

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 August 2025

by **C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/25/3368988

197 Bicknor Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9PF

- 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 Velizar Kirilov against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. is 25/500979/FULL.
 - The development proposed is for a dropped kerb, vehicle crossover and driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the local area; and
 - highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site relates to a two-storey, end-terrace dwelling on Bicknor Road, in a street scene of other domestic properties of broadly similar scale and design. The works would essentially comprise the removal of a section of boundary wall and the loss of part of the grass verges to the front of the site, to provide access from the highway across the public footway.
 4. At my visit, I observed that along Bicknor Road there are a number of properties which use their forecourts for off-street parking. However, these are either on the opposite side of the street where dwellings are served by front-facing gardens, or are further afield where character context is different. The area of which the appeal site is a part is reasonably verdant, with historically planned and unaltered grass verges between the pavements and carriageway that make a valuable contribution to the greenery.
 5. The formation of the access and driveway to the front garden of the appeal house would interrupt the established pattern of community landscaping. Policy LPRHOU2 of the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2024 (LPR) advises that redevelopment of a residential property should provide sufficient parking within the
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curtilage of the dwelling without diminishing the character of the street scene; the proposal would fail to achieve this. To my mind, the scheme would represent a discordant feature within the vicinity, creating a swathe of hardscaping across the public footpath to the detriment of local character and appearance. The harm would be exacerbated through the loss of the boundary wall on the north border of the residential garden, and the presence of a parked vehicle that would be facilitated therein.

6. I have borne in mind the appellant's use of an electric car and the difficulties faced with charging on-street. I also acknowledge that other landscape features of the area, the public open spaces, would remain undisturbed. However, the scheme would remove attractive grass verges which would erode and harm the setting, and this outweighs other considerations.
7. I therefore conclude that the scheme would be injurious to the character and appearance of the local area. It would fail Policies LPRSP15 and LPRHOU2 of the LPR and the Council's Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2009 (SPD), which collectively expect new development to be of a high-quality design that reflects and respects the existing setting and local context. It would also be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Highway safety

8. The Council argues that the scheme raises concerns, as it would be likely to involve the reversing of vehicles across a wide stretch of public land, which could cause a highway hazard due to manoeuvres on and off the highway. I appreciate that a vehicle emerging from the driveway and crossing the pedestrian footpath is an obvious safety threat.
9. However, I observed that visibility along the pavements at and around the appeal site are clear. Furthermore, vehicular manoeuvres into and out of domestic accesses are a feature along local roads, with these being infrequent, of short duration and 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 other properties elsewhere, and there is no indication that any incidents have arisen due to conflict between pedestrians and vehicles in the neighbourhood.
10. 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 Policy LPRSP15, the SPD and the Framework insofar as they relate to reducing road danger and improving street safety.

Conclusion

11. Having regard to the above and all outstanding matters, the appeal fails.

C Hall

INSPECTOR