



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 July 2022

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C4235/D/22/3300417

1 Tarvin Avenue, Stockport SK4 5LG

- 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 Stefan Williams against the decision of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/083507 dated 25 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2022.
 - The application is for replacement of existing hedges, fence and gate with 6ft fence to front and side of property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the Councils decision notice and differs from that used on the Appellant's original application. In Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development is the same as that used by the Council and as such I have used this description accordingly which I feel accurately represents the scope of the proposals.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the streetscene and the impact of the proposal upon highway safety.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an end of terrace/link attached house that occupies a corner plot between Tarvin Avenue and Carnforth Road within an area of similar Mid Century suburban houses. I consider that such areas typify the legacy of the Garden village inspired housing developments of the mid twentieth century in their provision of houses with gardens and streets that are often tree lined or landscaped with grass verges and with properties generally sporting hedge boundaries or low walls and fences.
5. Along Carnforth Road, and to a lesser extent, Tarvin Avenue, there are elements of this character remaining that contribute in a positive manner to the character and appearance of the streetscene and reflect these characteristics.

Such features such as tree lined verges and boundary hedges are therefore important in maintaining the landscape character and quality that contributes to making these areas distinctive and attractive.

6. The appeal property has replaced a low wall and hedge with a two metre screen fence to the front of the property upon a concrete base with concrete piers between panels. In so doing the scheme has removed an important element of landscape character and this has resulted in a harsh and dominant boundary treatment that is a dramatic contrast to the softer boundaries that still predominate within the area.
7. In assessing this appeal I give great weight to the Policy requirements of SIE-1 'Quality Places' of the adopted Stockport Core Strategy DPD that reflects the National Planning Policy Framework in its requirements for good urban design and placemaking and find that there is sufficient harm caused by this proposal to significantly erode the character and appearance of the area.
8. Although I take account of the Appellant's personal circumstances and perceived need to secure his property, I consider that such a fence would, conversely, lead to the appearance of the area becoming more threatening through the presence of such harsh and dominant boundary treatments. This would also have the effect of removing any natural surveillance from the street and would therefore undermine the principles of good design as set out in the above policies.
9. Although I note the hedge was previously overgrown I consider that this could have easily have been remedied and would have had the effect of maintaining the streetscene as a well kept area without the harshness of a solid fence being introduced.
10. In considering the effect of the proposal upon highway safety I have considered the points raised by the Appellant that a high hedge would similarly restrict visibility of vehicles and pedestrians when exiting and entering the site. In this case I consider that there is little difference between the previous situation of a hedged boundary and that of a fence. I also saw on my site visit that there are several properties where such visibility is restricted through boundary treatments and as such I feel unable to give the necessary weight to dismiss this appeal based upon Policy T-3 of the Stockport Core Strategy DPD.

Conclusion

11. Although I have found no harm to the safe and efficient use of the highway through this proposal I have found significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and for the reasons above, taking into account all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR