



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2023

by A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/23/3321147
26 Grange Crescent Chigwell IG7 5JB

- 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 Nazakat Ali against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref EPF/0179/23, dated 27 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 28 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is new front garden railings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene.

Reasons

3. No.26 Grange Crescent (No.26) is a semi-detached house found within a long suburban street populated by a mix of detached and semi-detached houses fronting grassed verges and avenue trees. Typically, paved forecourts provide just sufficient space for the off-road parking of one or two domestic vehicles. The width of carriageway in Grange Crescent is not generous such that opportunities for on-street parking are limited to one side or the other and, from my observations, restricted in availability. The street is a cul-de-sac incorporating some non-residential uses near and around its access point from Manor Road.
4. A majority of houses, including No.26, date from the mid twentieth century and are of typologies which are derivatives of 'arts and crafts' influenced designs from that period. Whilst many houses retain these characteristics to a significant degree, others have been substantially altered or extended, including the subject of this appeal. The proposal would result in a complete enclosure of the forecourt to No.26 with railings and gates extending to a height of 2m.
5. The appellant refers to security issues in justification for installing high railings giving examples of similar railings and gates in justification. Whilst I observed such examples at the time of my site visit, there is nothing before me to indicate that these examples have the benefit of planning permission or have become immune from enforcement. Indeed it would seem these are of

relatively recent construction and demonstrate how ill-considered and exaggerated design can precipitate harmful change in an otherwise calm and open suburban environment. I therefore attach little weight to such examples, indeed I consider what has already taken place in the immediate vicinity of the site to be a harmful precedent which should be avoided.

6. Other than the examples referred to, street frontages are generally open with conventional boundary treatments. The effect of the proposals would be a significant change in both appearance *and* character in the street, in that such high enclosures would imply an exceptional fear of burglary or theft, of which there is no evidence provided, and introduce an atmosphere of alienation and suspicion. To the extent that a permission would flag the wider acceptability of such high fenced enclosures and could trigger a cascade of similar works in the wider area, the result would risk harm not only to character and appearance of the area but also to the social cohesion of this conventional suburban environment.
7. I therefore conclude the proposal would erode and not enhance local character and, due to its substantial height, width and prominence, inappropriately dominate and cause unacceptable harm the character and appearance of the street scene. This would, for the reasons given, conflict with Policy DM9 of the Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 which seeks high quality design and to ensure development proposals react positively to their context. On that basis the proposal would not accord with the development plan taken as a whole, and consequently, taking all matters raised into account, the appeal cannot succeed.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR