



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 17 May 2021

by M Bale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/21/3267364

Delph House Nursing Home, Upper Golf Links Road, Poole BH18 8BY

- 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 J L Haigh against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref APP/20/01238/F, dated 2 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolish conservatories; erect 2 x two-storey extensions; extend laundry room; and reposition ground-floor windows on northern elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect on the character and appearance of the area; the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No.2 Greensleeves Avenue with regard to privacy and light, and of future occupiers with regard to outlook; and the need for the development.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The surrounding area is characterised by buildings arranged in spacious plots set back from the highway edges in a landscaped environment. This gives the area a spacious and verdant character and appearance. There is wide variety in the scale and architectural design of the dwellings around the site, although they all sit comfortably in the street scene such that the landscaping and topography dominates over the built form. Delph House is relatively large, but it also occupies a large plot at the corner of Greensleeves Avenue and Upper Golf Links Road. Despite the building's size, its position, together with the surrounding landscaping means that it, too, has little presence in the overall street scene, other than in direct views through the main vehicular access.
4. The proposal, relative to the existing building would be well designed, picking up on key architectural details and providing an acceptable overall architectural composition. On the side alongside No.2 Greensleeves Avenue, it would replace a fairly utilitarian single storey extension and conservatory that is not particularly respectful of the overall built form.
5. However, the extension alongside No.2 would project further forward than the main face of the existing building. Although similar in position to the existing conservatory, at a full two-storey height it would be particularly prominent in views along Greensleeves Avenue and not particularly screened by boundary

vegetation. Despite the incorporation of a pair of gables in the side elevation to break up the mass, the scale and form of the extension, coupled with its proximity to the front and side boundaries, and the raised floor levels relative to the road, would have a bulky appearance such that the built form intruded into the verdant landscaped setting. The resulting building would be uncharacteristically prominent in the street scene.

6. While there are no particular heritage or townscape designations at the site, I, therefore, find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would conflict with those aims of Policies PP27 and PP28 of the Poole Local Plan 2018 (LP) that seek to ensure development reflects or enhances local patterns of development and neighbouring buildings.

No.2 Greensleeves Avenue

7. No.2 has been extended such that it presents a blank gable elevation to the appeal site. The proposed extension alongside the boundary may result in some additional shading during the middle part of the day, but given the lack of facing windows, position of the driveway next to the site boundary, and open nature of No.2's front garden, this is unlikely to have a significant effect on highly used areas of this neighbouring property.
8. However, windows would be proposed facing No.2 at first floor level, in close proximity to the boundary. While they would be alongside the blank side elevation of the extended No.2, the low roof form of this neighbouring dwelling may not be sufficient to prevent views across the roof into the private garden. While there have historically been trees along the boundary, the long-term health and presence of vegetation cannot be guaranteed and so I attribute soft landscaping limited weight as a means of protecting privacy.
9. In the absence of detailed three dimensional evidence demonstrating the relationship between the proposed bedroom windows and the private rear garden of No.2, I find that the privacy of the occupiers of this neighbouring dwelling would be harmed. Such would be in conflict with those aims of LP Policy PP27 that seek to ensure that the proposal would not harm the amenity of local residents.

Future occupiers

10. The windows of the extension alongside No.2 would be close to the boundary where some may be obstructed by boundary vegetation. However, that outlook is likely to be less restricted than the existing bedrooms in this location at ground floor level and there is no evidence that this is harmful. I, therefore, find that the alleged harm to the living conditions of future residents has not been substantiated and there would be no conflict with the aims of LP Policy PP27 that seek to protect those interests.

Need

11. LP Policy PP2 sets out that by 2033, the LP seeks to deliver a minimum of 816 (net) care bed spaces. LP Figure 25 clarifies the need to be for 323 residential care home and 493 residential nursing home spaces, with a total of 472 being delivered up to 2025 and 344 thereafter.
12. The appellants evidence, drawing from the Council's monitoring report of April 2019, indicates that this translates to a need for 39 bed spaces annually up to

2025 and that, since 2013 only 78 have been delivered, leaving a backlog of 156. However, the same evidence goes on to confirm that there are a number of care homes either under construction or committed in extant planning permissions. I have no particular evidence as to how far this will go to meeting the currently unmet need or the overall LP targets. While the target is a minimum, need could increase as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a significant proportion of bedspaces are expected to come from windfall development, on the basis of the evidence, I cannot conclude that the development is required to address unmet needs.

13. I note that regulatory changes have reduced the capacity of the care home in recent years and that the appellant contends that the business would not be viable in the future if capacity cannot be increased. However, while the LP clarifies that retaining existing bedspaces is important, there is no substantive evidence concerning business viability, so I can only give this matter limited weight.
14. Overall, then, it has not been demonstrated that the development is necessary to meet identified needs, nor that bedspaces would necessarily be lost if permission were not forthcoming.

Planning balance

15. The LP and Broadstone Neighbourhood Plan may well be broadly supportive of care home development. However, the conflict with those policies that seek to protect the character and appearance of the area and living conditions of neighbouring residents result in a conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. On the basis of the evidence before me, I can only attribute limited weight to the benefits associated with the provision of additional bedspaces, which includes any associated job creation.
16. Therefore, I find that material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Other matter

17. A third reason for refusal referred to the effect on Habitats Sites. It may well be that that can be addressed through financial contributions. Nevertheless, in light of my conclusions in respect of the appeal overall, harm to the integrity of these sites could not arise from my decision. I have, therefore, considered this matter no further.

Conclusion

18. With regard to the above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Bale

INSPECTOR