The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2022 by C Glaister

Decision by K Taylor BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/22/3292860
Freshwater House, 6 Heathfield , Cobham, Surrey KT11 2QY

- 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 A Lomholt against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
- The application Ref 2021/2574, dated 5 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 29 November 2021.
- The development proposed is described as "erection of automated entrance gates and brick piers either side of gates".

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an entrance gate and piers at Freshwater House, 6 Heathfield , Cobham, Surrey KT11 2QY in accordance with the terms of application Ref 2021/2574, dated 5 October 2021 subject to the following conditions:

   1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

   2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 'the Location Plan', 'the Block Plan', and 001 (the layout and elevation plans).

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The description used in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. In the interest of clarity, the description has been simplified for the purposes of the decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. There are houses along the southern side of Heathfield. The side opposite contains an area of woodland. The appeal property, and those either side of it, are two-storey detached dwellings. There are differences in their size and appearance, but all maintain a similar style. Each property is set back from the road, and most are partially obscured by hedges of various heights. Some frontages, such as at Freshwater House, are fully enclosed by vegetation, aside

from the driveway, whilst others are more open. The property adjacent to the appeal site has a small pedestrian entrance with a wrought iron gate and brick pillars.

6. Many of the properties along Heathfield are already largely enclosed by some form of hedge, some of which are very dense. The piers would be relatively narrow, and lower than the hedge. The gate would be lower still, and the spaces between the wrought iron bars would allow visibility through the gate, whether open or closed. As such, the proposal would retain a sufficient degree of openness, sympathetic in effect to the boundary treatments that currently exist along the road. The materials would also sympathise with the design of the house, and the pedestrian gate at the site adjacent.

7. For these reasons, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore accord with Policy CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (July 2011) and Policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan (April 2015) which together seek to ensure development responds to the positive features of individual locations, and preserves or enhances the character of the area.

8. Policy CS10 is largely strategic in nature, and not directly relevant to the appeal's main issue. However, the proposal would nevertheless accord with the policy's general aim of ensuring development is well designed. The Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document Companion Guide: Home Extensions (April 2012) (SPD) relates to extensions to dwellings, and is not directly relevant to boundary treatments. However, the proposal would nevertheless accord with the SPD's general principles, including those that seek to ensure the design of the original house is respected.

Conditions

9. Standard conditions relating to the commencement of the development, and to ensure adherence to the plans provided, are recommended in the interests of certainty. The gate would be made of wrought iron, a material not currently used in the external surfaces of the house. The use of wrought iron would relate well to the existing materials, and a condition to ensure the materials used for the proposal match those used in the existing building would not therefore be necessary.

Conclusion and Recommendation

10. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

C Glaister

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR