
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2020

by R Morgan MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/M2325/D/20/3245223

17 Saltcotes Road, Lytham St Annes FY8 4HN

- 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 James Lawton against the decision of Fylde Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0633, dated 30 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is the installation of a boundary timber fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a boundary timber fence at 17 Saltcotes Road, Lytham St Annes FY8 4HN, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/0633, dated 30 July 2019, and the plans submitted with it, and subject to the following condition:
 - Within two months of the date of this decision, the fence, in its entirety, shall be stained with a dark brown colour, and thereafter this stain shall be re-applied as necessary to maintain that appearance.

Procedural Matter

2. The fence has already been erected and I am therefore considering this appeal retrospectively.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is located in a predominately residential area. Along both Saltcotes Road and Mythop Road, most properties are set back behind front gardens or shared amenity space. Boundary treatments vary but are typically formed of hedges, or a combination of low brick walls with hedges or low fences. Trees, shrubs and hedges in many of the front gardens contribute positively to the character of the area.
5. Number 17 is the end property on this section of Saltcotes Road, and fronts onto a mini-roundabout at the junction with Mythop Road (B529). The front boundary of the property is long and curved, and is set back from the highway behind a grass verge, part of which has been planted with low shrubs.

6. The timber boarded fence which is the subject of this appeal has been erected above a low brick wall. In total, the height of the fence and wall is approximately 1.8m. Trees and shrubs have been left to grow up behind the fence, and at the time of my site visit had started to overhang it in some places, which helped to soften its appearance.
7. The fence is not in itself particularly unattractive, and although it is higher than those in the immediately surrounding area, the combination of the fence and wall, with vegetation above, breaks up the appearance of the front boundary. As a result, the fence does not appear overly dominant or overbearing in the streetscene. However, I note the suggestion that the untreated timber could be stained a darker colour, and agree that this would help it to blend into the surrounding area to a greater extent.
8. Although it is long, the curved nature of the front boundary significantly limits the extent to which the fence can be seen from vantage points on Saltcotes Road. From the mini roundabout, screening is provided by the landscaping on the verge. The fence does not appear as a significant feature in the street scene, and its location on a sweeping corner of a wide section of road prevents any undue feeling of enclosure.
9. Whilst the house and views across the corner are now largely screened from view, this screening is provided predominately by the boundary vegetation, rather than the fence alone. Other properties on Saltcotes Road are similarly screened by trees and shrubs along the frontage, and clear views of the houses is not a particular characteristic of the area.
10. I conclude that the fence does not cause undue harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, I find no conflict with Policy GD7 of the Fylde Local Plan 2018 which requires, in criterion h), that development should avoid demonstrable harm to the visual amenities of the local area. Similarly, I find no conflict with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework concerning the achievement of well-designed places.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal be allowed, subject to a condition requiring the fence to be stained a dark colour, which is necessary to safeguard the character and appearance of the area.

R Morgan

INSPECTOR