
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/24/3353764

6 Springhead Road, Gravesend DA11 9QY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Elidon Voka against the decision of Gravesham Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 20240639.
 - The proposed development is for the creation of a driveway to provide space for 2 car parking spaces.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the creation of a driveway to provide space for 2 car parking spaces at 6 Springhead Road, Gravesend DA11 9QY in accordance with the terms of the application reference 20240639, subject to the following conditions:

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 001A, 003A, 004A, 005A

3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be in accordance with those stated on the application form or shall match those used on the existing wall.

4) The vehicular access hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until a vehicular crossover (dropped kerb) has been constructed in accordance with the Highway Authority's specification and requirements and with the written approval of the Highway Authority having first been obtained. The vehicle crossover shall be commensurate with the width of the vehicular access as hereby permitted.

5) No gates shall be installed across the vehicular access and driveway hereby permitted at any time.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the impact of the development on:

- the character and appearance of the host dwelling and local area; and
- highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site relates to a two-storey, detached dwelling on Springhead Road in a street scene generally characterised by domestic properties, with a hotel and pub in the surrounding environs. The property lies in close proximity to the junction with the B2175.
4. At my visit I saw that there are numerous crossovers serving frontage parking areas to dwellings in the neighbourhood, particularly on this side of the highway of which the appeal residence forms a part, and these are established features of the locality. Moreover, whilst the removal of a section of the boundary wall and garden area is regrettable, areas of wall and garden would nevertheless be retained elsewhere on the site frontage. Therefore, taking account of the overall context, I find that the scheme would not be so deleterious as to warrant a refusal of permission on this ground.
5. Consequently, there would be no adverse impact on the character of the host dwelling and local area as a result. The proposal would meet Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 (CS) and the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2021, which seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Highway safety

6. The Council argues that the scheme raises concerns given the close proximity to the junction with the B1275 and the impact on vehicular visibility, which could cause a significant highway hazard due to increased turning movements on and off a highway that can be busy during peak times. I appreciate that a vehicle emerging from the driveway, with the driver having restricted views of other road users, is an obvious safety threat.
7. However, vehicular manoeuvres into and out of local accesses are a common feature along Springhead Road, and these are generally approached at low speed. The prospect of reversing to and from the appeal site would therefore be little different to the existing situation concerning numerous properties elsewhere along the thoroughfare. Due to the infrequency and short duration of such manoeuvres, I find that highway safety would not be unduly compromised in this particular instance.
8. Furthermore, I note that the Local Highways Department does not object to the scheme, and although the Council has provided crash map data showing a collision near the appeal site, there is no indication whether this was as a result of vehicles entering or exiting driveways.
9. In the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary, I am therefore drawn to conclude that the development would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety. It would comply with Policies CS11 and CS19 of the CS, Policy T5 of the Local Plan First Review (1994) and the Kent County Council Parking Standards 2006.

Conditions

10. I have considered the imposition of conditions in light of advice in Planning Policy Guidance and the Framework. In addition to the standard implementation condition, the approved plans are listed for certainty. A condition requiring external materials in accordance with those listed on the application form (hardstanding) and to match (wall) would provide for a satisfactory appearance.
11. Conditions requiring the vehicular crossover (dropped kerb) to be constructed prior to first use and in accordance with the Highway Authority's specifications and restricting gates across the access are necessary in the interests of highway safety.

Conclusion

12. Having regard to the above and all other matters, the appeal is allowed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR