



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2025

by **E Heron MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B5480/D/24/3355822

446 Havering Road, ROMFORD, RM1 4HR

- 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 Gulam Abbas Hussain against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Havering.
 - The application Ref is P1067.24.
 - The development proposed is front boundary treatment, railings, and gates.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Although 'Retention' is included in the description in the application form and the decision notice, I have not included it in my heading above as it is not a form of development. However, the application form confirms the development has been completed and I was able to see this during my site visit. I have determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issues

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located at the junction between Havering Road and Lower Bedfords Road. It sits within a line of similar semi-detached dwellings that are predominantly set-back behind low brick walls and hedges, interspersed by driveways. The neighbouring corner property facing Lower Bedfords Road has a dark wood close-boarded fence. Its colour and natural material soften its appearance. The dwellings sit opposite a large green open space. Consequently, these factors contribute to the verdant and spacious suburban character of the area, with the boundary treatments providing a pleasant buffer between the public and private realm.
5. The photographic evidence shows that prior to the proposed works taking place, the appeal site had a wide entrance opening and some close board wooden fencing on a low brick wall. Its modest appearance assimilated with that of the neighbouring dwellings, and thereby reinforced the pleasant suburban character and appearance of the area. As the appeal site is a corner plot on a wide and busy road intersection, its front and side boundary treatments are particularly prominent.

6. Whilst the proposed railings provide some transparency, they are overly tall and decorative, detracting from the simple and unassuming character and appearance of the adjoining boundary treatments. The proposed panels are white and textured with a prefabricated appearance. They are highly conspicuous, and an alien feature at odds with the prevailing character of the street scene. This harm is compounded by the use of the same type of panels, positioned at the boundary with no 448 Havering Road. Accordingly, the proposal fails to achieve the objective in the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document, adopted 2011 of reinforcing the prevailing character of the streetscape.
7. In coming to my findings, I have taken account of the images of other boundary treatments provided by the appellant. Whilst I acknowledge there is some variety in boundary treatments evident in the wider area, I have given greatest weight to those that exist closest to the appeal site as they play a more important role in establishing the immediate context. In any event, whilst there are some similarities in some of the examples provided, none of them match the design of the appeal scheme. Accordingly, they do not lead me to a different view on this main issue.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the boundary treatment, railings, and gates harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the development conflicts with Policies 7 and 26 of the Havering Local Plan 2016-2031, adopted November 2021. These require high quality design that contributes to the creation of successful places in Havering, including respecting and complementing local distinctive character, and providing inclusive and attractive living environments.

Other Matters

9. I understand the appellant's wish to make the property secure, and that two residents supported the planning application partly on this basis. Security is an important design consideration and is reflected in local and national planning policies. However, they do not indicate that this matter takes precedence over others. Neither is it shown that measures to improve security could not be achieved without causing the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified above.
10. There is little evidence before me to demonstrate that damage arising from vehicle collisions in proximity to the appeal site is so frequent that physical protection measures are necessary. In any event, the evidence does not demonstrate that the boundary treatment proposed is an appropriate response, or the only means to do so. As such I attribute little weight to this matter.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

E Heron

INSPECTOR