
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2016

by David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT

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

Decision date: 29 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E1210/D/16/3156938

21 Martins Hill Lane, Burton, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 7NJ

- 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 Klaus Pedersen against the decision of Christchurch Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 8/16/0145, dated 23 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is to replace the existing roof with a new pitched roof to form first floor bedrooms.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. With the agreement of the appellant I conducted the site visit unaccompanied. I can confirm that I was able to access all parts of the site, including the rear garden. I noted that the property is unoccupied and that building works are being undertaken.
3. The reason for refusal refers to the proposal being detrimental to 'the amenities of neighbouring occupants'. However, no substantive evidence was submitted by the Council, for example in terms of loss of light or overlooking. Indeed the Council conclude that any loss of light 'would not necessarily result in significant harm' and that any overlooking 'would not be considered materially harmful'. The Officer Report, however, does refer to the proposal being overly dominant and visually intrusive in relation to the adjacent properties and therefore I have interpreted the Council's concern, in this respect, as being primarily related to the outlook of neighbours.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal property sits within a row of six bungalows in this part of Martins Hill Lane. Although I noted some side dormers (at Numbers 15 and 17), these

six properties are all similar in terms of height and scale and contribute to a high level of consistency in the appearance of the street scene at this location.

6. The proposed development would result in the provision of a first floor and would include an increase in ridge height, the formation of gable elevations to the front and rear, and the construction of a large dormer window on the north-east side elevation. This significant increase in height, mass and scale would result in a dwelling that would appear prominent and incongruous in this setting, both from the street and from neighbouring properties. The proposed development would significantly detract from the character and appearance of this part of Martins Hill Lane.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 56) confirms the importance of good design and, amongst other factors, new development should add to the overall quality of an area, be visually attractive and respond to local character. These objectives are reflected in saved policy H12 of the Christchurch Local Plan (2001) and policy HE2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan (2014), which seek to ensure that development would be appropriate to the character of the immediate locality and that it would achieve a high quality of design (including in terms of scale, bulk, height and visual impact). This proposal does not meet those requirements.

Other Matters and Conclusion

8. On my visit I saw that a number of other properties in the locality appear to have been extended, including by the provision of first floor accommodation. The appellant also refers to a number of properties in the area where planning permission has been granted for development that includes the raising of ridge heights. However, I do not have the details of these developments and in any event I am required to determine this appeal on its own merits. I have therefore only attached little weight to the matter of precedent.
9. For the reasons given above I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not sit comfortably in relation to the neighbouring dwellings and within the immediate street scene. Significant harm would be caused to the character and appearance of this part of Martins Hill Lane and therefore the appeal should be dismissed.

David Hogger

Inspector