



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 January 2025

by **R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14TH February 2025

Appeal Reference: APP/P1940/D/24/3355935

36 Parkfield, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 5AZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr. A. Lal against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application reference is 24/1273/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a “new front boundary wall and gates”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary points

2. The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in December 2024 but, in this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions that have been made to it. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action. In this appeal, I have had regard to the most recent version, of course.

Main issue

3. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surroundings.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within a residential area of Rickmansworth, a short distance to the west of the M25 (near Junction 18), whereas the main part of Rickmansworth lies to the east of the motorway. This residential suburb is a low density area, characterised by substantial homes in large plots. Parkfield is a meandering and informal cul-de-sac, with short side branches, set with attractive houses and bungalows in a leafy suburban setting. Along Parkfield, frontages that are defined by soft landscaping make an important contribution to the streetscene while, although some roadside boundaries have walls or fences, these generally occur where a dwelling has a garden side boundary to the road. Overall, the streetscene is characterised by trees and shrubs that soften the townscape.
5. Number 36 Parkside is a large two-storey house, in a traditional style, constructed of brickwork under a complex hipped, tiled roof. The house is set well back from the road, behind a large front garden that also includes space for car parking and

manoeuvring. The front boundary at number 36 is marked by a row of conifers, with some mature trees behind the frontage.

6. It is now proposed to mark the front boundary of the property with a new front boundary wall and gates. The proposed wall construction is described on the submitted plan as being new brick walls and piers, of brickwork to match the existing house, topped with semi-engineering bricks on a tile creasing. New wrought iron swing gates would close the entrance.
7. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history (while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change).
8. An emphasis on the importance of encouraging good design as a general principle is also to be found in the Development Plan. In this case, the most relevant Development Plan Policies are to be found in the 'Core Strategy' (adopted in October 2011) and the 'Development Management Policies Local Development Document' (adopted in July 2013). The 'Chorleywood Neighbourhood Plan' (dated 2020) is also part of the Development Plan.
9. Policy CP1 of the 'Core Strategy' is a general policy that supports sustainable development and encourages good design, among other things. Policy CP12 is more specifically concerned with the design of development and it aims at achieving a high standard of design, having regard to the local context. Policy DM1 of the 'Development Management Policies' introduces more specific criteria for residential development, by reference to Appendix 2 of the policy document.
10. The proposed new wall and gates would introduce a solid brickwork wall and metal gates into the streetscene at this point on Parkfield, which would create a hard urban feature where there is soft landscaping at present. These urbanising features would be out of character with the leafy suburban context and seriously harmful to the character and appearance of the surroundings. Thus, the proposals are clearly contrary to planning policies that are intended to promote good design.
11. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and I accept that the wall and gates would improve security at the property, to some extent. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the benefits of the scheme would not outweigh the significant objections to it.
12. I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the appeal submissions, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR