

5 Eastern Avenue, Reading RG1 5RU

Householder – Replacement Fencing (in a conservation area)

We are disappointed that the Council has not been able to engage in a positive way to resolve the situation and that it is apparently unable to work proactively with us to secure a development that improves the environmental conditions of the area and the objections raised by them in refusing our first planning application.

As per the advice given on the Planning Aid England website of what to do when a planning application has been refused, we have enquired of the Council to see whether there could be an agreeable adjustment to our planning application. To quote Planning Aid England “Normally after a refusal of planning permission the case officer, who has dealt with the application, will be willing to discuss the issues with the applicant. It is often possible to amend a proposal to overcome the objections to it”. Our enquiries have not resulted in any seeming willingness on the part of the Planning Department to discuss the issues.

We are therefore submitting this amended application taking into consideration the key points raised by the case officer’s report on our previous planning application no. 191828 which we understand to be:

- a. The overall height of the fencing plus trellis and its impact on the streetscene
- b. The visibility of concrete elements used in the fencing and their impact on the streetscene
- c. The possible requirement of applying for a widening of the existing dropped kerb due to the widening of the driveway next to the house

Proposal

To replace previous fencing adjoining the highway and on the return in towards the garden for 1m with new fencing to same height and with the same appearance as previous fencing. Also to install gates in front of garage.

This application is to adapt and regularise what has already been installed as we were not aware that the new fencing would require planning approval.

Features

Unlike virtually all other houses on Eastern Avenue the garden to 5 Eastern Avenue is on the side of the property with no garden at all to the rear of the property. The rear wall of the property abuts the bottoms of the gardens of properties in Hamilton Road. A recent side extension to the property required removal of the previous fencing and hedge. This application is to regularise and adapt the installation of new fencing and a set of gates to allow access to the garage in the garden of the property. Also a feature to be taken into consideration is that the garden of the property at the point that it connects with the pavement is 18 inches higher than the pavement level and so we are looking for an acceptable solution that will retain enough privacy for recreational use of the garden whilst meeting planning approval. Note also that the garden continues to rise in height as it moves away from the pavement towards the rear of the property.

Access

There is access to the garden through a side gate and new access created through a set of double gates to the garage frontage.

We acknowledge that the Council may want to require us to apply for a widening to the existing dropped kerb due to the widening of the driveway. We have not done this because we were specifically asked by neighbours not to do so as this would reduce the on-road parking by one space. We note that the Council could make the installation of a widened dropped kerb a condition of granting this planning application and if this was to happen we would proceed with an application and the relevant works to get the widened dropped kerb installed.

Scale / Appearance

This proposal would keep the height of the new fencing to the same height as the previous fencing. The current concrete posts and gravel boards would have a timber fascia applied which would make the appearance of the installed fencing to be completely timber and so the same as the previous fencing thus not altering the streetscene that has been the same for more than 20 years (except for the removal of the significantly high hedge). We would paint the fencing reddish brown (as previous fencing) to keep the appearance the same and to make the tone of the fencing sympathetic to the area.

The reason for using concrete fencing posts rather than timber posts (as in the previous fence) is because of the difference in garden height compared to the pavement, which means that the posts are constantly in contact with the ground and our experience has been that timber posts rot very quickly. The issue of the appearance of the concrete posts and gravel boards will be dealt with by the application of a timber fascia to match the fence panels.

The current timber gate posts and concrete fence posts adjacent to the highway would also be reduced in height down to the same height as the fencing.

Other notes pertinent to the application

There are at least two other properties within the conservation area that have had similar height or higher fences and gates installed in the past few months or years. Photographs of two instances are included on a separate document submitted with this application. Both of these other properties are within approximately 200 yards walk of our property, are within the conservation area and again both have gardens that border on the highway due to the properties being on a corner.

We have had at least two attempted burglaries (that we know about due to damage caused) at the rear side of our property, hence security is a significant concern.

We are aware that drug dealing was happening in the driveway to our garage when that area was open to the road and hence one of the reasons we decided to put gates in across that entrance.