
Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 12/12/16

**gan Clive Sproule BSc MSc MRTPI
MIEnvSci CEnv**

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 09.01.2017

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12/12/16

**by Clive Sproule BSc MSc MRTPI
MIEnvSci CEnv**

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 09.01.2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H6955/D/16/3161895

Site address: 18 Richmond Road, Little Acton, Wrexham LL12 8AB

The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.

- 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 Mr Andrew James against the decision of Wrexham County Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WRA P/2016/0414, dated 17/04/16, was refused by notice dated 25/07/16.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a boundary fence to the front of the property and adjacent to Merlin Road and relocation of garden shed to north west corner of garden.
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Decision

1. For the reasons that follow, the appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Following consideration of the Council's reason for refusal and the representations in this case, the main issue is considered to be the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Richmond Road and the streets around it have detached and semi-detached dwellings that provide the locality with a residential character. This character includes gardens and other amenity spaces that separate the dwellings from the highway.
 4. The residential environment that includes no.18 is of sufficient age for vegetation, boundary treatments, extensions and other modifications to have created a degree of variety in the developments that form the townscape.
 5. The estate type developments that contribute to this street scene may at one point have had more of an 'open plan' character. Vegetation and other boundary treatments ensure that the open plan character is now much reduced. Nevertheless, this is an established suburban area where gardens at the front of dwellings and those to the side at junctions, along with their boundary treatment and the building lines
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created by the layout of the dwellings, are important contributing factors to the local residential character which remains essentially open and suburban.

6. The appeal site is a corner plot at the junction with Merlin Road. While there are a number of houses with two storey front elevations on the opposite (southern) side of Richmond Road to the appeal site, no.18 is a bungalow type dwelling with a single storey front elevation amongst other similar dwellings that predominate to the north of Richmond Road. Bungalow type dwellings on Merlin Road, in common with those around them, are set back from the footway due to the presence of their gardens and driveways.
7. A substantial hedge is present between the appeal site and the neighbouring house at 2 Merlin Road. By extending out along the boundary between no.18 and 2 Merlin Road to the highway, the hedge adds height to the street scene. However, as a vegetative screen it differs in form and character to the presence of a built form.
8. The development that is the subject of this appeal has been erected between the side elevation of no.18 and Merlin Road. The fence runs alongside the boundary with Merlin Road (with the garden shed next to it and the boundary with no.2). The fence then turns and returns toward the front of the side elevation of no.18. The proposed development stands well forward of the front elevation of the neighbouring bungalow at 2 Merlin Road.
9. Due to height, length and nature of the wood panel fence and its positioning next to the highway boundary, the fence is a prominent and stark feature in the street scene. These factors cause the proposed development to significantly reduce the open residential character of the area, and are sufficient to be unacceptably harmful to its character and appearance.

Other matters and conclusion

10. My site visit confirmed there to be a number of other fences in the locality that also are of substantial scale and positioned next to the highway. Full details of the circumstances behind these other fences, including their planning history, are not before me. In any event, each planning appeal is dealt with on its own merits and these other fences have not altered local character to the extent that they would set a precedent for the determination of this case.
11. For the reasons above, I conclude that the development is unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the locality. As such, the appeal scheme conflicts with Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 Policy GDP 1 and the relevant parts of Planning Policy Wales – 9th edition that seek development to be of a scale, design, materials and layout that accords with the character of the site and make a positive contribution to the locality.
12. I have considered the duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (“the WBFG Act”). In reaching this decision, I have taken into account the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act and I consider that this decision is consistent with the sustainable development principle as required by section 8 of the WBFG Act.

13. All representations in this case and the scope of possible planning conditions have been taken into account. No matters, including the benefits to the appellant's use of the land, have been found to outweigh the identified harm and conflict with local and national planning policies. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Clive Sproule

INSPECTOR