



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2025

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/25/3366148

53 West Hill Road, Bournemouth BH2 5PG.

- 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 & Mrs J Sterling against the decision of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
 - The application Ref is P/25/00098/HOU.
 - The development proposed is removal of the existing unauthorised boundary and the erection of a new boundary treatment.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue to be whether the proposed development would serve to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Cliff and Poole Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, 53 West Hill Road (No53) is a four-storey Victorian terrace house. The terrace comprises mainly hotels and flatted accommodation. I understand from the evidence before me that No53 is currently being converted into mixed development of holiday flats and residential. The property is located in the West Cliff and Poole Hill Conservation Area.
4. It is proposed to remove an existing unauthorised high close boarded fence and gate which wraps around the entrance area to the front of the building and replace it with 1.0 meter high metal railings, finished in black and fixed above a low boundary wall that is currently screened by the existing fence. The combined height of the wall and railings would be 1.8 metres or so high.
5. The existing close boarded fence is a prominent, unattractive and utilitarian structure and therefore its removal is to be welcomed.
6. As I observed, boundary treatments to the back of the footpath in the immediate vicinity of the No53 are generally either low walls or low walls with low height railing of various designs over. I therefore consider that the introduction of 1.0 high metal railings here, giving an overall height of about 1.8 metres to the boundary treatment, would result in an uncharacteristic, prominent and harmful feature in the street scene.

7. In addition, the application drawings show only a generic palisade style of fencing. Neither the detailed design nor the material from which the railings would be fabricated has been provided. Given the site's location in the conservation area the detailed design would, in itself be an important consideration.
8. For the foregoing reasons I conclude that the proposed boundary treatment due to its unsympathetic, bland and uncharacteristic design would cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, which include conservation areas. It draws a distinction between substantial harm and less than substantial harm to such an asset. For the latter, which applies here, the test is that the harm should be weighed against public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.
10. The construction work would provide some limited economic benefit, however no other public benefit would arise. Given the harm that I have identified I conclude that the public benefits would not outweigh this harm, or the conflict that the proposed boundary treatment would have with the objectives of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Framework as it relates to the quality of development and the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Other Matters

11. The appellants argue that the high boundary treatment as designed is required to deter actual and perceived anti-social behaviour from people, who before the current fence was erected entered to area to the front of the property and indeed the house itself.
12. I am sympathetic to the appellants' desire to avoid the problems outlined. However, the high fence as designed would to my mind, in the context of the surrounding development, appear somewhat fortress like. This in turn might serve to reinforce the attraction of the area to the very anti-social behaviour it seeks to combat.
13. Furthermore, I consider that there are any number of alternative solutions to the proposed railings that could singularly or cumulatively serve to deter anti-social behaviour while not causing harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Conclusions

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

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR