



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2023 by C Glaister

Decision by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/23/3328249

21 Linkfield Lane, Redhill, Surrey RH1 1JF

- 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 Green Home Property Developments Ltd against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00673/HHOLD, dated 21 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as "Erection of Front Boundary Fence to a height of 1.8m".
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The works have already been carried out and the appeal will therefore be considered with respect to its retrospective status.
4. The Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on 20 December 2023. The revised national policy is a material consideration. Planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. It is not therefore necessary to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and no party shall be disadvantaged by this action.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site comprises a two-storey detached property with front garden where the fence has been erected. Boundary treatments along the southern side of Linkfield Lane in the vicinity of the site generally feature a mixture of low brick walls and well-established hedges and vegetation, with dense vegetation of some sort being the most consistent element. The appeal site

previously featured a low brick wall with vegetation behind it. This was consistent with the established boundary treatments to other properties in the area.

7. Opposite the site is Regent Crescent, which is notably different in the character and arrangement of its properties. Dwellings have open frontages and little to no boundary treatments. There are some closeboard fences associated with side boundaries on the opposite side of the road, which has a different character and appearance, and there is also a fence directly adjacent to the site which runs alongside a pathway leading to the neighbouring school. This fence is perpendicular to the roadside and does not principally contribute to the character of the frontages on Linkfield Lane.
8. The predominance and consistency of lower boundary treatments and/or vegetation to the frontage of properties, positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area.
9. The fence which is the subject of this appeal, which replaces the low brick wall and vegetation previously at the property, clearly deviates from the character and appearance of the boundary treatments along the southern side of Linkfield Lane in the vicinity of the site. Due to its length, height and relatively solid appearance, the fence dominates the frontage of the appeal site, appearing oppressive and incongruous, even if there is a small degree of visual permeability through the loosely-spaced horizontal boarding. The extent of the fence, that covers almost the entire frontage, results in the ground floor of the property no longer being visible from, or contributing to, the street-scene.
10. The finish and the design also give the fence a contemporary appearance which is at odds with the more traditional and established low brick walls and vegetation which characterise the boundary treatments on this side of the road. There is some low-level vegetation in front of the fence, but this does little to mitigate its effect.
11. For these reasons, the fence harms the character and appearance of the area. It therefore fails to comply with Policy DES1 of the Development Management Plan¹ and Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy² which together seek to ensure development promotes, reinforces and reflects local distinctiveness, and respects the character of the surrounding area. It would also fail to align with the general principles of the Design Guide SPD³ which guides development to reflect local distinctiveness and avoid poor design.

Other Matter

12. The appellant has referred to other examples of boundary treatments in the surrounding area, however none are of the same extent, size, siting or design as the appeal development and do not alter my views expressed above about the character and appearance of the locality. Furthermore, I have dealt with this appeal on its individual planning merits and, in any event, I am not certain of the exact circumstances which led to these other boundary treatments being erected. I therefore give them limited weight in the appeal.

¹ Reigate & Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan (September 2019)

² Reigate and Banstead Local Plan: Core Strategy (July 2014)

³ RBBC Local Character & Distinctiveness Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (June 2021)

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Glaister

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR