
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 July 2017

by Elaine Benson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N3020/D/17/3173218
8 Fairfields Drive, Ravenshead NG15 9GR

- 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 Richard Marten against the decision of Gedling Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2017/0114, dated 24 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 29 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as 'the erection of fence on north eastern section of front boundary'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The fence which is the subject of this appeal has already been erected. It is approximately 1.8 m high and is supported by concrete pillars. The main issue in this appeal is its effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property stands on a corner plot in a relatively recent housing estate within the Green Belt. The estate can be characterised as comprising two-storey detached houses in large plots with predominantly open and landscaped frontages. Most boundaries, particularly those around rear gardens, are enclosed by brick walls, including some on the road frontages. In most cases they have substantial planted areas in front of them. The openness and significant areas of grass and landscaping in the estate give it a most attractive character.
4. The appeal fence surrounds part of the front and side boundary of the property. As the appellant points out, it represents around 25% of the total length of the boundary. The fence encloses an area between the site boundary and a detached garage and screens the appellant's touring caravan. There is no dispute that the vertical slatted fence panels are of high quality and it is noted that they will silver and mellow with age. I also note that the gravel boards are sunk below ground level to limit their visibility.
5. Although the fence does not enclose the entire site, it is on a prominent part of the road frontage and close to a corner leading to a cul-de-sac. I conclude that the erected fencing is out of keeping with the high quality character of the

- estate where the layout and arrangement of boundaries is generally open plan or enclosed by walls. The fencing also detracts from the attractive landscaping within the area, adding to its incongruous appearance.
6. The appellant has retained an almond tree and shrubbery and planted a strip of perennial flowering plants in front of the fence to improve its aesthetic appearance. However, this planting does not ameliorate the harmful appearance of the fencing. Furthermore, the many trees and woodland in the vicinity do not justify the use of timber to enclose the boundary as the appellant suggests.
 7. The fencing is intended to screen and protect the caravan. Other crime prevention measures installed include a padlocked security post and a movement and light sensor fixed to the adjacent garage. Whilst I appreciate the appellant's security and personal safety concerns, there are other available methods to protect against crime which do not involve the erection of visually harmful structures such as the appeal fence.
 8. The appellant considers that the development is sustainable because it allows for the safe storage and use of the family touring caravan for holidays in the UK, thereby not relying on air travel. He also states that home-based holidays support the UK economy and that there are benefits to the health and relationships of family members. The development has also used local and natural materials. These factors in themselves contribute towards sustainability. Sustainable development is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), however the measures of sustainability described by the appellant are not at all dependent on the presence of the appeal fence and I therefore give this argument little weight.
 9. At the site visit I noted that the neighbouring property at No 6 also has extensive fencing around its frontage. However, the main parties have not referred to it and I have no details about whether this has been erected with the permission of the Council. I can therefore give this factor very little weight; although I note that the occupier of this property supports the appeal proposal.
 10. In respect of other matters raised, neighbouring occupiers who object to the fencing have commented that it obscures the corner of the road for motorists and pedestrians, including children, and therefore presents a danger to highway safety. The Council has not included this matter in its reason for refusal and there is no evidence with this appeal to lead me to conclude that there is any adverse impact on highway safety arising from the erection of the fencing.
 11. The harm to the appearance of the area and the failure to improve its character is contrary to Policy ENV1 criterion 'a' of the Gedling Borough Council Replacement Local Plan, Policy 10 of the Gedling Borough Aligned Core Strategy and the requirement of the Framework for good quality design with which the Council's policies are consistent.
 12. For the reasons I have set out, the appeal is dismissed.

Elaine Benson

INSPECTOR