



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2020

by David Wyborn BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/W/20/3258529

5 St Johns Gardens, Romsey SO51 7RW

- 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 Laura Pearsall against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00434/FULLS, dated 18 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as “moving fence to edge of boundary line next to the pavement to make best use of garden space and due to the old fence being uplifted and damaged by the tree in the garden. The tree is also part of the reason why we have moved it to where it is as it has large roots and branches impeding the options for fence position”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. At my site visit I noted that the fence was in place and I have considered the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. St Johns Gardens forms part of an attractive estate of reasonably modern housing. A particular feature of the estate is the variety of landscaping which has matured and provides a pleasant and verdant appearance to the street scenes. Often the landscaping consists of front garden planting with hedges and bushes, but there are also small informal areas of planting to the sides of properties together with a mix of small and medium sized trees. Individually each of the various planted spaces make a small contribution to the character and appearance of the area but collectively they combine to provide a high quality environment that softens the built form.
5. 5 St Johns Gardens is a corner property. The side elevation of the house and accompanying rear garden boundary face Tench Way. The curving nature of Tench Way means that this side of the property is readily apparent within the street scene. The evidence indicates that previously there was a modest triangular shaped strip of landscaping between the garden fence and the

- footway. This contained a medium sized tree and planting. The result was that the appearance of the fence was softened and the space made a small but valuable contribution to the verdant appearance of the estate. To some extent it complemented the landscaped strip on the other side of the road and together made a more pleasant entrance to Tench Way from St Johns Gardens.
6. The present fence has been moved very close to the edge of the footway and the landscaped area has been lost. The fence appears as a stark feature in the views of the side of No 5 when approaching along Tench Way and the lack of planting between the fence and footway erodes some of the verdant appearance to the street scene. The tree is visible above the fence but the extent of the reasonably tall and unrelieved fencing creates an unsympathetic appearance to this part of the road and contrasts adversely with the positive contribution the site made in the past.
 7. There are a limited number of other fences and structures abutting the footway within the estate, including the ones drawn to my attention. However, they are generally the exception and are not examples that demonstrate the typical approach which contributes positively to the verdant appearance of the estate. I, therefore, attach these examples limited weight in justification for the present proposal.
 8. I understand that the position of the fence makes best use of the garden for the occupier. Nevertheless, the private benefits from the additional garden area do not out way the visual harm that the present fence and the lack of landscaping causes to the area. It is also explained that the tree caused problems with the fence in its previous position. There is no convincing technical evidence that a fence, or another boundary treatment such as a hedge, could not be formed and positioned in a way that would be unaffected by the tree. Consequently, I attach limited weight to the argument that the tree negates the ability to provide a meaningful landscaping strip in this case.
 9. Romsey Town Council raised no objection to the proposal. However, the fence, because of its adverse impact, is contrary to the general approach in the Romsey Town Design Statement for Area 7 - Lower Cupernham and Fishlake Meadows (adopted January 2008) which identifies key elements, including landscaping, that contribute to a pleasant environment across the defined area.
 10. Accordingly, I conclude that the fence harms the character and appearance of the area and thereby conflicts with Policies COM2, E1 and E2 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2011-2029 which seek, amongst other things, that development should integrate, respect and complement the character of the area.
 11. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

David Wyborn

INSPECTOR