

Planning application to be considered 16/6/26 1319/25/HHO

Location BYWAYS, GREEN HILL, Lamerton

This is a retrospective application for the removal of a section of Devon hedge (a dry stone walling with thick vegetation along the top) that was part of the boundary frontage of the house with Green Hill, and its replacement with a high mortared stone-faced wall to match the existing section of adjacent walling for this property.

It is noted that a small section of the hedge to the east was failing, but a large part of what has been removed does not appear, from the photo provided, to have been in poor condition, and none was beyond repair.

However the hedge has already be removed, and this provides the householder with considerable additional amenity space within the site.

Although I note that the existing length of stone-faced wall was part of the original planning consent, a boundary structure consisting of a formal high stone wall is more appropriate in an urban rather than a rural setting. Different considerations applied at the time of the construction of the original house and wall, and we are far more mindful of the irreplaceable nature of assets like Devon hedges. In general I think removal of Devon hedging is regrettable and that is why consent has to be sought. Older hedges such as that removed, provide habitat for a myriad of plants, insects, small mammals and nesting sites for birds. It is an historic feature of our landscape as well as part of the vernacular of our built environment.

It is quite possible to replace like with like in the strict physical sense, but it will be many years before a replacement version will provide the benefits of what has been removed. A solid stone-faced structure such as is proposed will achieve a consistent appearance to the road frontage, and preferable if the alternative were fence panels, post and wire or similar, but will never offer the rich habitats of a Devon hedge.

Allowing a different type of structure on an retrospective application might encourage others to adopt the “remove first and apply later” approach which would be an unwelcome consequence