



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2020

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/19/3240208

6 Clarendon Road, Bournemouth BH4 8AJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr D Cracklen of Clarendon Homes (Westbourne) Ltd against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2019-7957-I, dated 6 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing building and the erection of 8 flats with associated access and parking (Revised Scheme).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The planning application was submitted in outline, seeking approval for all matters aside from landscaping. I assessed the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. Mindful of my statutory duty under the Act¹, I consider the main issue to be whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Cliff and Poole Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. No.6 Clarendon Road is a large detached house located within the West Cliff and Poole Hill Conservation Area (the CA). It falls within the Marlborough Road Character Area of the CA, as set out within the West Cliff and Poole Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (the CAA). Whilst the CAA is an emerging document, it is nonetheless material and informative as a guide.
5. The significance of this part of the CA is drawn from its villas and apartment buildings set within luxuriant, treed gardens. Materials are somewhat mixed, but there is a preference towards red brick walling and detailing, bay windows and hipped and gabled roofs clad in slate or tile. The overall effect is a spacious and high-status garden suburb. Although of Victorian origin, the CA is not defined only by this epoch, but also by its growth through other periods.
6. No.6 is one of three interwar period dwellings at the junction of Clarendon Road and Portarlington Road, the others being No.8 Clarendon Road and No.5 Portarlington Road, which were built following the demolition of a Victorian villa. Whilst No.6 has dense greenery to its roadside boundary, its entrance, first

¹ Section 72(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

floor and roof profile were all clearly visible from Clarendon Road during my visit. The front, west elevation is composed of an oriel window poised above an attractive brick archway entrance. The building turns its south west corner with a full height bay window dissected by a brick buttress feature, with its south frontage containing a larger bay, also to the eaves. Its tiled roof is punctuated by brick stacks, and it has a mass and domestic form which is comfortable within its generous garden plot. As such, whilst I acknowledge that No.6 has undergone a degree of insensitive alteration, it retains its architectural merit and exudes the CA's garden suburb aesthetic².

7. Furthermore, No.6 and its siblings share this design theme and, whilst greenery restricts much of their direct intervisibility, they are read together as one travels the public realm. Given their collective origin and the quality of their shared design, these dwellings have historic value as a small but interesting interwar phase of the CA's development. For these reasons, the appeal site, including the standing building, contributes positively to the CA's significance³.
8. The proposed building would be modern but embrace features and finishes prevalent within the CA, which is a sound approach. As the site is heavily treed, the proposed felling of trees of low amenity value would not be unacceptable in itself. That being said, the building would be perceptibly larger, and its scale would be emphasised by the opening up of the site, with opportunities for further planting likely to be limited by the extensive parking areas. These areas, in whatever finish, and the associated parked vehicles, would be appreciable through the site entrance and would predominate the outside space in my view. The bin and cycle stores would add to the intensity of built form within the site. As such, the scheme would unacceptably weaken the verdant and spacious quality of the land, and therefore the site's contribution to the CA.
9. The appellant has directed me to two appeal decisions at 5-7 Clarendon Road, which is almost directly opposite the site⁴. However, the dwellings therein are of different design and merit to No.6 and their circumstances are materially different as they fall outside of the CA in any case. These decisions have therefore carried very limited weight in my assessment.
10. Drawing my findings together, the scheme would remove a building which contributes positively to the CA and replace it with a development of negative effect. It follows that, overall, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the CA. Any such harm nonetheless merits great weight in accordance with Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and falls to be weighed in the balance with the public benefits of the development. I return to this later in my decision.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Cliff and Poole Hill Conservation Area. It would conflict with the heritage and design aims of Policies 4.4, 4.25 and 6.10 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan (adopted 2002), Policies CS21, CS39 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (adopted 2012). The proposal would also be contrary to the advice of the Framework to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

² With consideration of the findings within the appellant's Heritage Statement by Forum Heritage Services (2019)

³ Taking account of the guidance within Historic England's Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition, 2019)

⁴ Appeal Refs: APP/G1250/W/19/3222214 and APP/G1250/W/19/3226349

Other Matters

12. The site is within the influence of the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area and the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (the Protected Sites). There is no dispute that the proposal would likely, in combination with other housing schemes elsewhere, have a significant adverse effect on the Protected Sites through increased recreation. To that end, the appellant has supplied a Unilateral Undertaking to secure necessary mitigation. Had I been minded to allow the appeal, it would have been necessary for me to consider this matter within an Appropriate Assessment. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I have not taken it further.

Planning Balance

13. The appellant has stated that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Paragraph 11 d) of the Framework states that in such circumstances permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development. Pursuant to footnote 6, this includes instances of harm to designated heritage assets, such as Conservation Areas. The Framework therefore provides a clear reason for refusing the proposal in any event, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is not engaged.
14. The government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing and the scheme would reuse the land to provide eight homes within an accessible, town location. Taking into account both the identified housing need in the area, but also the minor scale of the development, I consider these to be public benefits which collectively attract moderate weight. They would not outweigh the harm to the CA, which I am bound to afford great weight in the balance.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict. Given such, and having considered all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR