
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 August 2022

by T J Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/22/3296270

Greenbanks, 30 Ipswich Road, Orford IP12 2LT

- 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 Sarah Parker against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/21/5448/FUL, dated 22 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2022.
 - The development proposed the Erection of 1.8 metre weatherboard fence along the front and part side of property. Purpose of which is to replace pre-existing hedging which was in poor state and caused obstruction to pathway. New fence erected to provide privacy to property and conceal unsightly gas tank from road vision.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description in the banner heading above includes wording that is not a description of development and which addresses the suggested merits of the case. The proposal would therefore be more appropriately described as the erection of a 1.8 metre weatherboard fence along the front and part side of property. I have considered the proposal on this basis.
3. It was evident on my site visit that a fence had already been constructed to the front and side of the property. This broadly accorded with the submitted plans, but for the avoidance of doubt my decision has been made on the basis of the plans.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The fence is located shortly after the entrance into the attractive village of Orford from the surrounding countryside. The village is located partly on the banks of the River Alde and the site is within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
6. I have considered the submitted photographs and I was able to observe on my site visit that the majority of boundary treatment fronting Ipswich Road on the lead into the centre of the Village is formed of hedging. The hedging affords Ipswich Road a largely verdant appearance which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the village.

7. Within this setting, the tall and robust boundary fence has a stark and stand out appearance which contrasts sharply with the hedging and occasional low boundary treatment along the route towards the centre of the village. It creates a hard edge to the front of the property which is very much out of character. It is visible to many people given the prominent location of the fence on the principal route into the village.
8. The 1.8 metre weatherboard fence therefore has a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would subsequently conflict with Policy SCLP11.1 of the East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2020) which amongst other things seeks to support high quality design that clearly demonstrates an understanding of the key features of local character.
9. The proposal also harms the scenic beauty of the AONB. I am required to afford this matter great weight by the Framework¹ and this weighs further against the proposal.

Other Matters

10. I accept that hedge boundaries are likely to require maintenance, but such maintenance would not necessarily have to be provided by the occupier themselves were they unable to carry this out. Maintenance requirements do not justify the proposal and I afford this matter limited weight.
11. The fence provides some screening to a tank which is located within the front garden of the appeal property, but it is not of significant height, is finished in a neutral colour tone and is set down slightly below banking adjacent to the road. It would not therefore form a prominent feature in any case. I therefore afford limited weight to the screening effect of the fence.
12. The property appears to have a further garden to the rear which offers more privacy and I therefore afford limited weight to the privacy that the proposal provides to the front of the property.
13. Whilst noting the signage on the fence, I am not convinced that this is the only way to provide more clarity on the location of the property and I afford this matter limited weight.
14. I also noted the new housing development. This had not yet been provided with boundary treatment at the time of my visit, but I noted that a modern residential development to the west of the property incorporates hedging on the boundaries with Ipswich Road.

Conclusion

15. Taking all relevant matters into account, the proposal has a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and the harm that it causes to the scenic beauty of the AONB further weighs against it.
16. There is no indication that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

T J Burnham

INSPECTOR

¹ National Planning Policy Framework 2021 Para. 176.