

PLANNING STATEMENT

**Retention of close-boarded timber boundary fencing
with concrete posts enclosing the side and rear
garden.**

**15 Thistledown,
Gravesend,
DA12 5ET**

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1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective householder planning application for the retention of close-boarded timber boundary fencing with concrete posts at 15 Thistledown, Gravesend, DA12 5ET.

The application seeks to regularise the boundary fencing that has been installed around the side and rear garden of the property, adjacent to Miskin Way. The fencing was installed to provide the occupiers with a private, secure and usable residential garden area.

The application is submitted following correspondence with Gravesham Borough Council's Planning Enforcement Officer, who advised that planning permission is required due to the position of the fencing adjacent to the highway and its height.

The submitted drawings show the previous open-plan garden arrangement and the existing close-boarded timber fencing now enclosing the side and rear garden.

2. Site and Surrounding Context

The application site comprises an end-of-terrace dwelling located on a prominent corner plot at 15 Thistledown. The property is positioned adjacent to Miskin Way, with the side and rear garden directly visible from the public highway and footway.

Prior to the installation of the fencing, the garden area was largely open-plan. Due to the corner position of the property, the garden was highly exposed to public views from passing pedestrians, vehicles and neighbouring properties. This resulted in a reduced level of privacy for the occupiers when using their private amenity space.

The previous open arrangement also left the garden vulnerable to unauthorised access, vandalism and the throwing of rubbish or other items into the applicant's garden.

While the wider estate contains elements of open-plan landscaping, this particular plot has a more exposed relationship with the public realm than a typical rear garden. The need for enclosure is therefore greater in this case.

3. Description of Development

The development comprises the retention of close-boarded timber fencing with concrete posts enclosing the side and rear garden area of the dwelling.

The fencing measures approximately 2 metres in height and follows the boundary of the applicant's residential curtilage. It does not project into the highway or footway. The submitted block plan and

elevation drawings identify the position of the fencing adjacent to Miskin Way and its relationship with the surrounding street scene.

The fencing is domestic in form, material and appearance. Close-boarded timber fencing is a common residential boundary treatment and is appropriate within the context of a residential estate.

4. Planning Justification

Privacy and Residential Amenity

The main purpose of the fencing is to provide a reasonable level of privacy to the occupiers of the dwelling.

The property occupies a corner plot, meaning the side and rear garden are not naturally screened from the highway. Before the fencing was installed, the garden was visible from Miskin Way and the adjoining footway. This significantly affected the occupiers' ability to use the garden as private residential amenity space.

The fencing provides a necessary degree of enclosure and screening. It allows the garden to function in the same way as a conventional private rear garden, where occupiers can sit outside, allow children to play, and use the space without being directly overlooked from the public highway.

A lower boundary treatment would not provide the same level of privacy or security. Given the exposed corner position of the property, the height of the fence is considered reasonable and proportionate.

Security and Prevention of Anti-Social Behaviour

The previous open-plan arrangement left the garden vulnerable to unauthorised access and misuse. The applicant had genuine concerns regarding people being able to access the garden easily, potential vandalism, and rubbish or other items being thrown into the private garden area.

The fencing provides a secure and defensible boundary between the private residential garden and the public realm. It helps prevent trespass, discourages anti-social behaviour and protects the occupiers' private property.

The fencing therefore serves a clear practical purpose in improving security, safety and the proper use of the garden.

Character and Appearance

It is acknowledged that the fencing has changed the previously open appearance of the side garden. However, the fence remains domestic in scale and appearance and is viewed in the context of an established residential estate with two-storey dwellings, parking areas, private gardens and other domestic boundary treatments.

The use of close-boarded timber panels is appropriate for a residential setting. The fence does not introduce an industrial, commercial or visually alien feature. It reads as a standard domestic garden boundary associated with the dwelling.

Although the fence is visible from Miskin Way, visibility alone does not make the development unacceptable. The fence is positioned along the applicant's boundary, encloses an existing private garden, and provides an understandable domestic function.

It is also relevant that the surrounding residential area does not have a wholly uniform open-plan character. There are examples within the wider locality where garden areas have been enclosed by timber fencing or other domestic boundary treatments. As such, enclosed gardens and boarded boundary treatments are not unusual within the wider residential context.

While each property must be assessed on its own planning merits, the presence of similar domestic boundary treatments in the surrounding area supports the view that the fencing would not appear as an isolated or visually alien feature. The proposal remains consistent with the domestic character and function of the estate.

The visual impact is considered acceptable when balanced against the clear need to provide privacy, security and usable private amenity space for the occupiers.

Highway Safety

The fencing does not obstruct the public highway or footway and does not alter the existing road layout, parking arrangement or vehicular access.

The fence is contained within the applicant's land and does not project into Miskin Way. It does not create a physical obstruction to pedestrians or vehicles.

Visibility along the highway remains acceptable, and the development does not result in any material highway safety harm.

5. Planning Balance

The key planning consideration is whether the retention of the boundary fencing causes unacceptable harm to the character of the area or highway safety, when balanced against the privacy and security benefits for the occupiers.

In this case, the fencing serves a clear and reasonable domestic purpose. The property's corner position means the garden was previously unusually exposed to the public realm. This reduced privacy, limited the occupiers' ability to use the garden comfortably, and created concerns regarding unauthorised access, vandalism and rubbish being thrown into the garden.

The fencing provides a practical solution by creating a secure and private residential garden area. The works are contained within the applicant's curtilage, use typical domestic materials, and do not obstruct the highway or footway.

Furthermore, the wider residential area includes examples of enclosed gardens and domestic boundary treatments. The proposal should therefore be considered within this broader residential context and would not appear as an isolated or inappropriate form of development.

Any visual change to the street scene is limited and acceptable within the residential context of the area. The benefits of providing privacy, security and a usable private garden area outweigh any limited impact arising from the enclosure of the previously open side garden.

6. Conclusion

The retention of the close-boarded timber boundary fencing is considered acceptable in planning terms.

The fencing provides necessary privacy and security for the occupiers of 15 Thistledown. It allows the side and rear garden to function as private residential amenity space and helps prevent unauthorised access, vandalism and rubbish being thrown into the garden.

The development is domestic in character, appropriate to the residential setting, contained within the applicant's land and does not result in any material highway safety harm.

The wider residential area also includes examples of enclosed gardens and domestic boundary treatments, demonstrating that the proposal would not appear out of keeping with the broader local residential character.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for the retention of the boundary fencing.