



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2019

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D1780/W/19/3233035

5 Barnes Road, Southampton SO19 5FG

- 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 Matthew Sketcher against the decision of Southampton City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00590/FUL, dated 31 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of a single-storey side extension and change of use of land to private garden land enclosed by a boundary treatment with a height of 3 metres - 1.8 metres.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the description of the development from the council's decision notice, rather than the application form, as it more clearly and accurately describes the proposals shown on the accompanying drawings.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal dwelling lies at the end of a terrace of three houses that face Barnes Road. The house occupies a prominent corner plot, and its end gable faces Keats Road. There is a landscaped area of public land between the gable and Keats Road, which softens its appearance, and provides an attractive entrance to this residential area. There are four other 3-house terraces to the north of the appeal site, running perpendicular to Keats Road and stepping down the slope. In each case there is a substantial landscaped bank between the gable of the end-terraced house and Keats Road. Without these repeated landscaped areas, the street scene would be dominated by the featureless gable ends of the houses. They therefore play an important role in softening the overall appearance of the development, and so contribute positively to the character of the area.
5. The proposal submitted to the council was for the change of use of the landscaped area to private garden, its enclosure with a wall/fence, and the

construction of a single-storey extension to the side of the house. The wall/fence would be erected right on the back edge of the pavement. It would be 1.8m high on the Barnes Road frontage, rising to 3m facing Keats Road, as the land slopes away. The enclosure of the land would result in the loss of the open and attractive entrance to Keats Road. The height of the wall/fence, and its proximity to the pavement, would make it a harsh feature that would be out of character with the generally open front gardens and soft, landscaped appearance, of the rest of the street. As a result, it would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

6. My attention has been drawn to a wall/fence at 1 Keats Close, which is also constructed right up to the pavement. I am not aware of the planning circumstances behind that development. However, I saw that the property is on the opposite side of the road from the appeal site, so does not form part of the same vista of repeated landscaped areas that is seen from either end of Keats Road. As it is not a corner plot, the impact of the enclosure is not directly comparable with the appeal proposal. In any event, I must determine this appeal on its own merits. Consequently, this existing means of enclosure does not alter my conclusion that the proposed fence/wall would be harmful.
7. As part of the appeal submission, the appellant has indicated that he wishes to remove the wall/fence from the proposal. This would result in a development that would be significantly different to the one on which the council made its decision, and on which local residents were consulted. However, there were no public representations, and the council has had the opportunity through the appeal process to comment on the amended proposal. In these circumstances, I can consider the change of use and extension, separately from the boundary wall/fence, without injustice to any party. Section 79(1)(b) of the 1990 Act would allow me to issue a split decision, allowing one part of the scheme and dismissing the rest.
8. The extension would project 3m for the whole width of the end gable of the house. It would, therefore, occupy a significant proportion of the landscaped area. Furthermore, it would leave a comparatively narrow strip of land between the extension and the pavement. As a result, the extension would reduce the amount, and scale of landscaping, that could be provided on this key corner site. The change of use of the land to private garden would also mean that it came under a different management regime than the other landscaped areas. Over time it could take on a quite different appearance to the repeated landscaped areas that play such an important role in lifting the quality of this residential area. Consequently, even without the boundary wall/fence, the change of use and extension would significantly diminish the contribution that the land makes to the appearance and character of the area.
9. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies SDP1, SDP7 and SDP9 of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (2006), and Policy CS13 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document Amended Version incorporating the Core Strategy Partial Review (2015). In combination these policies seek, amongst other things, to protect the amenity of the city, retain important urban spaces, promote quality of the public realm, and ensure that the visual impact of proposals respect their surroundings. The proposal would also conflict with the guidance in the council's Residential Design Guide (2006), which

advises that the treatment of boundaries should be in keeping with the treatment of other boundaries along the street.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR