



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2023

by Laura Cuthbert BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/22/3303720

1 and 3 Kennet Road, Newbury RG14 5JA

- 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 P Simmons of Four Acre Investments against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02953/FUL, dated 22 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is retention of an existing timber building for ancillary storage use.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for retention of an existing timber building for ancillary storage use at 1 and 3 Kennet Road, Newbury, RG14 5JA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/02953/FUL, dated 22 November 2021, and the plans submitted with it, all received by the Council on 23 November 2021: Location Plan - Drawing No. 123, Existing Site Plan - Drawing No. 110, Proposed Site Plan - Drawing No. 121 and Existing & Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations - Drawing No. 122.

Preliminary Matter

2. At the time of my site visit, I saw that the proposed development had commenced and appeared to be completed. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect on the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to the setting of the Newbury Conservation Area and the nearby Grade II listed buildings.

Reasons

4. The appeal site consists of a corner plot situated at the junction of Kennet Road and Craven Road. The development relates to a timber storage building which was originally erected as a temporary building whilst 1 and 3 Kennet Road were being converted from 2 separate dwellings to 6 self-contained flats. A mature hedgerow encloses the appeal site along the southern and eastern boundaries. Views of the northern gable end of the building are possible as you travel south down Kennet Road due to the gap in the boundary to provide vehicular access.
5. The boundary to the Newbury Conservation Area (CA) runs along the eastern boundary of the appeal site, including the footpath which runs along Kennet Road. The CA covers Newbury town centre and covers both residential and

commercial areas. The significance of the CA is largely derived from the historic building pattern of the town centre, including some important individual properties, many with interesting architectural features.

6. The Newbury Town Design Statement (July 2018) states that this area is the most densely developed area of the town. Craven Road has a mixture of larger detached, semi-detached and terraced housing on the north side, mostly 19th century, although individual properties have older elements. On the south side of Craven Road, after the run of Victorian developments, are post-war, local authority built properties of a more utilitarian design. Therefore, the appeal site is within an area with a mixture of built forms, which contributes towards the established character and appearance of the area. There is also a mixture of roof heights and forms and materials, ranging from brick and render, hipped roofs, pitched roofs, with small pitched roof and flat roofed dormers also visible in the streetscene.
7. There are also two Grade II listed buildings nearby, 26-32 Craven Road and 29-31 Craven Road. They both consist of pairs of semi-detached dwellings. Nos 26-32 are situated immediately to the east of the appeal site, on the opposite side of Kennet Road. Nos 29-31 are situated to the south of the appeal site, on the opposite side of Craven Road. Their special interest derives mostly from their historic built form and architectural details. The variation in built form in the surrounding area heavily influences the setting within which both the CA and the listed buildings are experienced.
8. The development's timber construction has introduced a different material to the area. However, the storage building has the appearance of a large domestic shed and would not harm the character and appearance of the area, simply adding to the existing variety. Its siting is appropriate, respecting the building lines along both Kennet Road and Craven Road. Whilst it is a large building, I note that it would be used for the storage of bicycles, as well as charging points for e-bikes and the storage of equipment and furniture, which would all be appropriate ancillary uses. Its low profile roof and low height allows the development to be read as an ancillary building to Nos 1 and 3, despite its size.
9. There is a degree of intervisibility between the development and the listed buildings, due to the siting of the proposal to the designated heritage assets. However, due to the modest scale of the development and as a consequence of its appropriate design and siting, any visual or physical relationship between the development and the heritage assets is acceptable. Whilst the development has resulted in a perceptible change to the setting of the CA and the listed buildings, and the wider context in which they are experienced, it is not of a magnitude to constitute harm.
10. The mitigation afforded by the hedge is beneficial and I note the appellant does not have any intention of removing it. However, the acceptability of the development does not rely on the softening it provides given the conclusions I have made on the suitability of the design, scale and siting of the development.
11. I note that the building was originally constructed as a temporary structure and that there was a condition on an earlier planning consent for the building to be removed. Nevertheless, I have considered the appeal on its own merits and concluded that it does not cause harm for the reasons set out above.

12. Therefore, I conclude that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the area. Notably, it preserves the setting of the Newbury CA and the Grade II listed buildings of 26-32 Craven Road and 29-31 Craven Road. The development is in accordance with Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) (adopted 2012) (Core Strategy) which, in combination, seek to ensure that new development demonstrates a high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, and ensures the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the district is conserved and enhanced. This includes the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of heritage assets and their settings.
13. The development is also in accordance with the principles within Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) which seek good design sympathetic to the local area. It is also in accordance with the principles set out in Section 16 of the Framework, which requires great weight to be given to heritage assets' conservation, including their setting.
14. The Council's reason for refusal also cites the 'Quality Design – West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document' (the SPD). However, I have not been directed towards any section of the SPD that the development conflicts with. Given the reasons above, the development represents good design and thus, it is in accordance with the overriding objectives of the SPD.

Other Matters

15. The Council allege that the development has an adverse effect on the 'amenities enjoyed by residents of the host site' but does not expand on this or provide any justification for this statement. The development is separated from Nos 1 and 3 by the vehicular access serving the site. The parking associated with the appeal site is situated adjacent to the storage building. Due to the acceptability of the development, and the relationship it has with the flats within Nos 1 and 3, this ensures that the living conditions of the occupants of Nos 1 and 3 are not harmed.
16. I note the Council's concern that the appearance of the building is more akin towards independent living, and not as a storage building. The description of the development is for an ancillary storage building. If the development is not used as proposed, or if there is a material change of use in the future to create a separate dwelling, then a separate grant of planning permission would be required.

Conditions

17. The Council have not requested that any planning conditions be imposed. The standard time limit condition is not required as the development permitted has already been implemented. I have therefore allowed the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Laura Cuthbert

INSPECTOR