
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 20 September 2021

by Martin Chandler BSc, MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/D/21/3275881

5 Virginia Way, St Ives PE27 6SQ

- 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 Miss Jo Evans against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02343/HHFUL, dated 9 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is Retrospective Planning Permission requested for the erection of fencing to 2.10m high to the boundary of the property. Retrospective Planning Permission to erect privacy screen attached to fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the erection of fencing to 2.10m high to the boundary of the property, at 5 Virginia Way, St. Ives PE27 6SQ, in accordance with the terms of application Ref: 20/02343/HHFUL, dated 9 November 2020. No conditions are necessary because the development has already been undertaken.

Procedural Matter

2. In allowing the appeal, I have removed the reference to the privacy screen within the original description of development. This is because, based on the evidence before me, the appellant has removed that element from the proposal. In doing this, I am satisfied that the views of interested parties have not been compromised.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is occupied by a detached dwelling that is set back from the road. Frontages in the locality generally consist of low-rise enclosures set amongst mature and well-maintained landscaping. The front garden of the appeal site is enclosed by tall and mature hedging, and in this respect, it is entirely consistent with the surrounding environment which contributes to its verdant quality.
5. Despite this, opposite the appeal site there is a small parking courtyard that is enclosed by tall fencing, as well as a rear garden enclosed by a tall brick wall. In addition, there are many examples within the broader environment of tall enclosures to the front and sides of properties. Accordingly, the presence of

such enclosures is not an uncommon event with the immediate context. Indeed, tall boundary enclosures are a clear feature in the surroundings which complement the pleasing and verdant suburban environment identified above.

6. The proposal seeks to retain a fence enclosure that is located adjacent to a tall hedge. The fencing is tall, however, due to the presence of mature landscaping to the front and side boundaries of the front garden of the appeal site, the fencing would be well-contained. Accordingly, it would be a relatively discreet means of enclosure that would not be visually intrusive or overpowering, and the views that can be achieved would be experienced amongst the variety of boundary enclosures identified above. As a consequence, due to the surrounding context, in my judgement, the proposal would not be at odds with the prevailing form of the front gardens, or detrimental to the verdant surroundings. Instead, the fence would be experienced as part of the broader variety of boundary enclosures in the locality, and consequently, it would have a neutral impact on the street scene.
7. For the reasons identified above therefore, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would comply with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019), as well as guidance contained within the National Design Guide, and the Huntingdonshire Design Guide. Taken together, these seek amongst other things, development which understands and responds positively to its context.

Other Matters

8. I note the comments from interested parties regarding the privacy screen, however, this matter has been withdrawn from the appeal and I have amended the description of development accordingly. I also note the concerns regarding the impact on wildlife. However, due to the abundance of landscaping in the immediate surroundings, I am satisfied that the proposal would not cause any material harm in this regard.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons identified above, the appeal should be allowed.

Martin Chandler

INSPECTOR