
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2019

by Alexander Walker MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M4320/D/19/3234374

199 Liverpool Road, Crosby, Liverpool, Merseyside L23 0RX

- 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 Michael Draper against the decision of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/2019/00522, dated 1 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is a 6ft fence around property garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. At the time of my site visit the proposed fence had already been erected. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. This stretch of Liverpool Road is lined on one side by two-storey, semi-detached dwellings in a Mock-Tudor style. These properties are set back from the road and generally have a low brick wall front boundary with privet hedging behind. On the opposite side of the road is a school playing field with a close boarded timber fence boundary with the road. The set back position of dwellings, the wide pavements and the low and soft boundary treatments make a positive contribution to the openness of this leafy suburban setting.
5. The appeal property is located on the corner of Liverpool Road and Mornington Avenue, resulting in it being a prominent site on the junction of the two roads. Property styles on Mornington Avenue are not as ornate as the Mock-Tudor properties on Liverpool Road. Furthermore, properties are sited much closer to the road. However, the low front boundary walls and hedging continues along the avenue, providing a visual link between the two roads and retaining the openness found on Liverpool Road. The corner plot of 201 Liverpool Road enhances this link. Whilst there is no longer a privet hedge on the boundary of the appeal site, the low wall remains and it is clear to see that prior to the erection of the subject

- fence, the appeal site also made an important link between the two roads and a positive contribution to the overall openness of the area.
6. The subject fence provides a high, solid barrier, which is in marked contrast to the prevailing lower and softer boundary treatments, resulting in it appearing as an unduly prominent and intrusive feature in the streetscene. This is exacerbated by its corner plot location, emphasising the incongruity of the boundary treatment along both adjacent roads. The sense of enclosure created by the fence detaches the host dwelling from the streetscene and diminishes the openness of the area.
 7. I note that 191 Liverpool Road also has a high fence along its front garden boundary. However, notwithstanding the lack of any evidence indicating whether or not it benefits from planning permission, the front boundary is also largely composed of planting, which helps to soften the appearance of the fence. I have also been referred to photographs of other high fence boundaries in the wider area. However, in the absence of any context of where exactly these properties are, I cannot be certain the characteristics of the streetscene in which they are located are directly comparable to the proposal before me. As such, I attribute them only very limited weight.
 8. The design of the fence is sympathetic to the style of the host dwelling and its low maintenance would ensure that it remains in a tidy appearance for a long time. However, this does not mitigate the harm the fence has to the character and appearance of the area.
 9. I find therefore that the proposal significantly harms the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies EQ2 and HC4 of the Sefton Local Plan 2017, which seek to ensure that development contributes positively to its surroundings through its scale, height and form, and require alterations to dwelling houses to be in keeping with the surrounding area. It would also fail to comply with the Council's House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2018, which states that new walls should respect the design and character of the surrounding area and neighbouring properties. It would also fail to accord with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

10. I acknowledge the appellant's wishes to provide a safer living environment for his family and make better use of the outdoor amenity space of the property. Furthermore, the fence likely does reduce the noise and air pollution generated by the adjacent roads, in particular Liverpool Road, although there is no substantive evidence quantifying this. Nevertheless, individually or cumulatively, these matters do not outweigh the significant harm the fence has on the character and appearance of the area.
11. I note the level of support for the proposal from local residents. However, I do not consider that this support amounts to sufficient justification for me to determine the appeal otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Alexander Walker

INSPECTOR