



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 September 2020

by Andrew Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/20/3253567 10 Summer Fields, Verwood BH31 6LG

- 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 A Everett against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref 3/19/2108/FUL, dated 16 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is erect new dwelling on land adjacent to 10 Summer Fields and re-model existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 1 April 2019 East Dorset District Council merged with North Dorset District Council, Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council to become Dorset Council. The development plans for the merged local planning authority remain in place for the former area of East Dorset District Council until such a time as they are revoked or replaced. It is therefore necessary for me to determine this appeal with reference to policies set out in the plans produced by the now dissolved East Dorset District Council.
3. The appellant submitted a revised plan as part of the appeal submission (Ref PA01 01.3.A), which shows the further relocation of openings on the existing dwelling. These changes are minor in nature. I do not consider the interests of any party to be prejudiced if I take the revised plan into account. I shall therefore determine the appeal on the basis of the plans referred to on the Council's decisions notice as well as the revised plan submitted as part of the appeal.

Main Issues

4. 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 occupants of the existing dwelling, with regard to daylight and outlook; and the occupants of No. 9 Summer Fields (No. 9) with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site is located within a small modern housing estate of detached dwellings. Most of the dwellings are orientated to front the road in a conventional manner. However, the existing dwelling, its immediate neighbour to the east, and a further dwelling to the northeast, form a cluster of three dwellings that present a blank side gable to the road. As a result they occupy wider plots than their neighbours, with window and door openings facing out to either side.
6. I accept that the wide space between the existing dwelling and its neighbour to the west presents a theoretical space for an additional dwelling, and that the width of the proposed dwelling, although smaller than most of the dwellings in the estate, would not be so small as to appear out of character. However, features that define the principal elevation of the existing dwelling would be retained but left to face towards the side of the proposed dwelling without purpose. These include the small gable projection which currently serves to emphasise principal windows including the ground floor bay, and the roof that currently provides shelter to the bay window and front door. As a result, the west elevation of the existing dwelling would have an odd appearance, and the dwellings would not have a conventional side by side relationship similar to other dwellings in the estate. The proposal would create a cramped and awkward arrangement where the two dwellings would fail to relate well to each other.
7. The new openings inserted into the road facing gable of the existing dwelling would be prominent to view from the estate road. They would appear out of character alongside the blank gables of the two dwellings to the east especially as I could see no examples in the estate of principal openings inserted into a gable elevation. This intervention would not therefore constitute an enhancement to the streetscene.
8. In summary, the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy HE2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy adopted 2014 (Core Strategy), which seeks to ensure that development proposals are compatible with their surroundings in terms of layout and style, and of a high quality of design.

Living Conditions

9. Although many windows serving rooms of the existing dwelling would be moved to give a better outlook, the two large windows serving the large snug would face towards and be very close to the side of the proposed dwelling. This would result in a poor outlook from this room and a significant reduction to daylight levels.
10. The revised plan shows a replacement window for the southwest bedroom of the existing dwelling. The replacement window would be much smaller than the existing window. It would appear to be undersized for a room of this size, and owing to its corner position would provide a poor outlook.
11. The rear first floor windows of the proposed dwelling would be close to part of the rear garden of No. 9 owing to the irregular shape of the garden boundaries. This would have a significant impact on the level of privacy currently enjoyed

by users of the neighbouring garden, as occupants of the proposed dwelling would be easily able to look out over the neighbouring garden from an elevated position at close range. I consider this to be significantly worse than the current arrangement whereby the windows of the existing dwelling largely face towards the blank side wall of No 9.

12. In summary, the proposal would cause significant harm to the living conditions of the occupants of the existing dwelling and No. 9, contrary to Policy HE2 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to ensure that development proposals are compatible with nearby properties, minimising general disturbance to amenity.

Other Matters

13. The appeal site is within the vicinity of Verwood Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest, Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area and Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar. The addition of a residential unit would be likely to have a significant effect on the internationally important interests and features of these areas, in combination with other plans and projects. However, as I am dismissing the appeal the likely significant effect will not occur and this matter does not therefore need to be considered further.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Tucker

INSPECTOR