



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2024

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23RD July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/D/24/3343905

19 High Elm, Stanhope Road, Bowdon WA14 3JZ

- 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 Chris Bacon against the decision of Trafford Council.
 - The application Ref is 112912/HHA/24.
 - The development proposed is retrospective application for erection of CCTV pole with cameras to front of property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the CCTV pole with cameras on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. High Elm, No.19 Stanhope Road (No.19) is a detached two-storey dwelling (with accommodation in the roofspace) located on Stanhope Road on the corner of Blueberry Road. No.19 is typical of Stanhope Road, characterised by substantial dwellings set back from the road typically behind mature tree-lined gardens and hedgerows and/or boundary walls, verdant in its appearance. On the frontage of both roads, No.19 has a continuous solid rendered wall around 1.5m in height with piers and infill composite fence panels, with hedging planted behind. At the corner of the wall (so close to the Stanhope Road, Blueberry Road junction) a 5.7m high pole has been erected with a CCTV camera on a pivot at the top.
4. The CCTV pole is utilitarian in its appearance and design and I accept it is not dissimilar in scale and dimensions to lampposts and telegraph poles, familiar in the streetscene in residential areas. However, lampposts on Stanhope Road are regularly spaced, typically set within the grass verge at the back edge of the pavement, and are not particularly prominent, viewed against the backdrop of street trees or trees within front gardens. In contrast, the CCTV pole is located on an open corner of the front garden of No.19 and the combination of this siting, its prominence on the corner, and height, means it appears an unsympathetic and over-dominant addition. It does not read along with other street furniture, as argued by the appellant, and is incongruous and visually intrusive in the context of the otherwise verdant appearance of Stanhope Road.

5. The appellant has drawn my attention in the evidence to an example of a 7m high CCTV pole (with a camera mounted to the top) at 13 Shaws Road, Altrincham, which is similar in type (albeit taller) than the one before me. I am, however, familiar with the location of this CCTV pole, which is sited within the busy commercial core of Altrincham town centre, rather than on the corner of two residential roads; its siting and context is therefore starkly different to the appeal proposal now before me.
6. For the reasons given above, I conclude on the main issue that the CCTV pole results in significant harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene. Because it fails to reflect quality design that respects the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size and scale, it conflicts with Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024) (PfE). It further conflicts with the guidance at paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework that developments should add to the overall quality of the area and are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

7. I have given careful consideration to the appellant's need for CCTV in order to prevent a further burglary and to address a fear of crime. Other dwellings on Stanhope Road have active forms of private security and I observed on my site visit a private security vehicle patrolling the area. There is, therefore, a reasonable evidential basis of a fear of crime in the local area, which I afford substantial weight.
8. The guidance in the Council's *Planning Guidelines 24: Crime and Security (2002)* is that, in order to create secure residential areas, buildings should be designed so that surveillance of public areas is maximised (particularly with buildings on corner sites) and that, where appropriate, perimeter fencing should be constructed of visually permeable material. Further, PfE Policy JP-P1 and Policy L7 of the Trafford Core Strategy (2012) (CS) both require development to demonstrate that they are safe and designed to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.
9. The appellant's evidence is that, based on a visual audit of the surrounding area, natural visual surveillance is very limited and that there is zero natural surveillance of the Blueberry Road frontage of the appeal property. The observations from my site visit are that on the east side of Stanhope Road, dwellings are set well back and I recognise that this distance and the often high, or solid, boundary treatments means there is limited natural surveillance of comings or goings on the road, or miscreant activity. However, dwellings on the west side, which includes No.19, are much closer to the road and so afford natural surveillance particularly from windows at first floor. No.19 itself is set behind an enclosed front drive, but has a large, almost fully glazed two-storey gable to the front elevation which, combined with the first floor and dormer windows, provide natural surveillance to the front. Because of its corner location, there are no neighbouring dwellings that front the Blueberry Road frontage of the appeal property; No.17 Stanhope Road (on the opposite corner) presents its flank to Blueberry Road. However, No.19 is offset only a limited distance from its Blueberry Road boundary and I find there is, therefore, some opportunity for surveillance from the first floor opening and/or non-obscure first floor windows, as well as those on the rear elevation.

10. Notwithstanding these findings, I have had careful regard to the advice, provided in evidence, from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) titled '*Keep burglars out of your property*' and the *Secured by Design Security Advice* guidance that CCTV can be a valuable tool in the prevention of burglary and a deterrent to intruders. The guidance is that cameras are positioned where they are best able to obtain good quality facial images and should be positioned so that they are not easily accessible. I accept that the location of the CCTV pole reflects this guidance and is consistent with PfE Policy JP-P1 and CS Policy L7 in so far as they require consideration of opportunities to reduce crime. However, GMP, in particular, advise that CCTV should be considered alongside other measure including boundary treatments, alarm systems, external and internal lighting. Whilst I accept that the appellant has clearly obtained advice from a security company, I have no evidence before me that a CCTV pole, of 5.7m in height and sited in such a prominent location, is the only means of improving the security of the appeal property and consequently the only way to reduce the fear of crime.
11. I am mindful of the guidance in the Planning Practice Guidance that planning permission usually runs with the land and it is rarely appropriate to limit the benefits of planning permission to a particular person. It is the appellant's own evidence that there is a 'clear fear of burglary in the local area' and therefore I am not persuaded that exceptional circumstances exist in this case to impose a personal condition, as suggested by the appellant, which links the pole and CCTV camera to his own occupation of the appeal property.
12. I have sympathy for the appellant and his family, and I recognise a genuine fear of crime. However, for the reasons I have given, I am not satisfied that there are no other means of addressing security and therefore there is nothing before me to change my conclusion on the main issue above.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR