
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2021

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/20/3261063

**Land to the rear of The Rising Sun, Bath Road, Woolhampton,
Reading RG7 5RH**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant consent, agreement or approval to details required by a condition of a planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Premier Developments Southern against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00561/COND2, dated 28 February 2020, sought approval of details pursuant to condition No 4 of a planning permission Ref 18/02501/FULD, granted on 12 September 2018.
 - The application was refused by notice dated 29 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'application for full planning permission for the erection of 4 dwellings with additional rooms in the roof'.
 - The details for which approval are sought are described as: 'Condition 4: Boundary Treatment Plan including the details, positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected is submitted. The boundary treatment consists of a 1.8m high close board fence surrounding the site'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. I have observed that construction works have commenced, including the erection of fencing. However, I have little evidence that this fencing is what has been proposed. As such, I have proceeded to assess the proposed development on the basis of the plans rather than what has been erected on site.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the details for which approval is sought on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located within an open countryside location forming part of a cluster of ribbon development along Bath Road (A4). Within this cluster I have observed a number of boundary treatments including some examples of close boarded fencing of a similar height to that proposed and visible from public vantage points including the A4. However, these examples are not identical to the proposal before me. Furthermore, they are not the only types of boundary treatments in this cluster. I have observed open frontages and low boundary

treatments in closer proximity to the appeal site, such as the railings to the front of the adjacent property to the north-east.

5. Alternative details have been approved by the Council which include a 1 metre high fence to the site frontage, wrapping around either flank for approximately the front half of the site, before rising to a height of 1.8m to enclose the rear gardens of the 4 approved dwellings. Additionally, a high fence has been approved to the side of The Rising Sun¹. I afford these details weight as a realistic fallback. These would result in a relatively low boundary treatment in the prominent frontage locations along Bath Road and Railside. I find that this would satisfactorily assimilate with the area.
6. However, the proposal would result in an additional 800mm in height to this fencing in the most visually prominent parts of the site. The fencing would be located up to the site boundary on the narrow Railside and in very close proximity to the site frontage on Bath Road. The combination of the fence's height, siting and length would appear prominent and dominant, out of keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
7. The appellant has detailed a scheme of soft landscaping that includes the planting of Laurel hedging on the outside edge of the proposed fence. They state that this would be maintained to a height of 1.8m and obscure any fence from view. However, whilst I afford this some weight, landscaping cannot be considered a permanent feature and should not therefore be used to justify development that would be otherwise unacceptable. Furthermore, no such landscaping is proposed along Railside.
8. The appellant has brought to my attention further examples of close boarded fencing within 5 groups along the A4 to the east and west of the appeal site. However, some of these are a distance away, have a different context and/or differ from the proposal in terms of siting or other details. Furthermore, I have not been provided with full details as to how they came to exist and whether or not they required, or gained, planning approval. As such, I afford them limited weight whilst also noting a variety of other boundary treatments along the A4 in the 5 groups identified by the appellant.
9. Therefore, in conclusion on the main issue the details for which approval is sought would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) Development Plan Document, Adopted July 2012; Policy C3 of the Housing Site Allocations DPD (2006-2026), Adopted May 2017 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies seek to ensure a high quality of design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area.

Other matters

10. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would improve security and safety at the site. However, I have little evidence to support this assertion and afford it limited weight. Furthermore, the appellant highlights that a 2m high fence was detailed in the approved noise mitigation details. However, I have not been provided with any evidence as to the extent of any harm to future occupiers of the development without such mitigation, or that alternative

¹ LPA ref: 20/00033/FULD

mitigation cannot be achieved. As such, I afford this little weight. Even taken cumulatively the other matters raised do not outweigh the identified harm.

Conclusion

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

James Taylor

INSPECTOR