



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2020 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Claire Searson MSc PGDip BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/20/3248990

85 Lynwood Grove, Orpington BR6 0BQ

- 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 Higham against the decision of the London Borough of Bromley Council.
 - The application Ref DC/19/05303/FULL6, dated 18 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 February 2020.
 - The development is a retrospective application for a new front wall with railings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site accommodates a large detached dwelling with a front boundary wall, railings and two sliding gates located opposite the junction of Lynwood Grove and Melbourne Close. It lies within a locally designated area, The Knoll Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC). On my site, I observed that the surrounding area is characterised for the most part by white rendered detached dwellings set within spacious plots and verdant front gardens. The Council advises that Lynwood Grove properties feature a mix of open plan or landscaped front gardens delimited by low boundary walls or hedges and that creative use is often made of planted boundary walls and hedges to delimitate side boundaries and front gardens as well as paving materials for driveways.
 5. The proposed retention of the front boundary wall, railings and sliding gates would jar with the pleasant and sylvan character of the surrounding area. The wall stretches across the whole length of the front boundary where there is a bend in the road, opposite Melbourne Close. It is therefore highly visible and appears as an obtrusive and prominent feature in the street scene owing to its height, bulk and stark design. The lack of soft landscaping reinforces its austere look and contrasts with the surrounding properties who have
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maintained open and subtle frontages with low height boundary treatments and landscaping. I have had regard to the photographic evidence of neighbouring properties provided by the appellant however these only serve to reinforce the fact that the development has strayed from the immediate context. Indeed, whilst they show a variety of front boundary styles and designs, these nevertheless still respect the characteristics of the ASRC through the use of soft landscaping, low walls or hedging. Although some railings are observable along Lynwood Grove, these are mainly attached to very low walls and are complemented with vegetation.

6. My attention was drawn to the fact that the development was constructed in October 2016 prior to the inclusion of Lynwood Grove within the designated ASRC. The appellant also highlights that the development would have been observable to the Council in 2017 as it was indicated on the plans for a previous permission at the appeal property. These points do not affect my consideration of the planning merits of the case put before me and do not outweigh the adverse impact of the development.
7. In light of the foregoing, I find that the design, height and siting of the front boundary wall, railings and gates result in a visually discordant feature that is detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene and which fails to enhance The Knoll ASRC. The proposed retention of the development would conflict with Policy 37 of the Bromley Local Plan (the 'Local Plan') which seeks to ensure proposals are well-designed, complement the scale, proportion, form and materials of adjacent buildings and areas, and positively contribute to the street scene. The proposed retention would also conflict with Policy 44 of the Local Plan which requires proposals to respect, enhance and strengthen the special and distinctive qualities of ASRCs. This is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework which aims to ensure proposals are sympathetic to local character.

Recommendation

8. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

9. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Claire Searson

INSPECTOR