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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 May 2023

**by Ian McHugh DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/23/3318517**

**4 Limefields Way, Northampton, NN4 0SA**

- 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 Mrs Dawn Culverhouse against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
  - The application Ref WNN/2022/1378, dated 20 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 February 2023.
  - The development proposed is a new fence enclosing the property.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural Matter

2. The appellant has not provided any written submission in support of the appeal. Therefore, I have based my decision on the submitted plans, the Council's decision and its officer report and my observations at the site visit.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the streetscene.

### Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling, which is situated within a modern residential estate. It occupies a prominent position on the corner of Limefields Way and Oakgrove Place. It is clear from the Council's submission and photographic evidence that the front garden was originally open plan and that the side boundary to Limefields Way was a mixture of hedging and timber fencing.
5. The appeal proposal, which has been implemented, is for new fencing along the Limefields Way frontage and around the front garden area. The fencing varies in height, with higher fencing along the side boundary with the rear garden and lower fencing around the front garden area.
6. The Council contends that the proposal is out of keeping with its surroundings and that it does not meet with the requirements of the original planning permission for the residential estate that was granted in 1984. It points to other fencing in the area being lower and "transparent."

7. The Council cites conflict with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Saved Policies E20 and H18 of the Northampton Local Plan and with Policies 2 and 3 of the emerging Local Plan. Of these, I consider policies S10 and E20 to be the most relevant as they generally require new development to be of high quality and to reflect its surroundings.
8. At my site visit, I observed other timber fences along the boundaries of residential properties. However, these were generally along rear garden boundaries and are generally acceptable in terms of their appearance and scale. Fences that enclose front gardens are less common and open plan frontages are a distinctive characteristic of the area.
9. Regarding the appeal proposal, I consider that the fencing that encloses the rear garden is acceptable and justified in terms of the need for privacy and security. Furthermore, its height and appearance in the streetscene are not at odds with other fences in the area.
10. However, the front garden fencing is out of context with the open plan frontages in the area. Although it is relatively low in height, its solid appearance detracts from the spacious and open appearance of the streetscene. This impact is exacerbated by the site's prominent corner position. Consequently, this part of the proposal conflicts with the relevant policies of the Development Plan, as referred to above.

#### **Other Matters**

11. A request was made by the occupant of the adjoining property that I view the fencing from that side. The occupant had expressed concern regarding the visual impact of the fence around the front garden and its impact on the outlook from the dwelling.
12. I have dealt with the appearance of the fencing in the preceding paragraphs. Regarding outlook, I acknowledge that this will have changed for the occupant. However, because of its relatively low height, I am not persuaded that it has an unacceptably harmful overbearing effect on the neighbouring property.

#### **Conclusion**

13. For the reasons given above in relation to the fencing at the front of the property, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

*Ian McHugh*

INSPECTOR