



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 September 2023

by R Lawrence MRTPI, BSc (hons), PGDip (TP)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P1750/D/23/3318950

27 Church Road East, Hampshire, Farnborough GU14 6QJ

- 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 Ms Sarah Woodward against the decision of Rushmoor Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00055/FUL, dated 18 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 16 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is retrospective boundary works.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description on the Council's decision notice contains more detail than on the planning application form, referring to boundary fencing and electric gates on the front boundary. Although this detail is not referred to in the appellant's description, this is clearly shown on the submitted plans and I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis.
3. My attention has been drawn to planning permission Ref: 22/00578/FULPP for boundary treatments along the front boundary at the appeal site (the extant permission). In contrast to the appeal scheme, the extant permission involves trellis on the upper portion of 3 of the fence panels. I consider the relevance of this permission later in my decision.
4. The appeal scheme has been completed. I am therefore considering the appeal retrospectively.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the street scene.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is in a prominent location at the boundary of two roads, although as the proposal relates to boundary works on the front boundary, it is the street scene along Church Road East which is of most relevance. The Church Road East street scene has a verdant character with a number of hedgerows and trees either comprising, or sited adjacent to, front boundaries. Whilst there are a variety of forms front boundary treatments, these are generally low in height and where they comprise close board fencing are often further softened by planting. There is an open character to the street which the low boundary treatments contribute to.

7. The proposed boundary treatments would be of an increased height relative to other front boundary treatments and would be positioned in proximity to the footpath. These factors, together with the width – extending along the full frontage of the site, result in a sense of enclosure within the street which appears at odds with its' verdant open character. The corner plot location of the appeal site results in the front boundary treatment appearing prominent in views both from Church Road East and Canterbury Road.
8. In the wider area there are some examples of high close board fencing along front boundaries to which the appellant has drawn my attention. I witnessed a number of these on my site visits including at 16 Church Avenue and 2 Church Avenue, the latter of which is also a corner plot. However, those examples are very much in the minority rather than being characteristic of the area. Furthermore, the examples cited are not visible in the same views as the front boundary of the appeal property. As such, the examples do not set a precedent for a proposal that I consider would harmfully erode the character of the street scene.
9. Having regard to the above, I conclude that the development would harm the character and appearance of the street scene. The proposal, therefore, conflicts with Policy DE1 of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2014-2032). It is also contrary to guidance contained within the Rushmoor Home Improvements and Extensions Supplementary Guidance February 2020. The policy and guidance, amongst other things and insofar as relevant to the proposal, requires development to respect the character and appearance of the local area.

Other Matters

10. The proposal provides improved security and privacy to the occupiers, particularly in relation to amenity space. Given the appeal site is a corner plot, most of the site would be open to public views without any meaningful boundary treatments. However, there are multiple forms of boundary treatments that would provide improvements to privacy and security, and I am not persuaded that the same benefits could not be achieved by other means. This does not therefore justify the harm I have identified.
11. The extant permission provides a valid fallback which could be implemented. The use of trellis panels within that scheme would provide some views through the fencing, and as such would retain a higher degree of openness, compared with the appeal scheme. As such, the increased amount of close board fencing would cause material harm and therefore the extant permission does not override the harm identified to the street scene.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan as a whole and all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R. Lawrence

INSPECTOR