

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: 13 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G1250/W/16/3158829

45 Southbourne Coast Road, Bournemouth BH6 4DA

- 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 Brownsea Build Ltd against the decision of Bournemouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2016-2179-U, dated 24 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolish existing and erect 2 No. 4 bedroom chalet bungalows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. In respect of the Council's second and third reasons for refusal, the Council has since confirmed that these matters relating to overlooking of the neighbouring property, which could be prevented by obscure glazing the window concerned, and providing a satisfactory SUDs drainage solution, could be controlled by conditions. I have no basis to conclude otherwise on these issues and so have not included them as main issues.
3. The Council's fourth reason for refusal relates to the failure to make an appropriate contribution towards measures to mitigate any potential adverse effect of the proposal on the integrity of the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area, Ramsar Site and Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation. A planning obligation has now been provided and the Council has confirmed that this resolves its concerns. As I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, it is not necessary for me to consider the obligation any further.
4. The Council, in its decision notice, refers to its Residential Development: A Design Guide (the Design Guide). I have applied some weight to that document due to its role in supporting the relevant development plan policies.

Main Issue

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

6. The site currently comprises a bungalow set within a fairly spacious and open prominent corner plot at the junction between Southbourne Coast Road and Dalmeny Road. The vicinity of the site also has a pleasant sense of openness and spaciousness. This is partly due to the lower heights of dwellings comprising bungalows within the triangle of properties bounded by the above roads and Stevenson Road. It is also due to dwellings being generally set back from the road behind front garden areas, and an area of grassed open space on the opposite side of the road to the south and south-east of the site, with only a small number of buildings on that side of the road, albeit large ones.
7. The bungalows in the triangle have varying designs, including a number of a chalet style with rooms in the roofspace. They provide the immediate context, particularly in respect of Southbourne Coast Road's streetscene, albeit that there are also full two storey houses opposite the site on the northern side of Dalmeny Road.
8. The proposed dwellings would have distinctly raised eaves compared with the existing dwelling at No 45, the neighbouring chalet style bungalow, and others in the street, such that the first floor would not be entirely within the roofspace. They would also have higher ridgelines. Although it would not be a large difference from the highest part of the existing dwelling at No 45, that part is relatively small compared with the extent of the proposed higher ridgelines and roof areas. Other properties to the west, including No 43, have prominent gable features. However, those proposed would extend to a greater height than that of No 43, with a greater vertical emphasis.
9. As such, particularly with both dwellings exhibiting those raised features, and in fairly close proximity to each other, they would stand out as having a noticeably more bulky appearance than both that proposed to be replaced and those neighbouring chalet bungalows. This in turn would be likely to draw disproportionate attention to the proposed dwellings in the context of Southbourne Coast Road's streetscene in particular.
10. Combined with that, the tapering of the site dictates the staggering in the building line of the two proposed dwellings due to the restricted space at the eastern end of the site. Unit 2 would also be in close proximity to both the northern and southern roadside boundaries. That proximity would be further emphasised by the front elevation of unit 2 facing onto Dalmeny Road and being positioned noticeably closer to the road than others along it on either side, in the vicinity of the site.
11. Additionally, whilst it is proposed to plant a screen hedge around the garden boundaries of the proposed properties, this would inevitably take some time to mature. Furthermore, such hedge planting could not be guaranteed to be retained or maintained in the long term. Any garden paraphernalia such as external seating, children's play equipment and washing lines would therefore be clearly visible in circumstances of insufficient screening. Such paraphernalia in the proposed fairly confined garden areas, and close to the road, would have the potential to bring a cluttered appearance to the plots in this prominent location.
12. All of these factors would combine to give the proposed development a dominating and cramped appearance on the plot, uncharacteristic of the

surrounding development context and the pleasant open setting at and around this prominent corner location. This would be despite the presence of the full two storey dwellings on the northern side of Dalmeny Road.

13. I acknowledge that the existing dwelling on the site does not exhibit any significant architectural merit. Nevertheless, its fairly modest appearance, in terms of massing and position on the site, reflects the open setting at this corner location. I have also had regard to the unimplemented approved extension to No 45. However, the submitted evidence indicates that it would not have the same raised eaves, would not for the most part be as high as that proposed and would not have the same depth. The circumstances are therefore different in this case.
14. I saw an example of another completed development of two storey dwellings on a prominent corner plot at the junction of Stevenson Road and Southbourne Coast Road. However the circumstances relating to that site in terms of the nature of the development, the plot it relates to and its immediate context are different to those relating to the appeal proposal which I have in any case considered on its own merits.
15. For the above reasons, and despite the locality not having any particular characteristics unique to Bournemouth, the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it would be contrary to policies CS6, CS21 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy, policy 6.8 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan and the Design Guide, which together, in respect of this issue, require that development should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings, that the quality of the street scene be maintained and enhanced, and for residential development to contribute positively to the character of the neighbourhood.

Conclusion

16. 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.
17. There is disagreement between the parties as to whether or not the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites and I have not received evidence which provides a conclusive answer to this. Nonetheless, even if there is not such a supply, I consider that the unacceptable harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the surrounding area would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the small benefit of the net addition of only one dwelling in an established settlement in terms of contributing towards addressing the undersupply of housing. It would therefore not be a sustainable form of development.
18. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR