

Statement of Significance Heritage Assets - Portland Avenue

20a Portland Avenue falls within the Conservation Area of The Avenues, Exmouth. 20a Portland Avenue was built around 1989, as an annex to 20 Portland Avenue. Whilst 20 Portland Avenue is a Victorian Villa, 20a Portland Avenue is of no significant historical significance. It was legally separated from 20 Portland Avenue in 2005 and became a separate freehold property.

Portland Avenue is a tree lined avenue, which includes a number of large houses or villas, with large gardens, mature trees and red brick walls incorporating rows of white bricks. The properties were built before the motor car became widely used and over the intervening period numerous changes have been made to the walls to facilitate vehicular access to the grounds of the properties. As a result, over the years, many of the original walls and pillars have been moved, removed or rebuilt. However, many of the original walls remain. The walls are notable as each section of walling ends in a brick pillar which is constructed from red brick with a stone cap and distinctive lines of white bricks set into the walls and pillars. Although the walls are a feature of the street, when the Conservation Area was designated not all of the walls in the street were included within the Conservation Area. The walls directly opposite the applicants house, whilst appearing to be original walls from the Victorian era are not included within the Conservation Area.

The height of the pillars tends to follow the natural gradient of the road.

It can be seen that the pillar subject of this application is not an original end pillar. Unlike most of the pillars in the street it is missing its central row of white bricks, is currently one row of bricks taller than its neighbours and has a low wall adjoining it, which has been built into the pillar, after the pillar was constructed. This in itself is unusual in the street as, almost without exception, no dividing garden walls butt into the visible face of other pillars. This low wall, butting into the pillar, appears to have been built solely for the purpose of retaining a telegraph pole which was sited just inside the entrance to 20a Portland Avenue. This telegraph pole has been recently re-sited by OpenReach and is no longer within the curtilage of 20a Portland Avenue. As such this retaining wall is redundant.

The applicant's are seeking to move the gate pillar 93 cm, rebuilding it with the original bricks. This will result in the loss of 93cm of the original wall. The applicants feel that, once completed the loss will make no significant difference to the overall appearance of the street but will allow for the appearance to be enhanced by restoring a number of other features. The driveway is currently wide enough for two vehicles but due to the width of the entrance two vehicles cannot be parked on the drive. By moving the pillar it will allow a second vehicle to be parked on the driveway of the premises, reducing the number of vehicles parked in the street. Rebuilding the pillar will enable a height reduction of one brick due to the natural gradient of the road, putting it back in proportion with its neighbours. It will also allow the pillar to have a central band of white bricks incorporated into it, which will restore it to the appearance of other pillars in the street. By removing the low retaining wall, this too will enhance the appearance of the pillar in line with others in the street. The applicants feel that the positive contribution this will make to the appearance of the street will more than compensate for the small loss of wall.