

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 December 2017

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29 December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/17/3180623

19 Conifer Crest, Newbury, RG14 6RS

- 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 Andre Clothier against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00846/HOUSE, dated 21 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2017.
 - The development proposed was described as *"Build brick wall along front border of property, approximately 19 mtrs in length. The wall be made up of a 2ft (600mm) tall double brick width wall [sic] 6ft (1.8m or closest measurement over) pillars approx 3 mtrs apart and infilled with closed board fencing"*.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. During my visit I saw that the development had already taken place.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Conifer Crest is a residential road comprising mostly detached homes set back from the highway with generally open plan frontages or boundaries demarcated with natural vegetation. There is an overwhelming and natural sense of openness that is derived by the plentiful amounts of mature landscaping and the soft edges between the highway and the private front gardens beyond.
 5. The boundary that has been erected is positioned immediately adjoining the back edge of the pavement and comprises a dwarf brick wall interspersed with brick piers up to 1.8m high with the spaces between filled with close board fencing. It reaches for approximately 20m along the frontage of the property and is visually prominent in the street scene.
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6. The wall and fence stand out as an isolated means of enclosure that is both harsh and visually impenetrable, contrasting noticeably with the verdant character of the street scene that otherwise prevails and which provides a soft transition between the public and private domains along Conifer Crest. As such, it fails to make a positive contribution to the area, and detracts from its landscape character. It therefore conflicts with Policies CS 14 and CS 19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (CS) and with a core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework, which is to always seek to secure high quality design.
7. I note the Council has referenced CS Policy CS 18 in its decision. This deals with green infrastructure. However, despite my findings as they relate to the effect of the development upon the character of the street scene, I am unable to identify any harm in this case to any of the examples of green infrastructure that have been defined at paragraph 5.124 of the CS for the purpose of this policy. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the level of harm and conflict with the development plan and national policy that I have identified.

Conclusion

8. For the reasons given, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR