



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 3 August 2021

by S Harley BSc(Hons) M.Phil MRTPI ARICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31st August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/21/3271977

146 Alumhurst Road, Bournemouth, BH4 8HW

- 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 Dent against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2020-13091-E, dated 1 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is alterations and extensions to dwelling house to include new mansard roof to form 2nd floor level, balconies and raised decked area with steps.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal was described on the application form as “remodel the existing dwelling, including extensions and alterations to the external appearance”. The description on the decision notice and the appeal form is as set out above. This more accurately describes the proposals and I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.
3. Since the Council determined the planning application the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the 2021 Framework) has been published. The main Parties have been given the opportunity to comment on the implications of this and I have taken account of the comments received.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area and on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties particularly Numbers 142 and 144 Alumhurst Road.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The local residential character is a mix of predominantly three storey contemporary and traditional buildings. These vary greatly in age, footprint, overall size/scale, architectural design, appearance and materials with a variety of roof forms and heights. Many have undergone extension and alteration, including to the roof. Properties are angled from one another and irregular in shape. There is no strong local vernacular. Many of the properties on the appeal side of Alumhurst Road and Sandbourne Road have large amenity

spaces to the rear with rear balconies and terraces to make the most of the seaward views.

6. Number 146 Alumhurst Road is a two storey house at the eastern end of a terrace of four properties with a staggered building line. It is an unusual shape with part of the building at an angle to the rest and a lower, asymmetric roof. It contrasts with the rest of the terrace which consists of three storey townhouse style properties with the top floors in the roof spaces. Nos 144 and 142, and the main part of No 140, are of similar appearance at the front, particularly in terms of roof shape, materials and windows at first and second floor levels.
7. No 140, at the other end of the terrace site, has been extended and altered in the past. It has a two storey side extension which steps forward of the building line with the first floor accommodation in the roof space. In 2018 extensions were allowed incorporating large areas of glazing, terraces, and balustrades with a slightly higher roof line (Appeal Ref APP/G1250/D/17/3188620).
8. The proposal would increase the height of the dwelling by some two metres by adding a mansard roof rising from the existing walls to accommodate a living room and bedroom with ensuite bathroom and a second floor balcony. This type of roof shape would be more in keeping with the rest of the terrace than the existing one. There would also be a modest increase in footprint at ground floor level at the front and rear, but the upper walls would predominantly be on the line of the existing walls, other than a set in from the side wall with No 144 at second floor level. A large garden would be retained.
9. The appeal building is significantly wider than the attached three storey buildings. Even though a higher roof than the existing would be in keeping with the height of the adjoining properties and the ridgeline would step down a little from the neighbouring one, because of the width the scale and mass of the proposed second floor would be disproportionately large and over dominant in relation to the existing buildings. This would be exacerbated by the relatively narrow gap at second floor level between the proposed side wall and the neighbouring wall which contains a window. Moreover the proposed materials and vertical windows to the front elevation would be at significantly at odds with those of the attached buildings. This would not be visually attractive or particularly innovative.
10. No 146 is the last building before the garden walkway along the cliff and down the slope to the beach. Accordingly the existing first floor balcony and parts of the side and rear elevations are prominent in views from lower parts of Alumhurst Road and the garden walkway. Notwithstanding the trees and hedges the front elevation is also very noticeable when moving from west to east along Alumhurst Road. Whilst not adversely affecting the cliff top open space or views of the beach areas the proposal would appear as a prominent incongruous addition to the existing terraced row of buildings.
11. I acknowledge that the existing property is a different shape to that of the adjoining properties. Nevertheless the majority of external materials, particularly of the front and side elevations are similar, so it blends in more easily than the proposed design would.
12. Taking the above into account I conclude that the proposal, due to the height, width and bulk of the proposed mansard roof extension and the proposed

design of the front elevation, would be inappropriate and harmful to the character and appearance of the attached buildings and the area in this prominent location. There is nothing wrong with the design itself but the overall proposal would not amount to a good or beautiful design because of its relationship with the attached buildings. There would be conflict with Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy 2012 (the CS); the Residential Extensions: A Design Guide for Householders 2008 (the Design Guide) and those provisions of Paragraph 8 and Part 12 of the 2021 Framework which together seek the creation of high quality, beautiful buildings tailored to the local circumstances and scale and which respect the site and its surroundings.

Living conditions

13. The rear boundaries between Nos 142, 144 and 146 are angled eastwards. As a result there is some overlooking of the neighbouring gardens from the windows and first floor balcony at the appeal site and this is not unacceptable in residential areas.
14. There would be potential for more intrusive over-looking from the proposed second floor balcony and windows at a much higher level than the shrubbery alongside the boundary. However, the revised plan p14 revb shows the second floor balcony would be set back from the roof edge and an appropriate privacy screen could be secured by condition.
15. Taking the above into account I conclude that the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of occupiers of Nos 144 and 142 would not be unacceptable in planning terms and would not justify withholding permission. Accordingly I find no material conflict with Policy CS41 of the CS; the Design Guide or those provisions of Paragraph 130 of the 2021 Framework which seek to enhance the amenities of future occupants and neighbouring residents.

Other Matters

16. My attention has been drawn to other properties nearby, including on Alumhurst Road, which are of contemporary design and utilise a similar palette of materials to those proposed. However, these are generally new build and are detached properties, rather than being attached to buildings of a very different design, so the other examples do not lead me to any different conclusion.
17. The alterations allowed under the 2018 appeal at No 140 were predominantly to the rear of that property. Although there was a slight increase in the height of the roof the result was comparatively little change from public vantage points given the adjacent buildings. Accordingly that appeal decision does not set a precedent for the appeal before me.
18. The proposal would provide additional accommodation which is a benefit. However, this may be achievable in other less harmful ways and does not lead me to any different conclusion in respect of the proposal before me.
19. It is not appropriate to rely on additional planting to screen inappropriate design and in any event in some views the existing lower roof can already be seen above the tall planting along the front boundary.

Conclusion

20. I have found that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. In conflicting with Policy CS41 of the CS the proposal cannot comply with the development plan taken as a whole. The appeal is dismissed.

S Harley

INSPECTOR