
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2026

by **C Housden BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th February 2026

Appeal Ref: 6001994

7 Old Road West, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0LH

- 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 Marco Manente against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application ref is 20250563.
 - The development proposed is formation of vehicular access on to B261 and provision of one off-street parking space in front garden with associated hard standing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Marco Manente against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council. This application is subject to a separate decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on highway and pedestrian safety; and
 - the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Highway and pedestrian safety

4. The appeal site is set on Old Road West, a B-classified road with a 30mph speed limit. The site is situated in close proximity to a traffic light-controlled crossroad which includes a pedestrian crossing.
 5. The oncoming traffic from the crossroads enters Old Road West on the nearside carriage to the appeal site. Due to the road layout, vehicles approaching from Singlewell Road and Old Road East have no visibility of the appeal site on the approach to the crossroads. Drivers would therefore only have first sight of the proposed access whilst navigating the crossroads and entering into Old Road West, where attention would be focused on completing the manoeuvre.
 6. Due to the dimensions of the proposed driveway, a future user would not be able to turn within the site, and at least one movement would be required to be undertaken in reverse gear. A future user reversing out of the proposed parking space would have a significantly hindered field of vision through the boundary
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treatment, whilst reversing into the space from Old Road West would pose reduced visibility risks whilst also impeding the flow of traffic along the carriage.

7. In relation to pedestrian visibility, the evidence shows that 2m x 2m splays are required. Whilst these are shown on the proposed site plan, the required splays would only be achieved if a future car is parked at a specific angle within the proposed driveway. Given the width of the parking space, it is likely cars would be frequently parked in a different alignment where drivers subsequently would not have clear visibility of both sides of the footway. Furthermore, at least one vehicle movement would be required in reverse gear where views of pedestrians would be restricted.
8. In these circumstances, with the proposal situated in such close proximity to the crossroads with traffic approaching on the nearside carriage, the evidence does not demonstrate that the introduction of vehicular manoeuvres with limited visibility in such a location would not result in an unsafe arrangement through both the impediment of traffic and risk of collisions with other road users and pedestrians. It therefore follows that the appeal proposal fails to demonstrate that it would not be detrimental to pedestrian and highway safety. The purported slower speed of vehicle movements in this location would be insufficient to justify the lack of evidence in this regard.
9. Kent County Council as Highway Authority (HA) did not raise an objection as part of the application, subject to conditions. One such condition was the demolition of the boundary pillars to 0.6m in height. However, notwithstanding that these pillars are shown as being retained on the proposed plans, other parts of the side boundary would limit pedestrian visibility depending on the alignment of the parked car. I am therefore not convinced that such a condition would ensure adequate pedestrian visibility splays could be achieved. Furthermore, the subject of reversing manoeuvres into and out of the site is not covered in the responses of the HA, which I consider to be particularly important given the close proximity to the junction. In these circumstances, I attribute limited weight to the responses of the HA in this regard.
10. The style of driveway arrangement with limited on-site turning is prevalent through Old Road West which I observed on my visit. Furthermore, a number of examples of planning permissions granted by the Council and appeal decisions for similar developments within the road and surrounding area have also been brought to my attention¹. However, the appeal site is situated closer to the junction than the examples and is on the side of the road where on-coming traffic approaches the appeal site on the nearside carriage from the crossroads, rather than from Old Road West. The localised site-specific context of the appeal site is therefore not directly comparable to these examples and therefore they do not justify the proposed access and parking arrangement.
11. I also observed that both the adjacent neighbours of Nos 5 and 9 of Old Road West had driveways. However, in the case of No 5 it had two accesses which could allow vehicles to enter and leave in forward gear. In the case of No 9, this is located slightly further away from the junction and rather than provide justification for the appeal proposal, its existence points to a need for such proposals to be

¹ 12 Old Road West (LPA ref 20251121), 13 Old Road West (PINS ref 2089351) 14 Old Road West (PINS ref 6001704), 16 Old Road West, (PINS ref 3375413), 20 Old Road West (PINS ref 3349193), 37 Old Road West (PINS ref 3351002) and Warner House, Cotton Lane (PINS ref 3251527).

carefully controlled in order to ensure that highway and pedestrian safety within the area is not undermined.

12. The appellant has highlighted guidance from Manual for Streets 1 & 2 which sets out the general safety of frontage accesses within urban areas, and it stating factors to consider in relation to frontage accesses include the turning around of vehicles within the property where this is possible. The appellant also notes that the Council's Householder Extension Alteration Design SPD (2021) does not require on-site turning.
13. Whilst I have had regard to this guidance, it is not specific to this exact site. I have assessed the proposal based on the site-specific circumstances before me where I have particular concerns relating to a lack of evidence addressing the proximity of the access to the junction and the introduction of associated vehicle movements with hindered visibility.
14. The appellant contends that the Council has been overly reliant on the Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (2023) and Gravesham Front Driveway Design Guidance (2023) which has not been formally adopted or been subject to formal consultation. I note that both these documents state that they are informal guidance on their respective front covers. In these circumstances I would only afford limited weight to these documents, however this does not alleviate my concerns that I have identified.
15. The evidence fails to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in considerable harm to highway and pedestrian safety. It therefore follows that the development would conflict with Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) (LPCS) and saved Policies T1 and T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (saved 2014). These policies, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that development mitigates its impact on the highway and ensure that the formation of a new access would be within an acceptable location where no danger would arise.

Character and appearance

16. The area has a residential character and appearance with properties set back from the road with prominent frontages. The appearance of the frontages is mixed, with some properties containing a landscaped frontage, often enclosed by low walls and hedgerow, whilst others contain an open front drive. The appeal property presently has a grassed front garden area with a low frontage boundary wall and hedgerow.
17. The appeal proposal would remove much of the front garden area and front boundary wall, replacing it with an open paved parking area. Areas of grass and hedgerow closest to the property would be retained. Whilst this part of Old Road West does contain a higher portion of enclosed frontages, the prevailing character of the area is nevertheless mixed and open frontage driveways are still a prevalent part of the streetscene. In these circumstances, the appeal proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
18. A previous proposal for a front driveway at the site was dismissed at appeal². In particular, the inspector of this appeal concluded that the removal of the frontage

² PINS ref APP/K2230/D/12/2172265 dated 20 April 2012

wall would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. However, it is clear from the number of recent examples that I have been provided with, and from my observations on site, that the character and appearance of the area has evolved since this decision and the streetscene is now more varied in its character and appearance. I have based my assessment on the specific circumstances currently before me.

19. The appeal proposal would therefore comply with Policy CS19 of the LPCS. This policy, amongst other matters, seeks to ensure development integrates well with the surrounding local area.

Other Matters

20. The proposal would facilitate a parking space at the appeal site which would improve the living conditions of the occupiers of the host property and reduce pressures on on-street parking within the wider area. However, due to the small scale of the proposal this would carry limited weight. These other matters do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

21. 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. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Housden

INSPECTOR