



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 August 2025

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/D/25/3368782

Sheridan, New Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2EE

- 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 Dr Michael Ralph against the decision of Herefordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 242505.
 - The development proposed is removal of 12' high Leylandii hedge at the front of the property which borders the pathway alongside New Street. To be replaced with an 8' fence matching an existing short portion of fencing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to the front boundary of Sheridan, this being part of a row of somewhat closely spaced detached and semi-detached dwellings set back from New Street in generous plots. Buildings vary in terms of their ages and styles, but the street scene heading west is unified by well vegetated frontages and roadside boundary treatments comprising predominantly low walls and mature hedgerows.
4. There is a distinct change in character to the east of the neighbouring property, Reslaw, due to the presence of a retail store and carpark and, beyond this and on the opposite side of the road, the Ledbury Conservation Area (the CA). This latter encompasses the historic town centre along High Street and extends to include nearby key streets. The part of New Street in the CA is a densely built townscape characterised by generally continuous frontages immediately to the rear of the footway and comprised of 2 and 3 storey buildings finished in brick or render.
5. The proposed 8 foot solid timber fence would be markedly out of keeping with the verdant and leafy front gardens and boundary treatments that characterise the western extent of New Street. The tall fence would similarly be poorly related to the nearby historic built environment at the eastern end of New Street. By virtue of its height, length and design, the fence would be a dominant and incongruous feature that would diminish local distinctiveness and the otherwise strong sense of place.
6. The existing Leylandii hedge has been unsympathetically cut back. The removal of the foliage has revealed the interior of the hedge with bare trunks and some individuals appear to have died and fallen. Undoubtedly, this has diminished its

visual amenity value. Even so, the landscape planting remains more sympathetic to the surrounding context than would an overly tall fence. The condition of the hedgerow does not provide a justification for a proposal that would be discordant and visually obtrusive in the street scene.

7. The nearby retail store and car park are not in keeping with the surrounding built environment. Nevertheless, its boundary treatments, certainly those that contribute to the street scene, appear to comprise hedgerows. While there is some fencing in the area, this is more commonly to side boundaries, generally lower than the proposal and assimilated by low walls and mature garden planting. The short sections of tall fence to either side of the Sheridan gateway are similarly unobtrusive, being screened and softened by the hedgerow and would not in any case provide a justification for the scale of the fence proposed.
8. The appellant is of the opinion that the proposal would be no worse than buildings in the CA which are directly behind the footway. However, the historic building elevations that flank the roads in the CA, including those indicative of burgage plots, are not comparable to a tall and contemporary fence and they do not provide a justification for the appeal.
9. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would conflict with policies SS6, LD1, LD4 and SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 Adopted October 2015, and policies BE1.1, BE2.1 and NE2.1 of the Ledbury Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021-2031 Adopted March 2023. These require, among other things, that proposals maintain local distinctiveness and townscape character, taking into account local architectural details and materials. They should conserve and enhance the setting of heritage assets, including the character or appearance of the CA. Moreover, boundary treatments should be appropriate to the location, maintaining and if possible improving the street scene.

Other Matters

10. There is a Grade II listed building, “Le Play House” (ref 1082842) (the LB), on the opposite side of the road to the appeal property. This dates from the sixteenth century, but it has been modernised and extended. It is set back from the road in large mature grounds and to the rear of Wistaria Cottage. The Council raises no concerns in relation to the LB. Based on the degree of separation and intervening development, including buildings and the road, I also find that the proposal would not harm and therefore it would preserve the setting of the LB.
11. The parties corresponded in an attempt to achieve a satisfactory form of development. In this regard, the Council appears to have suggested a shorter fence, with reference to permitted development rights, or a combination of fence, wall and new hedgerow such as would be locally in keeping. I understand that the appellant would be amenable to a lower height of fence. However, no amended plans have been submitted to illustrate a different boundary treatment. Taking into account the appellant’s concerns in relation to a shorter fence looking odd in visual juxtaposition with the existing 8 foot tall section next to the gate, and my observations that tall fencing would be visually detrimental to the street scene, I cannot be satisfied that the adverse visual impact could be adequately mitigated through the imposition of a planning condition requiring amended plans.

12. The appellant is frustrated with the processing of the planning application, and its refusal, when he considers he should have been allowed further time to submit amended plans. He also notes that the decision notice does not mention the possibility of a shorter fence as was earlier discussed. However, his concerns in these regards do not weigh in favour of the appeal.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict.
14. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR