
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2017

by Gwyn Clark BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22nd June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/17/3173236

3 Woodlea Drive, Bromley, Kent BR2 0UG

- 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 Majid Hamdalla against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/16/04838/FULL6, dated 12 June 2015, was refused by notice dated 9 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a boundary wall following the perimeter of the front garden of number 3 Woodlea Drive.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The description of development in my banner heading above does not include all of the description set out on the planning application form. I have excluded the detailed explanation of how the works would be carried out for the sake of brevity. Also, while the description of development does not include a reference to the proposed hardstanding, it is clear from the appellant's grounds of appeal, the submitted drawings, the decision notice and my site visit that this is part of the proposal. In addition, I could see from my site visit that the boundary walling, piers and the hardstanding are complete. I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (i) the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the street scene along Woodlea Drive and (ii) the effect of the use of the sliding gate upon highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance of the street scene

4. Beyond the shops and garaging found at the entrance to Woodlea Drive there is a marked change in character from one that is commercial in nature to one that is clearly residential. The houses on both sides of Woodlea Drive establish a strong building line. Front gardens are well landscaped with a variety of hedges, shrubs and trees, some of significant height. The gardens are enclosed by means of low walls and fences and are used for the parking of vehicles. The

overall appearance created is of an attractive and open street scene where front car parking is successfully integrated into the space available amongst soft landscaping.

5. The appeal site lies in a prominent position within Woodlea Drive close to where the commercial nature of the shops and garaging abruptly changes and where the landscaped residential character becomes established. The partially completed development at No 3 has removed the opportunity for soft landscaping because the entire front garden is hard surfaced. The constructed brick piers and proposed railings are much higher than those typically found in the street. The combined effect of this creates a harsh and discordant feature within the street scene causing significant harm to its character and appearance.
6. I consider that the development does not comply with the requirements of the Bromley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies BE1 and BE7 which seek to encourage new development that would enhance the character of the street scene and create attractive settings for buildings using hard and soft landscaping. There is also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) in so far as it emphasises the importance of design in the built environment.

Highway safety

7. At the time of my visit several vehicles were parked on the roadway in the vicinity of the appeal site. Traffic was light, forward visibility is unhindered and vehicle speeds were low. During busier times of the day there would be more traffic and greater pressure for on-street parking but I have no reason to believe that traffic speeds would be any higher. I consider that due to the prevailing road conditions I have described, should a vehicle stand in the road while waiting for the proposed electric gate to open this would be no more than an inconvenience to other road users rather than posing a risk to highway safety. Should this occur at all it is likely to be a brief and occasional interruption to the free flow of traffic. Therefore I find the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety and consequently it would accord with UDP Policy T18.

Conclusion

8. In conclusion I find that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety, but this lack of harm is far outweighed by that which I have identified in relation to the character and appearance of the street scene. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gwyn Clark

INSPECTOR