
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2016

by Rory Cridland LLB (Hons)

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

Decision date: 28 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/W/16/3157120

55 Howell Close, Arborfield, Reading RG2 9GN

- 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 Paul Baron against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 152894, dated 15 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is a change of use of existing amenity land to residential curtilage, erection of 1.8m high fence and siting of timber shed.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of existing amenity land to residential curtilage, erection of 1.8m high fence and siting of timber shed at 55 Howell Close, Arborfield, Reading RG2 9GN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 152894, dated 15 April 2016 subject to the following condition:

The development shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details on drawing number 4047-1.

Preliminary matter

2. The development proposed has already been carried out. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that the application is retrospective.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located at the end of a terrace of modern houses and previously formed part of the landscaping of the original development. Policy CP1 of the Wokingham Core Strategy¹ permits development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment. Furthermore, Policy CP3 requires new proposals to, amongst other things, contribute to a sense of place in the way they integrate with their surroundings.
5. The Council is concerned that the erection of the fence and siting of the shed has had a harmful impact on the street scene by introducing additional hard

¹ Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010).

landscaping and enclosures to the surroundings. I do not agree with that assessment. While I recognise that the site itself would originally have formed part of the soft landscaping for the estate, in view of both its size and location, its contribution, while positive, would have been limited. Although the area has a large amount of hard surfaced areas and built form, the landscaping which remains is effective in softening its impact. The enclosure of the site has little impact on the overall visual aesthetic of the surroundings and both the fence and shed integrate well with other examples of fencing in the wider area. Overall, its impact on the street scene is negligible and does not in my view result in any material harm.

6. Consequently, I do not consider the development to be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and accordingly find no conflict with CS Policies CP1 or CP3.

Other matters

7. I have noted the concerns raised by local residents and the Parish Council, particularly those which relate to highway safety. However, I note that the Council does not raise any concerns in this respect and the highways consultee is satisfied that the proposal would not adversely affect highway safety. I have not seen anything which would lead me to conclude otherwise.

Conditions

8. I have had regard to the condition suggested by the Council and consider a condition requiring the development to be maintained in accordance with the approved plans to be appropriate in the interest of character and appearance.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Rory Cridland

INSPECTOR