

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 May 2019

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st May 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B9506/D/19/3223045

7 Durrant Way, Sway, Lymington SO41 6DQ

- 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 N Banks against the decision of the New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application, Ref. 18/00866, dated 1 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 2 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a two storey side extension to form a double garage with master suite over. Conversion of the existing garage into study and utility. Front extension to living room and bedroom 3 over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings, in particular the street scene of Durrant Way.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that the character and appearance of Durrant Way is largely defined by its apparent origins as a co-ordinated scheme by a single developer in the manner of an estate development, albeit with a more traditional suburban layout and plot characteristics. The effect of this is a commonality of design, scale and external materials, a limited range of house types and broadly similar plot sizes.
 4. In this regard, I note that Nos. 7 and 9 are handed versions of the same dwelling type, with the difference that No. 9 has a detached rather than an integral garage – quite possibly due to a subsequent permission. The reason for their larger than normal plots is explained in the grounds of appeal.
 5. Whilst this commonality has the benefit of a harmonious and visually coherent street scene, enhanced by the remarkable consistency of the beech hedges defining the frontages, it also imposes significant constraints as regards extensions and alterations to individual dwellings and their relationships to their plots. And in my view this requires the achievement of a fine balance between on the one hand the understandable aspirations of householders to improve and enlarge their houses and on the other hand maintaining the more pleasing
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aspects of the character and appearance of the individual buildings and the street scene as a whole.

6. Applying this assessment to the appeal scheme, although the proposal is not without merit with some consistency of design and a degree of subservience, I nonetheless consider that it would be of an overall size and frontage width relative to the plot that would draw the eye as being incongruously large in its context.
7. Paragraph 2.2 of the appeal statement says that the average gaps between the flank wall of the Durrant Way houses and their side boundaries is 3.5m, but paragraph 3.3 then explains that the proposal would leave a gap of 2.6 metres to the western boundary. There would therefore be a below-average gap to the boundary for an extended house that, because of its larger size, would not unreasonably necessitate an above-average separation to the footpath. This is to enable it to be perceived as both sitting comfortably in its plot and maintaining the relatively spacious character of the road.
8. I am also concerned that insufficient consideration has been given to the possibility of No. 9 being extended at some time in the future. Leaving aside the minor feature of its detached garage, No. 9 is not only the same house type as No. 7 but also has the same distance of 9m to the boundary with the footpath. If I were to allow the appeal it could be difficult, in all fairness, to resist a very similar proposal to this appeal scheme. And in this event, when the two extended houses were read together in Durrant Way there would be a significantly adverse effect on the street scene.
9. Accordingly, I consider that an appropriate yardstick for assessing the scale and siting for any revision of the current appeal scheme would be to have regard to the possibility of it being seen with a future extension to No. 9. I appreciate that this is not a matter that the appellant would regard as being important, but it seems to me factoring in this consideration is more likely to achieve the appropriate balance that I have referred to in paragraph 5 above.
10. Indeed, given that Nos. 7 and 9 were originally built as a handed pair of the same house type and the same distance from the footpath, it seems reasonable to conclude that retaining the opportunity for some form of symmetry between them is essential to avoid the harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings than would occur if I were to allow the appeal. A further consequence would be to avoid the current outcome of the appeal proposal being in harmful conflict with Policies DP1, DP6, DP11 & CP8 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD 2010; the NPA's Design Guide SPD 2011, and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.
11. I have had regard to all other matters raised, including the appellant's detailed assessment of the extension's effects in terms of the main issue. However, this does not alter my view that for the reasons set out I should dismiss the appeal.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR