
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/D/24/3351002

37 Old Road West, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0LH

- 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 Andrew Pitches against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application reference is 20240534.
 - The proposed development is for formation of vehicular access on to B261 and provision of one off-street parking space in front garden with associated hard standing.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the formation of vehicular access on to B261 and provision of one off-street parking space in front garden with associated hard standing at 37 Old Road West, Gravesend DA11 0LH in accordance with the terms of the application reference 20240534, 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: 01, 03, 04A.
 - 3) The landscaping and planting shown on drawing no. 03 shall be carried out in full during the first available planting season following the installation of the scheme hereby approved. Any trees or plants that die, are damaged, removed or become diseased within five years from the date that the soft landscaping scheme is implemented shall be replaced with a species of a similar size and species during the next available planting season.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the consideration of this appeal is the impact of the development on highway safety.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached house on Old Road West, a class 'B' road that runs in the direction of Northfleet town centre. The residence lies within a row of properties of similar size and appearance between the junctions with Singewell Road and Woodfield Avenue.

4. At my site visit I saw myriad hardscaped frontages are evident in the street scene, creating off-street parking spaces for the houses along both sides of Old Road West; the proposal introduces a similar arrangement with vehicular access and hardstanding to the front of the appeal site.
5. Vehicular manoeuvres across the public footpaths into and out of local accesses are a common feature along Old Road West, although these are approached with caution. The Council states that appropriate sight lines would not be achieved at the site entrance. I recognise that a vehicle emerging from the driveway, with the driver having restricted views of other road users, is an obvious safety threat.
6. However, that prospect would be little different to the existing accesses to numerous properties elsewhere along Old Road West. Due to the infrequency and short duration of such manoeuvres and the low speeds involved, I find that highway safety would not be unduly compromised in this particular instance. Furthermore, I note that the Local Highways Department does not object to the scheme, and whilst the Council has highlighted two accidents in the 5 year period 2018 to 2022, there is no indication whether these were as a result of vehicles entering or exiting driveways.
7. I have read the appeal decision referred to by the Authority (Inspectorate reference APP/K2230/D/23/3329520), which relates to a crossover elsewhere in the environs of Gravesend. I note that this would have involved a vehicle having to negotiate a well-used layby to reach the main highway, and that there is "continuity to the garden frontages along this stretch of London Road", which would imply that there are no other accesses to houses within the area, both of which are not the case in this instance. I therefore consider that the cited appeal is not comparable to that before me.
8. I conclude that the development would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety. It would comply with Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014, Policy T5 of the Local Plan First Review (1994) and the Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2021.

Conditions

9. 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 the completion of the landscaping scheme is necessary to ensure that the proposal integrates with the site and surrounding area and provides for biodiversity.

Conclusion

10. In respect of the foregoing and all other factors, I allow the appeal.

C Hall

INSPECTOR