

APP/15/01276 – 4 East Pallant, Havant

There has been some generic pre-application provided which raised matters of concern relating to the loss of the present wall. I was not involved with the redevelopment of the site. However, I can fully understand the design solution. Part of the planning role is to raise the standard of design and achieve visual enhancement where practical.

The proposal represents a net increase in parking on the site, a loss of enclosure to the street and a consequential reduction in the screening for the parked vehicles. There will therefore be an overall negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. I note the comment about the possible intimidating use of the footpath. This is however more likely a consequence of the size of vehicle rather than the presence of the wall. The wall surmounted by railings provides the benefit of enclosure without being as imposing as a solid wall.

Although, in my view the proposal will cause some harm to the character, it is relevant to consider whether this can be justified by a wider public benefit. The only perceivable public benefit would be improved highway safety. My non-expert view is that whereas turning on site at present may in some instances be problematic, in the revised scheme it will be non-existent. The expectation therefore is that vehicles will reverse onto the narrow one way system. The visibility for seeing users of the footway is poor. I can foresee the small section of retained wall being vulnerable to damage with subsequent pressure to remove. The new tree planting proposed (in mitigation) appears unrealistic in the assigned locations – your arboricultural officer will be in a better position to verify.

The layout as shown on the existing plans is inaccurate. A much smaller planting area exists adjacent to parking space 3. There is no tree. Some reasonably effective screening is provided by bamboo. There is no automatic gate.

The Highway Engineer who has been consulted will be able to provide expert technical advice. Unless there is a compelling highway case to suggest the changes improve highway safety, justification for the work is lacking. My expectation is the changes will worsen highway safety and if the scheme falls to be determined would fail on highway grounds. The negative impact on the conservation area would be a supporting reason for refusal.

On the basis of the current information I can not support the proposed changes for the reasons set out.

John Townsend
Conservation Consultant
08/12/15