The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2025

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 25th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/D/25/3359938
Maplebank, Henfield Road, Cowfold, West Sussex RH13 8DW

- 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 Mrs Mia Wheeler against the decision of Horsham District Council.
- The application Ref DC/24/1654, dated 23 October 2024, was refused by notice dated 6 January 2025.
- The development proposed is a vehicle crossover to allow access to driveway at the front of the property.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene and the setting of the Cowfold Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. The proposal is to construct a vehicle crossover in front of Maplebank, an attractive semi-detached Victorian style property, to enable the creation of an off-street parking space in the front garden. The dwelling is the first in a row of four similar semi-detached houses, two pairs, which front the east side of Henfield Road just outside the CA near the centre of the village.

4. At present none of the four houses have such parking spaces, each being set back behind a slight bank landscaped to create modest front gardens with low frontage fences next to the footway. Whilst there is a layby/bus stop on the roadside to one side of Maplebank and a double parking space to one side of Oakcroft at the other end of the row, the four dwellings comprise an attractive coherent group with similar architectural detailing, and the unspoilt line of front gardens complement their character.

5. The application plans show that virtually the whole of the front garden would be replaced by block paving with minimal margins left available for any mitigating planting. In addition, the low bank in front of the house would need to be cut away and low retaining walls put in place to provide a suitable space. The result would be the loss of the existing verdant front garden, opening the property up to the road, and the introduction of a discordant hard landscaped area and a parked car which would significantly detract from the character and appearance of the row. With the row of front gardens complementing the wide

grass verge on either side of St Peter's Close opposite, the proposal would also harm the character and appearance of the southern approach into the CA, thus harming its setting.

Conclusion

6. For these reasons the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the adjacent CA in conflict with Policies 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015. These policies seek to conserve and enhance the built environment, including heritage assets, and ensure that development relates sympathetically to its built surroundings.

7. It is appreciated that there are some other properties along Henfield Road with their front gardens made over to parking spaces. The proposal would provide a convenient off-street parking space for use by the appellant with the potential for electric vehicle charging, and the loss of on-street parking may have some benefits for the free follow of traffic. However, these material considerations do not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area and the associated conflict with the development plan.

8. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR