

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2019

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X0360/D/19/3230804

South Lodge, Farley Castle, Castle Hill, Farley Hill, Reading RG7 1XD

- 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 Steve Corfield against the decision of Wokingham Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. 183559, dated 1 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 25 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is the proposed erection of a 2m chain link fence with a 1.3m close boarded timber fence behind.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a 2m chain link fence with a 1.3m close boarded timber fence behind at South Lodge, Farley Castle, Castle Hill, Farley Hill, Reading in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. 183559, dated 1 January 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three months from the date of this Decision or such other period as may be first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority;
 - 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: Drawing No. SC0795-01-18 Issue B;
 - 3) Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall specify the species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees / shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting season following the date of this Decision. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed boundary treatment on the character and appearance of the road (Bunces Shaw) and the surrounding countryside.
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Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that there are a number of 1.8m / 2m close boarded fences in the vicinity of South Lodge. These boundary treatments are part of the existing character and appearance of the area and have been documented in the grounds of appeal. And whilst I note the Council's preference for just a chain link fence for the rear boundary of the property, I do not consider this to be reasonable given the existing context of boundary treatments and the inconsistency of the Council's approach as set out in the grounds of appeal.
4. Furthermore, by limiting the height of the close boarded fence to 1300mm (plus 150mm concrete gravel board at its base) and with existing / additional planting growing through the upper section of chain link fencing, the proposal will result in a sufficiently permeable and verdant boundary to be acceptable having regard to the rural character of Bunces Shaw and the surrounding area. It would meet the appellant's reasonable security needs and, in my view, not harmfully conflict with the Council's development plan policies in the Core Strategy & Local Plan; the Borough Design Guide SPD, and Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.
5. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. I also note that a pre-commencement condition has been agreed as regards landscaping. Government policy is to discourage such conditions but as this has been agreed by the parties, I shall include it in this Decision.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR