
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 June 2020

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/20/3246884

20 Leicester Road, Poole BH13 6DA

- 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 D Russel against the decision of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Council.
 - The application Ref APP/19/01118/F, dated 2 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as sever land and erect a 4 bedroom detached house with integral garage and parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development provided on the planning application form contains the phrase 'revised scheme'. As this is not an act of development, I have omitted it from the description in the banner heading above.
3. The decision notice makes reference to both Branksome Park Conservation Area, and Branksome Park and Chine Gardens Conservation Area. Based on the materials submitted these names each relate to the same conservation area. For this reason, and given that the most recent information with which I have been presented is entitled Branksome Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance 2006 (the SPG), I have made reference to Branksome Park Conservation Area as opposed to Branksome Park and Chine Gardens Conservation Area, below.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Branksome Park Conservation Area (the Conservation Area).

Reasons

5. The site is located within the Conservation Area. The significance of the Conservation Area derives in large part from the origins of the historic layout as a Victorian seaside suburb, characterised by deep plots, spacious landscaping and copious tree planting, and the good collection of large detached late nineteenth and early twentieth century dwellings it contains.

6. Along Leicester Road the historic plot pattern is clearly discernible from the street frontage. The dwellings on these plots are predominantly set well back, and to the rear of deep front gardens containing tall trees. Due to the extent of setback, combined with topography and planting, some dwellings are not visible, or only partially visible from the frontage. In these cases, plot spaciousness, depth and the visual contribution made to the character of the street scene by trees and other vegetation, are accentuated. This is indeed currently the case at the appeal site.
7. Within this context the proposed development would involve laterally splitting the existing plot and positioning a new dwelling atypically close to the street frontage. In this unusually prominent location, there would be little scope to establish landscaping of the type generally seen within front gardens along Leicester Road. Even in the event that some screening was introduced along the front boundary, it is likely that the dwelling would be readily viewed through the entrance. The atypical character of the tandem arrangement of dwellings would itself be clearly at odds with the historic layout and established pattern along Leicester Road, and appreciable to anyone entering the site, or visiting No 20. In all these regards the development would be incongruous whether or not the proposed architecture would be stylistically consistent with that of the Conservation Area at large. Consequently, the character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area would be harmed.
8. I note that the appeal scheme has sought to respond to a previous appeal Decision for development on the site, reference APP/Q1255/W/19/3225062 (the previous appeal). Insofar as the issues in the current appeal are fundamentally similar to those in the previous appeal, I see little reason to reach findings which differ from those of the previous Inspector. This includes with regard to the 3 other appeal Decisions cited which relate to other developments in the Conservation Area, where the particular contexts, developments, layouts and range of associated considerations differ. As such none serves to justify the harm that would be caused by the current appeal scheme.
9. I further acknowledge reference to an approved scheme at 11 Leicester Road. However, insofar as this involved the longitudinal splitting of a plot with dwellings set well back from the street frontage, it bears little resemblance to the development proposed.
10. In view of the above I find that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and that, with reference to paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the development would cause less than substantial harm. Having regard to the considerable importance and weight to be given to the statutory objective of preserving or enhancing conservation areas, I attach considerable importance and weight to the harm that would arise. The development would provide one additional unit of housing, with associated economic activity generated locally both during and after construction. The resulting benefits would however be very small in scale and nature, and in this case insufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the significance of the Conservation Area.
11. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the Conservation Area. It would therefore conflict with

Policy PP27 of the Poole Local Plan 2018 (the LP), which amongst other things seeks to secure development that reflects or enhances local patterns of development; Policy PP28 of the LP, which amongst other things restricts plot subdivisions to those where the type, layout and scale of development would preserve or enhance an area's residential character; and Policy PP30 of the LP, which expects development to preserve or enhance Poole's heritage assets.

Other Matters

12. Planning permission was partly refused on the basis that the scheme would fail to avoid or mitigate likely significant effects on the integrity of the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation, the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, and the Poole Harbour SPA and Ramsar sites, which would arise as a result of increased recreational pressure. The appellant did not contest the need for contributions towards avoidance measures in line with the Council's guidance, and indicated that a Unilateral Undertaking (UU) would be submitted during the course of the appeal to secure them. No UU has been received. Had I been minded to allow the appeal, and thus the circumstances existed in which planning permission could be granted, it would have been necessary for me to consider this matter in further detail. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, further consideration is not required.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR