

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Proposed amendment to the layout of the drive.

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

Introduction

Planning consent has been granted for off road parking in the garden land to the south of the cottage under application 20190929 with consent granted at Appeal. Unfortunately, the shape and depth at the point of access of this parking area as approved doesn't make it very useable and this is resolved by two minor changes as described below. Therefore, this application seeks approval to minor changes to the shape of the drive and for a slight repositioning of the point of access off Thong Lane in order vehicles can reverse into the drive after lining up to reverse within the carriageways of Thong Lane.

Planning history

The original planning application to create a new drive, application number 20190929, was refused and later granted at appeal with a number of conditions, appeal reference PP/K2230/D/20/3244216. Application 20211403 approved on the 2nd March 2022 cleared the external facing materials, pedestrian visibility and soft landscaping conditions. Application 20220586 for a larger parking area was refused on the 26th July 2022.

Planning

The original application, reference as given above, was refused based on the impact on the Conservation Area from forming a parking area using part of the garden. The Appeal Inspector found in favour of the application with sections of his report being relevant to this application.

“Paragraph 146 of the Framework states that it is not inappropriate to carry out certain forms of development within the Green Belt. This paragraph states that engineering operations might be considered to being a not inappropriate form of development, providing they preserve the character of openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

The proposed development consists of a parking area which would replace access elsewhere on the site and serve an existing dwelling. Furthermore, the proposed development would be predominantly located at ground level and would include an element of landscaping. Accordingly, 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. Accordingly, the Main Issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the Thong Lane Conservation Area (the CA).

The proposed development would result in the removal of a portion of a hedge. However, the section to be removed would be comparatively small, even allowing for the potential increase in visibility splays. As such the predominantly linear boundary in proximity to the edge of the road would remain the dominant feature. In addition, owing to the sinuous road pattern, views of this access would not be particularly prominent.

Whilst the proposed development would create a new access to the property, this would not appear unduly incongruous given the prevalence of similar developments elsewhere within the immediate vicinity.

Although vehicles would be parked on the site, views of these would, in part, be screened by the boundary treatments present at the site. Whilst the appeal site contributes to the character of the CA, the site already features vehicular access (from a track used by pedestrians) which means that the presence of parked vehicles on site would not represent a notable change. In addition, the site's boundary treatments would, in part, screen views of parked cars.

It is clear that the Appeal Inspector did not see the proposed drive as being of a level of concern that the Local Planning Authorities refusal should stand. It is also clear from the Inspector's approach that removal of part of the front hedge was considered to be acceptable and that the Inspector did not consider the creation of a parking space as being detrimental to the Green Belt nor to the Conservation Area.

The depth of the parking area in-line with the entrance as approved is about 4600mm and width of the opening 3900mm however the position of the opening requires cars to reverse in and park in the northern section and there is not enough room for a car and van to pass each other when turning in and out. The changes proposed are minor and create the ability for two vehicles to reverse straight into the drive with enough room to get in safely and enough depth for one of the vehicles to come past the other and to get to a position where there is a sight line to see past the other parked vehicle. The depth required to park the van and to be able to open the rear doors to load it etc is 6 metres. These changes achieve enough space for vehicles to use the drive as safely as they can bearing in mind that the requirement from Gravesham Highways Officer is that vehicles reverse in from Thong Lane.

So, the minor changes are to create a straighter edge to the alignment of the eastern boundary to the drive, for the depth to be 6 metres and for the drive opening to Thong Lane to be a bit wider and slightly to the south of the approved position.

These changes are insignificant when read in conjunction with the Inspectors comments at the previous appeal. Is it likely that the average person passing by car would see the change to the drive surface as proposed or notice a change to the drive opening, we suggest it's not likely. Whilst the opening to the front hedge is wider than previously approved we should also note that at present a section of the hedge nearest the drive opening is dead or dying. This application includes further hedge planting to the northern side and rear of the parking area as well as replacement of the hedge to the front.

The changes are of fairly minor overall. The new hedges will help provide soft edges to the new parking area and will screen the fences.

The principle of having a parking area has been established so the changes proposed are to make it useable.

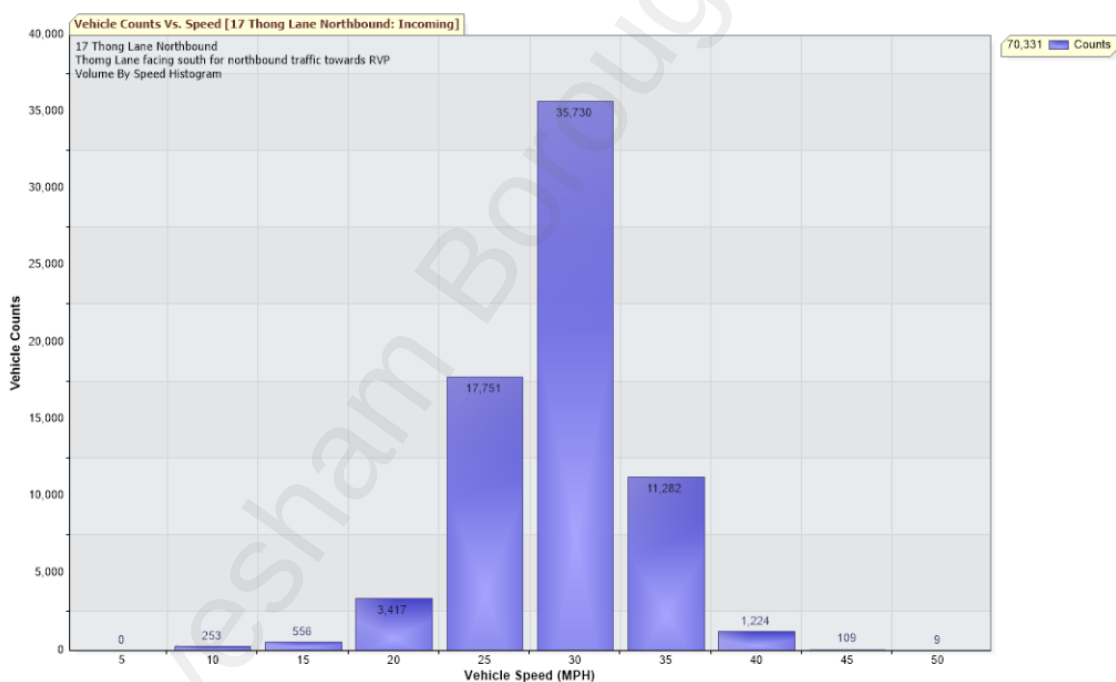
Proposal

The position of the entrance drive, landscaping and drive finishes has been established via a previous appeal and by the approval of details reserved by the Appeal.

This application seeks approval to a minor change to the approved area of drive and to the shape of the drive. If one drawing is overlaid over then it can be seen that this proposal retained the same depth and width to the drive and that the change is only to square off the rear left corner to the drive. The other main change is to move the drive entrance to the right and to widen the entrance so that the drive is accessible vehicles reversing in. Some new hedges are proposed along fence lines to create natural screening. The current fence at the rear of the parking area will be taken down and then moved forwards to match the reduced depth of the parking area. The proposed surface remains as approved before.

The household includes young children and Thong Lane is a busy road with some cars travelling above the speed limit as the SID Traffic Data on Shorne Parish Council's web site shows.

Traffic Analysis Summary for Thong Lane Northbound (traffic heading towards Riverview Park) From 09.07.2022 to 03.09.2022		
Total Vehicles during this period	70,331	
AADT (Average Annual Daily Traffic)	1256.8	
	Weekdays	7 Days
Average Daily Traffic Volumes	1312	1237
AM Peak Hour (07.00 - 08.00 GMT, 08.00 – 09.00 BST)	78	81
PM Peak Hour (16.00 - 17.00 GMT, 17.00 – 18.00 BST)	141	122
Average Speed	26.6 mph	
85 th Percentile Speed	30.9 mph	
Maximum Speed (at 00:20 GMT, 01.20 BST on 30/07/2021)	50 mph	
Percentage of vehicles exceeding 30 mph speed limit	17.9%	
Percentage exceeding 35 mph (enforcement threshold)	1.9%	



Access

The drive enables off road parking. Thong Lane is narrow with a carriageway in each direction and with no appropriate place for cars to park on the highway at this point as the former farm buildings opposite the cottage are fenced off right to the highway and also generate a certain level of commercial traffic. The ability to park off-road is essential to the applicants hence this further application seeks minor changes that will enable effective use of the parking area with slight changes to the previously approved drawing of the drive.

END