



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 May 2024

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31.05.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/23/3330896

8 Prior Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 1DA

- 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 and Mrs A and G Weller against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/0808/FFU.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a new boundary fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the Council's decision notice as it more succinctly describes that for which permission is sought.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a corner property at the junction of Prior Road and Ardrossan Avenue, which is a cul-du-sac. The host property fronts onto Prior Road, where houses in the immediate vicinity are generally set back within their plots, away from the road. Boundaries are typically enclosed by either walls or fences or otherwise dense hedgerows to a variety of heights. Houses in Ardrossan Avenue are similarly set back from their site frontages, but these are generally open, with low walls or hedges often delineating the boundary.
5. The appeal site has a low wall around its site boundary with hedging set behind for most of its length. Along much of its Ardrossan Avenue frontage, a wooden fence is set well in from the site boundary and is in part screened by mature trees. Overall, the appeal site adds positively to the spacious, open and verdant character traits that are displayed in the area.
6. The proposal involves the removal of the existing low boundary wall and its replacement with railway sleepers. In addition, a new 1.8m close boarded fence and concrete posts would be positioned through the existing hedge. At the site entrance, the fence would be positioned in front of the hedge.
7. The existing hedging is natural and visibly different in character and appearance to the fence, which would be a solid feature in a conspicuous

position. Whilst it may not be the appellant's intention to remove the hedge, I am mindful that any permission would not be personal to just the appellant and that planting can all too easily be removed or simply suffer disease and die.

8. Therefore, when considered on its own, the fence would be a visually impermeable feature in a prominent position that would erode, and thus be harmful to, the attractive character of the area. Even if the hedge were retained so as to soften some of the effects of the fence, this does not mean that no harm would occur to the wider street scene, or that the character of the area would not be eroded.
9. It is suggested that the fencing would help protect occupants from the noise of passing vehicles. However, there is no substantive evidence before me to indicate whether current noise levels are intrusive or harmful nor the extent to which the proposed fencing may assist in overcoming any such effects.
10. The appellant has pointed to other boundary enclosures of similar height and types in the area. However, in my opinion, the alignment and gradient of Prior Road, together with the position of the appeal site at the junction with Ardrossan Avenue, gives the property a prominence within the street scene that many others in the vicinity do not have. Therefore, the effect of the fencing elsewhere is not directly comparable to the appeal site. Furthermore, this other fencing does not alter the adverse effects the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the area.
11. I also noted on my site visit that much of the fencing around No.10 Prior Road, had been reduced in height from that shown in the photographs presented with the appeal. Accordingly, the boundary treatment to this neighbouring property does not provide a basis on which to allow the appeal.
12. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would be contrary to Policies CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 which, amongst other things, require developments to be sympathetic to their surroundings.
13. Similarly, the proposal would be contrary to the objectives of the Supplementary Planning Documents: Western Urban Area Character SPD (2012) and the Surrey Heath Residential Design Guide SPD (2017), that collectively seek to protect an area's character including through the use of appropriate boundary treatments.
14. For these same reasons there is conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's objectives for achieving well-designed places and ensuring developments are sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given and having regard to the development plan as a whole, as well as all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR