
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2017

by N A Holdsworth MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31/08/17

Appeal Ref: APP/J2210/D/17/3172621
Midway, Boyden Gate Hill, Chislet CT3 4ED

- 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 N Hollingworth against the decision of Canterbury City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01044, dated 9 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is proposed alterations, extensions and remodelling works.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. In July 2017 the Council adopted the Canterbury District Local Plan. In consequence, policies DBE 3 and DBE 10 of the Canterbury District Local Plan Deposit Draft 2014 have now become policies DBE 3 and DBE 6 of the adopted Canterbury District Local Plan 2017. Policy BE1 of the Canterbury District Local Plan 2006, as referred to in the Council's decision notice no longer has any weight. I have dealt with the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal building comprises a bungalow that forms part of a cluster of three dwellings within a countryside setting. In addition to the appeal building there is a larger building facing on to Boyden Gate Hill hosting two semi-detached dwellings, and a number of smaller outbuildings. The countryside around this cluster of buildings is characterised by orchards, fields of various sizes and scattered groups of trees. There are no other residential buildings in close proximity to the site.
5. Whilst it is some distance away from the other dwellings and within its own curtilage, the limited height and simple form of its low pitched roof means that the existing single storey building has a subservient relationship to the pair of semi-detached dwellings facing Boyden Gate Hill. In consequence, the latter building is the prominent feature in the current landscape setting.

6. The appeal proposal would add an additional storey to the existing bungalow within an extended building footprint, beneath a complex roof structure. Because of the additional bulk created by these works, the extended building would be considerably more prominent in the surrounding landscape when viewed from the road and surrounding fields. Instead of appearing as a subservient part of the existing cluster of buildings, it would appear as an isolated development in its own right, competing for attention with the other residential building.
7. In consequence the development would result in an encroachment of built form which is not consistent with its countryside setting. Its effects would not be mitigated by the maturing of landscaping features in close proximity to the site, nor could it be concealed through further planting. Such landscape features are by their nature temporary; they would change over the lifetime of the development and their long-term retention cannot be guaranteed.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would conflict with policies DBE3 and DBE6 of the Canterbury District Local Plan 2017 which, amongst other things, requires proposals to have regard to the landscape and townscape character of their locality.

Other matters

9. The appellants draw attention to environmentally friendly elements of the proposal that are considered to constitute sustainability benefits, and the contrast with the materials used in the construction of the existing building. I agree that the extended building is well-designed and attractive in its own right, and would provide a high standard of residential accommodation for future occupiers. It is likely to have an improved environmental performance compared with the existing building. However, these benefits would not outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area. The design of the extended building would not be compatible with its wider setting, and it would not meet the test of being truly outstanding or innovative having regard to paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
10. Whilst the appellants consider that the Council do not have a five year housing land supply, no new residential unit is being created. It would not therefore have any significant effect on the overall supply of housing within Canterbury. In broader terms the Framework is clear that proposals should respond to local character, which for the reasons set out above I consider this proposal fails to do.
11. I have noted that the proposal would be located in reasonably close proximity to an existing settlement, and that there would be some economic benefits of the development principally through the construction activity generated. I also note that the appellants run a public house in the nearby settlement of Boyden Gate, and the proposal would enable them to live in close proximity to their workplace. However, no evidence has been put forward to suggest that this housing need could not be served by the existing building. Furthermore, the proposed works would remain long after such circumstances had ceased to be relevant. I therefore attach very little weight to this argument. These factors, even when taken together with the other benefits of the development, would

not outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.

12. I have also considered the various examples put before me of other developments within the surrounding area. This decision has been made on the basis of the individual circumstances of the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Neil Holdsworth

INSPECTOR