Design & Access Statement

12 Old Road West, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0LJ

Applicant: Netpex Ltd
Agent: Prestige Planning Consultants Ltd

Description: Part proposed part retrospective.

Proposed creation of vehicle access and driveway to the front with installation of dropped kerb and associated works.

Retrospective application for the excavation of the front garden, including associated works.

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports the application at 12 Old Road West.

The works replicate the appeal-approved scheme at No. 20 Old Road West (APP/K2230/D/24/3349193).

The development provides safe and visually coherent off-street parking in a location where such features are now characteristic of the area.

2. Site Context and Planning History

Old Road West is a residential street on its northern side, which has 7 pairs of semi-detached dwellings.

Multiple properties on the immediate terrace (Nos. 4, 6, 20, 22, 28) have introduced driveways or dropped kerbs, forming a consistent pattern of off-street parking. Several other properties on the road also have these parking spaces.

Historic Google imagery shows that since at least 2012, the frontage of No. 12 was gravelled and largely bare, providing no meaningful landscaping or aesthetic contribution.

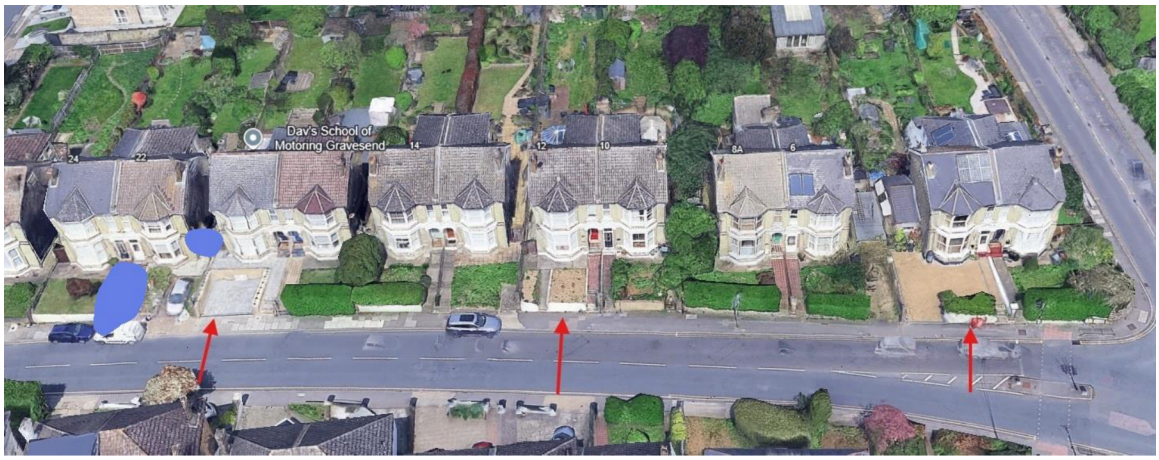
Although recently the empty gravel has attracted some weeds to grow and the side of the front garden, it clearly didn't complement the street scene.

In application reference 20090499, back in 2010, a similar proposal was submitted, the application was refused and the reason was:

"The proposed crossover and hardstanding would detract from the character and amenity of the street scene on this side of Old Road West This side of Old Road West is characterised with low walls and hedges to soften the frontages of these dwellings, so an undesirable precedent would be set if a crossover was allowed Therefore, this proposal would conflict with Policy TC1 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review"

The applicant does not see the existing street scene as part of the character.

See the image below of Google Earth:



The applicant pointed out that it would be the character to have a driveway or at least an excavated front garden.

In the image below, a small stretch of Google Earth shows just how many driveways there are.

All red dots are houses with vehicle access.



The new light-coloured brick driveway enhances the dwelling's appearance, adding quality and complementing the façade materials.

The vegetation that the applicant has planted clearly enhanced the street scene and should be supported.

See below the views from the inspector in a recent appeal:

Inspector's Key Findings (No. 20 Appeal)

"Numerous other hardscaped frontages are evident in the vicinity... alteration to the frontage is not significant taking into account the local context."

"Given the sporadic nature and limited duration of manoeuvres... safety of pedestrians would not be unduly compromised."

See below the views from the council after the above appeal:

Officer Commentary from No. 16 Refusal

"While reference was made to the appeal at No. 20, it is considered that each case must be assessed on its own merits... the cumulative effect of such works could erode the character of the terrace."

Despite this statement, the Council's reasoning replicates concerns already dismissed by the Inspector. The current proposal mirrors the accepted design at No. 20 and maintains visual harmony across the terrace.

Photographic Record

- Figure 1 – Street context view (Nos. 4–22 Old Road West)



- Figure 2 – Existing driveway and planting at No. 12



- Figure 3 – Comparison with No. 20 Old Road West (approved on appeal)



- Figure 4 – Adjacent driveways (Nos. 4, 6, 22, 28)









- Figure 5 – View of road and pedestrian footway



3. Road Character

The northern side of Old Road West features different houses. The 2 common types of houses are

1. raised front garden with soft landscaping, and
2. raised in front garden with hedges.

The image below shows examples:



The pre-existing frontage of 12 Old Road is completely odd with either of the 2 established frontages of Old Road.



Besides not being in line with the existing frontages, the existing front garden is neglected and does not add any charm to the current street scene of Old Road West, but the new scene has enhanced no.12 and Old Road West as a whole.

4. Design Considerations

The driveway employs high-quality light-toned paving blocks that complement the house and bay window. It replaces an unkempt gravel area with a cleaner and more attractive frontage.

Small planting beds soften the appearance, echoing the Inspector's approved approach at No. 20.

See photos below taken from when the works were completed.





5. Access Considerations

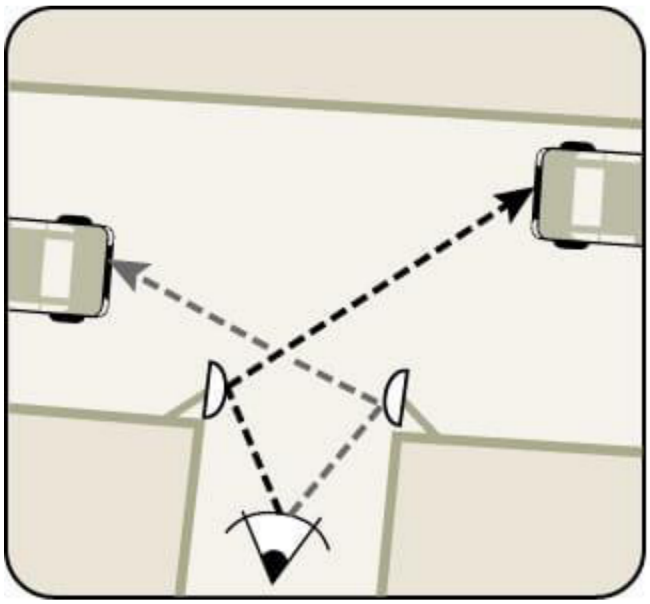
The proposed dropped kerb will be installed to Kent County Council standards. The wide pavement ensures clear visibility. Vehicle movements are limited and occur slowly, consistent with other driveways along Old Road West.

6. Road safety

The traffic flow on this side of the road is from west to east, therefore, the wall between numbers 12 and 10 will not harm the traffic flow. In addition to that, the wall between No. 12 and 10 is significantly lower, therefore, it will not harm the visibility.

In regard to the wall between 12 and 14, although it is higher, the applicant suggests that they can make use of a mirror to enhance the visibility of the oncoming traffic and pedestrians.

See below an illustration of how a suitable mirror can help the driver's disability, should the council feel that there is a need (this can be secured with a condition).



6. Planning Policy

The proposal complies with:

- Policy CS11 – supports safe access and transport;
- Policy CS12 – encourages biodiversity through landscaping;
- Policy CS19 – ensures design respects local character.

It also accords with the NPPF's emphasis on high-quality design and contextual development.

7. Conclusion

The development enhances both appearance and function. The previous frontage lacked vegetation or structure; the new light

brickwork complements the property and reinforces the terrace's coherent appearance. The design follows the accepted precedent of No. 20 and causes no harm to highway safety or local character, but contributes to the street scene and biodiversity.

Planning permission should therefore be granted.