

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 October 2016

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 19 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/H1515/D/16/3157874

Cherrytrees, Poplar Close, Blackmore, Essex CM4 0QJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr E Caplan against the decision of Brentwood Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 15/01571/FUL, dated 3 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a replacement drive and wall to front and side of house; replacement of a footpath to the property with a vehicle access; and security gates.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The proposal relates to new walls, gates and access arrangements to this corner property. Much of the work with regard to the walls was complete when I visited the property. The colour of the walls reflects the updated colour scheme associated with the house.
 4. The wall to the side of the property is viewed against the dwelling and has limited wider prominence. The gate piers to the side entrance, although higher than the associated walls, similarly sit relatively comfortably in this position. The inset gate piers to the front entrance are set back from the road and pavement and similarly, are not intrusive given their relationship with the neighbouring property and side boundary. The lower wall to the front of the landscaping area provides a satisfactory boundary to the property and is in keeping with the dwarf walls of the property to the north.
 5. I have significant concerns with regard to the appearance of the front piers which sit forward of the inset gate posts. These piers and the high walls that link into them, present a particularly austere and urban character and are prominent in views from the roundabout to the east, which lies within the Blackmore Conservation Area. They are also prominent when approaching from the north. The high brick pier which is located midway along the side of the proposed front landscape area, is also prominent in views from the east and
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- adds to the very urban form of the frontage. The diagonal wall and piers to the rear of the landscaping area similarly have an austere character but I acknowledge that the proposed planting would significantly soften their impact.
6. The appellant has made reference to a wide range of boundary treatments within the settlement. However, I have to consider this proposal in relation to the particular context within which it is set. The elements that I have described above as being of concern, fail to reflect the suburban character of the properties to the north. Rather than facilitating and reflecting the transition to the more urban character of the centre of the village to the east, the proposal overall represents a substantial and very formal feature that jars within this setting.
 7. The high roadside piers in particular are entirely at odds with the character and appearance of this particular property and its surrounds and they detract from the character and appearance of the area. I acknowledge that the property lies outside the conservation area but these elements detract from its setting when approaching from the north. Although there is scope for a formal boundary to this property, the current arrangement has not been well thought out and it represents poor design. Although the walls are of good quality materials, have been built to a high standard and include areas for planting, these positive elements do not overcome my concerns.
 8. The proposal conflicts with the design objectives of Policy CP1 (i and iii) of the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan 2005. Policy C14 relates to development within and in the vicinity of conservation areas. As the property lies in the vicinity of the conservation area and would not preserve or enhance the townscape character of the area, the proposal would conflict with its first requirement. As the Council's policies generally accord with the design requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework*, I afford them considerable weight. The *Framework* is also clear that permission should be refused for development of poor design. I have found that elements of this proposal represent poor design in this context.
 9. I have considered all the matters put forward by the appellant but they are not sufficient to outweigh my concerns. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR