

30th May 2022

Planning & Regeneration
Gravesham Borough Council
Civic Centre
Windmill Street
Gravesend
Kent DA12 1AU.

Dear Sirs
1 Cheneys Cottages, Thong Lane, Shorne, DA12 4AA.
Drive application.

We hereby apply for a new drive on an extended area in the location where consent for a drive was approved by Planning Appeal reference APP/K2230/D/20/3244216, decision issued on the 26th June 2020. Subsequently, the Conditions within the Appeal Decision Notice were discharged by Decision Notice 20211403 dated 2nd March 2022.

The area of car parking approved under the above Appeal Decision is very small both in width and depth and doesn't provide for a sensible parking area being only about 5.6m deep (depth from Thong Lane) at the most and with the depth in the area of the approved entrance being 4.8m metres. As the entrance is to the left side of the parking area and as Thong Lane is a busy road with visibility Ok, but not perfect, this approved area really is not sufficient.

The family have a family sized car and a work van they use daily and that they need to park offroad and they also need at least one space for visitors. Also, there needs to be room to turn around in the parking area as it's unsafe for vehicles to back out into the road and it is also unsafe to turn within the highway in order to reverse into the drive.

The applicants have a young family and therefore need to be able to open the car doors fully to unload children.

As there is a young family living here and as the road is dangerous with cars travelling very fast along this stretch of the road and with lorries and vans visiting the commercial uses in the barns on the other side of the road, the garden needs to be fenced off from the parking area.

It is therefore proposed to retain the existing fences to the north, south and east sides of the parking area as shown in the photograph below.



The proposed finish for the parking area is the same as that approved under the Decision Notice mentioned above, 20211403 being Daltex Bespoke Resin bound gravel over Ultidrive porous tarmac. The landscaping treatment and the requirement to keep the hedges below 1m in height is as approved before. If material brochures are required with this application these can be provided.

The appeal decision addressed a number of important aspects of this proposal in terms of the site being within the Conservation Area of Thong and also in a Green Belt location with a listed building on the opposite side of the road, although not directly opposite.

The Inspector said:

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).

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.

I acknowledge that the proposed works would require an area of hardstanding to be created within the surrounding area. Owing to the location of the parking area behind the site's hedge and the fact that these works would be at ground level, they would not be particularly notable within the environs of the site. As such, the defining predominantly open and verdant character of the CA would be retained. Furthermore, a large proportion of nearby properties feature similar parking areas. In consequence, the proposed development would not appear at significant variance to this characteristic.

The evidence before me indicates that a gate might be installed at the property. Owing to the relative frequency of such installations within the vicinity, I find that such a gate would not be particularly strident or incongruous. As such this would not result in harm to the historic environment.

In the above paragraph the Inspector has no issues with a gate to the drive. Therefore, if a gate is acceptable in a prominent position at the front of the site and onto the highway then it is highly likely that the fences that are currently existing on site and form a barrier to prevent children from getting onto the drive and onto the road, will be acceptable to an Inspector in the event of another appeal. The applicants do not wish to put a gate up to the road side of the drive because they would involve having to stop the car in the highway to open the gate to drive in or the reverse of this when leaving and it is not safe to leave a car in the carriageway here.

In terms of whether there is an impact on the listed building the Inspectors said:

The listed building and appeal site are separated by Thong Lane, which results in a diminished relationship between the two sites. Furthermore, the relatively low level of the proposed development and the presence of landscaping means that the listed building and appeal site are not readily viewed alongside one another. Therefore, the proposed development would preserve the setting of this listed building.

The Inspector did not accept that the Council's concerns are valid previously so we do not consider that there should be concerns raised when taking account that the width of the proposed drive is the same to the ordinary man in the street as the approved drive. The depth proposed is deeper than the approved but this is for safety and practical reasons which are quite obvious by examining the approved drive area and shape and the application of a practical approach to this. The Inspector has already stated that provision for two vehicles is acceptable and it is the width which determines the provision of spaces rather than the depth as access is from one point only, the approved access point set to the north side of the parking area.

The applicant is open to consider an alternative finish to the parking area beyond the area approved at Appeal so should it be considered that a grass finish with grass

re-enforcement mesh, a product uses on grass roadways and camp site stands for caravans is more acceptable than the use of resin bonded gravel then we welcome a discussion about this. The photograph below shows a type of reinforcement mesh laid over the grass and a car wheel. We have seen these mesh finished used on a client's caravan park roads and stands and it is very hard to see that a mesh has been laid and also it stops the wheels wearing the grass away.



We consider that the safety aspects are extremely important to this proposal and that these should be carefully considered when arriving at a decision.

Please so make contact with the writer if there are concerns or clarification is required on any detail relating to this application.

Yours faithfully



Jonathan Bolton