
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 August 2017

by Gareth W Thomas BSc(Hons) MSc(Dist) PGDip MRTPI

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

Decision date: 23rd August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1255/W/17/3175327

52/52A Cranbrook Road, Poole, Dorset BH12 3BS

- 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 Ian Spicer against the decision of Poole Council.
 - The undated application Ref APP/17/00042/F, was refused by notice dated 9 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of an extension and conversion of existing double garage to form 1 bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. A signed legal undertaking has been submitted in respect of habitat mitigation as required by The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document and Policies PCS15, PCS28, PCS36 and PCS37 of the Poole Core Strategy ('the Core Strategy'). The Council has confirmed that it will no longer be contesting reason No.2 on the decision notice. However, as I am dismissing this appeal on other grounds, I need not dwell heavily on this issue.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is within a residential estate comprising a variety of two storey dwellings of typical appearance for their age. More specifically, it adjoins a short terrace of three properties located on the corner of Cranbrook Road and Farcroft Road that, together with other properties are designed in a fairly regimented grid pattern and which share a strong uniform building line. These characteristics provide the street scene with a strong sense of visual rhythm and coherence with dwellings appearing to sit comfortably within their respective plots.
5. The proposal would see the conversion and extension of an existing double garage located within the rear garden of the host properties No's.52 and 52A, which front onto Farcroft Road. The extension would comprise a first floor addition with the dwelling occupying the same footprint as the garage which is situated fairly tight up against the side boundary of No. 50 Cranbrook Road.

There would be no useable rear garden or private curtilage space associated with the proposed dwelling. The existing garage forecourt would continue to provide off street parking. Moreover, the proposal would remove some 40-50% of the domestic curtilage to the existing host properties.

6. The effect of the proposal would result in the appearance of a small dwelling cramped within a restricted plot area. It would interrupt the visual rhythm identified above and the broad symmetry that exists between properties on Farcroft Road and Cranbrook Road. The retention of a right of way along the side and rear of the proposed dwelling so as to continue functioning as a pedestrian route to No.52 merely demonstrates that a dwelling at this location would need to be shoehorned into a relatively restricted plot.
7. The appellant has referred to various other developments and extensions elsewhere within the estate and beyond. However, it appears to me that the circumstances of those cases generally differ from the current proposal and it is not therefore possible to draw meaningful comparisons.
8. In particular I noted during my site visit that No. 16a Buckland Road is of similar appearance to its neighbours with ample private amenity space to its rear. In relation to 35A Richmond Road, whilst clearly having some similarity with the appeal proposal, the Council explains that this was approved prior to adoption of Core Strategy policies. The small courtyard development to the side and rear of 38 Wharfedale Road although relatively tight by comparison with neighbouring properties, nevertheless have both off-street parking and private amenity space and appear more spacious within their respective plots than the appeal property. Finally, the infill development at 36 Croft Road has altogether different characteristics including a spacious arrangement and symmetry with neighbouring properties.
9. Having regard to the above, I conclude that the proposal would result in the overdevelopment of a restricted plot, which would appear incongruous in the street scene. Accordingly, it would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with Core Strategy Policies PCS5 and PCS23 and with the National Planning Policy Framework through ensuring that sufficient land can be assembled where plot severance is involved and through promoting high standards of design that complements local character and distinctiveness. Furthermore, the Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and I therefore attach significant weight to this consideration.
10. I have taken into account the points advanced by the appellant, including the relative height of the proposed dwelling and the prevention of overlooking. It is appreciated that the proposal would provide a low cost housing solution and meet policies directed at promoting affordable housing. However, these matters in favour of the proposal do not overcome the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Gareth W Thomas

INSPECTOR