



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 August 2025

by **P Terceiro BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/25/3368763

The Brown House, Aviary Road, Pyrford, Woking, Surrey GU22 8TH

- 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 Christine Ecob against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PLAN/2025/0273.
 - The development proposed is removal of front boundary fence and stone piers and building of rendered masonry wall and piers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the planning application form. However, I have removed the superfluous words which are not acts of development.
3. I observed in my site visit that the wall and piers have been constructed. My assessment is therefore based on the development and works as built and shown on the application plans.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the wider area, including whether it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Aviary Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site lies within the Aviary Road Conservation Area (CA). Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
6. The Heritage of Woking 2000 advises that the CA is comprised of Aviary Road, together with part of Engliffe Lane from the Pyrford Centre (former Village School) up to Sandringham Close. Its significance derives, in part, from the high-quality Edwardian suburban housing which is very distinctive in character and dates 1910-1912. Although the properties are of individual design, the suburban form of the estate is very unusual for the Pyrford area. In general, the dwellings are set back from the road and properties have hedgerows along their front boundaries with the highway, which together with the grass verges provides the road with a spacious and attractive verdant character.

7. The appeal dwelling is one of the original Edwardian houses within the CA. It is a large, detached house which is externally finished in render of a pale-yellow colour and is decorated with timber frames. The evidence indicates that there was a picket fence with stone piers along the site's front boundary which was set back from the edge of the footpath. While somewhat at odds with the prevailing boundary treatments within the CA, the fence was low key and visually permeable. As such, the previous boundary treatment would have likely had a neutral effect on the significance of the CA.
8. The front boundary treatment is substantial in scale and comprises a wall together with taller brick piers on each side of the vehicular access. Given its solid form, height, design, and siting so close to the edge of the footpath, the wall and piers represent a harsh enclosure to the property that is visually prominent within the street scene and uncharacteristic of its surroundings. Furthermore, the wall has been painted a pale-yellow colour to match its host which is not a muted colour and draws attention to it. As such, the development forms an obtrusive and incongruous feature in the street scene that is markedly at odds with the prevailing character.
9. The frontage of the site accommodates a planting area which adjoins the front boundary treatment. Although the provision of a landscaping scheme could be secured by planning condition, were I minded to allow the appeal, it would not successfully mitigate the adverse visual impact of the boundary treatment, even more so when considering the time it would take for planting to fully establish to soften the impact.
10. The existing highway alignment, orientation of the built environment and local topography remain largely unchanged following the development. However, this does not overcome the harm that I have found due to height, design, siting and appearance of the development.
11. Consequently, the development fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, and it results in a medium level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that where proposals lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
12. The appeal development maintains the distinction between private and public space. However, I have not been provided with compelling evidence to demonstrate that this development is the sole means to achieve this. As such, this public benefit is insufficient to outweigh the great weight I must attach to the harm I have identified to the designated heritage asset.
13. The development has a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the wider area, and fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Aviary Road CA. Therefore, it is contrary to Policies CS20, CS21 and CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012, Policy DM20 of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2016 and Policies BE1, BE3 and OS1 of the Pyford Neighbourhood Plan 2017. Amongst other things, these policies seek to protect and enhance the historic assets of the Borough and support development that is designed to a high quality, provides a positive benefit in terms of townscape character, respects and makes a positive contribution to the street scene.

Conclusion

14. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

P Terceiro

INSPECTOR