
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2025

by H Faulkner BSc (Hons) MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1153/W/24/3356552

42 Station Road, Okehampton EX20 1EA

- 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 Tim Richters against the decision of West Devon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2260/24/HHO.
 - The development proposed is for a dropped kerb and removal of section of wall to provide off-road parking hardstanding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, having regard to whether or not the scheme would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Okehampton Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is situated within a short terrace of four houses on the western side of Station Road. All of the properties within the terrace have front gardens which are enclosed by a stone boundary wall with a single gate or entrance point. None of the houses in this row have parking within their frontage.
4. Station Road has a variety of architectural styles. Properties are also a mix of terraces, detached and semi-detached properties. On the east side of Station Road most of the houses are terraced with shallow front gardens enclosed by boundary walls.
5. The houses on the same side of the road as the appeal property, towards the town centre, are generally larger villa style properties which are grander in terms of their architecture and have larger frontages, many with areas for parking. The boundary walls, although low in places, remain largely intact.
6. The appeal site is located within the Okehampton Conservation Area (CA). The duty under Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.
7. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's

conservation. From the information before me and from what I observed on my site inspection, the significance of the CA derives from the visual quality of its architecture and buildings.

8. Boundary walls form part of the areas character. Although breaks in the frontages on the west side of the road are observed, there remains strong continuity of the low boundary walls. These generally create a consistent and uniform appearance, despite some variations in height, composition, and materials. Furthermore, where frontage parking exists it tends to be part of a more generous frontage, to the side of a house, or related to a different style of property to the appeal. The presence and general uniformity of the low boundary walls, and front gardens play an important role in defining the visual qualities and significance of the CA.
9. The appeal site contributes to the character of the CA by reflecting the key architectural features found along the street and the terrace it is part of. The terrace along with its stone boundary walls and intact garden areas form an attractive arrangement which contributes to the overall visual quality of the area.
10. I recognise that the wall may be a twentieth century addition and other similar walls may be present in the area, however, this does not diminish its contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding CA. Whilst the reasons for the extent of the wall removal are understood, the result is that nearly the entirety of the front wall for this property is removed and the garden replaced with hard surfacing. I note that the impact of this has been sought to be reduced through the use of block paving and the retention of small areas of landscaping. However, this does not sufficiently mitigate the harm that would arise. Overall, the proposed development would remove an excessive amount of the wall, which is a valued component of the street scene that helps to preserve the special character and appearance of the CA.
11. I have also considered the examples provided by the appellant regarding parking created at other properties in the area. The approval at 80 Station Road relates to a different part of Station Road where the properties are of a different style. The frontage area of the property is larger and a larger area of the garden and boundary wall remain. The context of the parking provided at 119 Station Road is not comparable as it is again on a different part of Station Road, as well as being outside of the CA boundary. The property also has a large frontage and the property is not central within the terrace; it therefore differs from the appeal property.
12. The appeal statement provides other examples of driveways in the area. Whilst these demonstrate that parking areas are not an uncommon feature they do not relate to properties of a similar form or frontage arrangement. Nor do they represent the removal of a large area of wall and creation of a significant parking area within an otherwise unaltered terrace frontage.
13. Having carefully considered the proposed design and site-specific context, I find that the proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the area and would result in less than substantial harm to the CA's special significance. In recognition of the attempts to arrive at an appropriate design, I find that this harm would be at the lower end of the less than substantial harm scale.

14. Nonetheless, Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. The proposal would allow for parking at the property which would be beneficial for one of the occupants who is registered disabled. It is also understood that the space has been designed to park a car as well as allow access for a mobility scooter. However, I also note that the Council has suggested that an allocated disabled space could be provided on the street. The benefits of providing off street parking is therefore largely private in this instance.
16. The provision of a parking space would remove a car from being parked on the road; however, I do not consider that this results in any visual improvement and would only have a small impact on the overall availability of parking.
17. The benefits of electric vehicle infrastructure at the property is recognised although the public benefits that could be derived towards meeting climate targets from one electric vehicle parking space would be limited in isolation.
18. All these factors limit the weight I attribute to the public benefits of the proposals to a modest level, which is insufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the relevant designated heritage assets.
19. For these reasons, I find that the proposed development would conflict with the Act. The proposal would also fail to accord with Policies DEV21 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan insofar as they seek to ensure development conserves and where appropriate enhances the significance of designated heritage assets, and for development to complement and reflect the character of the surrounding area. Additionally, the proposal would conflict with the historic environment protection policies of the Framework.

Other Matters

20. Reference is made to a fallback option indicating that similar works could be carried out under permitted development. However, a lawful development certificate was sought for these works and refused. Furthermore, the alterations shown on the fallback plan retains the gateway and a larger section of the wall, resulting in a greater sense of enclosure being retained within the terrace.
21. As part of determining this appeal proposal, I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which requires me to consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Protected characteristics include a person's disability or age.
22. The proposed development would allow a disabled occupant to access the site more easily, both when using a car, as well as allowing for access for a mobility scooter. However, this must be balanced against the great weight to be attributed to the conservation of designated heritage assets that would be in the wider public interest. The provision of a disabled bay on the street would meet similar aims as the on-site parking without having a permanent visual impact. Although a space could possibly be occupied by other blue badge holders I have not been provided

with any evidence that this would be a significant issue in this location. I have also not been provided with any details that other less harmful options have been explored to provide better access for a mobility vehicle. Therefore, I conclude that these are not matters which outweigh the harms identified.

Conclusion

23. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole, and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given the appeal is dismissed.

H Faulkner

INSPECTOR