
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2017

by Michael Boniface MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/17/3180043

Little Squirrels, Mountview Road, Claygate, Esher, KT10 0UD

- 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 K Patel against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2017/1150, dated 10 April 2017, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of front boundary screening (for a period up to 12 months).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The development has already been carried out and the application seeks planning permission retrospectively. As such, I was able to view the screening during my site visit.
3. The application seeks a temporary planning permission for a period of 12 months. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The screening involves a mesh and imitation leaves attached to a timber frame so as to give the appearance of a hedgerow. It is located on the inside of a brick boundary wall at the front of the property but rises significantly above its height. It is a tall and prominent structure from the public highway, which is at a much lower ground level, and spans much of the wide frontage of the property.
6. Hedgerows are a common feature in the street, many properties incorporating them into landscaping within large front gardens. The colour of the leaves used in the screening is not dissimilar to that of some laurel hedgerows in the area but those used in the appeal scheme are quite obviously manmade, presenting an unnatural appearance, particularly due to their uniform colour and 'draped' appearance, hanging from the mesh. This unnatural appearance is compounded by the mesh and wooden frame which are also visible from the street.

7. As a result, the screening does not reflect the natural planting in the area and appears as a crude and visually intrusive structure, harming the character and appearance of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy DM2 of the Development Management Plan (2015); Policies CS11 and CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (2011); the Elmbridge Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (2012); and the National Planning Policy Framework, all of which seek good design that respects local character and distinctiveness.
8. I note that permission is only sought for a temporary 12 month period whilst planting within the site establishes. However, I do not consider that the harm I have identified is acceptable even for this relatively short time. I have had regard to the appellant's desire to prevent foxes entering the site and causing damage to the garden but this matter does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
9. In light of the above, and having considered all other matters, the appeal is dismissed.

Michael Boniface

INSPECTOR