
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 June 2020

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc(Hons) DipTP Cert (Urb) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/D/20/3244265
62 Hazelwood Drive, Verwood BH31 6YQ

- 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 & Mrs Puddepha against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref 3/19/1932/HOU, dated 17 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is a 2 storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (a) the character and appearance of the area and (b) the living conditions of the occupiers of 72 Hazelwood Drive, having regard to outlook and privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises a detached two storey dwelling with rear conservatory and outbuildings. It backs onto the garden and the dwelling at 72 Hazelwood Drive, and flanks a dwelling at 74 Hazelwood Drive. Both these dwellings are served by a separate driveway, the end of which flanks onto a side part of the rear garden of the appeal property. Surrounding properties are of similar proportions, often closely sited to one another, in modest sized plots. Together with landscaping, the residential area has estate-like suburban character and appearance.
4. The two storey extension would replace the existing conservatory and outbuildings. It is intended that the outbuildings would be replaced with smaller and more attractive structures. However, the extension would be approximately two thirds of the appeal dwelling's width and the height of the extension would match that of the existing. Its depth would be approximately the same as the existing conservatory but would comprise two storeys with roof over. As a result, the extension would be out of proportion and dominate the rear elevation of the original dwelling. Such bulk would be visually intrusive which would be noticeable from neighbouring properties and the driveway serving Nos 72 and 74.

5. For all these reasons, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to policy HE2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy (CS).

Living conditions

6. The two storey dwelling at 72 Hazelwood Drive has a rear conservatory and is positioned at an angle to the rear of the appeal property. Between it and the appeal property, there is a garden wrapping around its rear, including its conservatory and an outbuilding.
7. The proposal would overlap with the existing conservatory footprint but would be wider and encompass a first floor. Nevertheless, it would be separated by a gap of just under 7m from the common boundary with No 72 and their garden beyond this. This neighbouring dwelling, including conservatory, would also be sited a further distance away by reason of its garden. By reason of this separation, there would be no significant loss of outlook to the occupiers of this neighbouring property.
8. The appellants have offered to obscure glaze the two rear first floor windows which would prevent any significant overlooking of the neighbouring dwelling. One of these serves a bedroom and the other serves a WC/shower room. As the bedroom serves the purpose of providing sleeping accommodation, such a measure would not be oppressive to future occupiers due to loss of outlook and light. However, both windows would be significant in size, especially that serving the bedroom, and thus, there would be perceived overlooking of the neighbour's garden.
9. The proposal would remove a line of sight from an existing first floor window to the neighbouring property but the extension would result in first floor fenestration being much closer. Consequently, this would not overcome the perceived overlooking objection. In terms of the existing conservatory, its removal would not be a benefit in privacy terms because it is at ground floor level with a line of sight mainly obscured by boundary treatments.
10. For all these reasons, the proposal would not ensure an acceptable relationship to nearby properties, having regard to privacy and the proposal would conflict with policy HE2 of the CS.

Other matters

11. The extension would provide living accommodation for visiting family members, including children and elderly relatives. The extension would ensure capacity to offer care, help and support to the elderly relatives including when they might potentially stay on a more permanent basis. Additionally, the ground floor of the extension would ensure an improved layout that includes a kitchen and living space. Currently, the kitchen is cramped whilst the living space within the conservatory is poor. Parts of the house, including conservatory, kitchen and bedrooms are also indicated to be overlooked.
12. However, personal circumstances will seldom outweigh the more general planning considerations as works of a permanent nature will remain long after the personal circumstances have ceased to be material. The extension would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area for the reasons indicated. There would also be a loss of privacy as indicated. Moreover, I am not convinced that the personal circumstances are persuasive.

It has not been demonstrated that a smaller and subservient sized extension could not provide improved accommodation. For all these reasons, the personal circumstances in this case are not sufficient to outweigh the conflict with policy and harm that would arise if the appeal were to be allowed.

13. Numerous other extensions and adaptations to properties have been indicated in the area. However, extensions of similar size were not found in the surrounding area on my site inspection and none have been specifically drawn to my attention. In any case, every proposal has to be considered on its particular planning merits. I note the appellants' comments on the unattractiveness of the existing outbuildings and conservatory. Nevertheless, such structures have far less of a visual impact than the extension because of its substantial size. Their removal would therefore not outweigh the identified harms of the proposal.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would not accord with the development plan and there are no considerations to outweigh that finding. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, this appeal is dismissed.

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR