
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 7 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P5870/D/17/3180098
138, Grove Road, Sutton SM1 2DF

- 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 & Mrs Saleem against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Sutton.
 - The application Ref B2017/76882/HHA, dated 7 April 2017, was refused by notice dated 26 June 2017.
 - The development is described as “rise a small wall with pillars plus gates in the middle”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. When I visited the site the development shown on the drawings was in situ, with the exception of the pair of gates to the driveway. Notwithstanding the description of development set out above, which is taken from the application form, the Council dealt with the proposal on the basis of the development being the retention and completion of a front boundary wall, piers, railings and gates, and so have I.

Main Issue

3. The main issue raised by this appeal is the effect the boundary treatment has on the character and appearance of Grove Road and the Landseer Road Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset.

Reasons

4. The front of the property has been enclosed with a series of six tall piers with lower walls topped by metal railings in between some and two openings, one with a tall metal gate. The white painted, rendered finish of the walls and piers makes the enclosure particularly prominent when viewed along Grove Road and it stands out against the darker and softer appearance of the boundary hedges in front of neighbouring properties.
5. The Conservation Area is characterised by substantial detached and semi-detached Edwardian houses, many on tree lined streets. Their arrangement relative to roads gives the Area a spacious character which, with the exception of the rear garden fences bounding York Road, is reinforced by the predominantly low brick walls, or in some cases hedges, enclosing

frontages. The resulting historic, mature and attractive townscape makes an important contribution to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

6. The combination of the height of the walls, piers and railings appears at odds with the generally lower front boundary treatments within the Conservation Area and has resulted in a greater degree of enclosure than that which predominates at the front of houses. Their crisp, white appearance has a stark and incongruous effect which contrasts harmfully with adjoining hedges and the soft, mellow and darker appearance of brick enclosures elsewhere in the Conservation Area. This has eroded the character and appearance of Grove Road in the vicinity of the appeal site.
7. The conservation of the designated heritage asset is something to which I have given considerable importance and weight and I have paid special attention to the desirability of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In doing so I have found that the development has harmed this character and appearance, and consequently the designated heritage asset's significance, and that there are no public benefits which would outweigh that harm.
8. The development would be contrary to the character and historic environment protection, streetscene enhancement and urban design requirements of London Plan, 2016 Policy 7.4, Core Strategy¹ Policy BP12 and Site Development² Policies DM1, DM3 and DM4.
9. The appellant's proposal to carry out planting behind the walls and railings would not only take some time to become established but would only provide a backdrop to the railings and would not reduce the prominence of the walls and piers. The omission of the vehicle gates has provided a degree of openness at the front but this is limited in extent and effect and similarly does not mitigate the effects of the walls and piers. Although a former hedge the appellants advise was in situ may have had an enclosing effect, as do adjacent hedges, their softer appearance has a much less marked and materially different effect on the area's character and appearance.
10. Whilst the appellants have reported that the development has been well received by neighbours and passers-by, this does not lead me to consider that the development is acceptable for the above reasons. I observed that there are some examples of taller railings, gates and piers elsewhere in the Conservation Area which the appellants have pointed out. However these are very much in the minority and none appear as extensive or as prominent as the appeal development and therefore do not lead me to a different conclusion.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, the development would harm the character and appearance of Grove Road and the Landseer Road Conservation Area, contrary to the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR

¹ London Borough of Sutton Local Development Framework - Core Planning Strategy, 2009.

² London Borough of Sutton Local Development Framework - Site Development Policies DPD, 2012.