The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 March 2019

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date:20 March 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/G1250/D/18/3217771
7 Gerald Road, Bournemouth BH3 7JY

- 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 Sam Howell against the decision of Bournemouth Borough Council.
- The application, Ref. 7-2018-27188, dated 13 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 October 2018.
- The development proposed is a single storey side and rear extension & replacement roof for existing garage.

Application for Costs

1. An application for costs has been made by Mr and Mrs Sam Howell against Bournemouth Borough Council. This is the subject of a separate Decision.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (i) the adequacy of the information submitted as part of the application, and (ii) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings.

Reasons

4. On the first issue, the Council considers that the application plans are inadequate for a full planning appraisal to be made in respect of the proposals. Leaving that matter temporarily aside, in common with the Council I take the view that the plans do indicate the proposed extent of footprint. In relation to the site boundaries this can be seen from the Ordnance Survey (OS) extract in Drawing No. HOW2/201 rA, whilst Drawing No. HOW2/208 rA also provides a partial explanation of the proposed uses of the buildings, albeit without the site's boundaries.

5. On this plan the existing garage is annotated 'RETAINED' with no further information, although I note from the grounds of appeal that its current use is the provision of hobby space, as is the case with the lean-to at the side of the building.

6. The principle of a rear extension attached to the existing dwelling to increase and improve the appellant's living space is acceptable in principle. And in any

event the grounds of appeal refer to the provisions of permitted development and prior approval, albeit both are subject to caveats that could have a restrictive effect on their implementation. However, I am aware that prior approval has now been obtained for an extension to the rear and that subject to implementation within the timescale this is a fall back for the appellants.

7. However even allowing for that fall back, the appeal scheme is more ambitious than the combination of prior approval and permitted development. The OS based drawing referred to above shows a new building to replace the lean-to at the side of the house which would formalise most of the dwelling occupying the full width of the plot; the rear extension similarly stretching across the full width of the site, and the retained garage which would extend the built form along the boundary to No. 9 to within a short distance of the rear boundary.

8. Bearing in mind that the Council's Residential Extensions Design Guide seek to ensure that alterations and extensions to a dwelling respect its original character and be proportionate to the original in size, scale and footprint, I consider that the Council is right, ostensibly at least, to raise concerns as to the extent of the additions proposed. On the other hand, in favour of the proposal is that the garage, a small rear extension and a lean to that infills space to the boundary are already there and these merit being given weight in the appraisal. In addition, there is a reasonable likelihood that the appearance of the existing side extension and garage would be improved by their redevelopment and re-roofing respectively.

9. Nonetheless, on the basis of the information available it would appear likely that the appeal scheme would be harmful to the character and appearance of both the original dwelling and its surroundings. In respect of the latter, Gerald Road is characterised by detached dwellings on medium sized plots and in my view this requires some restraint on the amount of plot coverage, as the erosion of the space around the buildings will cumulatively undermine its relatively spacious character. There are several options for the appeal scheme to be remedied in this regard but in its current form I regard it as being in harmful conflict with Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy 2012; the Council's Extension Design Guide, and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

10. The somewhat equivocal nature of my finding above arises from the first issue relating to the adequacy of the application. The grounds of appeal say that there was a covering letter *'which can be supplied by the appellant if necessary'.* This could and should have been supplied as part of the appeal documentation but I have not had sight of it, including checking the portal.

11. Be that as it may, the more fundamental concern is that the submitted drawings do not sufficiently illustrate or explain the proposal. I have only a vague idea as to the appearance of the extensions and the garage roof, whilst the plans also provide little or no information on the layout of accommodation and the details of door and window openings. As they are sketch plans with single lines representing the walls, I also consider I am unable to rely with any confidence on the accuracy of the stated 1:100 scale.

12. I therefore entirely endorse the criticisms in the officer's report as to the application as a whole and the plans in particular precluding the necessary full

and fair appraisal that a planning application deserves, including the favourable points I refer to at the end of paragraph 8 above.

13. In the event of the appeal being allowed it is Government policy to include a condition that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans 'for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning'. However, even if I had been minded to allow this appeal, my preliminary reservations as to the extent of the extensions and resultant plot coverage notwithstanding, I would be unable to impose this condition. This is because it would be essentially meaningless and could not be enforced because of the absence of information and poor quality of the drawings.

14. I have noted the comments in the appeal statement that the plans are *'more than adequate to make an informed judgement'* but in the context of a planning application I disagree. The submitted plans raise rather than avoid doubt and to use them as the basis of decision on a planning application is in my judgement not in the interests of proper planning.

15. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR