



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2025

by **SE Hughes BA (Hons) PGDip MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/D/24/3354863

1 Chapel Walk, Cliddesden, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG25 2NP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Declan Grant against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00218/RET.
 - The development proposed is rear garden walls and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for rear garden walls and landscaping at 1 Chapel Walk, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG25 2NP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/00218/RET and the following plans submitted with it: Proposed Site Layout and Location Plan drawing no DG/PLANS/10 dated January 2024 and Proposed Site Elevations and Longitudinal Section drawing no DG/PLANS/11 dated January 2024.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development includes the phrase “retrospective planning”. However, “retrospective planning” is not an act of development, therefore I have omitted these words from the description of development.
3. During my site visit I was able to see that the development is already in place and that it appears to accord with the plans before me. I have determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Cliddesden Conservation Area (CCA).

Reasons

5. No 1 is a substantial, modern detached house located within a residential cul-de-sac on the edge of the CCA. The CCA is characterised by its diverse historic buildings and vernacular architecture arranged along Fairleigh Road, Church Lane and Woods Lane. Insofar as is relevant to the proposal, the significance and special interest of the CCA lies in its variety of historic buildings, including the nearby former Wesleyan Methodist chapel which is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), its mature trees and hedgerow boundaries, and its views of the rising countryside behind.
6. The development comprises three terraces located in the rear garden of no 1. The

two lower terraces are supported by brick retaining walls with the third upper terrace retained by oak sleepers. A large patio area has been provided on the first terrace, which is linked by grey stone paving slabs and steps to the lower patio next to the house. Further steps and stone paving lead up to a small upper patio on the third tier.

7. The Council consider that the development causes “less than substantial harm” to the CCA, albeit at the lower end of the sliding scale. However, in the context of the host property, I consider that the terracing is a contemporary response to the site’s sloping topography and is in keeping with the property’s modern design and its scale. The development uses high-quality materials, with its brickwork matching the property, and its oak sleepers matching timber use in the village and the property’s porch. Additionally, the retained grassed areas on the middle and upper terrace and the oak walling, in combination with its set down position, help to soften the appearance of the development.
8. Indeed, while noting the site’s location in an “Open Area of Landscape Significance” (OALS) within Supplementary Planning Guidance¹ (SPG) and its identification as a “green finger” of open farmland in Appendix A² of the Cliddesden Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2039 made July 2024 (CNP), given that the host garden is spacious and the upper parts of the garden remain grassed, the development has not diminished the qualities of the open landscape and its connection to the farmland beyond. Consequently, notwithstanding the Council’s concerns for additional built form in this location, I conclude that the development has had a neutral effect on the significance and special interest of the CCA.
9. With regards to the nearby former Wesleyan Methodist chapel. Whilst it has been converted into a dwelling, it has retained its historical interest as a former chapel. However, given the separation distance between the site, and the lack of intervisibility due to the retained hedge between the site and the NHDA, the development has not caused harm.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development has preserved the character and appearance of the site, and therefore it has not changed its contribution to the character and appearance of the CCA. Therefore, it accords with policies EM10 and EM11 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029) adopted May 2016 and policies H1, DD1 and DD2 of the CNP. These policies require development to be high quality, be responsive to the appearance of neighbouring buildings and to conserve or enhance heritage assets.

Conditions

11. The Council have suggested a condition requiring compliance with plans. As the development has already taken place, this condition is not necessary.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

SE Hughes

INSPECTOR

¹ Conservation Area Appraisal Cliddesden and Cliddesden Conservation Area Appraisal Map, December 2001.

² Cliddesden Design Code, Updated April 2024.