
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2017

by Christopher Thomas BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/17/3181068
15 Wendy Crescent, Guildford, GU2 9RP

- 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 Cinar against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/P/01097, dated 17 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2017.
 - The development proposed is 2 storey rear, first floor side, porch and front wall/gate (Variation of approval Ref 16/P/00444).
-

Procedural matters

1. The proposal is described on the application form in the terms set out at the relevant bullet point above. However, the Council's decision notice more fully and I consider more appropriately describes the proposal in the following terms: Timber boarding on front elevation, increase in size of the front porch, insertion of a ground floor and first floor window within the eastern elevation and the insertion of a ground floor and a first floor window within the western elevation. Erection of a 2.2m high boundary wall to the front boundary, a 1.8m high boundary wall to the side boundary and a 2.2 m high electric sliding gate to the front boundary. (part retrospective) (amended plans received on the 20/06/17).
2. The Council's primary concern is with the amended design of the front boundary treatment, and it appears from the officer's report to find the retrospective elements of the proposal acceptable. Although the Council's description of the proposal refers to the front boundary wall and electric sliding gate as both being 2.2m high, I note that the amended drawing referred to, and on which the Council has based its decision (drawing no. 716-3 Rev A received on 20 June 2017), proposes the height of these features as 1.8m. Accordingly, I have proceeded on this basis.

Decision

3. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed front boundary wall and sliding gate on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. Wendy Crescent is a short cul-de-sac consisting of detached houses and bungalows. The primary means of boundary treatment at the back of the footway around the street is low brick or block walls with appropriately proportioned piers either side of the driveways to the properties. In one or two cases the frontage has been opened up to allow additional off-street parking and the boundary walls are therefore shorter. Vegetation is in evidence behind many of the boundary walls, and in two cases this forms a screen about 2m high.
6. The only exception to this general form of boundary treatment in the street scene is at either side of the entrance to Wendy Crescent from Worplesdon Road. Here the side and rear gardens/amenity areas of the two houses fronting on to Worplesdon Road adjacent to Wendy Crescent are screened by, in one case, wooden fence panels and intervening concrete posts approximately 1.8m high, and in the other by a brick wall with pillars and decorative metal railings backed by timber fencing. The latter treatment is on the same side of the road as the appeal site and incorporates a timber pedestrian gate and timber double gates leading to a garage, all approximately 1.8m high.
7. As I saw on my visit the existing front boundary treatment of the appeal site consists of a blockwork wall approximately 1m high with brick piers either side of the driveway. This is consistent with the general character and appearance of the boundary treatments of the properties fronting on to the street.
8. The proposed front boundary wall would consist of a brick base rising to a height of approximately a metre from the ground with vertical metal railings between brick pillars to a height of 1.8m. The proposed electric sliding gate, also 1.8m high and enclosing an opening approximately 4m wide, would be of a similar design to the metal inserts in the boundary wall. A short length of boundary wall to the right of the driveway would adjoin the brick pier which lies to one side of the timber double gates in the side wall of the adjacent house fronting Worplesdon Road.
9. The appeal property fronts on to the cul-de-sac and in character and appearance the front boundary treatment would be expected to relate to the other properties in a similar relationship to the street and not from the tall side enclosures designed to provide privacy to the rear gardens and amenity areas of the houses fronting Worplesdon Road.
10. Accordingly, I consider that the proposal would be a significant departure from the visual context to which it most closely relates in the street scene by introducing an incongruous form of front boundary wall and gate. This would be considerably higher and of much greater mass than the other front boundary enclosures in the cul-de-sac. Furthermore, by reason of its design the proposal would create an intrusive physical barrier which would harm the character and appearance of the street scene.
11. I have taken into account the appellants' desire to provide a level of security at their property. I note that they have been burgled and I recognise their fear of crime as a legitimate concern. However, without any evidence to support the appellants' claim to be living in a significantly high risk crime area of Guildford,

I consider that the identified harm would substantially outweigh the security benefits arising from the proposal.

12. I conclude, therefore, that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to saved policy G5 (4) *Street Level Design* of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 which expects, among other matters, that boundary treatments provide visual interest and a sense of place and identity. It would also conflict with the expectation in paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that proposals should achieve high quality and inclusive design.

C Thomas

INSPECTOR