
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 August 2017

by Gareth W Thomas BSc(Hons) MSc(Dist) PGDip MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24th August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1255/W/17/3169995
19 Parr Street, Poole BH14 0JX

- 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 Parkstone Conservative Club against the decision of Poole Council.
 - The application Ref APP/16/01373/F, which was undated, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is for decking enclosure to front.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. Both the Council's description and that of the appellant includes the word 'retrospective' to describe the development, which has already been carried out. As a retrospective act does not amount to development, this part of the description is omitted. The preferred description is for decking enclosure to front.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Ashley Cross Conservation Area including the effects on the setting of a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a three storey Edwardian building of red brick with ornate scalloped gable and a full height projecting bay to the front, which occupies a prominent position as a locally listed building opposite St Peter's Church a Grade II* listed building and within the designated Ashley Cross Conservation Area. No.19 is a key building facing the corner of Parr Street as it turns onto St Peter's Road within a part of the conservation area that retains a distinctive village feel, an essential feature in terms of its significance.
5. The proposal has been implemented and comprises a raised decking area occupying the entire original frontage of the property onto Parr Street and enclosed on three sides by timber posts and fencing. The timber posts are slightly higher (at approximately 1.3m) than the fencing to facilitate feature roping draped between the posts.

6. Both the appellant and the Council have carried out an assessment of properties within the conservation area where raised decking and different style enclosures have been constructed, some with planning permission but others either immune from enforcement action or awaiting further consideration. I have taken account of these in my consideration of this appeal.
7. I also acknowledge that the Council does not oppose the introduction of outdoor seating areas at commercial properties as a matter of principle in recognition that they can increase the vitality and vibrancy of local centres. By the same token, I sense that the Council has sought to apply a consistent approach in terms of the design of such facilities. From what I saw during my site visit however, there are a number of examples of raised decking that appear unsympathetic in the local context and which are having a negative effect on this conservation area.
8. The fencing around the decked structure is an extremely prominent feature when viewed from the street and importantly from the environs and entrance of the listed church. Little thought has been given to the nature of its historic surroundings. The structure is a modern feature which is entirely alien to the traditional character and setting of the non-designated heritage asset. The fencing panels, raised supports and rope draping undermines the character and quality of the conservation area. The raw colour of treated new timber will eventually weather to a more subdued grey colour; however this will not reduce the overall impact on the street scene and locally listed historic asset arising from the size, height and form of the raised decking structure and enclosure.
9. I appreciate that the raised decking provides attractive views across to a peaceful and verdant ecclesiastical site and that this could assist in attracting new patrons to the benefit of a local business. However, it represents an incongruous and unacceptable intrusion into its historic surroundings. Whilst there might be some justification for a lesser, more considered scheme, as it stands the structure does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of this conservation area and undermines its significance in terms of its village characteristics. Moreover, the structure jars against the elegant form of this Edwardian building and fails to conserve or enhance the significance of the building as a locally listed heritage asset.
10. While it is accepted that there are other equally jarring examples as identified by the appellant, this should not be used in any way to support incongruous developments of this type, particularly where the other examples may not have been formally sanctioned.
11. Consequently, the works have therefore been carried out in a manner contrary to the Council's Site Specific Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document Policies DM1 and DM2 and to section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies seek to ensure that the historic environment is protected from harmful alteration.

Conclusion

12. I consider that the decked structure diminishes the character and appearance of the conservation area to a significant degree and seriously undermines the significance of the setting of the non-designated historic asset. I have taken into consideration all other matters raised but for the reasons set out above, this appeal is dismissed.

Gareth W Thomas

INSPECTOR