



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240407

Location: 2 Newton Abbot Road Northfleet Gravesend Kent

Description: Installation of a dropped kerb. Removal of grass verge to gain access to driveway at front of property.

Applicant: Mr Gurpreet Singh

Site Visit Date: 13.06.2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form
- Site Location Map
- Drawing No: 2303-004 (Existing Block Plan)
- Drawing No: 2303-003 (Block Plan)
- Drawing No: 2303-004 (Proposed Block Plan)
- Drawing No: 2303-001 (Existing Front Garden)
- Drawing No: 2303-002 (Proposed Front Garden)

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Outcome	Decision Date
20231119	Installation of a dropped kerb. Removal of grass verge to gain access to driveway at front of property.	Refused	12.02.2024

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS11 - Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (November 1994):

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) sets out those 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 The review 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 a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) general conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG2 - Residential Layout Guidelines (2020)
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- SPD4 - Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Local Ward Councillors

No comments received.

Neighbouring properties

The application was advertised by way of site notice and letters to 9 surrounding properties. The consultation period expired on 12.07.2024 and no comments were received.

Analysis

Background

The proposal is a resubmission of 20231119 which was refused owing to the below two grounds:

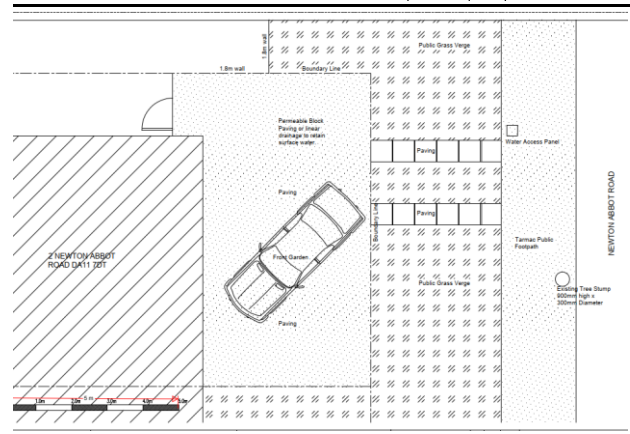
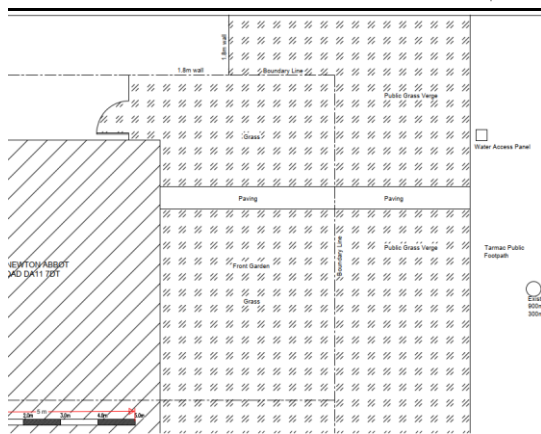
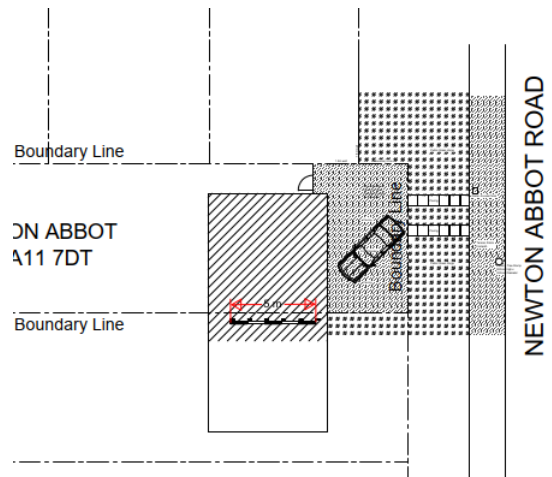
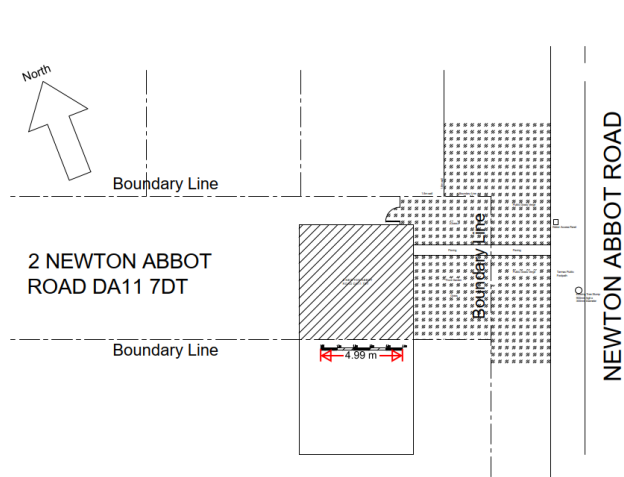
1. *It is considered that the permanent loss of the grass verge and soft landscaped frontage to hardstanding would erode considerably the soft landscape quality of the streetscape and have an urbanising effect. The plans fail to demonstrate adequate retention of biodiversity which would reduce the harsh impact of a hard-paved driveway and therefore the proposal is considered to be detrimental to the visual amenity of the street scene and is contrary to Policies CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), SPD4 - Householder Alterations and Extensions Guidance (2020) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) achieving well-designed and beautiful places.*
2. *The frontage of No. 2 Newton Abbot Road is substandard in depth and width to accommodate parking of vehicles. As such this would be contrary to Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), Saved Policies P3 and T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994), paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and SPD4 - Householder Alterations and Extensions Guidance (2020).*

Proposal

The proposal seeks to partially remove a grass verge to the front of the property and install a dropped kerb to allow for access to a driveway on the property frontage.

Existing

Proposed

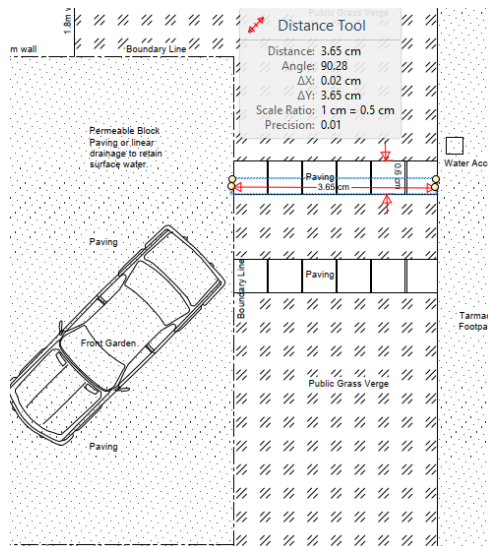


Character and Appearance

The application site is a two storey semi detached dwelling, the property is set back from the main highway and has a grass verge separating it from the pedestrian footpath. At present the frontage appears to be utilised as an off-road parking area which involves the occupants mounting the kerb and driving over the grass verge.



The proposal would seek to remove two strips measuring approx. 0.6m x 3.65 m of the grass verge and would involve removing all of the soft landscaping and replacing it with hard paving to facilitate off road parking for two vehicles. The driveway will have a depth of some 4.7m and a width of 8.7m.



It is noted that No.1 Newton Abbot Road, has removed some of the soft verge to the front of their property, however this appears to be more of a pedestrian access.



Policy CS19 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) requires new developments to be visually attractive, to conserve and enhance the character of the local built environment and also integrate well with the surrounding area. It is considered that the hardstanding and access over the grass verge would have a detrimental impact on the street scene, as it would not enhance the character or appearance of the area thus resulting in a net loss of biodiversity.

Well maintained grass verges are a typical and repeated feature along Newton Abbott Road and the neighbouring roads. The grass verges run between the public footpath and the residential properties thus softening the streetscene and enabling a positive and attractive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Removal of the grass verge would harm the wider character and set a dangerous precedent which could result in several sections of the grass verges being lost to hardstanding, furthermore the loss of the grass in the front garden would also increase the urban form in the area which would have a negative impact.



In an appeal for a similar application at 162 Livingstone Road APP/K2230/D/20/3247460 dated 2nd November 2020 the appeal officer stated:

*“The loss of this undisturbed verge would further harden the appearance of the streetscene and result in harm to the appearance of the cul-de-sac where the grass verges are currently uninterrupted....” See **Appendix 1 for full appeal decision***

A further appeal for a similar proposal was also dismissed with the appeal officer citing:
(Appeal at 66 Livingstone Road (APP/K2230/W/21/3286036 dated 7th March 2022);

“As a result the proposal would unacceptably detract from the visually soft suburban character and appearance of the street scene. This harm would be exacerbated by the associated negative impact on the level and quality of biodiversity in the locality, due to the loss of the verge and lawn.”
See Appendix 2 for full appeal decision

It is acknowledged that the applicant has attempted to lessen the loss of the grass verge by resorting to tyre tracks instead of a large section of grass however this is still considered to be interrupt the grass verge and damage the character and appearance of the street scene.

The proposal also seeks to entirely remove the soft landscaping to the property frontage and replace it with a hardstanding. Below is an extract from the Council's adopted design guidance:



It is considered that the permanent loss of the grass verge and soft landscaped frontage to hardstanding would erode considerably the soft landscape quality of the streetscape and have an urbanising effect. The plans fail to demonstrate adequate retention of biodiversity which would reduce the harsh impact of a hard-paved driveway and therefore the proposal is considered to be detrimental to the visual amenity of the street scene and is contrary to Policies CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) as well as Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) achieving well-designed and beautiful places.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The application provides acceptable conditions that safeguard the amenity of future occupiers in accordance with Policy CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

Neighbouring Amenity

The proposal will not cause any material harm to the amenity of any adjoining properties in terms of loss of light, outlook, privacy or sense of enclosure.

As such the application is considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy CS19 Local Plan Core Strategy 2014.

Parking and Highways

The hardstanding is insufficient and contrary to the Kent County Council's parking standards (SPG 4) which states a space should have a minimum depth of 5m and a minimum width of 2.5m. It is evident that adequate parking cannot be achieved to the front of the property and as a result - as can be seen with the existing parking arrangement – there will be an overhang onto public highway land which is unacceptable. As such the application is contrary to the minimum depth stated in KCCs parking standards (SPG 4) and cannot be supported on highway grounds.



Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Impact on Biodiversity - as aforementioned within this report, the proposed development will result in a significant loss of soft landscaping within the front garden and will therefore result in a loss of biodiversity. Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) states that developments should result in a biodiversity net gain. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposal has not addressed the previous reasons for refusal, it should be noted that adequate parking cannot be achieved on this site due to the dimensions of the front garden. The proposal is recommended for refusal owing to the below grounds:

The permanent loss of the grass verge, soft landscaped frontage to hardstanding would erode considerably the soft landscape quality of the streetscape and have an urbanising effect. The plans fail to demonstrate adequate retention of biodiversity which would reduce the harsh impact of a hard-paved driveway and therefore the proposal is considered to be detrimental to the visual amenity of the street scene and is contrary to Policies CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) as well as Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) achieving well-designed and beautiful places.

The proposed hardstanding is substandard contrary to CS11 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, Policy T5 Local Plan First Review (1994) and - KCC Parking Standards (2006).

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

Case Officer:	Mrs Sharon Sahota	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	24.07.2024	Dated:	2nd August 2024