
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2017

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 09 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1255/W/16/3163012
558 Blandford Road, Poole BH16 5EG

- 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 Tom Slaughter against the decision of Borough of Poole.
 - The application Ref APP/16/01304/F, dated 23 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is one new two bedroom bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The proposed dwelling would be located to the rear of No 558 in place of an existing single storey flat roofed garage. The design in itself would not be inappropriate in the context of a variety of dwelling designs and sizes in the vicinity. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the plot size, whilst fairly small would not be inconsistent with the varying sizes relating to other nearby properties, including some of similar size.
 4. However, whilst of varying alignments in relation to each other, those existing dwellings in the vicinity characteristically face directly onto the surrounding roads with the back gardens providing a sense of spaciousness to the rear. That represents the underlying pattern and grain of development in the vicinity. There are various buildings and structures within that backland area such as the garages in the court adjacent to the site, the garage on the site itself, and other outbuildings. However, they are generally of a modest footprint and height so as not to detract from that spacious character.
 5. I have had regard to a previous appeal decision relating to a proposed single dwelling to replace the existing garage on the site, Ref APP/Q1255/A/10/2133236, that was dismissed. My colleague found that the proposal, a two storey dwelling with the first floor within the roofspace, would appear markedly larger than other structures in nearby back gardens or the garages in the adjacent garage court. He found that its size and siting would appear incongruous and discordant. That decision is a material
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consideration although I have determined the appeal on its merits based on all of the evidence before me.

6. The proposal would not be as large, high or bulky as that previously dismissed at appeal. However, with its pitched roof it would be noticeably taller than the garage it would replace and those in the adjacent garage court, and it would have a materially greater depth than them. As such, it too would have a bulkier appearance than those other existing backland buildings in the vicinity, to an extent that it would be a jarring and incongruous feature in the context of the spaciousness of this backland location and the existing pattern and grain of development. Furthermore, it would be seen clearly as such from that adjacent garage court and from Blandford Road in views between dwellings, particularly at the access to the site.
7. The appellant refers to there being scope in respect of some limited infill, in terms of reference to such in the Borough of Poole Characterisation Study, albeit that the site is not shown as being in the applicable typology area of Bungalow and Detached Housing. Regardless as to whether or not it could be regarded as such an area, that does not negate the need to address the particular character of the site and its environs.
8. I have had regard to two other appeal decisions referred to by the appellant, for housing elsewhere, in Rosemary Road, Refs APP/Q1255/W/15/3004947 and APP/Q1255/A/14/2229360. However, I note that my colleague in those cases referred to a significant amount change over the years with additional dwellings having been inserted, including sometimes on backland plots. Those closely related proposals also represented more comprehensive forms of development than is proposed in this case. Another proposal allowed on appeal, Ref APP/Q1255/A/10/2136783 at 27 Branksea Avenue for two new dwellings, also differs in that it relates to them fronting onto the road, as opposed to backland development. The circumstances are therefore different for the current appeal which, in any case, I have determined on its own merits.
9. For the above reasons the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such it would be contrary to policies PCS5 and PCS23 of the Poole Core Strategy which together, in respect of this issue, require proposals for residential development to contribute positively to the character of the area and exhibit a high standard of design. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which in section 7 relates to requiring good design.

Conclusion

10. The Framework sets out that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development and indicates that to achieve that, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.
11. I have had regard to concerns over maintaining such a long existing garden and the benefit of limiting that burden. There would also be a small benefit of adding one additional dwelling to the supply of housing, in a sustainable location in terms of proximity to facilities and services to serve the day to day needs of future occupants.

12. The appellant refers to the proposal relating to a part of the site, including the garage, used independently from the flats at No 558 and that the proposal would have the benefit of making effective use of previously developed land. However, the Council highlights that the lawful use remains in association with the flats and I have received no substantive documentary evidence to the contrary. Nevertheless, even if it were to be regarded as previously developed land any benefit in this respect would again only be small due to it only relating to a single dwelling.
13. The benefits of the proposal, being only small, would therefore be insufficient to outweigh the unacceptable harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore not be a sustainable form of development.
14. Therefore, for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR