
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 October 2016

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 03 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/T1410/D/16/3154455

48 Rockhurst Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 8UX

- 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 David McDowell against the decision of Eastbourne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PC/160127, dated 6 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2016.
 - The development is car hard-standing, with retaining garden wall to enclose garden, with fencing on top for security and privacy purposes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for car hard-standing, with retaining garden wall to enclose garden, with fencing on top for security and privacy purposes at 48 Rockhurst Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 8UX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PC/160127, dated 6 February 2016, and the plans submitted with it.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The development has been completed. It relates to a corner residential plot, where the dwelling is raised above the street level, due to a drop in the road level at this point. This situation differs from other corner plots in Rockhurst Drive where the properties are at a similar level as the street.
 4. The combined height of the retaining wall and privacy fence makes it a prominent feature on this corner plot. However, the enclosure of the side and rear garden with a screen fence is not an unexpected feature within the context of other corner properties in the street, notably Nos 18 and 64. The side and rear garden of the end of terrace house on the corner opposite the site also has a screen wall abutting the street, albeit slightly lower than those other fences. Although in this case the fence is raised significantly higher than the street, and atop a retaining wall, that scenario is seen in the context of the dwelling's already prominent raised corner position. The materials and finish of the combined structure are also of a good quality and complementary to those of other boundary treatments in the street.
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5. On the approach to the site from the east, the structure is also seen in the context of a prominent side screen fence to No 41 before the site on the opposite side of the street. From that approach it is also seen against the backdrop of the higher flats beyond to the west which lessens its prominence to some extent. From the southern approach, the fence is set back from the street behind the sloping front garden and in line with the front of the house giving it a reduced level of prominence.
6. Although there was previously a vegetated bank on this corner, I have considered the development on its merits and note that such banking is not a characteristic feature of the street generally. Furthermore, the general pleasant openness of the streetscene is still maintained by the fairly open frontages to the dwellings facing the road within the block and the open, largely grassed, areas around the flats on the opposite side of the road to the west.
7. The car hard-standing slopes up away from the road, and is largely screened on the approaches by boundary treatment such that it is not a prominent feature.
8. For the above reasons, the development is not an incongruous or dominating feature of the streetscene and as such does not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. It therefore accords with saved policies UHT1 and UHT4 of the Eastbourne Borough Plan and policy D10a of the Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan which together, in respect of this issue, require development to harmonise with the character and appearance of the area and be appropriate in scale, form, materials, setting, alignment and layout.
9. I have had regard to concerns raised by local residents about the loss of on-street parking as a result of the new car hardstanding. However, it is not a significant loss in the context of the amount of remaining on-street parking still available. Furthermore, it has replaced little more than a single on-street space with two off-street spaces, albeit private. I am therefore satisfied that the development is unlikely to have resulted in a material or harmful reduction in the availability of on-street parking in the area.

Conclusion

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

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR