

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 March 2022

by J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision Date: 1st April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/21/3283547
38 Fauconberg Road, Chiswick, London W4 3JU

- 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 F Stickney against the decision of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application, ref. 00436/38/P7, dated 2 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2021.
 - The proposal is for a proposed timber fence with brick piers and reconstructed stone pier caps fixed to on top of the existing boundary wall (revised scheme).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. On my site visit the fence panels and brick piers were in situ and as such, the scheme is retrospective. I have therefore made my decision on this basis.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host building and the greater locality.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies on the corner of Fauconberg Road and Compton Crescent where the area appears to be part of a speculative Edwardian development towards the beginning of the twentieth century. The area consists of groups of two storey Edwardian dwellings along the northern side of Fauconberg Road that are designed of a higher status compared with the terraces along smaller roads such as Compton Crescent. Dwellings are set back from the front boundary with an emphasis on vegetation such as street trees and hedges to front boundaries along with low dwarf walls which present an openness to front gardens and spaces in and around dwellings.
5. The appeal building has many of the elements and characteristics which are positive attributes of the locality. The appeal building is one of the larger terraced dwellings along Fauconberg Road and the use of traditional materials

such as timber, brick and terracotta along with the designs of dwellings and setbacks reinforce a uniformity and authenticity which creates a formal picturesque townscape along with vegetated front gardens, boundary treatment and street trees which give a spacious, leafy and distinctive character. These elements reinforce the local character, appearance and distinctiveness of the area.

6. In undertaking development to existing sites, the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan (LP) Policies CC1 and CC2 are design led policies which seek to achieve high quality design for new development which reflects the existing character and context of the locality. LP Policy SC7 is specific to residential extensions and seeks that extensions do not harm existing character and appearance and also seeks that the Residential Extensions Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document 2017 (SPD) is taken into account in planning determinations. The SPD contains further specific guidance in relation to design principles and detailed design considerations with regards to boundary treatment.
7. The boundary treatment of the appeal site is rendered and contains a painted concrete coping to both Fauconberg and Compton Crescent. Brick piers with timber infills that have a trellis-like appearance have been added to the existing wall along part of Compton Crescent to raise its height to between 1.8-2 metres tall. I appreciate that the existing wall that was installed is not contemporary to the dwelling, and is inauthentic to this dwelling and the street scene; however the existing low wall height retains the openness to the garden which is a positive element of the street scene. The new installations have an appearance which is quite inauthentic in their appearance as brick with timber infills is uncharacteristic of this location and the fence is noticeably taller and disproportionate when compared to the dwellings within this street scene. The installation therefore has an incongruous appearance within this particular context. Consequently, due to the height and material, the wall as constructed has a poor and very defensive appearance which is alien to this particular residential environment.
8. I note photographs in paragraph 4.5 of the applicant's Statement of Case (SoC) that show tall fencing and walls to corner plots in the locality. The appeal documents do not provide any detail as to the circumstances behind each of the constructions and how the considerations are similar to this scheme. The Council's Planning Officer Report comments that some of the walls and fences were erected many years ago (in the case of No.32) with some not having evidence of planning approval (in the case of No.40). I have also taken into account comments in the applicant's SoC regarding the need for privacy, the weathering of the timber from its current new appearance, as well as the applicant's desire to grow plants behind the wall in order to provide softening of the height of the wall and some screening to allow privacy.
9. Given the above, I cannot afford weight to existing walls within the area, particularly when some of the walls according to the council do not benefit from consent or may have been erected prior to the current policy position. These walls are not part of the positive characteristics of the area and would not provide justification to erect further elements that are negative attributes towards the local distinctiveness of the area. I am also not convinced that the additional trellis or brick piers are required or necessary for plants or a hedge to grow behind the wall, and in this example scenario as provided by the applicant,

would achieve sufficient screening and privacy without the need for the increased height of the wall. This situation would present a much better appearance than the current proposal.

10. Taken as a whole and in conclusion of this matter, the alterations to the boundary wall cause unacceptable harm to the architectural authenticity and integrity of the appeal site and the character and appearance of the locality. Consequently, the installation is contrary to LP Policies CC1, CC2, and SC7 which is supported by the SPD, all of which have been described previously.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

J Somers

INSPECTOR