



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2022

by M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/D/21/3274919

Stamhus, Troutstream Way, Loudwater, Hertfordshire WD3 4LB

- 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 and Mrs S Morgan against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0021/RSP, dated 5 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of front gates Ref 20/0239/COMP.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of front gates Ref 20/0239/COMP at Stamhus, Troutstream Way, Loudwater, Hertfordshire WD3 4LB in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 21/0021/RSP, dated 5 January 2021, and 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 plan: BD/20/22/1.

Preliminary matter

2. Although the description of the development states 'retrospective' the gates were not installed at the time of my visit and I have determined the appeal on that basis. This is also reflected in my Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Loudwater Estate Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached, two-storey dwelling of white render exterior with a tiled hipped roof. This dwelling is set behind a generous frontage which is accessed off Troutstream Way. The appeal property forms part of the Loudwater Estate CA.
5. Based on the Loudwater Estate Conservation Area Appraisal, June 2013 ('CA Appraisal') and my observations, the estate is characterised by a carefully laid

out arrangement of dwellings, most with Arts & Crafts features in a variety of styles, designs and materials but with each dwelling usually being set within generous plots with plentiful vegetation and landscaping, including mature trees. The area is well-wooded and undulating and is served by an informal network of narrow roads with grass verges.

6. Also based on the CA Appraisal, I acknowledge that a prevailing feature of the Loudwater Estate CA is the existence of open boundary treatments with some comprising mature hedging and open driveways. Despite this, some gates are present and most are of a rural farm-like style, with wooden five-bar gates. Nonetheless, I also observed that there are some examples of gates in alternative materials and designs.
7. In this case, the appeal property is of a relatively contemporary design in comparison to neighbouring properties, but its general arrangement is consistent with the CA. Furthermore, its frontage, save for the existing vehicular pedestrian access is enclosed by mature hedges to the front and flank boundaries. These, along with the soft landscaped verges are a positive visual influence, consistent with the sylvan character of the CA.
8. The proposed gates would be located at the access point into the site from Troutstream Way, between the existing mature hedgerows. The gates would measure about 4.1m in width, with a maximum height of nearly 1.4m and would be setback from the highway by approximately 2m. An activation panel would be located forward of the gate on the right side of the access measuring approximately 1m in height.
9. Gates are not uncharacteristic for the area and the proposed dark colour and metal finish would be consistent with others in the area. Whilst the gates are of a modern style, this would complement the contemporary appearance of the appeal property.
10. Due to the modest height and width of the proposed gates, and a form which incorporates large open sections, the existing hedging along the site's frontage and adjacent properties would continue to dominate the site and the street scene. Moreover, the scale and form of the gates would allow views from Troutstream Way into the site. Thereby maintaining a degree of openness to the frontage.
11. Consequently, the gates because of their scale, siting and design would complement the host property and would not detract from the sylvan character or visual amenity of the area, and would preserve the character and appearance of the Loudwater Estate CA.
12. Accordingly, I find no conflict with the aims of Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy, adopted 17 October 2011 which together seek to secure high quality design in developments and the protection of historic environments, and Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (LDD), which amongst other things, states that applications will only be supported where they sustain, conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, character and setting of the asset itself and the surrounding historic environment. In light of this, the proposal accords with similar aims of Policy 1 of the of the Chorleywood Neighbourhood Plan (2020) ('NP') and Policy 2 of the NP which along with other matters requires that all development

makes a positive contribution to the 'street scene' by way of frontage, building line, scale and design.

13. The Council's reason for refusal also refers to Policy DM1 of the LDD. This Policy largely relates to new residential development and dwelling subdivision and therefore is not directly relevant to the proposal.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

M Aqbal
INSPECTOR