



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2025

By G Powys Jones FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/D/25/3365837

2 Homefield, Thornbury, South Gloucestershire, BS35 1PZ

- 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 M Blake against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref is P25/00606/HH.
 - The development is the erection of a boundary fence with retaining wall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. The fence and retaining wall subject of the appeal have been erected. The statement accompanying the appeal provides a brief resume of events including the prospect of the Council taking enforcement action to remove the fence in question. The applicant seeks the retention of that built and proposes some planting as mitigation.
3. The appeal statement concludes:

We are fully aware that the appeal should be made only against what has been submitted but under the circumstances feel very strongly that the correct resolution of the problem is to leave the retaining wall in place and then to agree an acceptable height for the fence.
4. As the appellant appears to understand, an appeal of this type does not provide the opportunity to negotiate. I am obliged to determine the appeal based on the information and plans submitted, and I shall therefore proceed on this basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is a detached dwelling standing at the junction of Homefield and Sibland Way. Images on Google street view show that the Sibland Way frontage of the plot was formerly hedged, but this has been removed. In replacement, a low wall comprised of breeze block has been built to retain the lawn behind, and a tall timber fence¹ erected above the wall. A narrow strip of earth

¹ Which the appellant describes as rather more than 3m above the pavement

separates the back of pavement from the retaining wall, and within this strip laurel² saplings have recently been planted.

7. Siband Way is a residential street of a distinctly suburban layout in a maturing phase. Its northern frontage is largely open plan whilst its southern frontage is punctuated by junctions serving culs-de-sac. The overall impression gained when travelling the street along its length is of well-maintained gardens, where hedges, trees and other planted vegetation all contribute to present a pleasant verdant environment. Although I noticed timber fencing had been erected to the west of the appeal property further along Siband Way, this did not contribute positively to the street scene.
8. The fence, in view of its length and what I regard as its excessive height above footway level, appears stark and uncompromising in a prominent position, and its erection has undoubtedly harmed the character and appearance of its surroundings. Whilst the retaining wall currently appears out-of-place, it is sufficiently low to be able to be effectively screened in time by appropriate planting in the strip between it and the footway.
9. The laurel hedge is intended in time to mitigate the harmful effects of the fence, but insufficient, indeed no information has been submitted to satisfy me that the planting carried out would prove effective. No information has been provided on soil depth, sufficiency, quality and suitability, its preparation or planting method. No maintenance schedule is in place. Whilst allowing for the fact that my visit took place during a hot, dry period, some of the saplings already showed signs of stress. Even if I could be satisfied on these issues, the laurel would take a relatively long time to grow to an effective height. In the meantime, much of the fence would stand out harmfully.
10. I conclude for the above reasons that the development has harmed the character and appearance of this part of Siband Way, and I have not been satisfied that the mitigation proposed would prove effective in overcoming the harm. Accordingly, a clear conflict arises with those provisions of policies CS1 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy (December 2013) and PSP38 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan (November 2017) directed generally to promote and encourage high quality design.

Other matters

11. It is not for me to comment on the alleged lack of contact between the Council and appellant at application stage. However, there is no evidence before me showing that formal pre-application procedures were invoked.
12. All other matters raised in the representations have been considered, including the representations made by the Town Council and local residents, some in support. None is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations leading to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

² Rather than the semi-mature beech hedge referred to in the appellant's application and submissions.