
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 July 2019

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/U2805/D/19/3228696

6 Rydal Close, Corby NN18 8TY

- 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 Mrs Rose Hibbert against the decision of Corby Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00032/DPA, dated 28 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of a new boundary fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have not included the full description of development from the appellant's planning application form as it makes reference to the proposal being retrospective and that is not in itself development. However, I was able to see on my site visit that the appeal fence had been erected and therefore I have determined this appeal on the basis that it is a retrospective proposal.
3. The presentation of the names of the appellants differs between the planning application form and the appeal form. The appellant has confirmed that Mrs Rose Hibbert, which is the sole name on the appeal form, was one of the applicants referred to on the planning application form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The surrounding area comprises of modern dwellings of differing styles, sizes and layouts. Where they are present, front boundary treatments in the area are varied but generally consist of low-level planting and low fences, which create an open character. The plans submitted indicate that the dwelling was originally constructed with a brick wall which followed the same line as the front elevation of the dwelling. This wall defined the rear private garden area of the dwelling. The fence encloses additional garden area, which is in front of the house, in order to incorporate it into the rear garden. The land which has been enclosed would have previously served an important function in maintaining a continuous visual line of openness from views taken down Rydal Close towards the dwelling and across its frontage.

6. The fence has introduced a feature which is uncharacteristic of the surrounding area in terms of its solid construction, height and length and this design is incongruous to the more open front boundary treatments that prevail in the area. Furthermore, the erection of the fence has served to terminate the view along Rydal Close towards and across the frontage of the dwelling in a manner that is visually jarring with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In both these respects the development has caused significant visual harm to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The fence has been set back from the site boundary and landscaping has been undertaken in the intervening space. At the present time this landscaping has a limited impact in addressing the visual harm of the fence and whilst it may provide some additional screening when it reaches its mature size, from the information before me I cannot be certain that this would ultimately provide an adequate level of screening. Furthermore, whilst the fence may soften in visual appearance over time, this too would not overcome the harm caused.
8. The fence would screen the adjacent sub-station but as the sub-station is not unattractive, the screening of it provides no benefit to the proposal. I note the appellant's argument that the enclosed area is easier to maintain than when it was open but this does not outweigh the visual harm. I also note the appellant's comments that the character of the area is being created as the residents add their personal touches, and also that the site is not within a Conservation Area. However, these factors do not justify a harmful development.
9. I conclude therefore that the fence forms an incongruous feature within the locality. Consequently, the development significantly harms the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the design aims of Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (July 2016) and Saved Policy P10(R) of the Corby Local Plan 1997 which seek to protect the character and appearance of the area.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has made reference to the fence being required to prevent anti-social behaviour and to improve security. However, I observed on site that the area in question benefits from good levels of natural surveillance from adjacent dwellings. It has also been suggested that before it was enclosed the land was perceived by some residents to be public open space. I consider however that due to the relationship of the land to the dwelling and due to the previous presence of a post and rail plot division fence, the land would not have reasonably been identified as publicly accessible by other residents.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graham Wraight

INSPECTOR