



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 16 November 2021

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/21/3278049

5 Castledene Crescent, Poole BH14 8DP

- 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 David Lake against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref APP/20/01498/F, dated 18 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing building and the erection of 2 no. dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The Council's second and third reasons for refusal were based on harm to the Dorset Heathland Special Protection Area (SPA), the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation, and the Poole Harbour SPA. The decision notice indicated that these reasons for refusal could be overcome, by the payment of a financial contribution towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring, and harbour mitigation measures. During the appeal, the appellant submitted an Undertaking pursuant to Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, securing payment of the required financial contributions towards such measures. The Council has confirmed that the contributions overcome the second and third reasons for refusal.
3. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Castledene Crescent is a small cul de sac of dwellings, occupying land behind houses that front Sherwood Avenue. The houses in Sherwood Avenue are generally two-storey and set back from the road on a uniform building line. The houses are of substantial scale, often with gables facing the road. Although they are all detached, the spaces between the buildings are narrow. Most are of traditional design, but a number have been replaced by more contemporary buildings. As a result, there is a variety of designs, but the street scene is characterised by formally arranged, closely spaced, two-storey houses.
5. The dwellings in Castledene Crescent are set well back from those in Sherwood Avenue, and are accessed via a narrow road between the frontage houses. They are informally arranged around a circular turning head, and comprise two

traditional houses, and three bungalows with dormers. They are all set well back from the turning head, and have roofs that slope away from the road, giving the cul de sac a spacious feel. Apart from the appeal property, they all have hipped roofs, allowing views between the dwellings. This informality and spaciousness, coupled with their detached location, means they form a distinct and separate group of buildings, with a different character to the frontage development.

6. The proposal would result in three storey development spanning almost the entire site. Whilst there would be a gap between the houses, it would be narrow, and the buildings would have a considerable depth. Consequently, views between the buildings would only be possible from a point directly in front of the site. From most vantage points the gap would not be evident, and the two buildings would visually merge into a continuous built form. Even the gap between the two sloping roofs would be largely filled by the structural glass dormers. The close proximity of the buildings to each other, and the resultant visual mass of the development, would not preserve the spacious character of the existing cul de sac.
7. The two houses would have full height gables facing the cul de sac, which would not reflect the neighbouring buildings that all have roofs sloping away from the road. The gables would be significantly further forward than the existing dwelling on the site, and would be closer to the road than any of the other dwellings. The uncharacteristic form and height of the gables, and their closer proximity to the front of the site, would make them very dominant features in the street scene. Whilst they would be of a scale commensurate with some of the newer houses in the wider area, their bulk and massing would make them a visually strident and discordant feature in the context of this discrete group of buildings.
8. The existing dwelling is a bungalow with dormers, which sits between a house to the east, and another bungalow with dormers on lower ground to the west (No 6). Consequently, there is a stepped reduction between the eaves and ridge heights of the buildings from east to west. The proposed houses would have higher ridges, and their eaves height would be at roughly the ridge height of No 6. As a result, the gradual gradation of roof heights would be disrupted, and there would be a very abrupt step down from the western house to No 6, which would be uncharacteristic of the generally harmonious relationship between the buildings in the cul de sac.
9. I am mindful that the existing bungalow is built right up to the western boundary, and the proposed house would be set a little further away. However, the part of the bungalow that is on the boundary is single storey, with a roof that slopes away from No 6, so does not result in any visual dominance. By contrast, the side elevation of the western house would be two storeys high to eaves level, and it would still be close to the boundary. As a result, it would have a dominant relationship over No 6, which would be visually jarring in the street scene.
10. I am mindful that there are examples in the wider area of dwellings of a comparable size and/or with a similar plot coverage. However, those examples lie outside this discrete cul de sac, in areas of a different prevailing character. It is also evident that the surrounding area is undergoing a gradual transformation, as older dwellings are being replaced by more contemporary

buildings. The Council does not dispute that a contemporary approach to any replacement dwelling(s) on the site may be appropriate. I am also aware that the proposal is of a reduced scale to a previous scheme. However, I have judged the proposal on its own merits, rather than comparing it to a previous proposal that was found to be unacceptable.

11. For the reasons given, I find that the development would be uncharacteristically cramped, visually dominant, and discordant with its immediate context. The proposal would, therefore, be contrary to Policies PP27 and PP28 of the Poole Local Plan (2018) (the Local Plan). These policies seek to ensure that development reflects or enhances local patterns of development and neighbouring buildings, and that plot subdivisions preserve or enhance the area's residential character.

Planning Balance

12. I have found that the proposal would conflict with the policies of the Local Plan that relate to safeguarding the character of the area. However, the appellant's evidence identifies that the government's most recent Housing Delivery Test results indicate that the delivery of housing in the area fell below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years. In these circumstances, Paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that permission should be granted, unless any adverse impacts of doing so, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
13. The Local Plan dates from 2018, but the weight to be attached to it does not hinge on its age. Paragraph 219 of the Framework makes it clear that due weight should be given to existing policies according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. Section 12 of the Framework seeks to achieve well-designed places. Paragraph 130 c) says developments should be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. I see no fundamental conflict between these aims and those of Policies PP27 and PP28 of the Local Plan. The conflict between the proposal and these development plan policies should, therefore, be given significant weight in this appeal.
14. Set against the harm that I have identified, there would be benefits associated with the development. It would support the Framework's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes as set out at paragraph 60. Paragraph 69 says that great weight should be given to the benefits of using suitable sites within settlements for homes. In this regard, the site is in a location which is sustainable, through limiting the need to travel, and offering a choice of transport modes. The proposal would have an economic benefit through employment during the construction phase, and through the future occupants' support for local services and businesses, which would accord with the Framework's aim to build a strong, competitive economy.
15. However, the benefits of one additional unit would make little difference to the overall housing delivery position, and the support that one extra household would provide to the local economy would not be significant. It has also not been demonstrated that similar benefits could not be achieved through an alternative scheme that preserved the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, when assessed against the policies in the Framework, taken as a whole, the adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the area would

significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The advice at paragraph 11 d) does not, therefore, indicate that my decision should be otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

16. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR