

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2017

by Siân Worden BA MCD DipLH MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/D/3161605

Flatlands, Newington Road, Austerfield, Doncaster DN10 6DH

- 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 J Rothwell against the decision of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01679/FUL, dated 28 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 September 2016.
 - The development is a boundary wall to the front of the house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The planning application was retrospective and the boundary wall was in place at the time of my visit.

Main Issue

3. I consider that the main issue in this case is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the street scene and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a bungalow in a row of dwellings at the junction of Newington Road on the edge of the village. The row connects with and is a part of the village. The general nature of the immediate area, however, is flat, open countryside with the row being almost surrounded by fields. The dwellings themselves are of various types and ages and fairly suburban in character. The appeal development is a brick wall approximately 1.8m in height which encloses the front garden of Flatlands.
 5. Several of the gardens in the row are enclosed by hedges of varying heights although those immediately to the east of Flatlands have quite open frontages. The appeal wall is separated from the carriageway of Newington Road by the pavement and the drainage ditch and its verges in front of the properties. It is constructed in an orange brick, with prominent white flecks, topped with a row of grey engineering bricks. Located on three sides of the front garden it is a tall, bulky and uncharacteristic structure. Despite being well set back from the highway, the openness of neighbouring gardens means that it is clearly visible in Newington Road. All in all it is harmfully conspicuous in the street scene.
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6. The wall does not, therefore, contribute to local distinctiveness, reinforce the character of the local landscape, or integrate well with the immediate local area. It is thus contrary to Policy CS14 of the Doncaster Council Core Strategy 2011-2028, adopted 2012.
7. During my visit I noted several other garden walls in the surrounding area. It did not appear to me, however, that any in the immediate area of the appeal property were as high and extensive as that at Flatlands. There are hedges of similar height and more but these do not have the same solid, engineered, and over-dominant character as the wall. The timber fence at Thorn Lea is of comparable height but has less mass, a less permanent appearance and does not completely enclose the front garden. Where there are walls to the sides of the bridges across the ditch these are no more than about a metre in height and, although positioned further forward than the garden walls and hedges, considerably less obtrusive.
8. I also saw the walls in Austerfield and elsewhere in Newington Road which have been drawn to my attention by the appellant. Whilst I appreciate that they include white-flecked bricks and pillars they are not in close proximity to Flatlands. In my view, therefore, they do not contribute to the salient character of the street scene or of the area immediately surrounding the appeal property. In addition, the presence of such features is not a compelling reason to permit a development which is detrimental to the street scene.
9. A reduction in the height of the wall of four courses of brickwork would not be sufficient to negate the harm it causes. The drainage ditch could pose a threat to small children, as would the busy road in front of the property. As long as it included secure gates, however, a wall of lower height would provide a satisfactory level of security. It did not seem to me that the highway is at a significantly higher level such that passers-by, either on foot or in vehicles, would gain extensive views into the dwelling or its garden. I have taken all the matters raised into consideration but not found any which are sufficient to outweigh the harm caused to the street scene and surrounding area.
10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sian Worden

Inspector