
Appeal Decisions

Site visits made on 2 September 2016 and 14 November 2016

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 November 2016

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q1255/W/16/3153856

14 Chester Road, Branksome Park, Poole, Dorset BH13 6DD

- 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 S Murdoch and E Roberts against the decision of Poole Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/16/00047/F, dated 13 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a side extension and alterations to existing dwellinghouse; existing detached garage demolished.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Q1255/W/16/3153817

14 Chester Road, Branksome Park, Poole, Dorset BH13 6DD

- 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 S Murdoch and E Roberts against the decision of Poole Borough Council.
 - The application Ref APP/16/00506/F, dated 31 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a side extension and alterations to existing dwellinghouse; existing detached garage demolished (amended scheme).
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Decisions

Appeal A Ref: APP/Q1255/W/16/3153856

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B Ref: APP/Q1255/W/16/3153817

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

3. The original planning applications were made as householder applications and the subsequent appeals were initially registered accordingly to proceed under the Householder Appeals Service (HAS). However, it was apparent to me from the appellants' submissions that the premises were occupied as two flats. This has subsequently been confirmed by the Council. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 defines a householder application as being for an existing dwellinghouse, and defines a dwellinghouse as a building that does not contain flats. A flat being defined as *"a separate and self-contained set of premises constructed or adapted for use*
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for the purpose of a dwelling and forming part of a building from some other part of which it is divided horizontally".

4. The appeals do not fall within the scope of HAS. As a consequence the procedure was amended to enable the appeals to proceed as s78 written representation appeals. Due to the delay this caused in the appeal process I revisited the area of the site unaccompanied in order to satisfy myself that there had been no material change in circumstances from the date of my earlier visit. I am satisfied that the appeals can now proceed to their decisions.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in relation to both appeals is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of 14 Chester Road and upon the Chester Road Conservation Area.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is a former detached single-family dwellinghouse dating from the Edwardian period and now occupied as two flats. It is located within a residential area and within the Chester Road Conservation Area (CA). In 2010 the Council adopted its Chester Road Conservation Area *Character Appraisal and Management Plan* (CAMP), following public consultation, in order to provide an analysis of the character and appearance of the CA and to formulate and publish proposals to guide development in ways that would preserve or enhance the area's special character.
7. The CAMP recognises that the buildings within the CA are prominent within the public realm and that they form cohesive elements defined generally by their two-storey square form and regular gaps. With specific reference to Chester Road the CAMP recognises that the existing buildings have a strong homogenous identity and that each makes a positive contribution to the CA. This includes No 14 despite the loss of some of its original features and some poor standard of maintenance and alterations, particularly in relation to its flank elevations. In addition the CAMP provides a design code for new development in Chester Road which advises that for schemes to be successful they should, amongst other things, take account of the vertical emphasis provided by the strong detailing of the Edwardian Villas; the general character and distinctiveness of the area; and the urban grain. Specifically the CAMP's Design Code 5 states that existing gaps should be maintained.
8. No 14 occupies a fairly wide plot, but one which is comparable with some other broadly similar style properties between Nos 2-16 that run along the west side of Chester Road at this point. There is a substantial gap between the two-storey forms of both Nos 14 and 16, filled in part by a double width garage to the side of No 14. This is of no particular quality in terms of design or appearance. However, there is a marked drop in land levels to the side and rear of No 14 and the garage is deeply recessed with a low profile. As such its presence is not especially harmful to the appearance of the wider area, especially given the strong verdant backdrop of mature trees and other vegetation that is prominently seen above it and through the gap; this being another strong feature of the area that is recognised within the CAMP.

9. Both proposals would involve demolition of the existing garage and the sideways extension of No 14 with a two-storey addition that would include an integral garage and living accommodation at the lower ground floor level with further living accommodation above. The additional living space at first floor level in the extensions would be provided for the benefit of the existing ground floor flat. Both appeal proposals are broadly similar but with Appeal B proposing an extension with reduced width and height. The extensions would be set back from the front elevation of the main building with a dummy pitched roof to the front and rear elevations but with an upstanding pitch to the rear at its far end, projecting a ridge towards the road and terminating with a front end gable.
10. In both cases, the proposals would be seen as obvious additions to the otherwise regular form of the original building. At over 9m wide the Appeal A proposal would be virtually equivalent to the width of the original dwelling. The Appeal B proposal would be around 7.9m wide. In my judgement this would not be significantly smaller to make its width appear sufficiently subservient in relation to the width of the original building. Despite the two-storey scale of the developments the upper floors of each would link through with the ground floor flat. Both additions would be seen from the public domain along Chester Road, and also in slightly longer views from the opening to Eaton Road opposite, despite the marginally lower profile of the Appeal B scheme. Due to the prevailing land levels, when seen from public view each would appear uncharacteristically low rise and overly wide in relation to the square and upright form of the existing property. Despite the use of matching materials, design features and window patterns, I find the overtly horizontal emphasis of both proposed extensions would be at odds with the scale and proportions of the original building. This would disrupt the cohesion and uniformity to the properties along this part of Chester Road, which is an important defining characteristic of the CA.
11. Whilst the gap between No 14 and No 16 is larger than most others in the area, its presence remains to be important as part of a regular pattern to development in the area. The CAMP recognises the importance of regular gaps not the size of gaps *per se*. I accept that there would remain to be a gap between the additions and the flank wall of No 16. In the case of Appeal B this gap would be fairly significant. However, in both instances the scale of the existing gap within the street scene would be clearly and significantly eroded by additions that would dominate the void that currently exists above the existing garage.
12. Overall, I find an enlargement to the existing building's envelope with additions that would in each case be unsympathetic to its original scale and proportions, together with the loss of space between Nos 14 and 16, would result in a building at odds with the prevailing grain of development along Chester Road. This would be detrimental to the area's cohesion and uniformity. As a consequence neither proposal would respect the design principles set out within Policy DM1 of the Poole Site Specific Allocations and Development Management Policies, adopted in 2012 and neither would they preserve the character or appearance of the CA which would be detrimental to its significance as a heritage asset. Without any public benefit there would also be clear conflict with Policy DM2 and Policy PCS23 of the Poole Core strategy,

adopted in 2009, insofar as they relate to local distinctiveness and development affecting a CA. There would also be conflict in this regard with the National Planning Policy Framework as it relates to conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

Other Matters

13. I have noted concerns from the adjoining occupiers at No 16 in relation to loss of light and privacy. However I am satisfied that the degree of separation in both cases between the extension and the flank wall of No 16 would be sufficient to enable light to penetrate the existing flank windows to this neighbouring property. The outlook from either extension to the rear would be towards the rear of the plot and only obliquely across the lower part of the garden to No 16. This would be a relationship that is typical for most neighbouring properties in this area and would not lead to any impact that would significantly erode privacy or the living conditions more generally at No 16. I note also that the Council raised no concern in relation to this matter.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given, and having regard to all other matters raised, I find that both proposals would harm the character and appearance of 14 Chester Road and the Chester Road Conservation Area. Accordingly I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B must both fail.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR