



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Application No:	20220400
Location:	The White Lodge, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent, DA13 0QA
Description:	Creation of vehicular access onto Wrotham Road with access over grass verge, increase in area of hardstanding, installation of new wall, fence and hedge to infill existing access and erection of new 2.4m high fence to northern boundary
Applicant:	Mr J Cornell
Site Visit:	N/A Desktop Assessment

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application Form - dated 08/04/2022;
- Certificate B - dated 30/03/2022;
- Design and Access Statement - March 2022;
- Supplementary Information - Article 13 Notification Letter to GBC;
- Supplementary Information - Article 13 Notification Letter to KCC;
- Supplementary Information - Article 13 Notification Letter to KCC;
- Drawing no. 01 - Vehicular Access Plan as Existing;
- Drawing no. 03 - Location Plan (scale - 1:1250);
- Drawing no. 04 - Block Plan as Existing (scale - 1:200);
- Drawing no. 05A - Block Plan as Proposed (scale - 1:200);
- Drawing no. 06 - Elevations on A-A and B-B as Existing and Proposed;
- Drawing no. JG01 - Swept Path Analysis for the Brambles;
- Drawing no. JG02 - Swept Path Analysis for the White Lodge;
- Drawing no. JG03 - Visibility Splays.
- ~~Drawing no. 02 - Vehicular Access Plan as Proposed - SUPERSEDED;~~
- ~~Drawing no. 05 - Block Plan as Proposed (scale - 1:200) - SUPERSEDED.~~

Plan Note

The Local Planning Authority have superseded 'drawing no. 02' due to discrepancies with the layout and materials. During negotiations, the section of hardstanding to the front of White Lodge was changed to be soft landscaping and the revised block plan as proposed (drawing no. 05A) shows this. Therefore, 'drawing no. 02' will not be included in the approved plans list.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20210253	Application for dropped kerb and creation of vehicle access.	WITHDRAWN	04.06.2021
19790876	Erection of a single storey extension at the side to form workshop and store	PERMISSION	07.11.1979
19780805	Details of 2 two storey detached dwellings with double garages pursuant to outline planning permission GR 77 63	APPROVAL OF DETAILS	10.12.1978

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

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 - Vehicle Parking Standards
- T1 - Impact of Development on the Highway Network
- T5 - Access to the Identified Highway Network

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) 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 (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 - Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Section 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- SPG 6 - Vehicle Accesses on Classified Highways (1992)
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Other Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Kent County Council - Vehicle Crossing: Guidance and Self-Assessment (2018)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

KCC - Highways and Transportation - The application proposes the formation of a vehicle access on the A227, Wrotham Road, the proposed vehicle crossing will be used to access The White Lodge and the neighbouring property The Brambles.

No plans have been submitted demonstrating the visibility splays for the new access. Visibility splays of 43 metres in both directions x 2.4 metres are required (based on a 30 mph speed limit), with no obstruction within the visibility splays over 0.9m above the carriageway level. The applicant will also need to demonstrate that any land crossed by the visibility splays is within their control, or that of Kent County Council.

In addition, pedestrian visibility splays of 2m x 2m behind the footway on both sides of the access, with no obstructions over 0.6m above footway level, would also be required.

I note that the residents of the Brambles will need to reverse on to the White Lodge driveway to enable them to exit the access in a forward gear. To avoid potential vehicle conflict and to future proof the proposal, turning space should be provided independently on each property. The hardstanding area would need to be increased at The Brambles property to achieve this to ensure vehicles can always exit the property in a forward gear.

I would be grateful therefore, if you would forward any amended plans or additional information to me for my further consideration.

Second comment (25/07/2022) - the revised visibility splays are fine. We would also want to see/condition the pedestrian visibility - 2 metres x 2 metres pedestrian visibility splays behind the footway on both sides of the access with no obstructions over 0.6m above footway level.

Meopham Parish Council - No objection subject to Highways approval.

Internal Consultees

GBC - Highways Officer - This proposal does not conform to the requirements of Kent County Council as the new access is not 10 metres away from the adjacent junction that serves the new development.

However, when considering the various issues I believe a new access for these two properties directly on to Wrotham Road is a benefit. It will improve visibility for the emerging vehicles and remove conflict with the new development.

Generally I consider the minimum distance between a junction and an access mentioned in the County Council's guidance relates to an access on the near side but past the junction, where an emerging driver from the side road could misinterpret a left turn signal to mean that an approaching driver intends to turn left at the junction, rather than leave the highway at the access. This could result in a vehicle emerging from a side road into the path of an approaching vehicle and is so a safety issue. In this case the access is before the junction and so the issue will not arise.

Wrotham Road is a classified road and requires all vehicles to enter and leave the highway in forward gear, to comply with PGN6. In this case the turning area fronts White Lodge and needs to be protected by condition so the residents of The Brambles are not compromised with the loss of the onsite turning provision. The applicant has presented drawings that clearly demonstrate residents can turn on site, but has not provided a plan that denotes the area to be used for turning and kept clear of parked vehicles, it is recommended that a plan should either be submitted now or in a response to a condition to ensure appropriate protection.

The applicant will need to ensure that no surface water can discharge from the site onto the highway.

Neighbouring properties

A notice was displayed on site 22nd April 2022.

In addition, 10 surrounding properties were consulted and no representations were received. The consultation period expired 13th May 2022.

Officer's Analysis

The White Lodge is a detached property located on the western side of the highway. The property and its neighbours are screened from public view by a large brick boundary and hedgerow stretching approximately 50m. This wall is setback from the footway and is separated by a grass verge. The existing access is to the north of the property (adjacent to the old police station) and is shared by The White Lodge and the neighbour The Brambles.



It is important to note that the adjacent Police Station site is currently being redeveloped (ref. 20200603) and nine houses are being constructed. This application proposes the blocking up of the existing access and the creation of a new vehicular access onto Wrotham Road, which will be shared by the two properties.

The new access will be positioned in front of The White Lodge, but shared by both properties. The access will be 6.2m from the vehicle access for the Police Station site, will have a width of 8m on the footway and will have a width onto the site of 4m. The access will be constructed using tarmac and will be located to the left (south) of the telegraph poles shown in the screenshot below.



Design, Character and Appearance

The proposal will change the character of the street scene by introducing a new access, removing the front boundary wall and hedge, as well as forming a hardstanding over the grass verge.

The grass verge and hedge is a consistent theme within the section of Wrotham Road, however the verge

in the position of the proposed access is relatively narrow. As such, the loss of a small section of verge for the access would not be considered detrimental. Similarly, the removal of the boundary wall and mature hedging would change the appearance of the street scene, but would only remove a small section and likely not be detrimental to the character of the area. In terms of the blocking up of the existing access at the property, this is visible and prominent for vehicles travelling south on Wrotham Road. The pre-application report recommended that the existing access is blocked up by a wall with brickwork to match the details of the existing front boundary wall design details (such as the pillars) and planting new hedging to match the front hedge. The existing side access will be blocked up by a wall, constructed using matching brickwork and will have a section of hedging planted behind, which in time will blend with the existing hedgerow along the boundary. This design strategy is considered positive, will be less impactful than the potential fencing originally proposed, and will reduce any impact of the development on the street scene in this highly visible and prominent position. A new fence will be erected beyond the new brick wall which also matches the existing fencing.

It is important to note that there is an existing access to the south of the proposed location, serving some neighbouring properties. Whilst this access has been in situ since the development of those properties in the 1980s, it is a material consideration for this proposal, is an established part of the street scene and demonstrates that a well-designed access would not harm the street scene.

Given that the existing access serving the neighbouring properties to the south is an established part of the street scene, the principle of forming a new crossover and access onto Wrotham Road is not considered to have a detrimental impact on character of the street scene or surrounding area. Overall, the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the character of the area and will reinstate features that limit any impact. The new access will be similar to other established features within the street scene and therefore the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of Gravesham's Local Plan Core Strategy (LPCS) (2014) and Section 12 (Achieving Well-Designed Places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed development will not have any detrimental impact on the amenity of future occupiers of The White Lodge or The Brambles, and therefore is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Neighbouring Amenity

There will be no harmful impact on the amenity of any adjoining property as a result of the proposed vehicular access, in terms of loss of light, outlook, privacy or sense of enclosure. No representations were received from any consultees. As such, the proposal is considered to safeguard the amenity of adjoining properties in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 (NPPF).

Parking and Highways

As aforementioned in this report, there were concerns raised by the Highway Authority (KCC) and Gravesham's Highways Officer regarding vehicle visibility, pedestrian visibility and turning space. After discussions with the agent, there were revised plans submitted and received that demonstrated vehicular visibility splays and pedestrian splays. The revised plans also demarcated a dedicated turning space that will remain clear to enable vehicles of the neighbouring property to turn on site without any obstruction, however it was not considered necessary to require dedicated turning areas on The Brambles as the existing arrangement requires access over the neighbours (White Lodge) land to enter and exit the site. Moreover, the plans submitted ('drawing nos. JG01 / JG02') show vehicle tracking through a swept path analysis for the two vehicles parking at each property, which demonstrates an estate car can comfortably turn and exit the site in forward gear. Therefore, the Local Planning Authority did not request that a clearly defined turning area is provided on each property and were satisfied with an unobscured area on the frontage to enable access for both properties.

It is noted that the proposed access will be within 10m of the existing access serving the new properties at the former Police Station, however the Highways Officer nor KCC raised any concern with this proximity. Instead the Highways Officer considered the proposed access a benefit by way of improving visibility and reducing conflict between the application properties and the new dwellings at the former Police Station.

The highway consultees were re-consulted on the revised plans. They considered that the revisions satisfactorily addressed their original concerns. Therefore, the proposal is acceptable in highway terms and can be supported, subject to conditions.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Impact on the Landscape - the application site is located within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area. This area is characterised by gently undulating topography with a mix of arable and pasture farmland, three large settlements located along the A227 and traditional architecture surrounding village greens providing local vernacular. Policy CS12 (LPCS) seeks to protect the Green infrastructure within the Borough and states at 5.7.26 the overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

The proposed vehicular crossover is not considered to have any detrimental impact on the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, by virtue of the sites location within the rural settlement.

Impact on Biodiversity - the development will reduce the biodiversity by creating a vehicular access and removing a section of mature hedge. Section 15 of the NPPF states that development should result in a biodiversity net gain. Although the development will remove part of the grass verge and hedgerow, there will be sections of soft landscaping retained within the curtilage of The White Lodge and The Brambles. Additionally, there will be a section of hedging reintroduced on the northern boundary, which will offset the loss of hedge for the new access. Therefore, while the development does not result in a net gain of biodiversity, the reintroduction of greenery and landscaping is a positive feature, and the proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of biodiversity.

Conclusion

The application has been fully considered and is in accordance with local and national planning policy.

The formation of a new access in this location will not harm the character or appearance of the street scene, and will involve the blocking up of the existing access with a boundary wall and landscaping reinstated to lessen any impact. The reinstated landscaping will offset the loss of biodiversity. Moreover, the new access achieves the visibility requirements set out in highway policy and would reduce conflict on the existing access.

As such it is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Permission

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mr Ethan Bonthron	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:		Signed:	
Dated:	26 th July 2022	Dated:	26 July 2022

Gravesham Borough Council