



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2022

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/21/3286975

10 Portman Crescent, Bournemouth BH5 2ER

- 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 & Mrs F Key against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2021-27998, dated 12 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is alterations and additions to the existing dwelling including extensions and remodelling the facades.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs F Key against Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Portman Crescent is a row of houses that follow the curve of the road and face across the street to the wooded park that lies opposite. There is considerable variety in the external materials and architectural features of the dwellings, but they are all detached, substantial in scale, and set back a similar distance from the road. There is a general consistency in their two-storey eaves line, and, although there are some gables, most of the roofs slope away from the road. Although they differ in detail, the houses are all of traditional design and proportions, with domestic scale window openings that are symmetrically arranged on the elevations, largely vertical in emphasis, and often divided into small panes. Consequently, whilst the houses vary in detail, the general uniformity in their layout, scale and elevational proportions, results in a rhythm and harmony in the street scene, which gives it a cohesive character.
5. The proposal involves the reconstruction of a rear extension, and the provision of dormer windows to the rear and side roof slopes. It is not disputed that these elements of the scheme could be accommodated without harm to the character and appearance of the area. However, the development also involves extending the ridge line of the main hipped roof towards the road, to create a

front-facing gable across the full width of the house. A smaller gable, with a lower ridge, would project a little further forward. Both would be extensively glazed, with the windows extending into the apexes of the gables. The resultant, asymmetrical and contemporary appearance would be a significant departure from the character of the surrounding buildings.

6. Although the overall scale of the building would be commensurate with those to either side, and elsewhere in the road, the full-width gable would be a dominant feature in the street-scene. Its apparent height would be emphasised by the expanse of glazing extending from just above ground level almost to the ridge, giving this elevation a three-storey appearance that would be out of character with its predominantly two-storey surroundings. Whilst many of the other houses do have three floors of accommodation, the upper floors are generally lit by unobtrusive dormers within the roof. The large and prominent windows would result in the gable having a strident appearance, which would disrupt the rhythm of the street scene, and would be harmful to its cohesive character.
7. Policy BAP2 of the Boscombe and Pokesdown Neighbourhood Plan (2019) (the Neighbourhood Plan) encourages imaginative modern design, provided it respects the historic and natural character of the area. Viewed in isolation, the proposed contemporary design has much to commend it. However, it would have little regard to its context, and the prominent and expansively glazed gable would appear as an incongruous and intrusive feature in an otherwise harmonious and balanced street scene. It would not, therefore, respect the established character and appearance of the area.
8. The submitted plans also show alterations to the front boundary treatment of the plot. The prevailing character of the area comprises front gardens that are enclosed by low walls, sometimes with hedges, or trellis to a higher level, but always allowing easy views of the front elevations of the houses. The proposed 1.2 metre high rendered wall would be in keeping with this character. However, the submitted Indicative Street Scene drawing, shows that a fence would be provided above the wall, together with a sliding access gate, to 1.8 metres in height. There is insufficient detail on the drawings for me to conclude that a boundary treatment to this height would be in keeping with the surroundings. Consequently, had I been minded to allow the appeal, I would have imposed a condition requiring further details to be submitted for approval, to secure a suitably transparent means of enclosure that would preserve the prevailing character of the area.
9. In conclusion, the alterations to the rear and side elevations of the house would preserve the character and appearance of the area, and an appropriate front boundary treatment could be secured through a suitably worded planning condition. However, the scale and design of the front gable would, in combination, result in it being an unduly prominent, intrusive, and harmful feature in the street scene. The proposal would, therefore, be contrary to Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012), and Policy BAP2 of the Neighbourhood Plan which, together, seek to ensure that all development is designed to respect the character of the site and its surroundings. The proposal would also conflict with the aim of the National Planning Policy Framework to achieve well-designed places by ensuring that developments are sympathetic to local character and history.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR