
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 May 2018

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 June 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/G1250/D/18/3197901
35 Hawden Road, Bournemouth, BH11 8RP

- 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 and Mrs Stockley against the decision of Bournemouth Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2017-23285-B, dated 21 December 2017, was refused by notice dated 20 February 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single-storey rear extension and roof extension including front and rear gables and side dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a single-storey rear extension and roof extension including front and rear gables and side dormer at 35 Hawden Road, Bournemouth, BH11 8RP, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 7-2017-23285-B, dated 21 December 2017, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drg 17-RG/217/001, 17-RG/217/002 A, 17-RG/217/003 A and 17-RG/217/004.
 - 3) The proposed windows in the dormer extension serving Bed 2 and the shower room shall be fitted with obscure glass. In the case of the window in the dormer extension serving Bed 2 this shall be fixed shut unless the parts of the window which can be opened are more than 1.7m above the floor of the room in which the window is to be installed. The windows shall be permanently retained as such.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow largely unaltered from its original form. It sits amongst a row of nine similar properties on the south side of the road but with some modified to various degrees. Although part of this group, in my view it is too simplistic to see the proposal as a random act of change that would be inevitably harmful.
4. This part of Hawden Road contains 26 dwellings in total along both sides of the road for a reasonably short and straight length that runs between Highmoor Road to the west and Sunnymoor Road to the east. It appears apparent that the properties would almost all originally have been of homogenous appearance. That is no longer the case. There are three neighbouring properties at Nos 45, 47 and 49, on the same side of the road as the appeal property, which have all been altered in a similar form to that proposed at No 35. There are two properties on the opposite side at Nos 42 and 46 that have also been modified in ways that are comparable to that now proposed. In addition to this there are other noticeable roof alterations to other properties including an example of a front dormer at No 31 and a side dormer at No 37. When taking in the vista along this stretch of Hawden Road, in both directions, these changes are visible to varying degrees and are key component parts of the overall street scene. More importantly, where the alterations have demonstrably altered the roof configuration of the original property, the changes did not strike me as jarring or intrusive.
5. The original dwellings have reasonably low profile, hipped roofs but with forward projecting gables that span roughly half the width of the front elevations. Unlike the examples of purely hipped roof bungalows illustrated on page 16 of the Council's Residential Extensions - A Design Guide for Householders (September 2008) where it deals with roof alterations, the gables along Hawden Road appear as prominent features in the street scene, with most painted white and standing proud. In common with the other similarly altered properties, the existing front gable to No 35 would be retained, albeit with a slight, but not significantly, modified pitch. This would maintain a rhythm to the façades of the buildings along this side of the road, as exemplified by the similar changes at Nos 45 and 47 in particular. The proposal would modify the main hip and add a further, more dominant gable. But this would be wholly proportionate to the more subservient gable feature and would not be alien to the area.
6. The other key point I saw of note was that the existing gable features project a series of obvious ridge lines that extend towards the road but lower than the ridge heights to the main roofs. The significance of ridge lines would not ordinarily be apparent within a street of wholly hipped roofed bungalows where ridges would otherwise appear fairly short and recessed, but these features specific to these properties are again prominent. What they add is a noticeable variation and horizontal emphasis to the profile of the buildings when viewed within the street scene. The other altered buildings add further step changes by their increased overall heights and continuous ridge lines, but they are not particularly strident. In this regard the increased height to No 35 would be similarly conforming.

7. The Council's Design Guide rightly expresses caution where the introduction of a gable end in a row of properties with pitched roofs can make the property appear over dominant in the street scene and generally unacceptable. But for the reasons I have explained, I am satisfied that the gable roof design and overall scale of the changes to No 35 would not be incongruous in its setting due to the particular design of the original properties and the changes that have happened along this part of Hawden Road, including those similar alterations that have been permitted by the local planning authority.
8. The Design Guide states that dormers with a horizontal emphasis and flat roofs should be avoided. The side dormer in this case would have a roof pitched at a shallower angle to the side roof slope. It would undeniably have a horizontal emphasis, but it would be set up from the eaves, down from the ridge, and away from the property's front and rear elevations. It would be well proportioned and appropriately framed by the tiles on the side roof slope and overall it would appear as an integrated part of the building's modified roof, again as exemplified by other nearby properties.
9. The Council has relied heavily upon previous planning decisions for No 35 to support their arguments. I am particularly aware of the appeal decision (Ref APP/ G1250/A/08/2067476) that related to a planning application made in 2007 (Ref 7-2007-23285).
10. I have only been provided with extracts of the plans and parts of the Inspector's decision letter and I do not know what evidence was before them. However, it is clear from the information that I have, and by the Council's own admission within the officer's report, that despite similarities, the 2007 proposal was for a more extreme height increase and a much bulkier and top-heavy roof design. The Inspector specifically noted the '*greater height of the building and the steep roof pitch*' as being markedly at odds. In my assessment these are traits not overtly displayed by the current appeal proposal, with a much more measured and proportionate change envisaged. I am also conscious that the last appeal decision pre-dated the changes permitted to No 47. The Council suggest that the proposal at No 47 was '*understandably*' harder to resist because of the gable features either side at Nos 45 and 49. Regardless, the change that has occurred has become part of the established street scene.
11. I am aware that a further alternative application in 2009 (Ref 7-2009-23285-A) for roof alterations to No 35 was refused permission. However, this does not automatically indicate that any ridge height increase or roof alteration would be necessarily out of character or harmful. I have also noted the examples given in the officer's report where other Inspectors have dismissed appeals for changes to hip ended dwellings. I have no further details other than extracts of the Inspectors' reasonings but in each case they found evidence of harm, which I have not, having considered this appeal on its own merits.
12. Overall, I am not persuaded that any current degree of uniformity to the group of dwellings within which the appeal property sits is critical to defining the existing wider character and appearance of the area, which is generally of low rise dwellings but now more mixed in appearance. I am also satisfied that the changes proposed to No 35 could be assimilated into the street scene without appearing unduly prominent or incongruous. There would therefore be no

conflict with the advice contained in the Design Guide or with Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012) insofar as it seeks to ensure that development is designed to respect the site and its surroundings. For these same reasons there would be no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions

13. A condition specifying the relevant drawings is necessary as this provides certainty. The proposal is explicitly for the use of smooth render and weatherboard. The external finishes of other properties in the area is mixed. I therefore see no reason why the materials should match the existing building, as suggested by the Council. To safeguard the living conditions at 33 Hawden Road, it is necessary to control the glazing to be fitted within the dormer extension.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given, I am satisfied that the proposal would not harm the character or appearance of the area. Accordingly, in the absence of any other conflict with the development plan and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR