



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2021 by Ben Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/20/3262468

7 Britannia Crescent, Stoke Gifford, BS34 8NH

- 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 Martyn Thompson against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P20/12205/F, dated 13 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as Remove 11m by 2m high unsafe garden wall - Erect 19m by 1.8m high wooden fence with 1.8m return panels to old wall line. Move existing 'non-permanent' wooden corner cabin.
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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.

Procedural Matter

3. It was evident at my site visit that the development proposed has taken place. The application is therefore retrospective.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the change of use of open space and fence on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons for Recommendation

5. Britannia Crescent is a pleasant short suburban cul de sac extending off Buckingham Drive and set within a wider suburban development. Both roads are made up mostly of a mixture of terrace, semi and detached dwellings, but with a consistent design, scale and materials. There is a consistent set back from the road with off street parking.
6. The largely open frontages set back from the highway and the generally consistent open amenity space on the corner of each road provide an attractive, open, spacious character to the area. Whilst there are some exceptions, there is also a generally consistent boundary treatment to the open corner spaces evident within the vicinity of the appeal site, comprising of

- bricked walls which provide high-quality boundary treatment which contribute positively to the street scene.
7. Whilst only projecting a limited distance into the open space to the side of the appeal property, the boundary fence sits prominently on a corner as the cul de sac curves around, and incongruously encroaches into the open space contrary to the established pattern of development.
 8. This is exacerbated visually by the 1.8m high close boarded timber fence, which is out of keeping with the established high-quality brick wall boundary treatment to the open verges within the wider development. The retention of a limited amount of grass next to the fence and the darkening stain applied to the timber does not soften its visual impact to a significant degree. The siting of the outbuilding, located in the corner next to the new fence, further exacerbates the visual impact of the development and reduction in the open and spacious character of the street.
 9. There are visible examples of timber fencing in the vicinity, as set out in photographs (but not detailed) by the appellant, however none are on Britannia Crescent or appear to be as prominently sited so close to the highway and on a corner. As such, none are directly comparable in their visual impact and in any event, I consider that unsatisfactory developments as shown in some of the photographs do not provide justification for further harm to the street scene. The appellant also points to a number of properties which have similarly changed the use of open amenity land, however again, no details are provided of any such development. In addition, each application and appeal must be considered on its individual merits, and this is the approach that I have taken in my consideration of this case.
 10. Similarly reference to a former children's play area being removed by the Council is unsubstantiated and not comparable with the development the subject of this appeal.
 11. It is acknowledged that the previous brick boundary wall may have been in poor condition, partly due to a tree stump. However, this does not justify its replacement with a lesser quality treatment or the encroachment into the open amenity space. It is further acknowledged that the fence reduces the amount of open space available for people or dogs to litter, however this would be the case for every open frontage or parcel of land in the surroundings and does not justify their enclosure.
 12. It is also acknowledged that the planning application did not receive any objections from the occupiers of neighbouring properties. However, this is a neutral factor which does not alter my conclusions on the main issue.
 13. In light of the foregoing, it is concluded that the proposal is harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. There is therefore conflict with Policy CS1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy (2013) and Policies PSP1 and PSP5 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan Policies, Sites and Places Plan (2017), which require development to reach a high standard of design and should not adversely affect the character of the locality.

Conclusion

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

B Phillips

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR