
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2017

by **Michael Boniface MSc MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 17th February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/D/16/3162274

18 Towcester Road, Greens Norton, Towcester, Northants, NN12 8BL

- 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 Jack Bodily against the decision of South Northants District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2016/2037/FUL, dated 15 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a 1.8m high fence on the front boundary.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of development contained in the Council's decision as opposed to that submitted by the appellant, as this more accurately describes the proposal.
3. The development has already been undertaken and the application now seeks retrospective planning permission. As such, I was able to view the fence in situ during my site visit.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached dwelling located on the corner of Towcester Road and Church View. Dwellings in the area tend to be set back from the highway behind front gardens which often incorporate landscaping and low level boundary treatments which maintain an open, verdant and spacious appearance in the street. This is particularly so on Towcester Road where areas of grass verge provide further separation between private residential properties and the carriageway.
6. The fence the subject of this appeal wraps around the front boundary of the property along both Towcester Road and Church View, fully enclosing the site. Whilst the lower grounds levels within the site relative to the highway go some way to reduce the visual prominence of the fence, it remains a stark and visually intrusive feature which is in contrast to the far more open character that I have described in the surrounding area.

7. There are other examples of fences in the local area, including of a similar height to the appeal scheme. However, these are exceptions to the predominant character that I have identified and I did not see any that were directly comparable to the appeal scheme in terms of their position and prominence. I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits.
8. I note that the fence replaced a hedgerow which, the appellant suggests, had been vandalised and damaged. I also recognise the benefits that the fence provides to the appellant in terms of privacy. However, I do not consider that the fence erected is the only option available for achieving this means, nor do these benefits outweigh the significant harm that I have identified. This is notwithstanding that no objections were raised by the Parish Council or the Local Highway Authority.
9. The development harms the character and appearance of the area. This is in conflict with Policies G3(A) and EV1 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (1997) which requires development that is compatible with the character of the locality and represents good design.
10. In light of the above, and having considered all other matters, the appeal is dismissed.

Michael Boniface

INSPECTOR