

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 October 2016

by Thomas Bristow BA MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/G1250/D/16/3156066

9 Woodford Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 3PQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Eleanor Christopher against the decision of Bournemouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2016-3339-F, dated 7 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2016.
 - The development is described on the application form as '*free standing carport*'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The development has been undertaken and planning permission is sought retrospectively. For the avoidance of doubt references in this decision to No 9 Woodford Road relate to the property alone and do not include the carport.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether or not the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the East Cliff Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. Policy CS39 '*Designated Heritage Assets*' of the *Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy*, adopted in October 2012 (the '*Core Strategy*') sets out how the Council will protect such assets, which include Conservation Areas, from inappropriate alterations. Similarly saved policy 4.4 of the *Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan* adopted originally in February 2002 (the '*Local Plan*') establishes that development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, thereby reflecting the requirements of Section 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.
 5. Likewise the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the '*Framework*') explains that when considering the impact of development proposed on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that any resulting harm should be weighed against the public
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benefits that would arise. Policy CS41 '*Quality Design*' of the Core Strategy further establishes that all development should integrate appropriately with its surroundings, in line with the approach in the Framework to securing high quality design that adds to the overall quality of the area.

6. No 9 Woodford Road is part of a grand period property set within a spacious plot squarely within the East Cliff Conservation Area. Whilst hosting some modern alterations including uPVC windows, both the design of the property and the main external materials that it features are nevertheless commensurate with its turn-of-the-century origins: a varied roof form, two storey bay window, brick facing and clay coloured roof tiles. Consequently in scale, form and design No 9 reflects strongly the prevailing characteristics of surrounding properties and contributes positively to the historic integrity and consistency of the area.
7. Some modern features and materials are apparent within the Conservation Area such as uPVC windows, solar panels, and non-original boundary treatments. Nevertheless properties in the vicinity of the appeal site remain strongly representative of the historic suburban development of Bournemouth, and the presence of such latter alterations does not in my view significantly compromise the traditional character of the area. Moreover there is little information before me as to the planning considerations that applied to modern development nearby, and in any event the presence of such does not serve to justify development that would erode the character of the area in the present.
8. The carport is of lightweight prefabricated utilitarian form projecting forward of No 9 towards Woodford Road. It comprises powder coated metal posts with shallow curved polycarbonate roofing which is supported by metal braces of modern engineered appearance. Whilst the appellant contends that this structure is reflective of the design of Edwardian arcades, neither its lightweight mechanical form nor materials are commensurate with an historic vernacular. Whilst off-road parking and garages are on occasion present elsewhere within the Conservation Area, no similar structures to the carport, historic or otherwise, appear to exist nearby. I appreciate that the structure has been erected in its particular location to be in line with the vehicular access to the property and boundary features, however its incongruous appearance is as a consequence further exacerbated by an off-centre placement in relation to a gable-ended element of No 9.
9. I acknowledge that intervening boundary features associated with No 9 and with properties nearby afford partial screening of the carport. Nonetheless I observed during my site visit that it is clearly visible from various junctures of Woodford Road, from which it appears as a detrimental modern addition to a largely consistent historic aesthetic. I also appreciate that the carport may afford greater convenience to those parking at the property during inclement weather and in guarding against inconvenience caused by birds. However these are chiefly private benefits and do not outweigh the public harm that would result. Whilst there is some reference in the information before me to a previous structure occupying the present location of the carport, there is no information before me as to the design of that structure, and this matter does not form part of the appellant's case.

10. Therefore whilst of comparatively modest overall scale, the development nevertheless fails to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the East Cliff Conservation Area, resulting in harm which is not outweighed by its benefits. The development consequently conflicts with the relevant provisions of policies CS39 and CS41 of the Core Strategy, saved policy 4.4 of the Local Plan, and with relevant elements of the Framework. For these reasons, and taking all other matters into account, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Bristow

INSPECTOR