



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 January 2023

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/22/3307325

47 Sheldrake Road, Christchurch BH23 4BP

- 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 and Mrs M Marsh against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council.
 - The application Ref: 8/22/0544/HOU dated 24 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 17 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is front and rear extension and roof alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - a) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and on the local area, and
 - b) The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of surrounding neighbours, with particular regard to overlooking and loss of privacy as well as loss of outlook.

Reasons

Issue a) Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow with a side garage linked to the adjoining garage at No 45, on the southern side of and towards the eastern end of Sheldrake Road. Reflecting the form of the road at this end, including with the turning head, there is a staggered siting of the properties at this end of Sheldrake Road, with the appeal property set back from No 45 but generally forward of No 49.
4. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, and Sheldrake Road primarily comprises regularly spaced bungalows under shallow pitched roofs, with generally open frontages. Although the properties towards the eastern end of the road remain as bungalows, a number of the properties in the local area have been altered to introduce first floor accommodation. Many of these alterations include modest raised gables to the front and rear, some with dormers, although and as pointed out by the Appellants, there are a range of design approaches undertaken, particularly on corner plots. Some of these

alterations and extensions have also introduced a wider palette of materials than the original range of mainly brick with tile hanging or painted timber on the gabled elevations under tile roofs.

5. The proposal before me would, together with other changes and additions, seek to introduce an asymmetrical first floor over part of the bungalow by extending the pitched roof from the eastern side of the bungalow with a shorter pitch to over the western side. It would be set back from the front elevation.
6. Whilst I understand the objective to try and retain the visual form of the bungalow, the scale and bulk of the proposed first floor addition would overwhelm the form and proportions of the existing bungalow and would be noticeably and incongruously out of step with the pattern of development of the surrounding properties. As a result of the dominating scale of the asymmetrical first floor addition, I am not persuaded that the visual form of the original bungalow, which is modest in terms of its proportions and form, would still be read in views from the front and the side.
7. The asymmetrical form would be at odds with the pattern of development in the local area and would be visually obtrusive and a jarring element in the street scene. The increased scale and form of the development with a vertical first floor under a pitched roof would be particularly over dominant in relation to the scale and form of the adjoining property at No 45. The scale and proportions of the extended sloping roof on the east side would also be a discordant element in relation to the form and massing of the existing roof slopes as well as those generally found in the street scene.
8. Taking all these factors together, I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the existing property and of the local area. This would conflict with Policy HE2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan, Part 1 Core Strategy 2014, Policy H12 of the Borough of Christchurch Local Plan 2001 and the National Planning Policy Framework, and in particular Section 12, all of which amongst other matters seek a high quality of design which respects the local context.

Issue b) Neighbours' living conditions

9. The appeal property has a relatively modest sized rear garden with the rear gardens to bungalows in Dunlin Close immediately to the rear. I agree with the concerns raised by neighbours and the Council, that given the distances between the appeal property and the properties to the rear, there would be overlooking from the proposed rear first floor window, serving a bedroom, over the garden areas of the neighbours to the rear and potentially to some of the rear rooms. This loss of privacy would materially harm the living conditions of these neighbours.
10. The Appellants have offered to accept a condition to revise the rear elevation so that the glazed element would be kept over 1.7 m in height. Whilst I understand the objective, any such change would need to be subject to consultation as well as consideration as to whether it would create a satisfactory living environment for the occupiers of the appeal property, given that the rear window would be the principal window to serve the proposed bedroom, the other windows being roof lights. I am therefore unable to address this proposed amendment further as part of this appeal.

11. In respect of No 45 Sheldrake Road, to the immediate west, the increased massing and height of the first floor accommodation would be overbearing in terms of the outlook from the both the garden and some of the rear facing windows. This is particularly due to the staggered arrangement of the properties and the close proximity of the proposed first floor accommodation to the common boundary. This loss of outlook would materially harm the living conditions of these neighbours. Although I have no technical information before me, I consider that, as a result of the increased scale and massing so close to the common boundary, there would also be some loss of light and overshadowing, during morning hours, particularly over the rear and rear garden of No 45 which would further compound the harm to their living conditions.
12. Turning to the neighbours at No 49 Sheldrake Road, I consider that their living conditions would not be materially affected by the proposal. This reflects the staggered siting of the dwellings with much of No 49 set behind the appeal property. From the side adjoining No 49 the roof of the appeal property would be extended up towards the proposed first floor extension which would sit on the side of the appeal property closest to the neighbours at No 45. There would be roof lights only on the side facing towards No 49 and were no other matters of concern and planning permission were to be granted, conditions could be imposed to protect the living conditions of the neighbours to ensure no overlooking and loss of privacy. However, my finding in respect of these neighbours does not override the harm I have already concluded in respect of the harm to the living conditions of the other surrounding neighbours.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would materially harm the living conditions of surrounding neighbours, including at No 45 Sheldrake Road as well as Nos 11 and 12 Dunlin Close. This would conflict with Policy HE2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan, Part 1 Core Strategy 2014, Policy H12 of the Borough of Christchurch Local Plan 2001 and the National Planning Policy Framework, and in particular paragraph 130, all of which, amongst other matters, seek a high standard of design which respects the amenities of existing and future occupants.

Other Considerations

14. The Appellants have sought to compare the proposals before me with other extensions already granted planning permission in the local area, and the issues raised in respect of those proposals. Each proposal must be judged on its individual planning merits, but so far as the information has been made available to me, I have taken these other permissions into account. Nonetheless I do not consider that the proposal before me directly compares in terms of its proposed design and relationship with surrounding properties, including in terms of effect on neighbours' living conditions, with any of these other permissions to which my attention has been drawn.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including in representations, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR