
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: 03 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/20/3247233

52 Queens Park Avenue, Bournemouth BH8 9EY

- 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 R Haydon against the decision of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2019-22114-F, dated 1 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 28 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as demolition of existing building and erection of a pair of dwellinghouses with associated access, parking spaces and amenity space.
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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.

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 is located at the junction of Queen's Park Avenue with Burnham Drive. Notwithstanding the modest scale of the bungalow currently on site, the site itself has a significant degree of visual prominence within the street scene. This is due to its frontage on both roads, and the crescent shaped layout of the junction. The latter both increases the visual exposure of the site, and directs views towards it.
5. Queen's Park Avenue is strongly characterised by a regular layout of large plots containing detached 2-storey dwellings, set back from the street frontage. In contrast, Burnham Drive features more compact plots, containing a regular layout of detached single storey and chalet bungalows on steeply rising ground. Whilst the bungalow currently on the appeal site, and that on the opposite side of the junction, generally conform with the pattern along Burnham Drive, each forms a component of the street scene along Queen's Park Avenue.

6. The proposed development would entail the construction of a 'pair' of semi-detached 2-storey dwellings, and thus the splitting of the plot. Semi-detached dwellings are not characteristic of the area, and the appellant accepts this.
7. The proposed design thus seeks to present the appearance of a detached dwelling. Given that the 2-storey height of the building would find primary reference in development along Queen's Park Avenue, it is presumably the intention for the elevation facing Queen's Park Avenue to appear as the 'front', and that facing Burnham Drive to appear as the 'side'. However, each could be read as front elevations, which is of course what they would be. For this reason, and given that the shape and form of the building would otherwise comprise 2 distinct parts, it would be obvious to any observer that the building comprised 2 dwellings.
8. This impression would be confirmed by boundary treatments, and further reinforced if future occupants of the 2 dwellings treated the respective external parts of the building differently. I note that a subtle approach to plot subdivision has been proposed, however it is not clear how this would be achieved, or how this would avoid further differences developing in the way in which future occupants managed their adjoining garden spaces. For the above reasons the design would not successfully present itself as a detached dwelling, and the atypical character of the development would therefore be appreciable, and appear intrusive within its setting.
9. Analogies can be found for the size of the compact plots that would be created. However, in this case they would be viewed in combination with the atypical semi-detached building design proposed. This would provide the impression of a higher than usual level of development on the site, whether or not this was in fact mathematically the case. In this regard the development would appear at odds with the spacious layout and character of development along Queen's Park Avenue in particular, relative to which the scheme would appear as overdevelopment of the plot.
10. The decision notice also describes the proposed building as 'overly large', which I interpret as reference to its scale and massing. Detached dwellings of similar scale and mass can be found along Queen's Park Avenue. However, none is located immediately adjacent to the site. Moreover, the scale and massing of the building would be obviously at odds with that of the more modest chalet bungalows which currently characterise the streetscene along Burnham Drive. Perceived bulk would be increased by the partially flat roofed design, used in combination with shallower roof pitches than is typical along either Queen's Park Avenue or Burnham Drive, producing a somewhat boxy form. In each of the above regards the design would relate poorly to that of development within its setting.
11. I acknowledge that the frontage of the site would be partially screened by vegetation, and that this boundary treatment could be made more substantial. Nonetheless, the building would remain visible above this, and the high level of exposure to view from Queen's Park Avenue, from the junction, and from higher ground within Burnham Drive, would each accentuate its atypical and intrusive character.
12. Planning permission has been previously granted for development on the site, reference 7-2008-22114-D (the previously approved scheme). As this scheme appears to have lapsed it does not represent a fall-back. The design of the

previously approved scheme in any case substantially differed from that currently proposed. This is insofar as it would have involved construction of a detached, 1.5 storey dwelling featuring steeply pitched roofs, which, notwithstanding a larger footprint, would have been of more modest scale and massing over all. The previously approved scheme does not therefore provide a basis to consider that the impact of the current appeal scheme would be acceptable. I have therefore considered the latter on its own merits.

13. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies CS20, CS22 and CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy 2012 (the CS), and saved Policy 6.8 of the Bournemouth District Wide Local Plan 2002, which similarly require development to be not out of character/to be in keeping with the surrounding area/to respect the site and its surroundings/and to complement the character of neighbouring development; Policy CS6 of the CS, which amongst other things seeks to retain and enhance the features that contribute to a place's character; and supporting guidance contained within Residential Development: A Design Guide 2008.

Other Matters

14. My attention has been drawn to Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which supports the effective and efficient use of land, particularly in relation to identified needs for housing. Paragraph 122(d) however sets this within the context of the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting, which reflects broader design policy within the Framework. In this regard I see no fundamental conflict between the above cited policies and the Framework. The scheme would consequently conflict with both.
15. I further acknowledge that paragraph 68 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. However, whilst the site is clearly suitable for housing given that it is already in this use, the proposed development is not suited to the site. Consequently paragraph 68 does not lend support in favour of the scheme.
16. The lack of avoidance/mitigation for identified likely significant effects that the development would have on the integrity of the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area and Ramsar sites, and the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation, was also given as a reason for refusal of planning permission. The appellant indicated that payment of a financial contribution in line with local policy would be secured by a Unilateral Undertaking (UU) during the course of the appeal. This was also anticipated by the Council, however no completed UU has been submitted to date. Had I been minded to allow the appeal, and the circumstances therefore existed in which planning permission could be granted, it would have been necessary for me to examine this matter in detail. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, no further consideration is required.
17. The Council accepts that it lacks a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Under paragraph 11 of the Framework planning permission should therefore be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or if specific policies within the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide clear reasons for refusal. In

this case the social and economic benefits that would result from provision of one additional small dwelling in a sustainable location would be very limited in scale, and in my view would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Consequently, paragraph 11 does not support the grant of planning permission in this instance.

Conclusion

18. I find that in this case material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. Thus, for the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR