

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2017

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 3 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/D/16/3165653

55 St. Marks Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1LP

- 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 John Porter against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref P16/S2483/HH, dated 25 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 28 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is for removal of part of front garden wall to provide off-street parking.
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Henley (St. Marks Road) Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The site is situated within a pleasant residential street comprising predominantly well conserved vernacular dwellings. There are a variety of front boundary treatments, red brick walls are a common feature, whilst some of these have however been removed to provide for front garden parking each case must be assessed on its own merits. The Council explains that an Article 4 Direction was enacted in 2008 to, amongst other things, preserve the historic front walls within the Conservation Area. Such features are highlighted as being of significance within the Henley Conservation Area Character Appraisal (May 2005).
4. The proposal would give rise to the removal of a significant portion of the existing front boundary wall and hedge that is planted behind it. Whilst I note that the proposal only seeks to provide for a single parking space, so as to leave as much of the wall either side as practicable, this would have a detrimental effect upon the visual characteristics of the appeal site and the wider street, notwithstanding the fact that wrought iron gates could be installed within the opening.
5. I acknowledge that the proposal would give rise to the exposure of the full façade of the host dwelling, and to some degree it would balance the visual appearance of the dwelling when viewed with its adjoining neighbour which has

had its front boundary wall removed. I respect the appellant's desire to renew the Edwardian tiled path, to reinstate the hedge against the wall next to no 53, as well as providing planting around the bay window. In addition, I commend the appellant's willingness to confirm full compliance with regard to sustainable urban drainage, to use traditional/natural materials, as well as providing for an electric charging point in order to facilitate a more sustainable mode of personal transport. Notwithstanding the fact that the kerb was previously dropped by the Local Highway Authority, these matters do not outweigh the harm that would result through the erosion of a feature that forms part of the significance of the designated heritage asset,

6. Therefore, I consider that the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. I find the proposal contrary to Policy CON7 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (adopted January 2006) and Policy CSEN3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy December 2012 which specifically state that the contribution made to a Conservation Area by existing walls and hedges will be taken in to account in order to conserve and enhance them for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Conclusion

7. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C J Tivey

INSPECTOR