

Design & Access, Heritage and Planning Statement

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Introduction

1. This Statement is submitted to accompany a planning application for alterations to the front area of hardstanding and creation of an off-street parking space with new dropped kerb and reinstated pavement to enable the parking of a car. The proposals are shown on drawings 1202-P-000, 001 & 002. Also accompanying this submission is a Transport Note by TTP Consulting relating to the proposed dropped kerb, which addresses transport planning matters.
2. The application raises two main issues: the effect on the character and appearance of the area, and the effect on traffic and parking in the vicinity.

Character and appearance

3. The application site lies within the Hampstead Conservation Area. It is one of a pair of houses that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, due to the general form and architecture of the house. The planning records reveal that the house (together with its neighbour) was formerly in use as an hotel. Planning permission was granted in August 2005 for change of use to 2 family dwellinghouses (ref. 2005/2454/P).
4. The information on the planning file at that time shows there was a gate to the front elevation and area of hardstanding to the side of the property now known as The Chestnuts. The change of use of the property was allowed, and this area and gate was upgraded. However, no dropped kerb was provided in front of that gate at the time of either the hotel use or the subsequent residential use. The same situation exists for the adjoining property of Holme Vale House. This has in fact led to a rather curious appearance to the property, where the front of the house looks as if there is already a parking area due to the forecourt and double gate, but the absence of a dropped kerb means no such parking occurs.
5. The proposals which are the subject of this application would see minor alterations to the hardstanding at the front of the property, through the extension of the existing forecourt to make it 5m long, in accordance with requirements for the length of a driveway. The works would be carried out to match the existing driveway, with the stairs to the basement lightwell adjusted to accommodate the extension by simply omitting the existing landing at the base. The alterations therefore have negligible impact on the appearance of the property. This would have a neutral effect on the Conservation Area. As now, there would be gates to the front of the property, and so again there would be a neutral effect on the Conservation Area.
6. The existing footway outside the property is in a poor condition, with collapsed kerb and an awkward junction between the pavement and an area of former dropped kerb outside the adjoining house of Leavesden Cottage. This is unsightly to the Area and also causes

an access problem for those using the footway. The proposed works would see the applicant undertaking the upgrading of the footway in this location, ie by repairing the kerbs and reintroducing a continuous and level pavement surface outside the adjoining house. That would be a positive benefit to the Conservation Area.

7. The proposed works would therefore represent, on balance, an enhancement to the Conservation Area and so to the heritage asset. This would be consistent with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan 2017. The upgraded footway – rectifying existing problems with the situation – is a public benefit and is consistent with the objectives of Policy T1 of the Local Plan. This public benefit also weighs in favour of the scheme, as stated by paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

Traffic and parking

8. The accompanying Transport Note addresses the matter of traffic and parking in the vicinity of the application site, and includes the results of a parking survey.
9. The Technical Report concludes that there would not be any adverse impact on the pressure for parking in the area, that there would be a safe provision of parking on the site, there would be safe access on and off the parking space. There is capacity to park in the area and this would not be reduced to a harmful level. Of course, the existing occupier of the house already parks in the area.
10. It is further concluded that the reduction in on-street parking by one space would lead to benefits, due to reduced congestion: at present vehicles cannot pass in the section of Branch Hill, and the removal of one space would provide a full carriageway width that would allow passing vehicles. This is an additional public benefit arising from the works.
11. Policy T2 of the Local Plan 2017 says that vehicle crossovers and on-site parking will be resisted. It is important to have regard to the reason for this Policy. Paragraph 10.21 says that parking can cause damage to the environment, due to loss of trees, hedgerows, boundary walls and fences, and their replacement with hard standing can affect character. There is no such issue in this case: the property already has hardstanding and a double gate suitable for vehicular access. Thus, there will also be no change to water run-off.
12. Paragraph 10.21 also says that off-street parking leads to the loss of '*much needed public on-street parking bays*'. As stated, the Transport Note finds that the removal of one parking space would not be harmful to the levels of parking in the area. Furthermore, there is the public benefit arising from the passing place that would be created.
13. The circumstances of this case therefore indicate that the proposed works would not conflict with the reasons for applying Policy T2: there would be no harmful change to the character of the area (indeed, an improvement due to the upgrading of the footway) and no harm to parking or traffic in the area (indeed, an improvement due to the effective widening of the carriageway).

Summary

14. The proposed works to the front of the house would result in minor changes to the appearance of the building, due to there already effectively being an area of hardstanding with gates. The character and appearance of the Conservation Area would not be harmed, and so there would be no effect on the significance of the heritage asset.
15. It has been proven there would be no harm to parking in the area, and there would be a benefit to traffic flow in the area.

16. There are public benefits arising from the proposed works. This relates to the enhancement to the footway outside the property and along Branch Hill, which would be a visual improvement and an improvement to access through levelling of the current poor surface. There would be benefits arising from the traffic improvements. These weigh in favour of the works, and must be taken into account in the balance of a situation where there is no discernible harm arising from the scheme.
17. The evidence in this case therefore points to planning permission being able to be granted for the proposed works.