
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 October 2017

by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6th November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C3240/D/17/3180036

42 Woodhouse Crescent, Trench, Telford TF2 7EY

- 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 Luke Darlington against the decision of Telford and Wrekin Council.
 - The application Ref TWC/2016/1115, dated 23 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a 1.8m high fence and installation of a canopy on front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The fence and canopy have already been erected at the property. I understand that the fence erected initially was a 1.8m high close boarded fence but following discussions with the Council the design of the fence was changed to a solid fence at the bottom with a trellis above. However, the Council have indicated that the change to the fence took place after they had determined the application. An amended plan has been submitted with the appeal documentation that shows the revised fence design, and this accords with what I saw erected at the property on my site visit. In addition, the revised design is no higher than the original fence design, and the lattice panel makes it less intrusive and enclosing. As such, it is materially better than the original scheme in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the area. I therefore consider that nobody's interests would be prejudiced by my taking account of these revised plans in determining the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in the appeal are the effect of the development on:
 - The character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area; and
 - Highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached house located on a corner plot. The surrounding area is residential in nature and comprises largely similar dwellings. The canopy that has been attached to the front elevation of the property extends the full width of the house, and projects approximately 3m from it, and acts as a car port.
5. Car ports are not a common feature in the area, with the majority of houses simply having a drive and/or a garage located at the side /rear of the property. Although a relatively lightweight structure, made from white uPVC that matches the window material on the property, its position on the front of the house makes it an incongruous and unsympathetic addition to the dwelling, and the street scene in general.
6. Boundary treatments to properties in the area vary considerably with walls, fences and hedges being in evidence, but are generally in the region of 1m in height. Where there are higher fences these are generally set back from the highway rather than abutting it. The appeal property sits at an angle to the adjacent roads and the fence has been erected along the boundary with both neighbouring properties as well as along the boundary to the road.
7. From my observations, even with the revised design, the height, scale, length, and prominence of the boundary treatment make it an overly dominant feature in the street scene that fails to respect, and is not in keeping with, the more open character and appearance of boundary treatments in the area. It therefore appears as an incongruous and discordant feature that does not integrate appropriately with its surroundings.
8. It has been suggested that the front elevation is the only elevation on which the car port could be mounted, and that if constructed from different materials or in a different colour, it would have a more detrimental impact. In addition, it is stated that the fence needs to be this high to ensure the dog cannot jump over it. Be that as it may, these matters do not justify allowing the canopy or the fence, given the harm I have identified that they cause.
9. As a result I consider the development unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly it conflicts with Policy CS15 of the *Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted December 2007)* and Policy UD2 of the *Wrekin Local Plan (adopted February 2000)* (WLP) which seek to ensure that development respects and responds positively to the local context including boundary treatments, so that it strengthens local identity, and has a positive influence on the appearance of the area.

Highway Safety

10. Although only partially hard surfaced, No 41 has a drive adjacent to the boundary with the host property. Whilst, the highway authority has indicated that the existing visibility from this drive is substandard, the height of the fence, and its position adjacent to the boundary restricts the visibility further. I also noted that it reduces the visibility when emerging from the drive on No 42. As such, the fence increases the hazardous nature of manoeuvres occupiers of these properties have to make.

11. The appellant has stated that the current occupiers of No 41 do not use their drive and do not drive. Nevertheless, the personal circumstances of the occupiers could easily change and result in the use of the drive on a regular basis.
12. Therefore, I consider that due to the reduction in visibility caused by the position and height of the fence, the development would be harmful to highway safety. Accordingly it would be contrary to Policy UD2 of the WLP which, amongst other things, requires that development provides a safe and convenient access.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR