



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2020

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L5810/D/20/3258483

7 Vancouver Road, Ham, Richmond, TW10 7YA

- 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 Craig Evans against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames.
 - The application Ref 20/1603/HOT dated 15 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is retrospective permission for new boundary fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for retrospective permission for new boundary fence at 7 Vancouver Road, Ham, Richmond, TW10 7YA, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/1603/HOT, dated 15 June 2020, and the plans submitted with it.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area and on biodiversity.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Vancouver Road comprises a terrace of 2 storey houses on both sides of the road. Houses along the street generally sit behind low brick walls with front gardens visible from the road. Although some have been partially removed to provide access for car parking, the gardens and low walls contribute to the character of the area. Some properties have low hedges running behind the front walls but not to the extent that they are defining features.
4. Houses at each end of the terrace, including the appeal site, contain gardens to their side. They create significant gaps between the nearest houses on adjoining streets. Although high fences and hedges along some of their boundaries prevent views into the gardens, the gaps between buildings creates a sense of openness that also contributes to the character of the street.
5. The Council is concerned that the fence is incongruous, visually intrusive and harms the character and appearance of the area. The appeal site and each of the other corner plots have different characteristics. At the opposite end of the road there are privet hedges that are high enough to prevent views into the

gardens. On the appeal site side of the road the hedge is behind a close board timber fence which continues onto Lammas Road and is as much a feature of the street scene as the hedge. The corner plot opposite the appeal site is not as large as other corner plots because of a side extension to the nearest property on the adjoining road. There is planting behind the wall, but the hedge is thin and allows views into the garden.

6. Whilst hedges are attractive features, they do not in my view define the character of the street scene and could, in any case, be removed without requiring planning permission. The fence is a similar height to garden boundaries at other corner plots, including the fence I mentioned earlier. As such it is not out of character and does not interrupt the openness at corner plots that I have identified as part of the character of the street scene. Also, it does not affect the front of the appeal property which retains the low wall so that the front garden remains visible from the street.
7. I conclude that the development would not harm the character and appearance of the area and would not therefore conflict with policies LP 1 and LP 8 of the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Local Plan (July 2018) (LP) which require development to be compatible with local character and not to be visually intrusive.

Biodiversity

8. I am not convinced that the loss of several metres of privet hedge has adversely impacted on biodiversity in the locality as the Council suggest. Neither has it led to the loss of an important landscape feature that policy LP16 of the LP seeks to avoid. There are hedges adjacent to the appeal site and trees within it. Furthermore, the appellant has stated that additional planting was carried out within the site and I have no evidence to suggest otherwise. I therefore conclude that the development would not harm biodiversity and there would be no conflict with policies LP1, LP15 and LP16 which seeks to ensure that development contributes to the local environment, protects biodiversity and retains important existing landscape features.

Conditions

9. The Council has suggested a condition specifying the approved plans. However, as the development is complete, I do not consider the condition, or a standard condition limiting the lifespan of the planning permission, are necessary.

Conclusion

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

P D Sedgwick