
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 September 2019

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B1740/W/19/3222535

53 Parsonage Barn Lane, Ringwood BH24 1PT

- 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 Paul and Sara Brothers against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/11348, dated 3 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is alterations to existing house and annexe to create additional separate dwelling, including re-design of amenity spaces and determination of requisite parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Amended drawings were submitted with the appeal, showing an alternative arrangement for the parking and amenity areas to serve the new dwelling. These drawings show a proposal that differs significantly from that submitted to the Council, and on which the views of interested parties were sought. Consequently, my consideration of the amended scheme would deny those who should have been consulted through the planning application process, the opportunity of such consultation. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the plans submitted to the Council.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies at the junction of Parsonage Barn Lane and Redwood Close, in a residential area of mixed housing designs. The existing house on the site fronts Parsonage Barn Lane, but it has a secondary vehicular access off Redwood Close. The house occupies a large plot, which is characteristic of the other houses in this row. Much of the rear garden is, however, taken up by an annexe that is attached to the main house. The annexe contains accommodation that would support self-contained occupation, but it is internally linked to the house. Its design, scale and relationship with the main house means that it has the appearance of an extension, within the original residential curtilage, rather than a separate entity.

5. The removal of the physical link between the buildings, and the formal subdivision of the curtilage, would significantly alter this relationship. Although the dividing fence to the rear of the annexe would not be visible from public viewpoints, the overall severance of the plot would be clearly discernible through the lack of any physical connection between the two buildings, and the solid boundary treatment between the former annexe and Redwood Close. The resultant appearance would be two separate dwellings on uncharacteristically restricted plots.
6. The rear elevation of the main house would be only 3.5 metres from the side elevation of the new dwelling, resulting in a visibly uncomfortable relationship between the two buildings. The shortened rear garden of the host property would be out of keeping with the spacious rear gardens that characterise this part of Parsonage Barn Lane. The new dwelling would directly abut the realigned rear boundary of the host property, and it would also be very close to its northern and eastern boundaries. Being so close to three of its boundaries, the new dwelling would have a very cramped appearance that would be out of character with the surrounding development.
7. The new dwelling would have a closer visual relationship with Redwood Close than Parsonage Barn Lane. This quiet cul-de-sac is characterised by bungalows with front gardens set behind low boundary walls and fences. The bungalows all have private rear amenity spaces to accommodate domestic paraphernalia, which means that the front gardens are uncluttered and well-planted, giving a spacious character to the Close. The frontage of the proposed new dwelling would, by contrast, accommodate a hardstanding and an enclosed pergola, with little scope for any planting. Although it has been suggested that the removal of part of the boundary fence would open up the Redwood Close frontage, the pergola would be a prominent and incongruous feature in the streetscene, that would be harmful to the appearance of the Close.
8. There would be no useable outdoor amenity space to the sides or rear of the new dwelling. Whilst it is suggested that the area to the rear of the existing annexe could be used, I saw that this was a narrow area, sandwiched between the rear of the building and a high boundary fence. It would not be suitable to accommodate garden furniture and would, in any event, receive little sunlight. The pergola would provide an area of reasonably private outdoor amenity space to serve the needs of the occupants of the new dwelling. However, the lack of any other outdoor space means that it would have to accommodate all the usual outdoor equipment associated with an independent residential use, such as tables, chairs, washing lines, etc. The presence of these features so close to the frontage would emphasise the cramped nature of the development.
9. The proposed dwelling would only have one bedroom, nevertheless, there would still be a requirement for outdoor seating and clothes drying, albeit that there may be less need for children's play equipment. My attention has been drawn to a recent residential conversion at 86 Parsonage Barn Lane, where the lack of alternative outdoor space has not resulted in the proliferation of domestic paraphernalia in the outdoor area at the front of the properties. I saw, however, that the entire front forecourt of this development was in use for parking vehicles, so it did not lend itself to the placement of domestic equipment.

10. I am mindful that the application leading to this appeal sought to overcome the reasons that led to the dismissal of a previous appeal¹. Whilst the proposals before me would provide more amenity space for the host dwelling, I note that this has resulted in a reduction in the proposed plot size for the new dwelling.
11. I therefore conclude that the separation of the annexe, to create a new detached dwelling, would result in a cramped form of development that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy CS2 of the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Core Strategy (2009). This Policy seeks to ensure that new development is well designed to respect the character, identity, and context of the area. Furthermore, the development would not accord with the aim of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) to achieve well-designed places.

Other Matters

12. The site is near the New Forest European Sites and the Solent Coastal European Sites, which are European Designated Sites afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (the Habitats Regulations). The Habitats Regulations require that permission for development may only be granted after it has been ascertained that it will not affect the integrity of the European sites. The Council has determined, through an Appropriate Assessment (AA), that the proposal would have significant effects on the features of interest of the SPAs, due to the increase in recreational use. The AA concludes, however, that the necessary mitigation could be delivered. As I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter any further.

Planning Balance

13. The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of land for housing. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework, the tilted balance should apply to the proposal. The additional dwelling would contribute to reducing the housing shortfall in the District in a location where services are easily accessible by sustainable transport modes. It is also suggested that the relatively modest size of the dwelling may make it affordable to local residents.
14. However, the benefits of a single dwelling to the housing supply situation would be modest, and no mechanism has been offered to ensure that the dwelling would meet the Framework's definition of affordable housing. I therefore find that the benefits are limited. Consequently, the harm that the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the area significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal Decision APP/B1740/W/16/3163552