



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2020

by S Dean MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3635/W/19/3243480

Flat 1, Jennifer Court, Adelaide Road, Ashford TW15 3GA

- 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 L Guarrasi against the decision of Spelthorne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01084/HOU, dated 1 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is timber fencing to side and rear boundaries and timber pergola.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The application form and documents submitted with the appeal state that the development being applied for has already taken place. On my site visit I saw the fencing and pergola pictured in the appeal documents.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Adelaide Road and the streets surrounding it are largely residential in nature, with a variety of building styles and materials. Despite that, most properties are set back from the footway edge, with generally open front gardens or driveway areas and relatively low boundary treatments, particularly to the front.
5. The appeal site is a corner plot on the junction of Adelaide Road and Chesterfield Road which has been converted to flats. The development subject to this appeal was erected in order to screen the habitable rooms in the ground floor flat from the road and to enclose the space in order to provide private outdoor space, screened from litter and passing traffic.
6. I accept that there are some tall fences and boundary walls adjacent to the highway edge in the area surrounding the appeal site. There are other properties on corner sites similar to the appeal site, notably directly opposite and at the far end of Adelaide Road, at the junction with Ferndale Road. In all of those comparable cases, any tall boundary treatments step down or are otherwise much lower than the appeal development at the corner of the site,

preserving the open character of those frontages and junctions. The appeal scheme does not do this. Instead, it introduces what I consider to be an uncharacteristic and visually incongruous, overly tall and somewhat stark boundary feature to the street-scene. The effect of this is emphasised by the corner location and visibility in longer views from both Adelaide Road and Chesterfield Road.

7. The timber pergola behind this fencing is similarly incongruous. It is particularly prominent, being taller than the fencing and forward of the established building line along both Adelaide Road and Chesterfield Road. Its height and appearance are at odds with the established character of the street-scene and I saw nothing on my site visit which suggested that such a structure was in keeping with the character or appearance of the area.
8. I note that part of the justification for the fencing is to provide screening and increased privacy to the ground floor windows on the site. However, the distance between the ground floor windows and the pavement is not fundamentally different from others in the wider area. There is also no compelling evidence to suggest that the space between the building and the site boundary could only be used with the benefit of the appeal development. My decision on this appeal must be taken in the public interest, and in doing so I do not consider that the essentially private benefits suggested outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area. In my view the appeal development does cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of its appearance, height and prominence.
9. The appeal development is therefore contrary to Policy EN1 of the Spelthorne Development Plan Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document (February 2009). This policy seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design, creates attractive places, has due regard to the existing character and appearance of the area in which it takes place, and makes a positive contribution to the street-scene and character of the area.

Conclusion

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

S Dean

INSPECTOR