
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 February 2020

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/D/19/3234007

5 Charlmead, East Wittering PO20 8DN

- 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 Cheshire against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application Ref EWB/19/00731/DOM, dated 8 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is first floor extension to existing bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the planning application form. It differs from that on the decision notice and the appeal form which is creation of habitable space at first floor level. My decision is based on the description in the heading above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Impact on the character and appearance of the host property and wider surrounding area;
 - Impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of 6 Charlmead, with particular reference to privacy; and
 - Whether the proposed development would provide appropriate living conditions for future occupants, with particular reference to flood risk.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a detached hipped roof bungalow in a private road within a residential estate. The housing area includes a mix of dwelling designs and materials, including single storey, chalet style and two storey dwellings, of traditional and contemporary designs. Charlmead is characterised by detached bungalows, which, on the appeal site side of the road, typically have an elongated footprint, reflecting long, narrow, plots within which they are sited. A

number of the original bungalows have been altered or extended to provide first floor living accommodation, including No.4 adjacent to the site. As a result, a variety of roof forms are evident in the street scene, including side dormers, front gables, balconies and roof lights. There is also a mix of materials, including tiles, slate, timber cladding and render.

5. As such, extending the appeal property to provide first floor living accommodation, in principle, would not be out of keeping with the prevailing pattern of development within the site locality. The appeal property already has a contemporary appearance arising from the flat-roofed front, side and rear additions, incorporating timber clad walls, grey metallic window and door frames and a large proportion of glazing on the front and rear elevations. As such, a contemporary design style is not inappropriate for any future additions to the property.
6. Notwithstanding the above, the proposal would replace the original hipped roof with a box-shaped roof that bears no resemblance to the original roof form characteristic of this part of Charlmead. The combined height, width and depth of the extension in comparison to the ground floor of the property, means it would comprise an over-dominant, top-heavy addition to the building. This is particularly evident on the front and side elevations, where the eaves-to-ridge height of the roof would be greater than the ground-to-eaves height of the original part of the dwelling. Also, the three large floor-to-ceiling windows and timber shutters on the front elevation would be significantly larger than the double doors and small window below. The proposed roof 'overhang' would also emphasise the top-heavy design of the proposed roof in comparison to the ground floor of the building.
7. The wide horizontal design of the new rear elevation windows would be at odds with the positioning and vertical design of the ground floor doors below, and the side elevations of the extension would be large, solid, and virtually devoid of features of interest, apart from a single high-level window. These factors serve to emphasise the incongruous design of the proposal in relation to the ground floor. The result would be a visually dominant and discordant addition to the property which would materially harm the character and appearance of the host property.
8. The proposal would be visible in the street scene above the front boundary wall. The proposed ridge height would not be out of keeping with those of the neighbouring properties. However, as a result of its bulk and scale and dissonant design in relation to the host property, and its box-shaped form in contrast to the traditional pitched and hipped roofs of the neighbouring properties in Charlmead, the proposal would appear as a visually dominant and discordant feature within the street scene, drawing the eye and detracting from the character and appearance of this part of the townscape.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to a variety of different architectural styles, including contemporary extensions and replacement dwellings, within the wider residential area. I acknowledge the variety of development within the estate. I raise no objection to the principle of a contemporary designed extension. However, these developments do not persuade me to come to an alternative view with regard to this main issue and the impact of the proposal upon the host property and the immediate street scene. I must determine this

appeal on its individual planning merits and on the particular circumstances of the appeal site.

10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed first floor extension would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider surrounding area. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the aims of Policy 33 of the Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies 2014-2029 (2015) (CLP) which seeks to ensure that development proposals meet the highest standards of design, including respecting, and where possible, enhancing, the character of the surrounding area and site and its setting in terms of its proportion, form, massing, height, size, scale, and detailed design. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Policies of the Framework which seek to secure high quality design as set out in Chapter 12.

Living conditions of neighbours

11. I do not consider that there would be a materially harmful impact on the privacy of the occupiers of the neighbouring property to the west of the site arising from the proposed rear elevation first floor windows. In making this judgement, I have noted the set-back position of that property in relation to No.5, and the position of windows and doors on its side elevation. I find the juxtaposition of the proposal in relation to No.6, and the recessed design of the proposed rear first floor windows, means that any overlooking to No.6 would be over its driveway and garage and rear garden, rather than directly to the side. I consider that overlooking from rear elevation first floor windows to neighbouring rear gardens is an expected occurrence within urban residential environments.
12. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not result in a materially harmful impact on the privacy of the occupiers of No.6 Charlmead. In this respect, the proposal would accord with CLP Policy 33, in so far as it aims to ensure that new residential development respects neighbouring amenity.

Flood Risk

13. The third refusal reason is based on the Council's position that the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3, and that the planning application did not include a flood risk assessment to demonstrate that the proposal would be appropriately safeguarded from flood risk, in accordance with CLP Policy 42. The appellant's statement of case includes an extract from the Environment Agency Flood Risk Map suggesting that the site lies within Flood Zone 1. However, since I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, there is no need for me to consider the flood risk implications further, since this will not affect the outcome of the appeal. As such, I have not referred this matter back to the main parties to determine whether or not the proposal accords with CLP Policy 42.

Other Matters

14. The appellant has sought pre-application advice from the Council which has resulted in an amended scheme from that originally proposed. Whilst the changes to the scheme have been noted, this does not alter my findings with respect to the current scheme.
15. I have noted the accessible location of the site within the settlement boundary, the support for the proposal from the occupier of the neighbouring property,

and that the Parish Council has raised no objection to the scheme. However, these matters do not overcome the harm I have identified in respect of the first main issue.

16. The officer report refers to concerns in respect of neighbouring outlook and sense of space. These matters are not elaborated upon within the officer report, nor specifically referred to in the council's refusal reasons. As such, there is no need for me to consider them further, as the development is unacceptable for other reasons.

Conclusion

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

S Leonard

INSPECTOR