



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2024 by A Khan BSc (Hons) MA MSc

Decision by S Edwards BA MATCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N5090/D/24/3340898

Middlemarch Lodge, Highwood Hill, Marsh Lane to Totteridge Common, Barnet, London NW7 4ET

- 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 Medi Mattin against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Barnet.
 - The application Ref is 24/0110/RCU.
 - The development proposed is erection of new front boundary wall, piers and fence panels.
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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. The development subject to this appeal has already been carried out and planning permission is therefore being sought retrospectively. I am confident that the submitted plans accurately represent the installations in place. Consequently, I have assessed the appeal development based on the plans provided.
4. The description of development as detailed on the application form has been amended in subsequent documents. I have adopted the description included in the Council's Decision Notice, as it details the appeal proposal clearly and concisely.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. The appeal site is situated in a residential area primarily characterised by two-storey detached and semi-detached dwellings, featuring front gardens that promote openness and greenery. The predominant use of low boundary walls enhances the appearance of the area and preserves the area's open character. There are also examples of mature hedges along some of the front boundaries, which act to soften the appearance of the area.

7. The boundary wall, built of brick and coping stone, is consistent with the host property's materials. However, its excessive height and solid structure, compounded by the infill panelling, disrupt the visual cohesion of the street scene. The solid structure, despite being located on a steep gradient road, obstructs public views of the property and harmfully contrasts with the open frontages characteristic of the area. The height of the piers and infill panels appears visually intrusive, detracting significantly from the open, verdant character which otherwise defines the area.
8. Although the area does feature high boundary screens, they predominantly consist of hedges and shrubbery that partially screen properties while preserving the area's greenery. Few homes possess high brick boundary walls, and those that do are typically set back from the road frontage and accompanied by mature vegetation, thus maintaining the area's verdant character. Consequently, I find that there are no comparable developments within the vicinity of the appeal site.
9. The development therefore causes significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, the development fails to comply with the London Plan 2021 Policy D4 and Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy) [September 2012] (CS) Policy CS1, which advocate for high standards of urban design. The development also fails to accord with CS Policy CS5 and Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies) [September 2012] Policy DM01, which require that development respects the local context and distinctive local character. Furthermore, the development fails to comply with the Residential Design Guidance SPD [October 2016] Sections 6.17, 6.18 and 8.15, which emphasise the importance of maintaining open frontages that enhance local character.

Other Matters

10. I have noted the point made by interested parties regarding the impact that the installation of a gate between the two piers could have for residents of Lawrence Gardens. As I am recommending the appeal to be dismissed on other grounds, this is not a matter which I have considered further.

Conclusion and Recommendation

11. Although I have had regard to the justification provided by the appellant regarding the need for privacy and security, no substantive evidence has been presented to demonstrate that other, less harmful alternatives to the appeal development have been considered. Overall, the considerations put forward by the appellant are outweighed by the harm which the development causes to the open character and appearance of the area. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Khan

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

S Edwards

INSPECTOR