

Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250305

Location: 133 Vale Road Northfleet Gravesend Kent

Description: Formation of vehicle crossover and frontage parking area.

Applicant: Mr Nitin Bansal

Site Visit Date: 03 April 2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

Householder Application for Planning Permission form;
Drawing no. 133/EXT_01 Rev. C Existing front elevation, site location and block plans;
Drawing no. 133/EXT_02 Rev. C Existing block plan;
Drawing no. 133/PRO_01 Rev. C Proposed front elevation and site location plans;
Drawing no. 133/PRO_02 Rev. B Proposed block plan; and
Drawing no. 133/PRO_04 Rev. C Visibility splays.

Submitted Documents/Plans

Drawing no. 133/EXT_01 Rev. B Existing front elevation, site location and block plans;
Drawing no. 133/EXT_02 Rev. A Existing block plan;
Drawing no. 133/PRO_01 Rev. A Proposed front elevation and site location plans;
Drawing no. 133/PRO_02 Rev. A Proposed block plan; and
Drawing no. 133/PRO_04 Rev. B Visibility splays.

Procedural Issues

Following a consultation response received from KCC Highways & Transportation, the applicant amended the submitted visibility splay details to correct them.

Following a request from the case officer, the applicant amended the submitted drawings to rectify various inaccuracies in the illustration of the existing and proposed front boundary treatments.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20041028	Retention of car port at the rear.	Permitted	10.02.2005
20030229	Construction of three dormer windows in side roof slope and conversion of roof space into bedroom, bathroom, study and walk- in wardrobe.	Permitted	14.05.2003
20030038	Construction of dormer extension in side roof slope and conversion of the roof space into a bedroom, walk-in wardrobe, study and bathroom.	Refused	10.03.2003

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (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 Highway Network
- T5 – Access to the Identified Highway Network

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) 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 (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 2 – Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020
- SPG 4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code (2024)

Other Relevant Guidance

- Kent County Council Dropped Kerb Guidance and Self-Assessment (2025)
- Gravesham Driveway Dropped Kerb Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)
- Gravesham Front Driveway Design Guidance (Informal Guidance) (2023)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

KCC - Highways & Transportation

Initial response:

The application proposes a new access on to Vale Road, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit, as such visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m are required in both directions with no obstruction within the visibility splays over 1.05m above carriageway level and drawn to the nearside carriage way edge. The applicant also needs to demonstrate that any land crossed by the visibility splays is within their control, or that of Kent County Council.

The submitted visibility splays have been drawn incorrectly and revised drawings should be submitted so

the achievable visibility can be assessed.

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, should also be provided, pedestrian visibility splays should be shown on a revised plan.

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

Second response:

I refer to my previous consultation response on 23rd April 2025 in which I raised concerns relating to the visibility, both vehicular and pedestrian, proposed by the applicant.

A revised drawing of the visibility splays was submitted on 23rd May 2025 which shows acceptable visibility splays provided the applicant has control of the land included within the splays or is within existing public highway. There is no indication on the plan that this is the case.

I therefore raise no objection to this application on highway grounds provided the following conditions are applied to any consent granted:

- 1 Provision and maintenance of the visibility splays shown on the submitted plans with no obstructions over 1.05 metres above carriageway level within the splays, or 0.6 metres where a footway crosses the access, prior to the use of the site commencing.
- 2 Provision and maintenance of 2.0 metres x 2.0 metres pedestrian visibility splays behind the footway on both sides of the access with no obstructions over 0.6 metres above footway level, prior to the use of the site commencing.

It is important to note that Local Planning Authority (LPA) permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Any changes to or affecting the public highway in Kent require the formal agreement of the Highway Authority, Kent County Council (KCC), and it should not be assumed that this will be a given because LPA planning permission has been granted.

For this reason, anyone considering works which may affect the public highway, including any highway-owned street furniture or landscape assets such as grass, shrubs and trees, is advised to engage with KCC Highways and Transportation at an early stage in the design process.

Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens and near the highway that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the public highway.

Some of this highway land is owned by Kent County Council whilst some is owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have 'highway rights' over the topsoil.

Works on private land may also affect the public highway. These include works to cellars, to retaining walls which support the highway or land above the highway, and to balconies, signs or other structures which project over the highway. Such works also require the approval of the Highway Authority.

Kent County Council has now introduced a pre-application advice service in addition to a full formal technical approval process for new or altered highway assets, with the aim of improving future maintainability. Further details are available on our website below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>

This process applies to all development works affecting the public highway other than applications for

vehicle crossings, which are covered by a separate approval process. Further details on this are available on our website below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/apply-for-a-dropped-kerb/dropped-kerb-contractor-information>

Once planning approval for any development has been granted by the LPA, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that before development commences, all necessary highway approvals and consents have been obtained, and that the limits of the highway boundary have been clearly established, since failure to do so may result in enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority.

The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under the relevant legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Further guidance for applicants, including information about how to clarify the highway boundary and links to application forms for vehicular crossings and other highway matters, may be found on Kent County Council's website:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissions-and-technical-guidance>. Alternatively, KCC Highways and Transportation may be contacted by telephone: 03000 418181.

Neighbouring properties

The application was publicised by a site notice and to four neighbouring properties by letter. No representations have been received.

Officer's Analysis

Design, Character and Appearance

Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy September 2014 sets out that new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It should conserve and enhance the character of the built environment and take account of the scale, height, building lines and other architectural features of buildings. Account should also be taken of strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place.

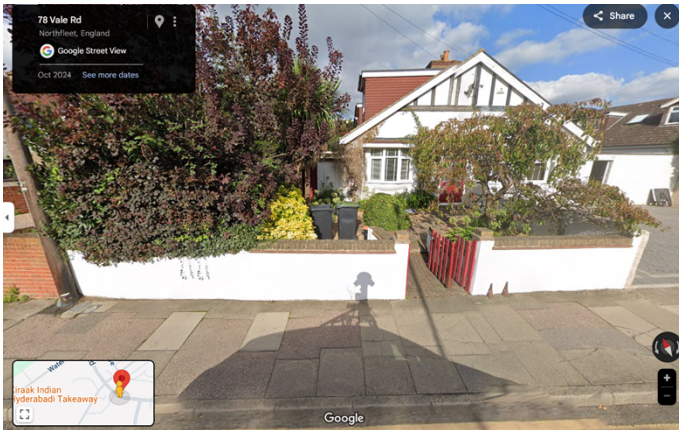
In relation to frontage parking, relevant considerations in the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and the GBC Front Driveway Guidance 2023 are that;

- Hardstanding should be proportionate to the size of the dwelling and the relevant car parking standards and avoid paving over a significant amount of the forecourt.
- Soft landscaped planted border along all boundaries should be provided in all spaces not specifically defined as parking or turning spaces.
- Allow sufficient space between the car and the dwelling to allow access to the front door and side of the property.
- Must be designed to avoid cars overhanging the pavement.
- Should not include gates
- Avoid removing any existing trees or established hedges and introduce new planting wherever possible.
- Introduce permeable paving to new areas of hardstanding to minimise rainwater run-off issues.
- There should be no water run-off from the forecourt onto the public highway.
- Pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays should be provided.

It is noted that the site frontage has already been subject to development work, whereby a block paved hardstanding has been formed. Following a recent enforcement investigation in relation to the unauthorised hardstanding, a low front boundary wall was erected to resolve the breach.

The current proposal would involve the removal of the centre part of the existing front boundary wall (retaining circa two metres of wall on either side with a reduced height), the provision of a dropped kerb and the use of the existing hardstanding for the parking of two vehicles.

Prior to the formation of the existing hardstanding, the frontage of the application site had a block paved pathway and was planted with mature vegetation, with a low, rendered front boundary wall. The following images show the existing and previous situations at the application site;



Google Street View Image October 2024



Site Photograph 03 April 2025

As evidenced by the above, the application site originally had an enclosed, verdant frontage, which contributed positively to the appearance of the dwelling and the street scene. Following the recent works, the property frontage is now largely devoid of any planting but retains an appropriate boundary treatment. The hard surfacing extends almost across the full width of the frontage and as set out in the Parking and Highways section below, it exceeds the minimum standard for accommodating two vehicles.

The materials for the retained wall and permeable surfacing for the hardstanding do not look out of place in the surrounding environment and the proposed layout affords access to the front door and side of the property and would not lead to vehicles overhanging the footway. The proposed opening at the centre of the site would expose a large expanse of hard surfacing that would detract from the visual amenities of the dwelling and the street scene. However, the retained walls would retain some sense of enclosure and the planted beds at the side and rear of the proposed parking area would soften the hardstanding. Therefore, provided that a condition to ensure that these beds are planted and retained, is attached to any planning permission granted, then the adverse visual impact would be mitigated.

It is noted that the application site is located opposite a Grade II listed building (Elm Cottage, no. 78-80 Vale Road). However, as a relatively small domestic development, located within an existing residential curtilage, the proposal would not adversely impact upon the setting of the listed building.

It is also noted that along Vale Road there are a number of examples of existing front driveways. Some of these have been carried out without planning permission and may have become lawful through the passage of time. However, no. 135 Vale Road has a recent planning permission for a vehicle access and hardstanding (reference 20241009).

Overall, the proposed design would be acceptable and there would be no significant adverse impacts to the character or appearance of the application site or its surroundings. As such, the proposal would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and be broadly in line with the Gravesham Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021) and the Gravesham Front Driveway Design Guidance 2023.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The proposed development would not impact upon the private amenity space or internal layout of the

application property and would not adversely impact on the privacy, daylight or sunlight of its occupants. As such, the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of future occupants and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Neighbouring Amenity

Due to the design of the proposed development and to the layout and orientation of the surrounding properties, there would be no adverse overshadowing or overbearing impacts to the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings. As such, the proposed development would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would be in line with Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014).

Parking and Highways

Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and Saved Policies T1 and P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) require new development to mitigate its impact on the highway and public transport networks and to provide sufficient parking in accordance with adopted parking standards.

Saved Policy T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) requires new accesses to be in an acceptable location and to an acceptable standard and to not give rise to danger.

According to the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards (SPG4), a four or more bedroom dwelling should have three vehicle parking spaces. However, it is noted that Kent Highways & Transportation have provided more recent guidance (as yet unadopted) that requires a minimum of two spaces to be provided for a four or more bedroom property in a suburban location. According to the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021), vehicle parking spaces should be a minimum of 2.5 metres in width (2.7 metres where they adjoin an enclosed boundary) and 5 metres depth.

KCC Highways & Transportation advise that pedestrian visibility splays on both sides of the access (2 metres x 2 metres with no obstruction over 0.6 metres) would be required and that carriageway visibility splays of 2.4 metres x 43 metres would be required in both directions, with no obstruction over 1.05 metres above carriageway level.

The application property has three/four bedrooms and on-site parking for at least one vehicle at the rear (accessed via Foxwood Grove). The application site is located on a classified road (C Class) which is a local distributor route and as such, is relatively busy. There are parking restrictions (double yellow lines) on both sides of Vale Road, in the vicinity of the application site.

The proposed development would provide two parking spaces on the site frontage. The parking area would have dimensions of 7.9 metres width by 5.6 metres depth, which would exceed the minimum dimensions for two parking spaces. The retained front boundary walls would have heights of 0.5 metres and would not impede pedestrian or carriageway visibility. Overall, the application site would have at least three off road parking spaces.

KCC Highways & Transportation do not raise an objection to the proposal provided that the required visibility splays are subject to planning conditions. The applicant has provided details of the required splays but it is noted that he does not own all of the land within them. To the north west, the carriageway splay crosses the frontage of no. 131 Vale Road, where there is a front boundary wall of approximately one metre height. To the south east, the carriageway splay crosses the open frontage of no. 135 Vale Road. Therefore, visibility would not be compromised but it would not be possible to impose a planning condition. However, visibility across the application site could be ensured by the imposition of a planning condition requiring the front boundary wall to be permanently retained as shown on drawing no. 133/PRO_01 Rev. C.

KCC Highways & Transportation provide information that can be brought to the attention of the applicant by an informative attached to any planning permission granted.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal would make sufficient provision for the parking of cars within the

application site and that there would be no adverse impacts to highway safety. As such, the proposed development would be in accordance with the Borough Council's adopted Vehicle Parking, Policy CS11 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014) and Saved Policies P3, T1 and T5 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review November 1994.

Suggested Conditions

Time Limit

Development in accordance with the approved plans

Prior to first use soft landscaping within planter areas shown on drawing no. 133/PRO_02 Rev. C

Prior to first use installation of vehicle crossover

Prior to first use the alterations to the front boundary as shown on drawing no. 133/PRO_01 Rev. C.

No gates shall be installed

Conclusion

The proposal would comply with local and national planning policies and subject to the conditions set out above, the proposal would be acceptable.

Recommendation

Planning permission subject to conditions is recommended.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Kelly Joyce	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:	<i>K Joyce</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	19th June 2025	Dated:	23rd June 2025