
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2016

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1255/W/16/3148170

42 Springfield Road, Ashley Cross, Poole BH14 0LQ

- 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 G Purnell against the decision of Poole Council.
 - The application Ref APP/15/01729/F, dated 8 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is plot severance and erection of detached dwelling with associated access and parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Springfield Road is a residential street containing a varied mix of detached houses, bungalows and flats. I saw during my visit that most of the buildings are set back from the road behind mature landscaped front gardens. Trees and hedging make a significant positive contribution to the street scene and this gives the neighbourhood a distinctive verdant character.
 4. The appeal site lies forward of No 42 Springfield Road and forms part of the residential curtilage to that property. It is occupied by a domestic swimming pool. Unlike the majority of other dwellings in the street which are visible from the public highway, No 42 is hidden by dense roadside vegetation. This planting is located on the outside of a bend and it forms an attractive focal point when approaching from the south.
 5. The proposed development site is not significantly smaller than those residential plots surrounding. However, it is much shallower in comparison with others fronting the street. Although the new dwelling would be pushed to the rear of the site it would be noticeably close to the road when viewed through the driveway entrance. The garage in particular would project forward of the main block and within 2 metres of the back edge of the pavement. In my opinion, the lack of visible space around the building and its proximity to the road would give the development a cramped appearance. The contemporary flat roof design, whilst not objectionable in itself, would do nothing to materially lessen this harm.
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6. It is put to me that the relationship of the dwelling to the road is not untypical within Springfield Road. However, none of the other properties highlighted has a garage so close to the road and it seems to me that the prevailing character is far more spacious.
7. It is argued that the garage would be obscured with new hedging and planting along the adjoining section of roadside boundary. This would replace three existing trees which are identified for removal. Whilst I accept that these trees have been classified as low quality specimens, they nevertheless combine with other vegetation to create an expansive wall of greenery. This is partly the result of the planting being on a steep bank.
8. Despite the proposal for new planting, I am not confident that the present level of greenery could be reproduced in the limited space available between the garage and the pavement. Even if a degree of screening were achievable, there is no reliable means of ensuring its retention in the long term. As such, I am not persuaded that the adverse visual impact of a new building so close to the street frontage would be satisfactorily mitigated. In all likelihood, the development would be more prominent than is being portrayed by the appellant, to the extent of being visually intrusive.
9. The new dwelling would be set at road level which is not dissimilar to other properties in the street. However, this would necessitate the construction of a tall retaining wall on the boundary with No 40 Springfield Road. The structure would be clearly visible from the road and in my view it would appear harsh and incongruous, emphasising the substantial level of excavation required on the site and the sunken nature of the development – something which is not a defining feature of Springfield Road. This also weighs against the scheme.
10. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would be materially harmful to the character and appearance of the area. I therefore find conflict with Policy PCS23 of the Poole Core Strategy (2009) and Policy DM1 of the Poole Site Specific Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2012). Together, these policies require a high standard of design which respects the setting and character of the site, surrounding area and adjoining buildings.

Other Matters

11. The Council has confirmed that the appellant has submitted a signed S111 agreement and paid the necessary contribution in respect of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring for the Dorset Heaths protected European sites. A copy of the agreement is not before me. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, the decision does not turn on the matter.
12. My attention is drawn to an update in April 2014 which showed that the Council was unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing in accordance with Paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This information is dated and details of the current land supply position are not before me. It may be of course that the authority is still in deficit. However, in that scenario I consider that the harm would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the modest benefit of adding a single family home to the overall supply and the temporary economic benefits arising during the construction phase.

13. Residents have raised concerns regarding the impact on road safety. However, I note that the Highway Authority offers support to the proposal on transportation grounds. Based on my observations I have no reason to take a different view. Accordingly, this issue would not constitute a reason to dismiss the appeal.
14. I have given consideration to all other matters raised, including the scheme's ability to retain protected trees, provide garden space for its occupants and avoid harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents. However, they do not alter my conclusions.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR