



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2025

by Robin Buchanan BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/D/24/3350148

48 Portacre Rise, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 8YL

- 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 Amrik Ram against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00893/HSE.
 - The development proposed is creation of brick boundary walls (brick and railings) with brick piers and gates.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The development had started when the application was submitted and is not complete.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. No.48 is a detached house and garden plot in Portacre Rise. This straight road is in a mainly residential part of Basingstoke. Houses along it are in two opposing rows set back behind front gardens similar in depth or width, with No.48 at one end next to a strip of grass verge or public open space planted with some young trees. This conventional arrangement of residential development is not in a Conservation Area or subject to any special designation, nor is No.48 a listed building.
5. Front garden boundaries, including as they return each side between properties, are or include mainly low fences or walls. There is variation in detail, design or materials of these structures but in the main they are mostly recessive and unobtrusive and include some taller hedges or shrubs. This also conveys a largely open, spacious feel to the pattern and layout of these parts of this residential development and along this road corridor.
6. The proposed brick front and side walls with brick piers have been erected. This overly tall structure between 1.46m and 2m high¹ is more akin to what might usually be expected or necessary to enclose a back garden. It stretches along most of the

¹ All dimensions approximate unless otherwise stated

front garden boundary, all of one side boundary back to the house and most of the other side boundary at the same height. This considerable surface area of vertical built form has significant bulk, scale and massing than is typical of front garden including side boundaries in this road.

7. Albeit narrow, the horizontal cream coloured stone coping course along the top of the wall is in strong contrast to the dark red/orange brick; as is, albeit flat, the same light colour flared stones that cap the top of the piers. While these materials might weather in due course, this would take some time. Meantime, the stone highlights and accentuates the significant linear continuity and stepped, regimented sequence of wall and piers in this structure at an excessive height. Reduced contrast in materials would not anyway mitigate the combined intrinsic height and extent of it.
8. Proposed horizontal railings to an upper edge 1.85m above ground (along the coping stones, inset between the taller piers) were not in situ. These partly open sections would nonetheless use a reasonably thick metal profile for the long black railings and be closely spaced so have tangible substance, conspicuous in this upper part of the structure at elevated eye level. Moreover, the same materials in the huge expanse of wide, 1.85m high sliding vehicle entrance gate (which was behind the wall) is overly extensive and manifestly incongruous. Though narrower, so too would be the 1.85m height of the same design and materials for the pedestrian entrance gate, a feature also more appropriate to a back garden setting.
9. Portacre Rise also slopes gently down and then up in each direction, with No.48 at a low point. The jarring visual and spatial presence of the wall, piers and vehicle entrance gate can be observed from the pavement as plainly at odds with the established prevailing arrangement of front garden boundary features in closer views and more distant elevated views, as would be the pedestrian gate and railings; especially in one direction because the front garden as a whole is more prominent next to the grass verge/public open space. The excessive visual and spatial impact of the structure already constructed is consolidated in the elevated views in each direction over it, revealing a significant part of the internal face of both side walls. Furthermore, the stark, imposing extent of this vertical and horizontal front garden means of enclosure appreciably reduces the sense of spaciousness and integration of this front garden at this point in the streetscene.
10. There are some shorter sections of front or side boundary walls or piers of a similar height but these are usually alongside boundaries that turn a corner into an adjoining road which is not the case here. None I saw or have been referred to are anyway as extensive in alignment or length around the front and both side boundaries of front gardens. Nor do any incorporate all of the features of the development applied for in this appeal so are not directly comparable or representative in this road.
11. Taking account of all the above, I find that the development already has and would if completed as proposed have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the streetscene. It is therefore contrary to Policy EM10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan, May 2016. This policy includes that development should positively contribute to local distinctiveness of a surrounding area, such as an existing streetscene or the appearance of a street, having regard to scale, layout, architectural design and materials. These aims are reinforced by relevant provisions of the Council's Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document, July 2018.

Other Matters

12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)² aims to achieve well-designed places including by development that is visually attractive in architecture and layout, sympathetic to local character and surrounding built environment and maintains a strong sense of place and distinctive places to live. These outcomes are consistent with relevant policy objectives of the Council's development plan.

Conclusion

13. The development conflicts with local and national planning policy to protect the character and appearance of an area, in this case a streetscene. There are no other material considerations to indicate that the appeal should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan taken as a whole. Consequently, for the reasons given above the development is unacceptable and the appeal does not therefore succeed

Robin Buchanan

INSPECTOR

² December 2024