



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 June 2023

by Nick Davies BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/22/3306473

35 Playfields Drive, Poole BH12 2EQ

- 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 Andrew Stewart against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref APP/22/00898/F, dated 30 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion into two habitable rooms. Dormer to one side of roof with gable walls replacing original hipped roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. 35 Playfields Drive lies in a row of dwellings that line the northern side of the road, and look across open grass sports pitches on the opposite side. The dwellings are nearly all detached, and are set back from the long straight road on a rigid building line. There is some variety in the form and scale of the dwellings at the eastern end of the road, but there is a conspicuous uniformity in the section to the west of Central Avenue as far as Connaught Crescent. With little exception, this stretch is made up of bungalows with twin bay windows and hipped front roofs. As a result, there is a pleasing rhythm to the street scene, with the closely aligned roof slopes stepping up the gentle slope to the west.
4. No 35 is a detached bungalow with twin bays and a hipped roof, so is typical of this arrangement, and positively contributes to the characteristic pattern of development. The extension of the ridge, and the conversion of the hip to a gable containing extensive glazing, would significantly disrupt the distinctive roofscape. This impact would not be mitigated by the retention of a small element of the sloping roof over the bay windows. The gable would project prominently beyond the prevailing roof slopes, so would be an intrusive feature that would be visible from considerable distance along the straight row of buildings. It would not, therefore, reflect or enhance the local pattern of development, or maintain details that contribute positively to local character. It would, therefore, conflict with the requirements of Policy PP27 of the Poole Local Plan (November 2018) (the Local Plan).

5. I am mindful that the adjacent property, No 34, does not entirely conform with the general uniformity of the row, as it has a twin-gabled arrangement on its front elevation. However, the gables do not extend from the ridge, so the characteristic hipped roof is still evident between the relatively modest gables. The gables are also considerably lower than the ridge, and do not contain windows. Consequently, whilst they do interrupt the roofscape to some extent, the overall pattern of development is still discernible. The proposed full-width gable extending from the ridge, and accommodating extensive glazing, would be a far more strident and intrusive addition to the street scene, which would more fundamentally alter the rhythm of the frontage.
6. My attention has also been drawn to a dormer window in the front elevation of No 32. However, I saw that this is modest in size, and is located within the large roof slope of a pair of semi-detached bungalows. It is set well back from the eaves and the sloping roof retains a visual dominance. As a result, the dormer does not significantly intrude into the distinctive roofscape in the same way that the appeal proposals would.
7. The proposals also include the conversion of the rear hip to a gable, and the provision of a dormer window along most of the resultant west-facing roof slope. The flat-roofed design of the dormer would not assimilate well into the roofscape, which is characterised by traditional pitched tiled roofs. Its length, which would be accentuated by the horizontal emphasis of the windows, would draw attention to the uncharacteristic form of the resultant dwelling, so it would be an incongruous element in the street scene. Its projection beyond the slopes of the hipped roofs of the bungalows to either side would also result in it being a prominent feature in westerly views, which would exacerbate the harm caused by the intrusion of the gable into the street scene.
8. I saw that a flat-roofed dormer has recently been added to the easterly side roof slope of No 37, but I have not been advised whether planning permission was required or granted for this development. It is visible from public viewpoints, and is not characteristic of the row of bungalows to the east. However, it is set back behind the line of hipped roofs, so does not have the same visual presence that the proposed dormer would. It does not, therefore, alter my conclusion on the acceptability of the appeal scheme.
9. In coming to my conclusion, I have had regard to the two-storey form of No 38 Playfield Drive, which lies two plots to the west. However, this dwelling lies on the corner of Connaught Crescent, which has a more diverse character. I have also considered the large front-facing gable at 11 Playfields Drive, and the various roof alterations that have been drawn to my attention at 1, 3 and 5 Connaught Crescent and at 24 and 29 Kent Road. However, all of these properties lie outside the characteristic row of bungalows that includes the appeal site. They therefore carry little weight in my decision.
10. The front gable and dormer would be prominent and intrusive features, which would disrupt the distinctive street scene of closely aligned sloping roofs. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would be contrary to Policy PP27 of the Local Plan, which seeks to ensure that all developments, including extensions, reflect or enhance local patterns of development.

Other Matters

11. The development would provide additional accommodation for a young family who wish to stay in the area. This is a benefit of the proposal that carries some weight in my consideration. However, it has not been demonstrated that some increase in living space could not be achieved in a manner that would be more reflective of the surrounding form of development. Consequently, this benefit does not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

12. 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