

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2017

by Sarah Housden BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H5960/D/17/3174054

31 Stormont Road, London SW11 5EQ

- 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 Andrew Japp against the decision of the London Borough of Wandsworth.
 - The application Ref 2016/4068, dated 6 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is 'erection of a 800mm high trellis on the inside of a 1000mm high wall. The trellis matches four other fences that surround the property, one at the front, three at the rear and three gates'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of the proposal in the banner heading above is taken from the planning application form. However, the fence has been installed on the Stormont Road frontage and side boundaries facing No 29 Stormont Road (No 29) and Gowrie Road. The Council's decision notice refers to 'installation of 800mm wooden fence on top of the 1 metre front boundary walls (retrospective application)' and as this represents a more accurate description, I have assessed the proposal accordingly.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are the effects of retaining the fence on:
 - the character and appearance of the area having particular regard to the Stormont Road/Gowrie Road street scene; and
 - highway safety, having particular regard to visibility at the Stormont Road/Gowrie Road junction.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site lies within an established residential area and comprises a recently constructed dwelling of contemporary design occupying a corner plot at the junction of Stormont Road and Gowrie Road. The variation in property age, scale and design contributes to a diverse street scene on both roads. The low level walls and fences to front boundaries, planting to front gardens
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and roadside trees create a sense of openness and pleasant residential character with the front elevations of dwellings generally open to public view.

5. Whilst the contemporary design of the appeal property contrasts with the more traditional dwellings in Stormont Road and Gowrie Road, its overall scale and proportions reflect those of the adjoining properties in the terraced row, providing an element of continuity in the street scene.
6. The fence has been constructed of horizontal timber boards supported on timber posts which have been installed behind the rendered wall on the site frontage and Gowrie Road. The majority of the wall is approximately one metre high with a higher section containing an entrance way adjacent to No 29. On the common boundary with No 29 the supporting posts are on the 'outside' of the fence, facing No 29's front garden.
7. When viewed from the north along Stormont Road, the fence is partially screened by other front gardens and parked cars. However, when viewed from closer distances, due to its height and prominent corner position it is a harsh and dominant feature in the street scene which 'draws the eye'. The horizontal emphasis of the timber boards exacerbates its somewhat utilitarian appearance. It creates an enclosed appearance which is at odds with the predominant character of the Stormont Road and Gowrie Road street scene of front gardens and front elevations open to public view.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the retention of the fence would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and contrary to Policy DMS1 of the Wandsworth Development Management Policies Document (2016) (WDMP) which amongst other things seeks to ensure that new development provides a high quality sustainable design and layout and contributes positively to local spatial character.
9. I note that the layout of the appeal property is different from others on Stormont Road with the main entrance in the side gable facing Gowrie Road. However, the low level walls to the site frontage were part of the scheme for the replacement dwelling and reflect the height of other boundary features to front elevations. Whilst the appellant indicates that more privacy is required to the front outdoor area, there is an enclosed outdoor area to rear of the property which is screened by the 1.8 metre wall on Gowrie Road and fences to the other boundaries.
10. The 1.8 metre fences on Gowrie Road enclose the rear gardens of Nos 101 – 107 Gowrie Road and similarly the walls to the rear boundaries of properties facing Marney Road enclose their rear outdoor area. As such, the layout and circumstances of those properties are not comparable with the circumstances of the appeal site. The officer report indicates that the fence at No 17 Stormont Road does not have the benefit of planning permission. As such, I attach little weight to this as a consideration. There are wider public powers to deal with littering offences and there is nothing in the evidence to suggest that the security of the property would be compromised with lower boundary walls.
11. I note the suggestions from the adjoining occupier at No 29 to modify the height and appearance of the fence. However, I am determining the appeal based on the details before me. No alternative proposals are before me for

consideration and such matters should be properly considered by the appellant and local planning authority in the first instance.

12. In summary, none of these considerations outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area and the conflict with development plan policy outlined above.

Highway safety

13. When emerging from Gowrie Road onto Stormont Road, visibility is already somewhat restricted in a northerly direction by parked cars on both sides of the road. Due to the width of the pavement in front of the appeal property and the alignment of the Stormont Road/Gowrie Road junction, the fence does not create an additional obstruction to visibility.
14. I am not persuaded that the retention of the fence would cause material harm to the safety of highway users. As such, there would be no conflict with Policy DMT1 of the WDMP which amongst other things promotes safe access.
15. Whilst the retention of the fence would not be harmful to highway safety, this does not outweigh my conclusions in relation to the first main issue in this case. Having taken account of all other matters raised and for the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Housden

INSPECTOR