



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2020

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/D/20/3247350

1 Redhill Road, Rowlands Castle PO9 6AL

- 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 Doug Moody against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 58378, dated 12 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "A small part of property boundary combines an old 2.4m tall Leylandii hedge behind a 1m high double-brick garden wall. The hedge is dying off and is unsightly. The proposal is to remove the hedge and raise the existing brick wall by 0.95m using matching bricks interspersed with flint panel blocks and 2 additional pillars".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The above description of development is taken from the application form. However, the proposal could be described more concisely as the removal of an existing hedge and increase in the height of an existing brick wall by 0.95 m. The Council made its decision against an amended elevation plan received on 16 November and my determination of this appeal is made on the same basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Rowlands Castle Conservation Area and its setting.

Reasons

4. Rowlands Castle Conservation Area focuses on The Green, a large triangular grass area which is bounded on two sides by buildings. The buildings fronting The Green are mainly 19th century – groups of stylised terraces, densely built next to one another and with small brick boundary walls. According to the Council's conservation area guidance leaflet, none of these properties are listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest, but the overall effect is to create an attractive historic village centre.
5. No 1 Redhill Road is a characterful Victorian dwelling located on one of the main approaches into the conservation area. It is prominent by reason that it is on a corner plot, being the final building on the southeast side of Redhill Road before

- it opens out to form The Green. The conservation area boundary bisects the residential curtilage, meaning that only a short section of the proposed wall would lie within the heritage designation. However, any distinction is somewhat academic; the frontage onto Redhill Road is read as a whole and it forms an integral part of the conservation area and its immediate setting.
6. The pleasant vista along Redhill Road towards The Green is framed by vegetation which reflects the predominance of hedging and trees along individual property frontages. There are examples of brick walls, notably in the vicinity of Stansted Close, but these are generally low structures designed to provide definition for boundaries. The exception is at The Keep where there is a taller brick wall with a scalloped profile; this austere boundary treatment is out of character with nearby frontages. The appellant describes the area's character as suburban but in my judgement it has a softer, semi-rural quality consistent with the village location.
 7. The boundary of the appeal property onto Redhill Road currently features a low brick wall roughly 1 m in height with taller coniferous hedging behind. The hedging is non-native and showing evidence of die-back. Nevertheless, it complements the greenery of neighbouring property frontages, the hedging bounding the Church on the Green opposite, and also the low boundary walls facing onto The Green itself.
 8. Notwithstanding amendments made during the course of the application, the proposed wall would be significantly taller than the majority of others on Redhill Road. The height and solidity of the wall would make it a harsh form of boundary treatment which is at odds with the prevailing verdant character. In my view, the token flint blocks would be visually incongruous, and the shallow scalloping would have no affinity to the traditional forms of walling in the village. For these reasons, I consider that the proposal would be materially harmful to the character, appearance and setting of the Rowlands Castle Conservation Area.
 9. The appellant has provided photographs to demonstrate the variety of boundary treatments in the village. None of these examples directly match the appeal proposal in design and materials, and in many cases the context is different such as in the case of retaining walls for railway embankments and low level historic walling along the south side of Finchdean Road. The wall along the boundary of the appeal property with Deerleap Lane is comparable in height to that proposed, but it does not have the same relationship with the conservation area in terms of views along Redhill Road.
 10. Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) explains that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Although it is argued that the removal of dying hedging would improve the appearance of the boundary and enable the dwelling to be better appreciated, much of the dwelling is already visible and therefore the public benefits in this regard would be limited. They do not outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage asset.
 11. I have taken account of the fact that the boundary provides privacy for the appellant's garden. However, this consideration does not justify the harm that would arise from the appeal scheme. I have also had regard to the offer to plant trees but there is no certainty that these would mitigate the adverse impacts, or that the trees would be retained in the long term.

12. Relevant advice is set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Residential Extensions and Householder Development' (2018) (SPD). This states that new boundary treatments should generally be of the style typical of the immediate locality and respectful of the surrounding streetscape in materials and details. The proposal would not accord with the SPD guidance and this weighs against a grant of planning permission.
13. Overall, the proposal would conflict with Policies CP29 and CP30 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014) and Saved Policies HE5 and HE8 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review (2006) insofar as these promote exemplary standards of design which both respect the area's particular characteristics and conserve and enhance heritage assets, including views into and out of conservation areas. The development plan is consistent with national policy set out in Sections 12 and 16 of the Framework.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the no objection response from the parish council and the lack of public opposition, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR