



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 March 2025 by T Mansfield

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1775/D/24/3357385

4C Wilson Grove, Southsea, City of Portsmouth, PO5 1PD

- 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 Miss Lynne Corrigan against the decision of Portsmouth City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00474/HOU.
 - The development proposed is the installation of vehicle hardstanding and dropped kerb after partial removal of front boundary wall (part retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. I have taken the description of the proposal from the Council's decision notice rather than the application form in the interests of conciseness, as the latter also included the appellant's justification the scheme.
4. I saw that at the appeal site, a hardstanding had been constructed and a portion of the front boundary wall had been demolished. Both of these appear to accord with the submitted plans. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that these parts of the development have already taken place. The proposed gates had not been erected at the time of my visit.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the development as a whole would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Campbell Road Conservation Area (CRCA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. As identified in the Council's Campbell Road Guidelines for Conservation (1995), the CRCA is a historic suburb of Southsea that is predominantly residential in character, with its boundary designed to exclude nearby shopping areas. The CRCA derives considerable significance from its architecture and the arrangement of streets and spaces. The clear separation between public and private spaces established by brick walls at the front boundaries of properties also makes a positive contribution to the CRCA. Although walls are of varying design, their solid

appearance provides a strong sense of enclosure for front gardens, a characteristic found throughout the CRCA.

7. The Guidelines identify the loss of boundary walls for parking and hardstandings as a problem and that this has fragmented the townscape of some parts of the CRCA. Whilst the Guidelines do not explicitly prohibit the removal of existing walls, they identify walls as part of the character of the area, encourage their retention and discourage the demolition of those that are of architectural or townscape value.
8. The appeal site comprises the end dwelling of a three-property terrace, one of two adjacent terraces built in the 1970's. The site is in a prominent location on the outward curve of Wilson Grove and can be seen from some distance down Inglis Road. A brick wall extends around the front boundaries of these two terraces and follows the curve of the road, and is a prominent feature in the streetscape.
9. Although the appeal property is not included within the Article 4(2) Direction removing permitted development rights to alter or demolish front boundary walls within part of the CRCA, this does not automatically mean that the boundary wall does not have townscape value. It must instead be assessed on its own merits.
10. The age of the wall in front of the appeal site is unclear, with some evidence suggesting it was built with the terraces, and other evidence indicating it is older. It is of similar height to others in the area, with decorative brickwork arranged in panels with taller piers marking gateways. The red brick used is also consistent with other boundary walls in the area. The evidence before me is that, prior to the demolition already carried out at the appeal site, the wall had the appearance of a consistent solid boundary around both terraces, with only small gaps for gated pedestrian entrances. It therefore provided the clear separation between public and private spaces at all six properties and the defined sense of enclosure that is characteristic of the CRCA. For these reasons, and given its prominence in the street scene, I find that irrespective of its age the wall had townscape value and contributed positively to the CRCA.
11. The removal of several metres of wall has created a large gap in this boundary, which is clearly visible in the streetscene and much larger than the original gap for the pedestrian gate. This has resulted in further fragmentation of the townscape through the loss of enclosure, and has disrupted the rhythm of front boundaries. Consequently, the demolition of this section of wall has harmed the character and appearance of the CRCA.
12. The proposed development would install wrought iron gates across the gap. While this would mitigate the impact of the loss of the wall to some extent, the nature of the gates would allow views through the railings into the site. The proposal would not therefore provide the same sense of enclosure as the previous wall. It would also interrupt the rhythm and visual consistency of the brick boundary wall around the two terraces. Therefore, the proposed gates would not therefore maintain the visual integrity and continuity of the street scape. Accordingly, they would not sufficiently mitigate the harmful impact on the CRCA of the loss of such a large section of wall.
13. Furthermore, I do not have evidence before me to suggest how the gates at the appeal site would be opened and closed by those exiting the highway to park on the hardstanding. It is unclear whether drivers would exit the car on street to open or close the gates when arriving or leaving, or whether the gates would remain

open for the duration a vehicle is away from the site. At times when the gates were left open, the degree of visual division and sense of enclosure they create would be lost and the existing large gap in the wall would be clearly apparent. This situation would further reduce their mitigating effect.

14. There are numerous examples in Wilson Grove and the wider CRCA where walls have been removed. I have no details of what the walls looked like previously, therefore it has not been demonstrated that the wall at the appeal site is of less significance, as the appellant contends. In any event, the resulting openings contribute to the fragmented townscape and harm to the CRCA that the Guidelines seek to avoid.
15. Metal gates and railings are found elsewhere in the CRCA, so are not in themselves an unusual feature. In the examples identified by the appellant on Campbell Road there are metal gates of simple form. However, in that section of the road there appears to be a pattern of wider gaps in boundary walls than is found around the appeal site. There are also many examples of railings sitting above boundary walls, however these are sympathetic and complementary to the walls rather than replacements.
16. In the case of 13 Wilson Grove, this property is much less prominent in the streetscene than the appeal site, being tucked in next to and overshadowed by its neighbour. Therefore, it does not have a comparable visual impact to the appeal scheme. I also do not have any information about how or when the gate at this property came to be built, what was there previously, and whether planning permission was required. These examples therefore do not have a comparable impact on the CRCA to the appeal proposal, and neither these nor the presence of other metal gates in the area justify the harmful impact of the appeal scheme.
17. For the above reasons, the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CRCA. As the proposal would only affect a small part of the CRCA, it would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the CRCA as a whole, however any harm is a matter of considerable importance and weight. In such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
18. The frontage of the appeal site was in poor condition, however that hardstanding has already been replaced under permitted development rights. Therefore, any public benefit from the improved appearance has already occurred, and in any event was not reliant on provision of a vehicular access.
19. Whilst I appreciate that the appellant may not feel safe using their existing garage, and that parking on the frontage would be more convenient for them, there is on-street parking available outside the appeal site. It has not been demonstrated that using on-street parking has, or would, lead to crime or a fear of crime, or that as a result, providing off-street parking would reduce crime in the area to the benefit of the public.
20. Installation of the dropped kerb would remove at least one on-street parking space, therefore the appeal scheme would result in at best a neutral impact on parking provision, and would not reduce parking stress in the area. While the development might offer an opportunity to install an electric charging point, this is not part of the

scheme before me, so is not a demonstrable benefit of the appeal scheme. It has not therefore been demonstrated that the proposal would result in public benefits, and the matters above are of very limited weight and do not outweigh the harm to the significance of the CRCA.

21. Consequently, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the CRCA as a whole. It therefore would not accord with Policy PCS23 of The Portsmouth Plan (adopted 2012) which seeks that new development protect and enhance the city's historic townscape.

Other Matters

22. I appreciate the appellant's concerns about the decision-making procedure and their dissatisfaction at the Council's decision, in the context of the recommendation for approval from the planning officer and comments made by technical consultees. However, it is not uncommon for decisions to be overturned at by a planning committee and the Council provided reasoning to substantiate its decision.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

T Mansfield

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

24. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and agree with the reasoning and recommendation. On that basis the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR