



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 3 June 2021

by Rachel Hall BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/W/21/3268885

Youell Court, Skipworth Road, Coventry CV3 2XA

- 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 Christopher Wilkinson of The Salvation Army UKI against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref FUL/2020/2822, dated 24 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a boundary fence and security gates to Skipworth Road boundary.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The fence has been erected and therefore I am considering this appeal retrospectively.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Vehicular access to the site is via Skipworth Road which is residential in character, comprising principally two storey houses and their gardens. Boundary treatment in the vicinity is varied, including sections of brick wall, close board fence, low kick rails, hedges and planting. There are some short sections of fencing and walls that are positioned immediately adjacent to the pavement, however I saw that the prevailing style is of these set behind low hedges or planting. This softens their appearance in the street scene and is characteristic of the area.
5. There are large grass verges either side of the entrance to Claybrookes Lane and an area of grass opposite on Skipworth Road. Similarly there are grass verges on either side of Skipworth Road adjacent to the roundabout. These contribute to a characteristic sense of openness and spaciousness in the area. Based on the photographs before me, prior to its enclosure the grounds around Youell Court would have contributed towards those characteristics.
6. At the vehicular entrance to the site on Claybrookes Lane, the appeal fence is positioned such that a sizeable area of grass remains outside the boundary of the fence. This maintains an open character to this part of the site. At the

junction with Kynner Way, the fence is again positioned such that there is a sizeable area of grass between the site and the road edge. This appears in keeping with the grassed area on the opposite side to the appeal site, on Skipworth Road, and maintains a landscaped area that separates the site from the roundabout and commercial development beyond.

7. Nevertheless there is a considerable length of fence that is positioned adjacent to the pavement along Skipworth Road, far lengthier than that typically associated with individual dwellings. Without the buffer of any landscaping between the fence and pavement to soften its appearance or add variation along its length, it appears overly dominant in the street scene and at odds with the characteristic variation in garden boundaries in the immediate vicinity. Whilst the hit and miss style of the fence creates a degree of transparency allowing partial views through to the site, and follows the contours of the site, its position adjacent to the pavement feels incongruous with the prevailing character. Consequently I find that the boundary fence harms the character and appearance of the area.
8. I fully appreciate the need for some form of boundary, to improve the security of the site for the benefit of residents of the care home, staff and visitors, as well as other residents in the locality. I note that the development does not reduce public open space. I also recognise the benefits of providing a more secure, larger and better defined garden area, as well as greater privacy for occupants of the care home. However these benefits are not dependent on the current position of the fence and do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
9. I note the reasons the appellant has listed for choosing this style of fencing and discounting the Council's suggested palisade fencing. However this does not justify the harm from the position of the fence adjacent to the pavement. I therefore conclude that the development is contrary to Policy DE1 of the Coventry City Council Local Plan (December 2017) which requires that development responds positively to the identity and character of the locality. It is also contrary to paragraph 127 of the Framework, which amongst other things requires that developments are sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, having considered the development plan as a whole, the Framework and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rachel Hall

INSPECTOR