



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2024 by N Unwin BSc (hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by Ben Plenty BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/24/3347359

55 Parkhurst Road, Bexley DA5 1BA

- 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 D Stannett against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref. is 24/00607/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as the erection of boundary fence/ gate.
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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. From the appeal documentation and my site visit I note that the proposed development has already been carried out. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area; and
 - highway safety.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal site forms a two-storey detached dwelling adjacent to Parkhurst Road. Despite their variation in design, the dwellings along this section of Parkhurst Road, including the appeal property, share a similar building line set back from the highway by parking areas or gardens, bestowing the street scene with a wide and open character.
6. Prior to the implementation of the proposed works, the appeal site reflected the predominant character of boundary treatments along this section of highway, comprising low-level walls. The appeal site therefore contributed to the attractive, open nature of the area. In the few instances of taller boundary

treatments, these primarily comprise iron railings which permit a good level of permeance, or vegetation which is visually softer than walls or fencing. As such, these preserve the aforementioned agreeable open character of the street scene.

7. The development forms a low render wall with high, grey slatted fencing above and grey slatted gate. The height of the fencing and gate projects significantly above that of the surrounding low walls, giving it a prominent appearance within the street scene. Its substantial nature emphasises its discordance with the prevailing diminutive character of neighbouring boundary treatments, appearing contextually alien and unsympathetic. The narrowness of the slats gives the largely solid fencing and gate an imposing and visually harsh appearance when viewed from the public realm, disrupting and diminishing the spacious width of the street scene.
8. Accordingly, the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area, conflicting with the relevant provisions of Policy D1 of the London Plan (2021) (LP), and Policies SP5 and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan (2023) (BLP), which when read together require new development to respect the existing character and context.

Highway Safety

9. This section of Parkhurst Road is subject to a 30mph speed restriction. It is relatively wide and straight, offering good visibility to motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians in both directions. During my site visit I observed a low number of vehicles travelling along the highway with speeds appearing commensurate with its residential location. Whilst I recognise that my site visit represented a snapshot in time, I have not been presented with any evidence to contradict this.
10. The appellant has demonstrated that a motorist's visibility splay from the driveway of the neighbouring property, No 57, would be unaffected by the proposal. However, the high fencing along the boundary with the highway somewhat reduces vehicular and pedestrian visibility, at the entrance to the appeal site in comparison to the previous low wall. Nevertheless, given the limited speeds and flows of traffic, combined with the good visibility along highway, vehicles entering and existing the appeal site or neighbouring properties would be unlikely to have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
11. The proposal would therefore be acceptable with regards to its impact on highway safety, complying with relevant provisions of Policies SP10 and SP24 of the BLP and the National Planning Policy Framework, which when read together require new development to not have a significant negative effect on the safety of any highway users.

Other Matters

12. The appellant suggests that the boundary treatment deters crime and offers greater security for the occupants of the appeal property. Whilst the proposal may aid in this matter, the benefits would not outweigh the above identified harm to the character and appearance of the area.

13. Whilst I note that the appellant has invested in and renovated the property, these do not form part of the appeal before me and as such, cannot form part of my assessment.
14. The appellant's transport statement suggests that a boundary fence of one-metre-high could be erected, under permitted development rights. Whilst this point was made to address highway safety issues, in terms of character and appearance, such a boundary would be substantially less obtrusive in visual terms to that proposed here.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

N Unwin

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

Ben Plenty

INSPECTOR