



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 May 2024

by L C Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/24/3338776

228 Church Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 9DX

- 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 Ms Susan Walker against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 112002/HHA/23.
 - The development proposed is the erection of front boundary fencing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of front boundary fencing at 228 Church Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 9DX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 112002/HHA/23, and the plans submitted with it.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the Council's Decision Notice as this more succinctly describes the development. However, the Council's description made reference to the development being retrospective. As that is not in itself development, I have omitted this from the banner heading above. I was able to see on my site visit that the development has taken place and therefore I have determined this appeal on that basis.
3. On March 21 2024, after the appeal was submitted, the Council adopted Places for Everyone (PfE) as part of the Development Plan for Trafford. PfE is a joint Development Plan Document produced by nine Greater Manchester districts, of which Trafford is one. The Council has clarified that JP-P1 of PfE has superseded Policy L7 of the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012).

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal property (No 228) is a two-storey dwelling situated on a corner plot between Church Road and Chassen Road. No 228 is located in a predominantly residential area, with a number of retail and commercial properties nearby. A large public house, The Roebuck, is situated on the opposite corner of Church Road and Chassen Road. Due to being located on a prominent corner, the plot is particularly visible as a result of the open nature of The Roebuck's car park and the open space at the junction of Church Road and Southgate.

6. The fence, which is the subject of the appeal, is set behind a low brick wall and runs part way along the front boundary of No 228, fronting the corner between Chassen Road and Church Road. It is constructed with vertical close boarded timbers supported by timber posts at intervals and with trellis on top, which reaches a maximum height of approximately 2.02m. The timber support posts have been shortened to match the height of the trellis.
7. Whilst the residential dwellings in the surrounding area are generally set back from the footpath, the properties are a mix of size, age and design. This, along with the commercial and retail uses which have a variety of frontages, makes for a varied, non-uniform street scene which contributes to the character of the area.
8. On my site visit I noted a range of boundary treatments of various styles, materials and height, including fencing, railings, walls and landscaping, along with open frontages. Consequently, there is no visual continuity between boundaries or one strong, uniform pattern of development. Furthermore, my attention has been drawn to a number of properties in the locality with fencing of similar height and form to that at No 228, and which I observed on my visit, including 153 Church Road, a dwelling also on a prominent corner plot. Whilst I recognise that poor examples in a local area are not sufficient reason for unsympathetic proposals to be approved, as detailed in guidance contained within the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 4: A Guide for Designing House Extensions and Alterations (2012) (SPD), the wide variety of boundary treatments in the locality ensures that the fence at No 228 does not stand out as untypical, incongruous or discordant in the street scene.
9. Additionally, the side boundary of the public house which runs along Chassen Road close to the property has a brick wall with a blank frontage which is a similar height to the proposal. A close boarded timber fence of similar height also forms the rear and part of the side boundaries of the car parking area which serves a number of properties, including No 228, in proximity to the appeal site. In this context the fence at No 228 does not appear as uncharacteristic or out of keeping with the area.
10. Even along Church Road where many properties have boundary treatments consisting of low walls and hedges, a number of dwellings have different boundary types such as fencing, or walls with railings. The fence at No 228 is no taller than much of the mature vegetation which forms the boundary treatment of several other dwellings in the vicinity. The fence does not fully enclose the front garden, allowing greenery and landscaping to soften its visual impact. This, along with the trellis, prevents the fence from appearing as a stark, solid enclosure, and ensures that it is appropriately residential in scale and function. The fence adds to the variety of residential enclosures in the locality and does not therefore appear unduly prominent or visually obtrusive.
11. Consequently, I find that the development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would comply with Policy JP-P1 of PfE which seeks to ensure that development respects the character of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials. It would also accord with guidance contained within the SPD which states that proposals for fences will be considered in terms of the visual character of the surrounding area. Furthermore, it would accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character.

Conditions

12. As the development has been completed, it is not necessary to impose the standard time limit for commencement, neither is it necessary to require that it be carried out in accordance with any plans.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would comply with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
14. As a result, the appeal is allowed.

L C Hughes

INSPECTOR