



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 May 2024

by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/D/24/3339206

1 Oldfield Close, Bickley, Bromley, BR1 2LL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Loughman against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref is DC/23/03773/FULL6.
 - The development proposed is the erection of six brick piers, front brick wall, metal railings and cast-iron gates.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the interest of accuracy, the description of development as it appears in the banner heading above is based on the decision notice and the appeal form.
3. The application was submitted retrospectively as the development has already been carried out. I have therefore assessed this appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a two-storey detached dwelling located on Oldfield Close, a cul-de-sac within an established residential area. Oldfield Close is characterised, for the most part, by detached dwellings with low front boundary walls and hedges, open driveways, landscaped front gardens and a distinct lack of gates and railings. This gives the cul-de-sac a pleasant and open appearance.
6. The appeal dwelling's front wall, piers, metal railings and cast-iron gates appear incongruous in this context. The number of piers is excessive and their height, at just over 2 metres, is disproportionate. The appellant contends that the rendered walls, stone copings and railings are of high quality and match the rendered house and its black mock Tudor detailing. However, the railings have a harsh appearance and, together with the rendered walls, fail to tie-in with the subdued look of the neighbouring low brick walls.
7. Whilst the appellant states that the front wall and gates still allow views in and out of the site, they appear as dominant and discordant features that

unacceptably enclose the site and negatively impact the appearance of the host dwelling.

8. I note that the neighbouring property at No 2 Oldfield Close also features a brick wall, brick piers, black metal railings and gate. However, these are finished with brick rather than white render and, furthermore, appear to have been erected without planning permission according to the Council. When viewed in conjunction with the boundary treatments at No 2, the development further erodes the open character of the street scene.
9. The appellant also refers to other similar tall boundary treatments and gates in the surrounding area. Whilst I acknowledge there are similar developments on Oldfield Road, the character at the end of Oldfield Close in the direct vicinity of the appeal site is more strongly defined by low boundary treatments and a sense of spaciousness. Its character differs from the wider area, and I am therefore not satisfied the developments referred to add weight in favour of the retention of the scheme.
10. Consequently, the development has an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. It conflicts with Policy 37 of the Bromley Local Plan (2019) which seeks to ensure development proposals are of a high standard of design and positively contribute to the existing street scene.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

11. The development has had a negative impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, and significant weight should be attributed to this harm. The appellant states that they have installed the boundary treatments to reduce their fear and risk of crime, highlighting that vehicle crime is particularly prevalent in the area. Although it is not a public benefit, I sympathise with this factor and in light of the crime data provided, it is considered that it attracts moderate weight in favour of the retention of the development. However, it does not outweigh the significant public and permanent harm the development has on the character of the street scene.
12. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
13. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

INSPECTOR