

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2016

by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 02 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/W/16/3148562

Bramdean Cottage, Bramdean, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 0LW

- 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 Mr Spencer Jeffries against the decision of the South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/16/00271/HOUS, dated 20 August 2015, was refused by notice dated 21 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a free standing close boarded fence above a listed brick wall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. For the sake of clarity, I have used the description of development as set out in the planning application form but I have excluded information in the description which does not relate to the act of development.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the effect of the character and appearance of the area including whether the proposal would preserve the setting of the adjacent listed building.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within Bramdean and is adjacent to the A272. Despite the road being busy with traffic, the character of Bramdean along this part of the road is still rural with a generally verdant appearance. Development is low density with few suburban features. Bramdean is also within the South Downs National Park. I have been referred to the site being within the Bramdean Woodlands Landscape Character Area and to the use of traditional boundaries consisting of palisade fencing, brick and flint walls, railings and hedgerows.
 5. Bramdean Cottage is a listed building which dates originally from the 16th Century with later additions. The wall is part of the curtilage of the listed building. The property is set back from the main road by the front garden but is still visible even with some planting behind the wall. I consider that the wall forms an important part of its setting. The listed building and the wall also make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
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6. The proposal is for a close board fence which would be erected behind but would be seen above the wall. Due to the proposed height and length of the fence this would be a highly dominant and suburban feature within the street scene. This would be at odds with the strong rural characteristic of the village. The fence would obscure the majority of the building from view and would significantly reduce the positive impact that the listed building has on the character and appearance of the area. Due to its prominence above the wall, the fence would have a negative effect on the setting of the listed building.
7. The appellant has provided a number of photographs to show close boarded fences and other boundaries within the village. However, I have not been provided with information to indicate that these examples benefit from or would need planning permission. I cannot be certain that the properties are listed buildings. In respect of the adjoining property to the southeast, to my mind this fence has a negative impact on the street scene due to its position and method of construction. The property which is to the northwest has a tall brick wall. However, that house is a modern building. Therefore, I consider these examples do not justify the proposal before me.
8. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building. It would be in conflict with saved Policy DP3 of the Winchester Local Plan Review 2006 and Policies CP19 and CP20 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy 2013. These amongst other things seek new development that responds positively to the character, appearance and variety of the local environment, that should be in keeping with the context and the setting of the landscape and settlements of the South Downs National Park and in relation to heritage assets, particular emphasis should be given to conserving recognised built form and local distinctiveness including in terms of characteristic materials.

Other matters

9. The harm to the setting of the listed building may be considered as less than substantial. In any such circumstances paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that any such harm be assessed against any public benefit the development may bring. I accept that the intention of the fence would be to protect the listed building and the occupiers from traffic and debris. I also consider that the protection of the house from theft could be considered a public benefit in the widest sense. However, even when taken together these are very modest benefits and would be significantly outweighed by the harm I have found.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised including the support for the proposal by the Parish Council, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Gibbons

INSPECTOR