
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2019

by Andrew Bremford BSc (Hons) MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B1740/W/19/3236951

14 Fieldway, Ringwood BH24 1QL

- 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 Dawkins against the decision of New Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/11675, dated 29 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 26 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of detached bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site has a planning history which includes several planning applications for a dwelling, the most recent of which was dismissed at appeal¹. The proposal before me is for a detached bungalow in more or less the same position but of reduced scale to the application dismissed at appeal in 2018.
4. The site is located at a tight looping bend in the road where Beechcroft Lane joins Fieldway; the road layout is such that it lies within a prominent corner location.
5. There is a detached bungalow on the site, 14 Fieldway, which along with the neighbouring detached bungalow, 12 Fieldway, are the only two properties on the inside of the bend in the road. Both are positioned well behind the main front elevations of the properties either side of them fronting onto Beechcroft Lane and Fieldway respectively. As a result of the layout of development Nos 12 and 14 are positioned within reasonably generous sized plots with spacious side gardens, which along with tall hedges and other foliage, combine to give the street-scene a verdant and spacious appearance which relates well to the tight looping bend in the road. The spacious layout of development is a distinctive characteristic of the surrounding area to which the appeal site makes a positive contribution towards.

¹ Reference APP/B1740/W/17/3178433

6. The proposal would sub-divide the plot and erect a 2-bedroom bungalow within the side garden of No 14. Although the siting of the proposed bungalow is in line with the front elevation of No 14, the east elevation of the bungalow would project forward of the front elevation of the neighbouring property 9 Beechcroft Lane. It would therefore disrupt the aforementioned layout of development, effectively projecting out into the side garden area and in doing so not relate well to the siting of the neighbouring property on Beechcroft Lane.
7. Notwithstanding the appellant's intention to retain the tall hedging along the Beechcroft Lane frontage, in local views from Fieldway, set against the open spacious character of the area, the development would appear prominent because it would occupy the open part of the site formed in part by the tight looping bend in the road. By virtue of its siting and thus relationship with No 14 the proposal would appear cramped, result in a loss of openness and therefore fail to respect the characteristic spacious layout of existing development in the immediate area.
8. Although there is a variation in the scale and architectural style of the properties in the vicinity of the site, the width of the north elevation of the proposed bungalow would be noticeably narrower than the north elevation of No 14. Moreover, although the eaves height reflects that of No 14 the roof height would be conspicuously lower. The appellant points out that the front door of the proposed bungalow faces Beechcroft Lane, therefore this will be the primary elevation. Thus, the north elevation would be the side elevation. However, overall, the scale of the proposed bungalow would be unsympathetic and out of keeping with neighbouring properties. Taking into account the close proximity of the proposed bungalow to No 14, the difference in scale would be particularly noticeable and as such the development would appear out of place within the street-scene.
9. For the reasons outlined above, the development would be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, it would conflict with Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy for the New Forest District outside the National Park and the National Planning Policy Framework which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that new development is appropriate and sympathetic to local character and its setting in terms of its layout and scale.

Other Matters

10. The appeal site is located in close proximity to the New Forest and Solent Coast European nature conservation sites. Regulation 63(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 indicates the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment is only necessary where the competent authority is minded to approve planning permission. Thus, given my overall conclusion on the main issue it has not been necessary for me to pursue this matter any further.
11. I recognise that the appellant has attempted to overcome the concerns previously raised but the design amendments would still result in a proposal that would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area for the reasons I have outlined. In any event, I have come to my decision based on the appeal proposal alone and not by way of comparison as to whether it is preferred to the earlier proposals.

12. I have considered this appeal proposal on its individual planning merits and none of the other matters raised alter or outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

13. There is no dispute between the main parties that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in Paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is engaged. Permission should therefore be granted unless any adverse effects associated with the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
14. The proposal would seek to boost the supply of housing in the context that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a deliverable five-year supply of housing land. However, the proposal is only for one new dwelling and therefore its contribution to future housing provision would be very small. I have no doubt that the occupiers of the dwelling would help to support local facilities and services, although the economic contribution from the occupiers of one dwelling would not in itself be a very significant benefit. Furthermore, the proposal would lead to some employment at construction stage albeit that this would be short lived. These are all positive matters to weigh in the overall planning balance.
15. Against this I have found that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. I afford significant weight to this matter as part of the determination of this appeal.
16. In this case, the identified adverse impacts would not be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the benefits of the proposal when considered against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Consequently, and for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Bremford

INSPECTOR