



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 21 June 2021

by Matthew Bale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/21/3270389

25A Ravine Road, Poole BH13 7HT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
 - The appeal is made by Pierfront Developments Ltd against Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref APP/20/01196/F, is dated 6 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is to demolish existing buildings and erect 2 detached houses with garages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issues

2. The Council did not make a decision on the application. Having regard to the reasons given subsequently that permission would have been refused, the main issues in this appeal are:
 - (i) The effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area; and
 - (ii) the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No.1 Newton Road, with regard to privacy.

Reasons

Conservation area

3. The area around the site has a mature suburban residential character. There are a wide variety of dwellings on Ravine Road and some clear modern forms, not dissimilar to those proposed. However, part of Ravine Road, including the appeal site is within the Canford Cliffs Village Conservation Area. The merits and extent of that designation are not before me, but in making my decision I must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. Therefore, although the proposal would be similar to some of the examples of more modern development outside the conservation area, those are of little influence on my decision.
4. The site is at the edge of the conservation area. Built forms either side relate more closely to the connecting roads of Newton Road and Spencer Road. The site is, to some degree, visually separate from them. The plot results from an historic separation of land from its original host property and it sits visually in the street scene alongside those more modern dwellings opposite.

Nevertheless, it is on land forming a block of dwellings within the conservation area and, as such, is read as part of the main part of the heritage asset beyond.

5. There are a wide variety of dwellings giving the impression of piecemeal development of discrete plots. While there is a common style running through most of the conservation area, more recent alternatively designed insertions have also been accommodated. There are two more tightly spaced dwellings around 13 Elmstead Road, but these are unusual and generally new dwellings have been successfully accommodated where they have respected the general pattern of detached dwellings in clearly individual, spacious grounds. Examples can be seen at 6a Newton Road and 25 Ravine Road. A pair of new dwellings at 19 Ravine Road/7 Moorfields Road have forms that more closely echo the more historic properties that, along with the dual road frontage, helps to visually differentiate them from one another and assimilate them into the conservation area.
6. The proposed development, by contrast, would result in two dwellings in close proximity to one another. While there would be an overall reduction in plot coverage compared to the existing single dwelling and the density may not be particularly high, their uncharacteristic spacing and broadly matching appearance would at odds with the prevailing spaciousness, and pattern of discrete development plots within the conservation area. The three-storey height, while similar to those dwellings opposite, outside the conservation area, would create extra presence in the street scene and emphasise the relatively narrow width of the plots.
7. The existing dwelling is distinct from the majority of the conservation area and makes a neutral contribution to it. However, while the site is right at the edge of the designated heritage asset and may, in itself, be of high quality design, the proposal would fail to preserve the key characteristics of the area that contribute to its significance, weakening its cohesion.
8. I, therefore, find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area and, in terms of the degrees of effect set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, would cause less than substantial harm to its significance. Such would conflict with those aims of Policies PP27, PP28 and PP30 of the Poole Local Plan (LP) which seek to ensure that proposals reflect local patterns of development and preserve or enhance heritage assets.

Living conditions

9. The proposed second floor balcony of plot one could facilitate sideways views to No.1 Newton Road. An obscure glazed privacy screen could be erected to the side of the balcony and secured by planning condition. Such would prevent direct views towards No.1 and thereby safeguard the living conditions of its occupants. Therefore, there would be no conflict with those aims of LP Policy PP27 that seek to prevent harm to the amenity of local residents.

Other Matters

10. The Council has confirmed that, the Housing Delivery Test results indicate that the only 73% of the required homes were delivered over the relevant accounting period. In this context, there would be clear benefits associated with the supply of additional homes. While small sites can make an important

contribution to the supply, there would be a net gain of only one dwelling which tempers the weight that I give to these benefits. In light of the housing delivery situation, though, I nevertheless attribute it moderate weight.

11. I note the appellants comments on communication with the Council while the application was under consideration. However, while it may have been possible to table amendments to overcome the concerns regarding privacy of No.1 Newton Road, matters of communication and process are of little consequence to my decision.

Planning balance

12. I have found that less than substantial harm would arise to the significance of the conservation area. In accordance with Framework Paragraph 196 this must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. I have attributed moderate weight to the benefits associated with housing delivery. However, as the Framework requires me to give great weight to the conservation of the heritage asset, this is insufficient to outweigh the harm.
13. The housing delivery situation means that Framework Paragraph 11(d) must be considered. The first limb of that paragraph sets out that permission should be granted unless the application of policies within the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. Policies relating to heritage assets are amongst those policies. Accordingly, the proposal does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in Framework paragraph 11.
14. The harm to the conservation area results in a conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including those associated with the benefits of delivering additional housing, that are of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
15. The Council has advised that permission would have also been refused due to the effect on European sites, designated for their nature conservation importance. However, in light of my overall conclusion no such effect would arise from my decision. Therefore, I have considered this matter no further.

Conclusion

16. I, therefore, conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Bale

INSPECTOR