



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 October 2024

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/D/24/3351495
309 Sewall Highway, Coventry CV2 3PD

- 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 Dennis Crame against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref: PL/2024/0001245/HHA dated 4 July 2024 was refused by notice 6 September 2024.
 - The application is for formation of vehicular access including a dropped kerb.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area and the safe and efficient use of the highway.

Procedural Matter

3. The description of development used in the heading above differs from that used on the original application form and instead the description is that as used by the Council's decision notice. I consider that the description of development used by the Council more accurately reflects the proposal before me and as such I have used this description accordingly.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a mid terrace bay fronted property within this street of similar suburban type dwellings. It appears that the overriding character of the area was one of houses with frontage gardens and tree lined verges which would be consistent with the age of the property and its character. More recently it appears that several householders have sought to remove their front gardens in favour of block paving for in curtilage car parking. In the instances where this has occurred the garden and the grass verge have been removed and replaced with hard surfacing.
5. In this case the proposal intends to do the same as some other houses along this stretch. A garden hedge had already been removed which exposes the adjoining neighbours previously enclosed garden and to complete the ability of the owner to park their vehicle on the site frontage, a dropped kerb is required which would see the removal of the grass verge and any remaining elements of frontage boundary treatment.

6. Although the application is for a vehicle crossing only, I must firstly assess this scheme with regards Policy DE1 of the Council's Local Plan who's aim it is to ensure changes to the environment are of a high quality. Within this policy there are several references to the protection of landscape and the natural environment as well as good placemaking and this approach reflects the National Planning Policy Framework in its approach to achieving well designed places.
7. In the case before me, although the removal of the front garden has occurred, the cumulative impact of further widening and removal of greenery and landscape infrastructure to allow the vehicle crossing and dropped kerb, would result in a much more harmful erosion of the area's character that could not easily be mitigated through condition. As such I share the concerns of the Council's Highways Officer that further such vehicle crossings and associated frontage parking could contribute to a harmful erosion of the character and appearance of the area.
8. Therefore, although there have been other instances allowed of such crossings, this further alteration would result in a greater cumulative change. With the two neighbours already having vehicle crossings therefore, the further widening, and further removal of verges, would be particularly excessive and harmful within the streetscene. As such this would bring this scheme firmly into conflict with Policy DE1.
9. With regards the effect of the proposal upon highway safety, I saw on my site visit that the road here is a relatively busy one with fast moving cars and significant pedestrian movement. Even though the removal of the hedge between the site and the adjoining neighbour would mitigate any elements around required visibility splays, I am unconvinced that the practicalities of being able to turn in the space and using the neighbours land to exit is a practical one.
10. Due therefore to the relatively fast moving traffic and pedestrian movements along this stretch, I am unable to see how it would be safe for a driver to reverse from this site in complete safety either for themselves or other road users, including those more vulnerable users on foot or on cycle.
11. When this effect upon highway safety is added to the harmful cumulative effect of this proposal upon the character and appearance of the area, I am lead to conclude that this proposal would, ultimately, fail to meet the criteria within Policies DE1, AC2 and AC4 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016. As such the appeal would not represent a positive change for the character or the area, nor would it contribute to a safe and efficient highway.

Other Matters

12. The Appellant has raised the extenuating need for in curtilage parking due to them leasing an electric vehicle. I know from experience the frustration of being unable to charge such a vehicle within ones property curtilage. However this environmental benefit must be weighted against the other matters as raised above. Ultimately, although finely balanced, I am unconvinced that the benefits of this ability to charge within the property curtilage would outweigh the effect of the proposal upon highway safety or the cumulative effect upon

the character of the area. Both of which are positive for their own environmental reasons and contribute to sustainable places in the long term.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR