
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2020

by Guy Davies BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L5240/D/20/3244976

1 St Leonards Road, Waddon, Croydon CR1 4BN

- 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 Olakotan against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon.
 - The application ref 19/04292/HSE, dated 9 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is a front boundary wall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of St Leonards Road.

Procedural Matters

3. The application was submitted retrospectively and is described on the application form as being for the 'proposed retention of front boundary fence'. The term 'retention' is not an act of development. Consequently, I have removed the word 'retention' from the description of development and treated the appeal on the basis that planning permission is sought for the development shown on the application drawings.
4. In addition, there is a discrepancy between the development being described as a 'fence' on the application form, and a 'wall' on the application drawings. As built, it is clear that the development is a wall rather than a fence, and I have described it as such in the banner heading.

Reasons

5. St Leonards Road is a short cul-de-sac of residential properties. The front boundaries of houses fronting the road are almost all defined by walls or hedges running along the back edge of the pavement. The walls are a mixture of different styles in either brick or render, some with railings, but all are low in height. This provides the road with a degree of openness where the buildings predominate over front garden structures.
6. In contrast to this general appearance, the wall with its accompanying gates subject of the appeal is excessively tall and bulky in comparison with nearby

front boundary treatments. It is visually prominent and dominates its frontage. Furthermore, as it is finished over in smooth render its plain design is incongruous with the host dwelling which is characterised by its brick frontage, which is rich in architectural detailing. For those reasons it appears discordant and out of character with other front boundary treatments in St Leonards Road. Although the gates are not mentioned explicitly in the description, they are shown on the plans and are attached to the wall, and I have therefore included them in my assessment. My view would be the same even if they were not included as part of the development.

7. Section 4.30 of the Croydon Suburban Design Guide advises amongst other criteria that front garden boundary treatments should respond to the design of the dwelling, be consistent with the height of other enclosures on the road, and avoid the introduction of different styles along the street. The wall subject of this appeal fails to accord with any of those criteria.
8. One other tall boundary treatment in St Leonards Road is a timber fence adjacent to the appeal site. This forms the side boundary to a corner property that faces Warrington Road. The side boundary has a different function to a front boundary, in this case providing screening to the rear garden of the property fronting Warrington Road, and is seen in that context. Therefore, its existence does not provide justification for similarly tall structures along front boundaries.
9. My attention has also been drawn to a brick pillar at 2 St Leonards Rd and a retaining wall at 7 St Leonards Rd. The first is an isolated pillar which does not have the same visual prominence as the appeal wall; and the retaining wall is set back from the road frontage such that it does not have the same function or dominance as the appeal wall. I do not consider either to be comparable to the wall subject of this appeal.
10. The wall has been designed in part to screen domestic refuse bins. While screening of refuse bins can help reduce the appearance of clutter in a street, it does not justify allowing screening that in itself is harmful to the appearance of the street. There are other solutions to the storage of refuse bins that do not require the construction of tall boundary walls.
11. It is also argued that a strong front boundary treatment is necessary to clearly define private and public space, and such an approach is supported by the Croydon Suburban Design Guide. While that may be so, it can be achieved by a lower wall than that proposed, and does not require a wall of the height built.
12. I conclude that the wall harms the character and appearance of St Leonards Road and conflicts with Policies SP4 and DM10 of the Croydon Local Plan 2018 and Policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2015, which require a high quality of design and for new development to make a positive contribution to its setting.

Conclusion

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

Guy Davies

INSPECTOR