



133 Dukes Ride
Crowthorne
RG45 6DU
25 July 2020

BFC Planning

Dear Sir/Madam

Ref: Mango tree 20/00347/FUL

Crowthorne Village Action Group (CVAG) is a non political association of residents who seek to protect the established character of Crowthorne Village and ensure that future developments are in keeping with their surroundings. We object to the above application for the following reasons .

Previous applications.

The site does have planning permission for internal alteration of the existing building to create 5 flats, 16/01236/FUL. A subsequent application 17/01273 asked permission to demolish the external structure, saying that it needed to be rebuilt "for safety reasons". This was accompanied by a firm commitment that it would be then rebuilt using existing bricks in line with 16/01236, which is for internal conversion with minor external alterations.

Quote:

"The building would be taken down brick by brick, with the existing bricks cleaned and re used in construction of the new building."

It's clearly impossible for this much larger building to be constructed using just the existing bricks

Scale and Mass

The proposed building is of a scale and mass which is not suited to that location. With accommodation over 4 levels and stretching far back into the plot the overall impact would be quite overbearing. The applicant shows the street scene from directly in front to be similar to the previous building, which conveniently ignores the fact that viewed from even a slight angle, the full scale would be visually apparent.

Overdevelopment

The sheer scale of the building leaves insufficient space for amenity space for residents.

The current permission includes shared amenity space with a depth of 18m for the communal use of the residents of the 5 flats. This application proposes to build on that space and offers no amenity space for residents of 10 flats.

The bin store appears too small to have 10 individual wheely bins plus recycling.

Parking

The application suggests 19 parking spaces. This appears insufficient for residents of 10x 2 bedroom flats, visitors, delivery drivers and any disabled parking which is required. Whilst this may meet the general guidelines, this particular location is in a congested part of a main thoroughfare and every effort should be made to avoid additional on street parking by delivery vehicles, visitors etc..

Access

There is insufficient access for a refuse truck to enter the site and turn round. This suggests that the refuse truck would need to park in Church Street whilst the staff retrieve and empty the contents of the bins. Church Street is a main thoroughfare and this would lead to additional congestion, potentially backing up to increase air pollution in the adjacent Crowthorne AQMA.

Conservation area

The mango tree is considered a non designated heritage asset and is located within the Crowthorne conservation area. To quote from the officers report on the application to demolish in 2017, comments which remain equally applicable today;

9.8 The Mango Tree is in quite a prominent position within the Crowthorne Conservation Area, at the junction of Church Street and Waterloo Road. Therefore the area is considered to have special architectural and historic interest. Any proposals would need to be of high quality and be seen as preserving or enhancing the Conservation Area. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires under Section 72 that special attention be paid in the exercise of planning functions in a Conservation Area, to the 'desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area'.

9.9 As part of the designation of the conservation area in Crowthorne, an appraisal of the area was undertaken by Jacob's consultancy which is titled "Conservation Area Appraisal, Church Street, Crowthorne". With regard to The Mango Tree, paragraph 7.5.21 of the appraisal report sets out the character and importance of No.63 Church Street within the Conservation Area streetscene and details the existing building as of "red brick construction in Flemish bond and hipped roof finished with tiles. The front elevation is symmetrical with a shop front style entrance central door flanked by plate glass of vertical emphasis fixed between timber mullions. The shop front design appears chunky in relation to the design of the building but the fascia is of appropriate proportions and is painted. Green glazed tiles relating to the earlier shop front survive below the black paint. The first floor windows are casements with a vertical emphasis."

9.10 Comments were received from the Council's Principal Heritage Officer in respect of the application, who considers that the Mango Tree is of local historic interest and a non-designated heritage asset in accordance with the NPPF which states at Paragraph 135 'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'

This revised application is clearly contrary to “preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area”

We urge that this application is refused and that the council uses whatever powers it has to encourage the applicant to rebuild the demolished building in line with their previous commitments.

Yours faithfully

Carole Doran
Secretary
Crowthorne Village Action Group.
carole@cvag.org.uk