



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5th September 2025

by Simon J Cater MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/25/3364664

4 Copperfields, Fetcham, Surrey KT22 9PD

- 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 Seema Sajan against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref is MO/2024/1819/PLAH.
 - The development is retention of fence on west boundary fronting Copperfields
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a timber close-boarded fence on the western boundary fronting Copperfields at 4 Copperfields, Fetcham, Surrey KT22 9PD in accordance with the terms of the application ref. MO/2024/1819/PLAH, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, Drawing Ref. Location Plan dated 28 Oct 2024 and Drawing Ref. TQRQM24064141853375 – Side Garden Fencing

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development provided on the application form is inaccurate and unclear. Accordingly, the banner heading above reflects the wording used in the Council's decision notice. As the development has already been carried out, the appeal is retrospective in nature. I have determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans for a timber close-boarded fence on the western boundary, fronting Copperfields.
3. The western boundary features two existing sections of fencing. The northern section, extending towards the highway, falls within permitted development under Class A of Part 2, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The appeal therefore relates solely to the southern section.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal relates to a timber close-boarded fence erected along the western side boundary of No. 4 Copperfields, a detached dwelling within a well-established residential estate that comprises dwellings of similar architectural style and layout.
6. The area is generally characterised by open front gardens, contributing to a spacious and coherent street scene. In many cases, front boundaries are left entirely open, with no fencing or hedging. Where boundary treatments do occur, they vary, with the use of fencing, walls, hedging, and planting which are evident along both front and especially side boundaries. There are several instances, particularly where side boundaries abut public footpaths or roads, where fences and walls are clearly visible and contribute to the sense of enclosure within the street scene.
7. The appeal fence is positioned adjacent to a public footpath and is readily visible within the street scene. A layby is inset into the adjoining carriageway, with the footpath running along its outer edge. The fence lies immediately beyond the footpath, rendering it visually prominent to both pedestrians and passing road users.
8. The fence is located on a side boundary rather than the principal frontage. While it introduces a more enclosed aspect to this part of the estate, it does not interrupt the prevailing openness of front gardens, which remain the dominant feature within the streetscene. Its height and design are standard for domestic boundary treatments, and its materials are consistent with others found nearby.
9. Although the fence is in place of an open side boundary, it does not materially alter the spatial character of the estate. The open frontage of the appeal property remains, and the enclosure of the side garden reflects a pattern seen elsewhere in the locality.
10. Its domestic scale and use of wood and concrete posts are typical of boundary treatments found within the estate. While it introduces a more defined edge to the property, it does not appear visually intrusive or discordant. The fence appears as a coherent element within the street scene and does not materially undermine the prevailing character of open frontages.
11. There are other properties of similar type and layout within the estate that feature side boundary enclosures, some of which are visible from public areas. In this context, the appeal fence does not appear incongruous or out of keeping. It represents a reasonable and proportionate response to the need for privacy and security, particularly given its location adjacent to a public footpath and layby.
12. The fence does not detract from the overall visual quality of the area. Although it establishes a clearer boundary to the property, it does so in a manner that respects the character of the estate and causes no material harm to its appearance.
13. I have had regard to the representations made by neighbouring occupiers, including concerns relating to visual impact, loss of planting, and the effect on the character of the estate. While I acknowledge that the fence alters the appearance of the boundary and is apparent from nearby properties and the public realm, its domestic scale, conventional materials, and siting on a side boundary do not result in a visually intrusive or discordant feature.

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the development preserves the character and appearance of the area. It therefore accords with Policy EN4 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2020–2039 (2024), which seeks to ensure that new development respects and, where appropriate, enhances local character and design quality, including boundary treatments.

Conditions

15. In considering the imposition of conditions, the Council has proposed a condition requiring adherence to the approved plans. Given that the development has already been carried out, I consider such a condition both reasonable and necessary in the interests of clarity and to ensure certainty regarding what has been permitted.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Simon J Cater

INSPECTOR