The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2018

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 July 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1255/D/18/3196203
15 Branksea Close, Poole BH15 4DR

- 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 Mrs P Sherman against the decision of Borough of Poole Council.
- The application Ref APP/17/01906/F, dated 14 December 2017, was refused by notice dated 8 February 2018.
- The development proposed is described as, extend to front, rear and side. New roof. Paved car standing to the front. Extend dropped kerb to the front.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect the development on the character and appearance of Branksea Close.

Reasons

3. Branksea Close is a straight cul-de-sac comprising a small development of single storey bungalows. They are characterised by tiled hipped roof forms, each of which features a principal gable of generally consistent height, width and pitch, orientated toward the street. I observed that many of the surrounding bungalows appear to have been have been enlarged from their original format. Where this has occurred, extensions have generally been accommodated beneath similar, visually subservient hipped roof forms complementing those of the original buildings. Though the original spacing between the bungalows has been eroded, the original generous spacing between the roof gables of neighbouring properties remains largely unchanged, and provides 'rhythm' to the layout. The high degree of uniformity between properties in spite of change lends a degree of distinctiveness to development in Branksea Close. This is made more striking in contrast to the far less visually coherent development which characterises adjoining Branksea Avenue.

4. The proposed enlargement of the bungalow would result in the gap between it and 16 Branksea Close becoming narrower than at present, and leave reduced back garden area. However with regard to the context, I am not persuaded that this would in itself result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

5. The same cannot however be said of the proposed design, and in particular the roof. The remodelled bungalow would feature a contemporary roof form that

would span the full width of the building. Though the highest point of the roof would be similar to that of the existing building, the form, angles of pitch and materials would otherwise be very different to both that of the existing roof, and others in Branksea Close. The difference would be accentuated and made prominent by the length and increased bulk of the roof, and the increased width of the frontage. These differences would be at odds with the established, characteristics of development in Branksea Close. They would provide a building that was both visually discordant and prominent within the street scene, and whose proportions and roof form interrupted the uniform appearance and regular rhythm of the existing layout. I consider that this would cause significant harm to the distinctive character and appearance of Branksea Close.

6. The appellant makes further reference to 29 Branksea Avenue, a large house with contemporary styling which stands at the junction with Branksea Close, and whose development apparently involved replacement of a bungalow. Whilst I do not have full details of this development, it obviously differs in appearance to the bungalows which characterise Branksea Close. However, given its peripheral location, I find that the property can be viewed as distinctly separate from others in Branksea Close, and as such it does not follow that this property provides a model or basis for change at No 15. Similarly the alterations undertaken to No 16 are not comparable enough to the appeal scheme to draw any direct comparisons.

7. I note the relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework to which the appellant refers, specifically in relation to design. However, they do not alter my judgement regarding the incompatibility of the proposed scheme with the surrounding built form, and the considerable harm to the character of the street that I have identified.

8. The scheme also includes a dropped kerb that would serve a parking area in the front garden. This would require loss of the existing front boundary. The Council appears to raise no objection to these arrangements, which, notwithstanding the loss of plot enclosure this would entail, would reflect those of some other properties within Branksea Close. I have accordingly given consideration to whether it would be appropriate to issue a split decision allowing these aspects of the appeal scheme. I conclude that as the parking layout and access proposed directly relates to the layout and design of building and garaging proposed, the two aspects of the development are not sensibly considered separate, and therefore a split decision would not be appropriate.

9. The development would not be in accordance with Policy PCS23 of the Poole Core Strategy, which seeks amongst other things, to ensure that development respects the setting and character of a site and the surrounding area. Whilst Policy DM1 of the Poole Site Specific Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document is also referenced by the Council, this directs attention back to Policy PCS23, and contains no additional provisions with which the development would clearly be in breach.

Other Matters

10. The appellant indicates that the development would provide more suitable accommodation with regard to personal needs, and for disabled visitors. With reference to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in the Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010), I have due regard under Section 149 of the EA 2010 to the

requirement to take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic. The EA 2010 defines disability as one such characteristic. These needs would be principally met within the proposed design by provision of a quiet bedroom, an easier to maintain garden, and more suitable parking facilities. Whilst dismissal of the appeal would not meet these needs, I have not been provided with any evidence to show that the existing property cannot be reasonably adapted to serve the same needs, or that a scheme of enlargement more in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing building and that of Branksea Close cannot be designed and built.

11. The appellant's additional points that the building would be better insulated than the existing dwelling, avoid adverse neighbour impacts by virtue of overlooking or loss of light, and would result in removal of an unattractive garage are acknowledged, but they do not outweigh the harm that I have identified above.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above the appeal is dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR