

Objection to Planning case reference HGY/2023/0269 Formation of vehicular crossover at 51 Cholmeley Crescent, N6 5EX.

Submitted by Tom and Katie Hedges, 49 Cholmeley Crescent

We **strongly object** to this application for a vehicle crossover and drive in the front garden at no. 51.

Executive Summary of reasons to object

- a) **Detrimental to the Conservation Area and street scene (contravenes the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan Policy TR5: Dropped Kerbs and Cross-overs and Policy DH6: Front Boundaries)**
- b) **Road safety issues caused by limited visibility on exiting planned crossover**
- c) **Electric charging points are readily available on the street within a few metres.**
- d) **Likely damage to a mature tree in neighbouring garden**
- e) **Boundary wall proposed creates dangerous fall risk and subsidence concerns for no. 49**

Rather than the current proposal, the applicant should reinstate the previous mature front garden (before it was destroyed during building works) which would be in keeping with the existing street scene.

The Highgate Society planning guidelines state 'The Highgate Society is keen to foster and promote an appreciation of the importance of original boundary walls and fences, in conjunction with the mature trees and shrubs of front gardens. These features are central to the quality and character of the street scene, and represent a strong link to the area's historic development.'

'It is important to stress that within a statutorily designated Conservation Area, individual demands are secondary to the overall integrity and preservation of the Area's appearance and meaning, and Borough planning decisions will be made according to these parameters'

1. Conservation Area concerns

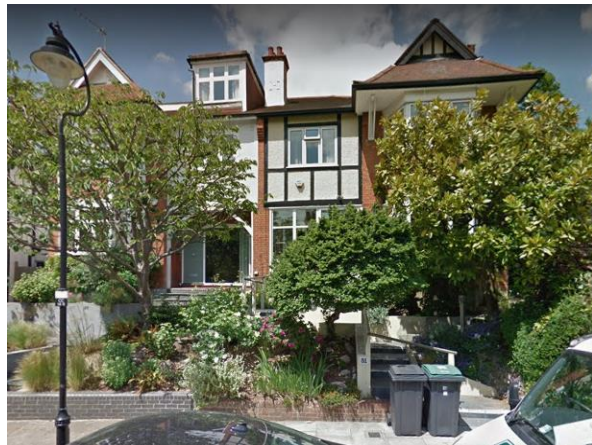
Number 51 Cholmeley Crescent is in a row of 15 houses on the outside of the crescent. None of these semi-detached houses have driveways. These houses (no. 47 to 75 Cholmeley Crescent) are all elevated from the pavement and have mature front gardens. Driveways are not suitable for these houses due to the steep elevation which would necessitate stark hard-landscaping to support the necessary earthworks. Such landscaping would cause unsightly disturbance to the existing street scene in what is a leafy green Conservation Area.

We would like to draw your attention to the previous street scene and what we are losing. Photo on left shows the current front garden. Photo on right shows the front garden as it was a few years ago where you can see the beautiful soft landscaping, shrubs and the two mature trees. You can see how the front gardens between no 49 and 51 flowed seamlessly together. Haringey should be enforcing the reinstatement of this front garden, not condoning a driveway with c.5% soft landscaping.

No. 51 front garden today



No. 51 front garden before



The Planning Application 'Design statement' says 'the proposal also incorporates some planters and soft-landscaping areas'.

This is incorrect as the proposal only includes one small planting area in front of the bay window (which will be obscured from the street by a black balustrade) and a very small soft landscaping area (observed behind the refuse bins). The proposed plan is 95% paving, brick work or balustrade. This is detrimental to the street scene and is unsuitable for the Conservation Area. I understand the target for soft landscaping in a front garden by Haringey Council, is a minimum of 50%.

The submitted design statement is incorrect when it states 'the proposal.... is sympathetic to the Conservation Area'.

Cholmeley Crescent has recently campaigned and fund-raised to re-plant 33 new street trees in the street. The 56 residents who contributed to this fundraiser do understand the value of living in a Conservation Area and wish to protect our green spaces and trees. This includes our front gardens.

Two mature trees in the front garden of 51 Cholmeley Crescent (a Magnolia Grandiflora and a Dwarf Zelkova) were felled as well as some beautiful mature plants and shrubs. Please see evidence of these trees in the photo above. These were removed over the last 3 years (permission granted) citing ease for building works and roots in the drain (!) See CON/2020/0549 and CON/2021/0566. Now the building works have been completed the previous street scene should be reinstated with a similar planting scheme.

No 49 Cholmeley Crescent, lying left adjacent to the proposed driveway, has a mature cherry blossom tree in their front garden. Due consideration should be given to protecting this tree and its root system. This tree is not mentioned in the planning application (and is within falling distance of the proposed development). This cherry tree is a valuable asset to the street scene and it is highly likely that the tree roots extend over the boundary and would be damaged by the extensive earthworks to build the proposed driveway.

When considering no. 49 and 51 Cholmeley Crescent as a pair of semi-detached houses: the look of the two front gardens should be considered together. Hard landscaping the driveway in no 51 would be incongruous with the existing soft landscaping of no. 49 and incongruous with the 15 houses that have continuous front gardens on that side of the crescent and therefore detrimentally damage the street scene.

2. Brick retaining wall height and Safety

No 49 and 51 Cholmeley Crescent are a pair of semi-detached houses. Currently the two front gardens are at the same level.

It is not clear from the drawings how high the brick wall between no. 49 and 51 will be. At least 2 metres high, possibly rising to 3 metres above street level? This needs to be stated. Will there be a sheer drop of 2 metres down to the driveway of 51? The proposed plan does not consider the huge safety issue if I was gardening along the adjacent edge of my front garden (no 49); I could fall 2 metres down into the driveway of No 51. It would be completely incongruous to the street scent to build up a brick boundary wall or install a black balustrade along this boundary. And we would not support that.

3. Road Safety and visibility splays

No. 51 Cholmeley Crescent is on the apex of the crescent. There are already reduced sight lines from this point up and down the crescent which would make reversing out of this proposed driveway very dangerous. The proposed crossover is 3 metres wide and if two cars are parked in the parking bays either side of the crossover, it is going to be impossible to see down the crescent until the exiting car is already well into the road. This proposal is therefore dangerous to passing traffic and could result in a road traffic accident.

Safety should also be considered when a car is exiting the driveway at the pavement stage. There will be a wall (height not specified?) which will block visibility of pedestrians/kids on scooters etc coming along the pavement while reversing out.

We note that the proposed driveway must be entered forwards and reversed out as the design does not otherwise allow sufficient space to access the driver's door.

4. Electric Cars

Whilst we are very much in favour of the transition to electric cars, there are 2 lamp post charging points within 50 metres of this house, (as well as charging points in all surrounding streets: Cholmeley Park, Archway Rd, Southwood Lawn Road etc). The applicant writes 'One of the primary reasons for the proposal, is because the application would like to introduce off-street parking and an electric charging point for their vehicle.' There is no valid reason to install an EVCP for personal use when there are public EVCP's a few steps away.

As The Highgate Society planning document states 'It is important to stress that within a statutorily designated Conservation Area, individual demands are secondary to the overall integrity and preservation of the Area's appearance and meaning and Borough planning decisions will be made according to these parameters.' This planning application solely focuses on the applicants personal desire to install his own personal EVCP. I trust Haringey's planning decision will take this into account.

5. Missing / incorrect information on application + construction issues

- a) A lamp post to left (from front) of proposed driveway has not been marked on the plan – again worsening sightlines on exit.
- b) Will the driveway be level with pavement or on a slope? No gradient is specified. And therefore it is not clear how high the retaining walls will be.

- c) Has drainage been properly considered? Has the risk of flooding been assessed? Is there drainage planned under hard standing in front garden? A huge amount of earth will need to be removed from the front garden to install this driveway. Has the risk of subsidence and damage to foundations for both 49 and 51 Cholmeley Crescent been assessed? What sort of reinforced construction is needed to retain the walls and ensure stability of the houses above?
- d) Section B-B has incorrect labelling, showing the soft landscaping area in front of the bin area. Whereas on the proposed plan this is behind the bins and less visible from street.
- e) The mature tree in no. 49 has not been mentioned or considered.

6. Crossover Position

Haringey Vehicle Crossover Application Guidance Notes states 'Minimum parking area of 4.8m deep, measured at a **right angle** to the footway, by 2.4m will be required before a crossover is agreed.' As this front garden is positioned on the curve of the crescent (as can be seen on the proposed plan), has the plan been measured correctly as the proposed parking area is not at right angle to the footway?

7. Highgate Society Planning document and Highgate Neighbourhood Plan

I draw the Planning department's attention to the relevant sections in these documents.

a) The Highgate Society Planning document states clearly its view on Front Boundary Treatments

'The Highgate Society is keen to foster and promote an appreciation of the importance of original boundary walls and fences, in conjunction with the mature trees and shrubs of front gardens. These features are central to the quality and character of the street scene, and represent a strong link to the area's historic development.'

'It is important to stress that within a statutorily designated Conservation Area, individual demands are secondary to the overall integrity and preservation of the Area's appearance and meaning, and Borough planning decisions will be made according to these parameters.'

'In addition to the above, the Highgate Society also has concerns about the increasing numbers of applications to enlarge or introduce areas of hardstanding in front of houses for use as private parking. These can be highly detrimental to the appearance of the Conservation Area'.

'It is also important to point out that the associated formation of new crossovers, dropped kerbs and driveways compound the parking pressures in the locality.'

b) Highgate Neighbourhood Plan (Adoption Version 2017).

Policy TR5: Dropped Kerbs and Cross-overs

Where planning permission is required, planning applications for the provision of off-street parking accessible by dropped kerbs will not be supported in areas covered by a CPZ where this would adversely reduce on-street parking capacity within the CPZ. They will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- I. They are either not in areas of high parking stress or a CPZ, or they are in areas of high parking stress but will alleviate the demand for on-street parking through the provision of off-street parking for more than one existing dwelling; and

- II. They would not negatively impact on the character of the area, particularly conservation areas (such as through the proposed removal of character enhancers such as walls and trees); and
- III. They would not have a negative impact on pedestrian and highways safety; and
- IV. Appropriate on-site drainage, such as permeable surfaces, achieving run off rates which are no greater than the existing situation, and wherever possible are reduced, so as to mitigate against off-site flooding caused by run-off from off street parking schemes.

Policy DH6: Front Boundaries

Original boundary walls, gate piers or railings should be retained unless their removal is necessary due to the condition of a structure, or replacement provision is proposed which would enhance the character of the area. In areas where matching and similar boundary walls form a recognizable part of the streetscape, for example clinker walls in Cromwell Avenue, replacements should be reinstated to match the originals. New boundary walls requiring planning permission, and gated developments will not be permitted if they:

- I. Have a detrimental impact on the open character of the street-scene; or
- II. Result in the unnecessary removal of mature hedges or natural features which have a positive impact on the character of the local area;
- III. Would result in a loss of visual permeability or public accessibility where this contributes to local character.

The 2013 Place Check uncovered a great appreciation for green front gardens and access to, and views of, green spaces, which are an essential part of the character of Highgate.

In summary, we strongly object to this planning application for the above mentioned reasons. We would urge the council to ensure re-instatement of the previous, mainly soft landscaped front garden.