



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2025

by N Armstrong BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M4510/D/25/3370795

50 Ridgewood Crescent, South Gosforth, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE3 1SQ

- 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 Martin Mears and Mrs Rebecca Mears against the decision of Newcastle Upon Tyne City Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/0166/01/HOU.
 - The development is described as "Removal of existing front boundary wall, due to structural failings, and erection of new fence in its place, replicating footprint of original wall. Fence constructed of horizontal timber slats in a Venetian style, stained black to match house front door. Fence dimension approximately 1750mm in height and 4360mm in length".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the application form. However, I have omitted wording that does not relate to the operative part of the development in the interests of conciseness, although I have had regard to the matters raised in that full description.
3. I noted at the site visit that a fence has already been constructed to the front of the property, which appeared to accord with the plans before me. I have determined the appeal based on the plans that were submitted with the planning application.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area;
 - highway safety; and
 - the living conditions of occupiers at 52 Ridgewood Crescent, with particular reference to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal property is a semi-detached, two storey dwelling located in a residential area comprising similar properties fronting onto both sides of Ridgewood Crescent. There are variations, although where they exist, boundary

treatments in the locality typically consist of low walls. There are also variations in the extent of landscaping within and to the front boundaries of properties in the area, which provides a softer and more verdant street scape where it is evident.

6. The evidence indicates that the fence has replaced a lower boundary wall and conifer hedging above, with the latter extending above the wall to a similar approximate height to the new fence. The fence comprises black coloured timber slats laid horizontally and close together. Fences of a similar height and construction have been erected to the side boundaries, although they are not part of the planning application.
7. Even if cars are parked along the road, the height and design of the fence directly abutting the pavement in a highly prominent position makes it an imposing and discordant feature in the street scene. It appears as an incongruous structure that is out of keeping with the prevailing character and appearance of other roadside boundary treatments in the area. From the information before me, this has also resulted in a more visually intrusive feature compared to the previous boundary treatment, with the former wall reflecting others in the area and the landscaping providing a softer, natural edge to the street frontage, in contrast to the stark form of the fence as constructed.
8. The appellant has also drawn my attention to a variety of other boundary treatments, which I observed in the area on my visit. Whilst these provide enclosure to the properties, including their frontages, the examples are materially different in their scale and appearance to the appeal proposal, and highlight the prevalence of low walls and soft landscaping in the area. Where there are some fences to roadside boundaries, these are typically set behind or above the lower boundary walls. I also do not know the circumstances under which all of these were constructed or their status regarding planning permission. I therefore cannot draw any direct comparison from these with the development that would weigh in its favour, and their presence does not justify the harm that I have otherwise found with the fence at the appeal site.
9. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the fence is materially harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The appeal scheme conflicts with Policy CS15 of the Planning for the Future Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030 (the CS) and Policies DM20 and DM23 of the Newcastle upon Tyne Development and Allocations Plan 2015-2030 (the DAP). Amongst other things, these policies seek to create attractive places and ensure that development responds positively to the local context, delivers high quality design, and provides a high quality environment.

Highway safety

10. The appeal site features a driveway to the front, and a car was parked on this and partially overhanging the adjacent pavement at the time of my visit. I observed cars parked on the road and pavements close to the site and along the length of Ridgewood Crescent, which appeared to be a quieter residential street in comparison to other busier roads in the wider area.
11. The fence has been erected abutting the pavement in a similar position to the previous wall and hedge. Given its height and the close construction of the individual horizontal slats, the fence is a relatively solid structure that impacts on

and restricts the visibility for drivers of vehicles using the existing parking space, despite the width of the access.

12. In addition to the lower speed limit in place along Ridgewood Crescent, the site is relatively close to a bend in the road, which along with other cars parked on the highway, could assist in reducing traffic speeds to some degree. Whilst this arrangement could potentially encourage drivers to emerge from the site more cautiously, it is also likely that drivers will have to edge further onto the pavement to obtain visibility, which would be harmful to pedestrian safety. Users of the road and pedestrians may be more familiar with the layout, although not all will have the same level of experience and familiarity. Whilst the site previously featured landscaping to the frontage that may have affected visibility, the scheme before me is development requiring planning permission. As a result of its siting, scale and design, the fence limits the visibility for drivers using the parking space, and therefore has a detrimental impact on highway safety, particularly in relation to pedestrians.
13. The appellant has provided a plan with the appeal indicating visibility splays and sightlines. However, as this does not appear to be a fully dimensioned or scaled plan that adequately demonstrates suitable visibility splays can be achieved, I give this little weight in my assessment.
14. For similar reasons to those set out above, I cannot draw any direct comparison from other examples of boundary treatments, including those featuring landscaping, with the development that would weigh in its favour in this respect. The presence of these boundary treatments does not justify the harm that I have otherwise found to highway safety from the appeal scheme, which has been assessed on its merits.
15. I conclude that the development has an unacceptable impact on highway safety, therefore it conflicts with Policy CS13 of the CS and Policy DM14 of the DAP. Amongst other things, these policies require that proposals connect safely to and mitigate the effects of development on the existing transport networks, and adequately mitigate against its impact on the highway network in the interests of safety.

Living conditions

16. Due to its position to the front of the site and its offset from the ground floor window of the adjoining property at No 52 Ridgewood Crescent, the fence does not have an unacceptable or harmful impact on the outlook for these occupants. Whilst a fence of similar construction is sited along the boundary to the side of the properties closer to the adjoining window, that is not within my remit for this appeal.
17. Notwithstanding the harm to the character and appearance of the area and highway safety from the fence, I conclude that the development is not harmful to the living conditions of the occupants of No 52, with particular reference to outlook. Therefore, the development does not conflict with Policy DM23 of the DAP, which amongst other things, aims to ensure development will maintain a good standard of outlook for existing occupants of buildings.

Other Matters

18. I acknowledge the absence of heritage assets in the area. I have also had regard to the appellant's reasons for erecting the fence, which include replacing an unsafe wall, wind exposure, security, privacy, screening of bins and shed, increase in useable space in the front garden, improved outlook and visual appearance. The appellant also suggests that the development has improved light levels within the appeal property. Although internal photographs have been provided, it is unclear as to the time of day or year and the weather conditions when these were taken, whilst the décor within the room has changed, which are all factors that could also affect light levels. Based on the evidence before me, these are not comparable. Furthermore, it is suggested that the fence would assist with landscaping and wildlife, although I have no compelling evidence before me to demonstrate that is the case. It is also stated that as well as the fence encouraging cycling, the widened driveway has improved access for wheelchair users, pushchairs and cyclists to some degree.
19. Whilst these matters are all noted, I do not find that these or any other suggested benefits justify the harm that I have identified. It has also not been adequately demonstrated that this development is the only way to achieve the appellant's objectives. Furthermore, whilst some fences may be undertaken as permitted development, due to its position and height, the fence before me requires planning permission and I have assessed the effects of it on its merits.
20. Whilst one objection has been received, the lack of any others does not equate to a lack of harm and does not alter my findings.
21. The concerns expressed regarding the Council's failure to request or discuss additional information during the processing of the planning application fall outside of the remit of this decision.

Conclusion

22. The development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Armstrong

INSPECTOR