

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2023

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/22/3309212
50 Hareclive Road, Bristol, BS13 9JN

- 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 C Rawlings against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03663/H, dated 12 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 September 2022.
 - The development is a boundary wall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The boundary wall subject of the appeal has already been erected and is substantially complete. The appellant, in effect, wishes to retain that built, and if needed, to clad it in timber or to render and paint it. I shall proceed on this basis.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property, a semi-detached dwelling, is situated at the junction of Hareclive Road and Gatehouse Avenue. A block wall varying in height has been erected at the back of the footway on both road frontages. A wooden gate allows vehicular access in and out of the site to and from Hareclive Road.
5. Judging from images on Google Earth, the front and side gardens were previously lawned, with some shrubs and plants, and the plot enclosed with a low brick wall. This means of enclosure is common to other residential properties sited along both road frontages either side. On the other side of Hareclive Road, neatly arranged railed fencing provides the means of enclosure.
6. This is a prominent corner which previously exuded a sense of openness, providing a welcome measure of visual relief in this largely built-up area. The sense of openness has been effectively destroyed by the erection of the wall, to the detriment of the street scene. I do not consider that rendering or cladding would assist in acceptably reducing the harm caused.

7. The wall's crude appearance is such as if it had been designed to enclose a compound. Indeed, I saw that the previously grassed side and front gardens had been largely replaced by hard-standing, and many motor vehicles were parked upon it, far more than could be normally expected to serve a household.
8. I note the appellant's references to other examples of similar means of enclosure in the locality. I am not aware of the full circumstances of the other cases referred to or whether they were lawfully erected. Notwithstanding this, they do not appear to me to be visually appealing and do not provide a good reason for accentuating visual harm in this case.
9. The appellant also says that the wall subject of appeal was erected '*to screen the garden and provide security*'. I have already alluded to the fact that the areas enclosed no longer have the appearance of a garden in the usual sense of the term. That the appellant desires security should not in my view take priority over maintaining the previous openness and pleasant appearance of this corner. I note too that an area of rear garden appears to provide privacy and security.
10. I therefore conclude that the erection of the wall has harmed the character and appearance of the locality. This is contrary to those provisions of policies BCS21 of the Bristol Local Plan, Core Strategy (2011) and policy DM26 of the Bristol Local Plan - Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2014) requiring development to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness.

Other matters

11. I have noted the references to other development plan policies but those to which I have referred are considered the most relevant having regard to the particular circumstances of the case.
12. All other matters raised in the representations have been considered but none outweigh those considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR