
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 December 2016

by David Walker MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14th March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G1250/W/16/3156640

Wilson House, 2 Lorne Park Road, Bournemouth BH1 1JN

- 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 Alex Bonnet against the decision of Bournemouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2016-3144-P, dated 1 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Extension to the roof of Wilson House. This extension includes two floors of additional office space and provision for additional external amenity space in the form of terraces. Along with additional car parking spaces and cycle spaces'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in the appeal are the effect of the proposal on:
 - i) the living conditions of the occupants of flats at 'The Chantry' in relation to scale and proximity and with regard to outlook; and
 - ii) the character and appearance of the area

Reasons

Living conditions

3. The flats at The Chantry are located on higher ground in relation to the appeal site and orientated with an outlook towards and over the top of the existing office building. I acknowledge that the presence of tall trees between the two buildings obscures much of the available views. Nonetheless, there are significant glimpses between the trees towards the south that would be an important aspect to the quality of life of the occupants of the flats. Balconies positioned along the elevation of The Chantry facing the appeal site highlight the importance of the available outlook.
4. The proposal would raise the height of the office building by an additional two storeys. While the design is stepped back at the front to reduce massing in the streetscene the full height of the proposal would be in close proximity to the neighbouring flats. I am mindful that an alternative design with only one extra storey has recently been approved¹. However, the second additional storey

¹ Planning application Ref: 7-2016-3144-Q

would rise to a height above that of the lower floors at The Chantry to curtail the outlook for occupants to an unacceptable degree. While no representations from occupants were received at the time of the application to the Council this cannot be relied upon as a measure of no harm.

5. I acknowledge that the Council raises no objection on privacy grounds and have no reason to disagree with that assessment. However, the harm I have identified in relation to the scale and proximity of the proposal would conflict with the requirements of Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy 2012 (the CS) and Policy D4 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Town Centre Area Action Plan 2013 (the AAP) to respect the amenity of existing occupiers, including their outlook.

Character and appearance

6. The four storeys of the appeal building are positioned between taller structures at The Citrus Buildings and Spartan House, albeit on higher ground. It is a different context to the circumstances at the time of the Spartan House development when the Inspector in allowing that appeal² noted the area was characterised by two to three storey buildings. Nestled between existing tall buildings and established trees the appeal building is not now especially prominent in the streetscene.
7. With the additional two storeys in a design subservient in scale and sympathetic in form and materials the proposal would appear as a logical addition to the host building. It would not rise significantly above the background trees as to appear prominent, including when viewed from the Old Christchurch Road Conservation Area that lies adjacent.
8. The proposal would therefore have a satisfactory effect on the character and appearance of the area for the purposes of the high quality design requirements of saved Policy 5.3 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan 2002, Policy CS41 of the CS and Policy D4 of the AAP. However, my findings under this issue, and the benefit of the additional office space that would be provided, do not outweigh the significant harm I have identified in relation to living conditions.

Conclusion

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

David Walker

INSPECTOR

² Appeal Ref: APP/G1250/A/10/2122730