
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 January 2019

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th January 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/G1250/D/18/3212969

1 Wordsworth Avenue, Bournemouth, BH8 9NT

- 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 Ovidiu Semerean against the decision of Bournemouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2018-24445-F, dated 10 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 28 August 2018.
 - The development proposed is described as the '*removal of old timber fence, erect pilars [sic] and render the entire fence*'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a replacement boundary wall/fence at 1 Wordsworth Avenue, Bournemouth, BH8 9NT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 7-2018-24445-F, dated 10 July 2018, and the plans submitted with the application, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan and proposed north east and north west elevations.

Procedural Matters

2. The application form described the proposal as "*removal of old timber fence, erect pilars [sic] and render the entire fence*". I have recorded the description of development in my formal decision as was described on the Council's decision notice, which better and accurately describes the works.
3. The application was made retrospectively and at the time of my visit the dwarf boundary walls and pillars had been constructed and rendered but the proposed wood/composite infill strips had not been installed and neither had any gates. The proposed development was therefore incomplete.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The Council has drawn comparison between the existing/proposed boundary with the enclosure that previously existed. I recognise that the new works involve significant change, but I have been presented with no evidence to suggest that the original arrangement was a feature that should necessarily be preserved. Neither was I persuaded during my visit that this should be the case, with a mix of boundary enclosures evident within the locality. These include amongst them tall and solid enclosures to the front and sides of other corner plots, including at 81 Bradpole Road, on the opposing side of the entrance to Wordsworth Avenue, and nearby at the dwelling occupying the corner plot at the junction of Bradpole Road with Vanguard Road. I have noted also from the Council's description of the previous enclosure to the appeal property that the frontages to both Bradpole Road and Wordsworth Avenue were bound by a hedgerow that had grown significantly taller than the original dwarf boundary wall. Although they may not be the most dominant forms of boundary treatment visible within the surrounding streets, tall enclosures to the back edges of the pavements are clearly not alien features in the locality.
6. The proposal involves a significant number of pillars. These have different intervals, particularly where they follow the curvature of the site's boundary at its front corner. The intervening spaces would be filled with, what has been described as, 'wood/composite' strips. These have been shown to be fitted horizontally in a 'hit and miss' arrangement.
7. Although the pillars are numerous and prominent features, contrary to the Council's view, I do not consider them to be excessive. The infilling of the gaps with an alternative form of treatment would add interest and relief. The solidity of the proposed gates at the points of opening would be limited to reasonably short lengths and would compare with the other solid and much greater lengths of enclosures nearby that I have previously identified.
8. In my opinion the new boundary wall/fence would be appropriately domestic in scale and appearance. Furthermore, the house would remain as a visible and dominant presence within the street scene and therefore I fail to recognise how the development would give rise to a fortress effect.
9. Although not necessarily standard in its appearance, in my assessment the enclosure would not be overly conspicuous or incongruous within the residential context of its surroundings. I therefore find no harm to the character or appearance of the area. In these circumstances there would be no conflict with the aims or objectives of the Council's *Residential Extensions: A Design Guide for Householders Supplementary Planning Guidance (2008)* or with Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan Core Strategy (2012) which deals with quality of design and the need for development to respect its surroundings. For these same reasons I find no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as it deals with the same issues.
10. I have noted a comment questioning the structural integrity of the wall, but I have no evidence before me to suggest that it is not sound. In any event this matter would be covered by other legislation and is not directly relevant to the planning merits of the appeal proposal. Neither are any covenants that may apply to the premises.

Conditions

11. As the development has commenced there is no need for me to impose the standard time limit condition. For the purpose of certainty I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings. The plans have no numbers or titles. I have therefore referred to them based on the orientation of the elevations, and as expressed on the Council's decision notice.
12. I have considered whether it is necessary for the details of the timber/composite boards to be submitted to and approved by the Council. However, their form is reasonably depicted on the appeal drawings and having regard to the mixed use of boundary materials locally, I do not consider it necessary to secure any further control by means of condition.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR