

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2017

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/17/3177637

1 Chestnut Avenue, Wokingham RG41 3HW

- 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 George Scott against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 170250, dated 26 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 22 May 2017.
 - The development is the erection of a 1.8m high wooden fence to the front and side of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission granted for the erection of a 1.8m high wooden fence to the front and side of the property at 1 Chestnut Avenue, Wokingham RG41 3HW in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 170250, dated 26 January 2017 and the plans submitted with it.

Procedural Matters

2. The fence, the subject of this appeal, has already been erected. The description of the development has been confined to the first line of the description provided on the application and appeal forms because this fully describes the appeal scheme.

Main Issue

3. It is considered that the main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, in particular the streetscene.

Reasons

4. The appeal scheme includes the erection of a 1.8 metre high wooden fence at the junction of Chestnut Avenue and Old Woollahill Lane. As claimed by the appellant, the fence has been erected for security reasons to enclose an area of what was an unmanageable part of the garden. The appeal property is situated within a predominantly residential area which is spacious and verdant in character containing a variety of dwelling designs. The dwellings have front and, in some cases, side gardens fronting the roads.
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5. There are variations in boundary treatments at the interfaces between residential gardens and the back edge of the footways. The boundary treatments predominantly include vegetation and wooden fences of varying types and heights, including an extensive length of wooden fence on the opposite site of Chestnut Avenue to the property.
6. Although at a road junction, rather than being a highly prominent part of the wider streetscene, the appeal scheme is only seen in views from the south along Old Woosehill Lane. However, this view also includes other wooden boundary fences. Views of the fence from other directions along the roads are limited because they are screened, including by other boundary treatments. Accordingly, the fence is not an unduly dominant or visually intrusive form of development whose siting and appearance is significantly out of character with either the wider streetscene or the surrounding residential area.
7. From locations immediately adjacent to the junction, and taking into account the surrounding vegetation both within the property's garden and forming other boundary features, because of the fence's height and limited length it is not so conscious or incongruous so as to cause detrimental harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene around the junction. In reaching this assessment account has been taken of other boundary features, including the extensive length of wooden fence on the opposite side of Chestnut Avenue which is sited adjacent to the back edge of the footway.
8. For the reasons given, it is concluded that the development does not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, in particular the streetscene, and, as such it does not conflict with Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Amongst other matters these policies require development to maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment and not to have a detrimental impact on matters including landscape. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) core principle of securing high quality design.

Conditions

9. The Council has only suggested a condition concerning the submission of a landscaping scheme. However, and having regard to the tests contained in the Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance, such a condition is unnecessary. The vegetation required to erect the appeal scheme has already been removed. Any new planting could only be to the rear of the fence and, for the reasons given, is unnecessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Accordingly, and taking into account all other matters, it is concluded that this appeal should be allowed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR