The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2022

By A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27TH July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/W/22/3296419
14 Solesbridge Lane Chorleywood WD3 5SN

- 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 Ms Sharon Kane against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
- The application Ref: 22/0052/FUL dated 13 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 28 March 2022.
- The development proposed is installation of hardstanding along front amenity space to allow off-street parking.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council have amended the description of the development proposed for concision and clarity; I have used that description for the same reasons and do so without harm to the rights of any party.

Main Issue:

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and upon the significance of the Chorleywood Common Conservation Area (CCCA) which is a designated heritage asset.

Reason

4. Section 72 of the Town and Country (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCAA) imposes a duty upon decision takers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. This is a matter to which great weight should be given.

5. 14 Solesbridge Lane forms part of a short row of 5 nineteenth-century terraced dwellings. These are distinguished from surrounding, more recent, development by the harmonious retention of architectural features and relationship with the street frontage. As a group, the terraced block make a positive contribution to the CCCA in which regard the setback and hedged separation or enclosure of foregardens is of some importance.

6. The appellant refers to the relevance of differing character zones set out in the CCCA character appraisal and it is noted that more recent housing opposite and around the appeal site are dominated by off-road parking including many entirely open paved forecourts. Whilst this is doubtless not unrelated to the

proximity of Solesbridge Lane to the 'busy Rickmansworth Road' , overall, it is my judgement that the ubiquity of such open parking areas tends to heighten the significance of retained, well-enclosed and greened foregardens such as found at the appeal site, in that such examples point to previous patterns of development which were not dominated by private motor vehicles.

7. The appellant does not provide a detailed layout but from my observation and what is stated, the result of creating two parking spaces would be frontage which, other than separating fences, would be entirely open to the street, similar to that found in the remainder of the terrace block dwelling group further reducing, what remains of intervening hedges. Together with the introduction of paved surfaces to replace the existing soft surfaces and traditional brick path, this would degrade the contribution of the dwelling group to the character and appearance of the CCCA. Although a less-than-substantial harm, this is a matter to which great weight should be applied. There would be a small public benefit from the provision of off-road parking in a location where on-street parking is evidently problematic, but that small benefit does not outweigh the harm I have identified.

8. Further, as my reasoning shows, the proposal would not accord with relevant policies of the Development Plan, those being Policy CP12 of the Three Rivers District Council Core Strategy 2011 and Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies Local Development Document 2013 which in general terms align with the objectives for sustainable development set out in the NPPF. Taken together with Policies 1 and 2 of the Chorleywood Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Version 2020 these seek a high standard of design that conserves the character of an area, protect heritage assets and maintain local distinctiveness.

9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CCCA and thereby fail to accord with the Development Plan taken as a whole. Consequently, taking all matters into account and for the reasons given, the appeal does not succeed.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR