

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B1740/D/17/3176184

Forest Brook House, Chapel Lane, Blackfield, Southampton SO45 1YX

- 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 & Mrs Paul Downey against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application, Ref. 17/10234, dated 16 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 3 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is a side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area, with particular reference to the aspect from neighbouring properties.

Reasons

3. On the first issue, I saw on my visit that Forest Brook House is on a backland site that is substantially larger than most of the gardens of the surrounding residential properties. However, the site also accommodates a dwelling of a large size and because of this and its backland position the roof can clearly be seen in the views from the adjoining rear gardens.
 4. I acknowledge that with its backland position the dwelling does not form part of a street scene or contribute visually to the public realm. Nonetheless its presence has changed the character and appearance of the locality from one of open gardens to that of a more developed nature. Although boundary planting screens the lower parts of the dwelling from neighbouring properties I consider that it is fair to conclude that its extensive roof is a dominant feature for the surrounding residents.
 5. In terms of the relationship of the existing building's footprint to the site boundaries, ostensibly there is scope for an extension to the dwelling on one or more of its elevations. However, there is also a potential problem in terms of first floor accommodation within the roof space of any addition because of the cumulative visual impact from the neighbouring dwellings, particularly their gardens, and its consequential effect on the character and appearance of this backland area.
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6. In the case of the appeal proposal the extension would result in a large area of additional roof being much closer to the boundaries of properties in Hampton Lane to the east, in particular Nos. 15 and 17. There would be a similar effect on 'The Chalet' to the south and I saw on my visit that this boundary is at present more open as regards inter-visibility.
7. I consider that this greater proximity, combined with the fact that the appeal scheme would result in a flank elevation and roof with an overall depth approaching 17m (the existing dwelling plus the net additional length of the extension), is a basis for the Council to reasonably conclude that there would be a further and harmful change in character and appearance of the area in terms of 'over-dominance' and intrusion.
8. The inclusion of five roof lights in the roof slope facing the rear gardens of Nos. 15 and 17 Hampton Lane would be perceived as exacerbating this effect, albeit I accept that conditions can be imposed to prevent overlooking and that there would not be a problem of overshadowing as feared by one resident.
9. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, with particular reference to the aspect from at least some neighbouring properties. This would be in harmful conflict with Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy for the New Forest District outside the National Park adopted in 2009 and with Section 7: 'Requiring Good Design' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
10. I have taken account of the points raised in the grounds of appeal but have found nothing of sufficient weight to alter my conclusion that I should dismiss the appeal.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR