
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2022

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M1595/D/22/3293467

Falconhurst, Second Avenue, Stanford Le Hope, SS17 8DP

- 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 Mokolade against the decision of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 21/01557/HHA, dated 6 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is boundary wall and fence alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. In Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered, but as the parties have not provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed I have used the one given on the original application.
3. The Council's report advises that the appeal development has been partially carried out, and at the appeal site visit it was evident that rendered walls with piers have been constructed to the front, rear and south-eastern side boundaries. Gates have also been installed on the front and side boundary, and the rear boundary appears to have infill panels above blockwork, between piers. However, for the avoidance of doubt, I have determined this appeal on the basis of the details shown on the submitted plans, rather than the development as built.
4. The proposed materials listed on the planning application form do not include railings, nor are they specified on the submitted elevations. The grounds of appeal include reference to the renewal of close boarded fence panels, although their position is not identified. Nevertheless, the Council's report confirms that the proposed wall fronting Second Avenue would include railings, and I have considered the appeal on the same basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the street scene and local area.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is a detached dwelling prominently located at the junction of Second Avenue and Southend Road. Within Second Avenue, front gardens tend to be modest in depth and open to provide parking. On the northern side of Southend Road, dwellings are set back behind deeper front gardens, but where enclosed, boundaries tend to be in the form of low fencing, walls or planting.
7. In this context, although the side boundary wall would be a notable feature in the street scene, it would be set back from Southend Road behind the footway and a deep verge, and would not be dissimilar to an ivy-clad wall on the opposite corner of the entrance to Second Avenue. However, the proposal would introduce a means of enclosure in front of the dwelling that would be almost 2m in height, and would front onto both roads at the corner. Whilst the use of railings may not appear as solid as the remainder of the wall fronting Southend Road, the enclosure would nevertheless appear as an overly dominant and incongruous feature that would detract from the street scene.
8. This adverse visual impact would be exacerbated by the extent of the wall, which would enclose a wide front garden. Rather than ensure visual continuity as suggested by the appellant, the proposal would appear as a stark contrast to the more open and low-key front gardens of the dwellings nearby in Second Avenue and Southend Road. I do not consider that this effect would be mitigated by the choice of materials or the preservation of the adjacent grass verge. Although the appellant notes that there are no designated heritage assets in the vicinity, design quality should be sought in all contexts.
9. I appreciate the appellant's aim to revive and refresh the original boundary treatment, but as proposed, the design and height would not appear to be founded on a thorough understanding of, and positive response to, the local context. This would be contrary to Core Strategy¹(CS) Policy CSTP22.
10. I therefore conclude that as a result of its siting, appearance, scale and design, the proposed wall and railings forward of the dwelling fronting Second Avenue and part of Southend Road would detract from the character and appearance of the street scene and local area. This would be contrary to the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and CS Policy CSTP22; and with CS Policy PMD2, as supported by the Thurrock Design Guide², which requires development to contribute positively to the character of the area and to the townscape, and for the design and detailing of elements such as walls to be robust, engaging and to contribute positively to the public realm.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR

¹ Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (as amended) 2015

² Thurrock Design Guide, Residential Alterations & Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2017