrectly. They highlight that the southern pedestrian visibility splay potentially includes land outside the ownership of the applicant, which casts doubt over what is actually achievable. Lastly, they state that the KCC Vehicle Crossover Team is unlikely to accept the proposal because it would not meet the required minimum 4.5 metres width of available full height kerb between the existing and proposed crossovers.

The application property has three bedrooms and on-site parking for one/two vehicles (in an existing garage and on a frontage parking space). It is noted that the existing garage does not meet the minimum size for a single garage set out in the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards but the existing parking space has appropriate dimensions. It is also noted that the application site is located in a relatively sustainable village location, close to local shops and services and a bus route. In addition, on-street parking is available in the locality. Therefore, the existing shortfall of one parking space would not necessarily be considered detrimental to highway safety.

The proposed development would provide an additional frontage parking space and dropped kerb, which would be welcomed in principle. However, in accordance with Saved Policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), the detailed design of the proposal must ensure that the proposed parking area is in an acceptable location, designed to an acceptable standard and would not give rise to danger.

Despite the dimensions shown on the submitted drawings (and the applicant's reference to a 5 metre depth in his letter dated 03 June 2025), the maximum available dimensions for the proposed parking space are 2.42 metres (width) by 4.44 metres (depth). These dimensions were measured by the case officer on 06 August 2025. The size is restricted due to the encroachment of the existing walls around the proposed parking area. As such, the actual proposed parking space would have dimensions that would be below both the Kent and Gravesham minimum depth standards and below the Gravesham width standards (NB the space would adjoin an enclosed boundary) and would lead to vehicles overhanging the footpath, to the detriment of pedestrian safety and having restricted access, to the detriment of future users.

The application site is located on a classified road (C Class) which is a local distributor route and as such, it is relatively busy. There are no parking restrictions in the vicinity of the application site and it is located close to a bus stop and a crossroads. There is a bollard and a signpost on the pavement in front of the application site, which could adversely affect the accessibility to, and visibility from, the proposed access (and at the very least would need to be relocated/removed at the applicant's expense if a new crossover were to be provided).

Reference to paragraph 4 of the Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025) illustrates that as a general rule, increasing the number of points on a highway where vehicles turn, increases the potential for traffic conflict and that proposals for additional access points will be assessed on their own merit and approval only given if there is no significant impact to on-street parking demand. Furthermore, it sets out that the provision of two dropped kerbs should allow vehicles to drive on and off a driveway in forward gear and be separated by at least 4.5 metres width (this is to allow for on-street parking between them). Paragraph 4 reads as follows;

You may apply for a separate entrance and exit or an additional access point where one already exists, but the general rule is that increasing the number of points on a highway where vehicles turn, increases the potential for traffic conflict. We will assess the site on its own merit and will only be granted if there is no significant impact to on street parking demand.

If your property already has a dropped kerb, we will not approve a second dropped kerb unless there is sufficient space within the boundary of your property to drive a vehicle on and off your driveway in forward gear and in one continuous movement. The minimum measurement of your frontage must be 15m width by 4m depth. Your application will be refused if you do not have sufficient space. Each access will have a maximum of 4 flat kerbs and your existing access may need to be altered to achieve this at your own cost. There will need to be a minimum width of full height kerbs between the two accesses of a minimum of 4.5m.

The proposed development would not allow vehicles to drive on and off the application site in a forward gear and would not be separated by at least 4.5 metres width from an existing crossover. As such, it is considered that the proposal would increase the potential for traffic conflict. Furthermore, the agent has identified that there is a high demand for on-street parking in the area surrounding the application site and that existing parking obstructs the existing driveway (in this letter dated 03 June 2025). Therefore, the loss of on-street parking outside the application site, as a result of the provision of a second access, would exacerbate existing on-street parking pressures.

As a result of the highway characteristics described above and the design of the proposal, reversing onto the proposed parking area, in addition to vehicles reversing onto the existing parking area, is likely to increase the potential for traffic conflict and hazardous manoeuvres, which would impede traffic flows and cause dangers to passing pedestrians and vehicles. As such, the proposed development would be detrimental to highway safety.

In his letters dated 26 June and 04 July 2025, the agent refers to drawing no. TAB/06/208A as showing that the front garden area adjacent to the front door is too small to manoeuvre and park in. This information has been provided in response to the KCC Highways & Transportation requirement for a 4.5 metres available width between the two accesses. However, it should be highlighted that the 4.5 metre space is to allow for on-street parking between the two dropped kerbs and not to allow parking at the application site.

In terms of vehicle visibility, a full assessment of the impact of the proposal on passing traffic cannot be undertaken, due to the lack of a vehicle visibility splay within the submission. In terms of pedestrian visibility, the northern side of the access would be acceptable, but the southern side has not been drawn correctly. In addition, the existing southern side boundary wall does not appear to be accurately drawn (the L-shaped section at the site frontage is missing). Therefore, it is difficult to fully assess the impact of the proposal on pedestrian visibility.

It is noted that the existing boundary treatment between the application site and no. 7 Forge Lane consists of a wall that is 0.8 metres tall and a lattice fence that is 1.7 metres tall. As such, there are currently obstructions above 0.6 metres in height within the area that would be required as a visibility splay. This would impede pedestrian visibility and be detrimental to highway safety.

It is acknowledged that drawing no. TAB/06/209B shows a proposed reduction in the height of the southern boundary wall to 0.6 metres, which could be secured by planning condition. Furthermore, a planning condition could be used to secure an amended visibility drawing. However, the fact that there is a higher fence and an area of raised land, not within the ownership of the applicant, within the area of the required pedestrian visibility splay, would preclude the use of such a condition. As such, it has not been proven that the proposal would have appropriate pedestrian visibility on the southern side.

The agent suggests that there are many existing situations where accesses do not have pedestrian visibility splays and refers to the fact that Highways Authorities should be consistent in their decision making. He has also provided a Visibility Sight Lines Guidance document that has been taken into consideration during the determination of this application. However, it is considered that the fact that existing accesses have visibility issues would not justify granting a planning permission that would cause adverse highway safety impacts and in any event, every planning application must be determined on its own merits.

The representations in support of the proposal are acknowledged. They have raised concerns about parking on Forge Lane and their need to park elsewhere and the applicant's son states that the proposal would allow his disabled grandfather to visit. These comments highlight the existing high demand for parking in Forge Lane. Improved accessibility for a disabled visitor to the site would be welcomed but due to the restrictions in the size of the parking space, this may not actually be achievable.

In his letter dated 03 June 2025, the agent explains that the proposed parking area would permit the future purchase of an electric car, so that visitors and others can charge their vehicles on site. The provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging at the application site would be a sustainable feature that would be welcomed. However, it is noted that the proposed development does not actually include an EV charging point and such a feature could be provided at the existing parking space at the application site.

In his letter dated 03 June 2025, the agent refers to a crossover being approved at no. 24 Forge Lane. The proposal at no. 24 Forge Lane (planning permission reference 20230616) was for alterations to an existing dropped kerb and related to an access that had been in use for ten years. As such, that proposal is not directly comparable to the situation at the application site and in any event, every planning application must be determined on its own merits.

The application details illustrate existing crossovers in the vicinity of the application site (drawing no. TAB/06/86A). As part of the determination of this application, the surrounding context is a relevant consideration, but the relevance of existing accesses diminishes, where they do not exhibit the same characteristics as the application site or are not located close to it. Therefore, it is not necessary to consider the planning history of all the existing vehicle accesses in Forge Lane. Instead, the following paragraph highlights the circumstances relating to those accesses located closest to the application site.

Planning permission was granted for the vehicle accesses at nos. 7 and 11 Forge Lane under references 19770462 and 20040466 respectively. Nos. 3 and 9 Forge Lane do not have planning permission and presumably their accesses have become lawful through the passage of time. All these properties have a single access point, with areas of planting (at the height of the original garden) located on either side. As such, these existing accesses are not directly comparable to the situation at the application site, where the whole of the original front garden has been removed and the proposed development is for a second access point, on a site where one already exists.

In his letter dated 03 June 2025, the agent cites six appeals. However, these are not directly comparable to the development, which is the subject of this application, because they relate to proposals for new vehicle accesses on sites where no existing vehicle access exists. Furthermore, they are not located anywhere near the application site.

In his letter dated 03 June 2025, the agent suggests that the current access is too steep. However, the following image illustrates that the existing access is usable, with a relatively gentle slope.



Photograph taken 20 March 2025

The agent has provided a House of Commons Transport Committee document relating to pavement parking. However, this information has limited relevance to the determination of this application.

In a letter dated 30 July 2025 and in email received on 13 August 2025, the agent has referred to two housing proposals in Swale, where the approved highways details do not include pedestrian or visibility splays. However, as new housing developments, these are not directly comparable to the situation at the application site and in any event, each planning application must be determined on its own merits.

Taking all of the above issues into account, it is considered that the highways benefits of the proposal (that additional parking would be provided at the application site, that the proposed development may improve disabled access and that EV charging provision could be provided) would not overcome the negative impacts (vehicles overhanging the footway and the proposed space having insufficient width, the increased potential for traffic conflict and hazardous manoeuvres, which would impede traffic flows and cause dangers to passing pedestrians and vehicles and a failure to demonstrate adequate vehicle and pedestrian visibility).

As such, the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety and be contrary to Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014), to Saved Policies T1 and T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994, to paragraph 115(b) of the NPPF 2024, to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021), to the Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (2023) and to the Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The application site is located within an area of multi-period archaeological potential and Groundwater Source Protection Zone 3. However, as the proposed development is within the confines of an existing residential garden and only a relatively small amount of groundworks would occur, then it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts to groundwater or archaeology. As such, the proposal would be in line with Policies CS19 and CS20 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policy TC7 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

The comments of the Ward Councillor are noted.

In his letters dated 26 June, 04 July and 30 July 2025, the agent has outlined his concerns that all the submitted application details (including his letters) may not have been available on the Borough Council's website. However, it should be noted that all the relevant drawings and documents (including the agent's letters) have been available to both consultees and the public, via the website, during the determination process.

Conclusion

The proposed development would have no adverse residential amenity, groundwater or archaeological impacts and would provide an opportunity for additional on-site parking, EV charging and disabled access. However, by virtue of the substandard size of the proposed parking space, the lack of pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays and the increased potential for traffic conflict and hazardous manoeuvres, the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety and visual amenity.

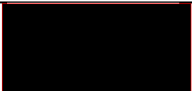
Overall, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the proposed development attract significant weight and would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal. Therefore, following a thorough assessment of the application and all material planning considerations, it is considered that the proposed development cannot be supported.

Recommendation

That planning permission should be refused on the following grounds;

1. By virtue of the substandard size of the proposed parking space, the lack of pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays and the increased potential for traffic conflict and hazardous manoeuvres, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed development would make safe and sufficient provision for the parking of cars within the application site. As such, the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety, impede traffic flows and cause dangers to passing pedestrians and vehicles, and be contrary to Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014), to paragraph 115(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024, to Saved Policies T1, T5 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994, to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021), to the GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023, to the Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (2023) and to the Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025).
2. By virtue of the substandard size of the proposed parking space, the proposed development would lead to vehicles overhanging the footway and be unacceptable in terms of design. As such, the proposal would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area and would not be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014), paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide SPD (2021) and the GBC Front Driveway Guidance (2023).

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	14th August 2025	Dated:	15 August 2025