



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2025

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M2270/D/25/3363683

14 Prospect Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 4SQ

- 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 Jo Hylton against the decision of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00076/FULL.
 - The development proposed is a dedicated off-street parking space to front of the property accessed by crossover from Prospect Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the local area and the character of the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey mid terrace house. It is set back from the road behind a front garden with a dwarf wall and tall hedge on its highway boundary to the footway on Prospect Road. This boundary treatment is of a type shared by other properties in the terrace, with boundary walls and hedges forming a strong visual feature within the street generally, including the heavy stone walls of Calverley Park.
4. The appeal property sits within the boundary of the CA, which is extensive and covers a large part of the town. The appeal property is located within the Camden Park character sub area of the CA. Along with the planting and trees in front gardens, the strong and defining highway boundary treatments in the street result in a cohesive and verdant streetscape. This is a significant part of the established character of the local area, making a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the CA and, therefore, its significance as a heritage asset. In line with the duty imposed on me by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have given considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
5. The proposal involves the removal of the dwarf wall and hedge on the highway boundary. Whilst there are a few examples of properties in the street that have lost their front boundary to allow for car parking, these are in a significant minority, and I have had no planning background or indication of age of these provided to me. From my site visit the detrimental effect of these on the otherwise cohesive

streetscape and character of the area, through the loss of garden greenery and a defined highway boundary is evident. The proposal would be additionally detrimental to the quality of the local streetscape in this regard.

6. On street parking is currently a feature of the street, including in front of the appeal dwelling. The presence of cars does partly mask the boundary and garden frontages when viewed from the other side of the street, but not entirely. The loss of the front garden to car parking at the appeal property would necessitate the removal of on street parking in front of it, thereby making the detrimental effect of the proposal I have identified above apparent, resulting in it being an unduly prominent feature in the streetscape.
7. I note that an appeal¹ for a similar proposal for removal of the highway boundary to this property to allow for off street parking at 4 Prospect Road, an end of terrace property for the same terrace of which the appeal property forms part, was refused in 2005, partly on the basis of harm to the streetscape and significance of the CA. I have given this previous appeal substantial weight in my considerations.
8. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposed development, when considered as a whole, would be substantially harmful to the character and appearance of the local area and would fail to preserve or enhance the character of the CA. In the context of paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (the Framework), the harm I have identified to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial.
9. This would conflict with Policies EN1 and EN5 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (2006), Policy CP4 of the Tunbridge well Borough Core Strategy and Section 16 of the Framework, as well as Policies EN1 and EN5 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Submission Local Plan. Collectively these seek to ensure that developments do not result in the loss of features important to the character of an area and preserves or enhances the appearance or character of conservation areas.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

10. The appellant has drawn my attention to the benefit of allowing the appellant more convenient and potentially safer access to their vehicle, I have not, however, been made aware of any existing safety issues relating to on street parking in this street that the proposal would alleviate. The potential benefit to the appellant of convenient electric charging off street has also been brought to my attention. However, these both constitute substantially private rather than public benefits. In general planning decisions should be made in the wider public interest. In this context, the harm I have identified, including the less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA outweighs these benefits.
11. Dismissing the appeal is a proportionate response in this instance.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal Reference: APP/M2270/A/04/1162669