
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 November 2020

by **L McKay MA MRTPI**

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th December 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/20/3255212

31 Strouden Road, Charminster, Bournemouth BH9 1QL

- 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 Lawrence Whittle against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2020-23814-B, dated 27 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is replacement and enlargement of west facing dormer, new gable to east elevation of roof to allow headroom and daylighting to new bedroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. As bungalows in this street of predominantly 2-storey dwellings, Nos 31 and 33 are somewhat unusual in the street scene. However, they share characteristics with the neighbouring properties, such as bay windows and relatively shallow pitched roofs. The roofscape around the appeal site is relatively unaltered, and the generally consistent roof forms contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area. The gabled roof of the appeal property is somewhat different to those around it, but relates to the gable feature on the front of 31 and as such is not particularly prominent in the street scene.
4. The proposed dormer on the east elevation would be significantly wider than the bay window below it, creating an awkward juxtaposition, and as such would relate poorly to the pattern of windows on the ground floor. The use of a gable roof would mirror that of the existing roof, but combined with the projection of the proposed dormer close to the eaves, would make it a bulky structure that would be a dominant feature on this roof slope. This would be exacerbated by the proposed louvres, which would have a relatively solid appearance and create the impression of a largely blank elevation. While I recognise that they are designed to prevent overlooking of neighbouring properties and provide natural light, the louvres would nevertheless reinforce the visual bulk of the proposed dormer.

5. The proposed dormer in the west elevation would be less bulky due to its hipped roof and placement set well in from the eaves. However, the combination of one hipped and one gabled dormer would give the dwelling a distinctly unbalanced appearance. This would be visible from the public realm, as the side roof slopes are clearly visible from the road due to the gaps between No 31 and its neighbours and the low height of No 33. Consequently, due to their scale, siting and design, the proposed dormers would detract from the appearance of the existing dwelling and would be prominent and incongruous features in the street scene.
6. There are other some dormers in the area, including various flat roofed examples on Nos 19, 49 and 84 Strouden Road and 38 Charminster Avenue, and multiple dormers on 20 and 24 Sutton Road. All of these are relatively prominently positioned on the host dwellings, however there are no details before me of the circumstances by which these came to be built, whether they required planning permission, and if so, the policy context under which they were considered. Furthermore, there are relatively few such examples in Strouden Road and nearby streets, and as such, they have not materially altered the character of the area. Moreover, none relate well to the roof of the host properties, and it seems to me that they are the type of development which the Council's Residential Extensions Design Guide seeks to avoid.
7. Accordingly, the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area, and would therefore conflict with Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan Core Strategy, which requires all development to be well designed and of a high quality. It would also conflict with the guidance in section 3.3 of the Design Guide. Furthermore, it would not meet the requirements of paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that developments add to the overall quality of the area and are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

8. While there appears to be potential for further roof extensions as permitted development, I have not been provided with any drawings showing what these would look like. As such, it has not been demonstrated that any such development would be more visually jarring, contrived and noticeable than the proposal before me, as the appellant suggests. Therefore, I can give this potential fallback position very little weight, and it does not justify the harm that I have identified.
9. I note that the appeal proposal seeks to address the Council's concerns with the appellant's previous scheme, which was withdrawn before it was determined by the Council. However, I have considered the proposal on its own merits, and while it may be smaller than previously proposed, that does not justify granting permission for a development that would harm the character and appearance of the area.
10. I appreciate the appellant's desire to create more headroom and living space for their family, however that would be a private benefit, and the courts have taken the view that planning is concerned with land use in the public interest. As such, the benefit of providing better living accommodation carries little weight and does not outweigh the harm identified.

11. Due to their design and position, the proposed dormers would not result in any significant overlooking of neighbouring properties, or have an overbearing impact when seen from their windows or gardens. As such, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, and I note that no objections were received in this respect. The lack of harm in this regard is of neutral consequence however, and does not weigh in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

12. Accordingly, having regard to the evidence before me, including the benefits of the scheme and the Framework, there are no material considerations that justify granting permission for development which conflicts with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR