
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 September 2020

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G4240/D/20/3254002

37 Radnor Avenue, Denton, Manchester M34 2QT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Victoria Smith against the decision of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01080/FUL, dated 10 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of 1.9m high timber fence (retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The development has already been carried out in large part and high timber fencing has been constructed along the front and side boundaries of the appeal site. The proposal is the retention of the fence that has been implemented with a reduction in its height along the site frontage. I have determined the appeal based on the submitted plans and my observations at the time of my visit.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. No 37 is a 2 storey semi-detached property on a corner plot at the junction of Radnor Avenue and Sherwood Road. It is in a residential area. It forms part of a group of properties on Radnor Avenue constructed in matching styles and materials and that are set back and angled away from the road behind small open front gardens. Sherwood Road is characterised by single storey semi-detached dwellings set back from the road on consistent building lines. Front boundaries are characteristically formed by low brick walls, some of which have railings or hedgerows.
5. The development (the fence) is a tall continuous boundary treatment that extends along Sherwood Road and around the corner onto Radnor Avenue to enclose the side garden of the appeal property. It is a solid feature that does not relate well to the open frontages, low walls and hedges that characterise the group of properties of which it forms part or to the boundary treatments on the remaining corner plots around the road junction. By virtue of its height,

length and materials, it is an incongruous feature that is not in keeping with the prevailing character and appearance of the area. It is not sympathetic to its surroundings and it does not make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness. Consequently, it detracts from and it is detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene.

6. The proposal would reduce the height of the fence for part of its length along the site frontage. While this would reduce its visual impact when viewed from Radnor Avenue, it would not mitigate the adverse visual impact of the fence along Sherwood Road. Moreover, while the shrubs that have been planted behind the fence would help assimilate a lower boundary fence into its surroundings, they would not screen or mitigate the extent of tall fence.
7. My attention has been drawn to, and I observed at the time of my visit, boundary treatments elsewhere in the area. In this regard, I appreciate that there are some tall boundary treatments, including timber fences, in the wider area. However, I cannot be certain that any of them benefit from planning permission or that they were considered in the same policy context. Moreover, they do not provide a visual context or a justification for the appeal scheme.
8. Therefore, notwithstanding the proposed partial reduction in height, the development harms the character and appearance of the area. It, and the proposal, conflicts with Policies C1 and H10 of the Tameside Unitary Development Plan Written Statement Adopted November 2004. These require, among other things, that development complements and enhances the distinctive settlement pattern and townscape character of the surrounding area and that, while it should ensure privacy and security where necessary, fencing should minimise visual impacts and enhance the appearance of the area.

Other Matters

9. The appellant's desire to secure her garden for the safety of her children and dogs, and to reduce the risk of burglary, is understandable. While she requested a meeting with the Council to discuss alternatives, I note that she has discounted fencing a smaller part of the garden and she has concerns in relation to the length of time it would take for a hedgerow to provide a secure boundary. Nevertheless, I am not persuaded that there are no alternative solutions that would deliver similar benefits without the conflict with the development plan.
10. My attention has been drawn to support for the development from local residents. However, while a third party has objected to the scheme, I am not aware of any representations in support. Therefore, the verbal support is not a matter that carries weight in favour of the scheme.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, the development conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR