



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: 5th July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/22/3304635

10 Vernalls Close, Bournemouth BH10 7HA

- 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 Ms L Howard against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref 7-2022-27799-A, dated 22 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is alterations and extensions to dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations and extensions to dwelling at 10 Vernalls Close, Bournemouth BH10 7HA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 7-2022-27799-A, dated 22 March 2022, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1824P/100a – Proposed Site Plan; 1824P/101 – Block and Location Plan; 1824P/102 – Existing Floor Plans; 1824P/103 – Existing Elevations; 1824P/104a – Proposed Floor Plans; 1824P/105a – Proposed Floor Plans; 1824P/106 – Proposed Elevations; 1824P/107 – Proposed Elevations.
 - 3) Development shall not proceed above damp-proof course level until details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the alterations and extensions hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details/samples.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description from the decision notice and appeal form, as it more accurately describes the proposal than that given on the application form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Vernalls Close is a cul de sac of detached bungalows, which are set back from the road behind enclosed front gardens. Many of the gardens contain planting and hedges, and there are also street trees, giving the Close a pleasant suburban character. The bungalows are of traditional design with a mixture of hipped roofs and small gables facing the road. There is some order to the layout with the frontages of the bungalows following the curve of the road, and a certain uniformity in the scale and character of the buildings on either side. This consistency is not so evident at the head of the cul de sac, where the layout of the buildings is less rigid, and other forms of development of a different scale and character are visible behind the bungalows.
5. No 10 is located in this more disparate part of the Close, and is set back on its plot, behind the frontages of Nos 9 and 11. As it is situated behind the building line of the bungalows on the western side of the road, it is not prominent when approaching from the north, only becoming readily visible when the road opens up at the turning head. Whereas most of the bungalows in the cul de sac retain their original form, the appeal property has been significantly altered. Its front-facing gable is larger than most, and has uncharacteristic horizontal cladding. It also has large dormers on two of its roof slopes, with the one on the northwest side being readily evident in the street scene, giving the bungalow an unbalanced appearance. Its recessed location, and altered appearance means that it does not conform with the more ordered and uniform pattern of development on the northern part of the cul de sac.
6. Planning permission was granted in September 2020 for the replacement of an existing detached garage with a two-storey building linked to the existing dwelling¹. The permission remains extant, and the garage has been demolished. There is, therefore, a more than theoretical possibility that the permission would be implemented if I were to dismiss this appeal. It therefore represents a genuine fallback position that is a material consideration in my decision. The approved two-storey building would have a glazed gable facing the cul de sac and a flat-roofed dormer in the roof slope facing the existing dwelling. The scheme would also include a new entrance porch with a glazed gable. The cumulative result of the approved scheme and the previous alterations would be a dwelling with three gables facing the road, an array of dormer windows, and a complicated roof configuration. It would bear little resemblance to the original dwelling, or any of the other bungalows in the Close.
7. The appeal proposal seeks to provide the additional accommodation that is required under a single roof. This would principally be achieved by converting the front hip to a larger gable (incorporating the existing front facing gable), and extending the south easterly hipped roof, converting it to a gable, and enlarging the rear-facing dormer. The front gable would be unlike any others in the Close, as it would be at full ridge height, and would contain first floor glazing. Whilst this would give it an increased presence in the street scene, its location behind the line of the buildings on the western side of the road means it would not be widely visible. In closer views from the turning head, its potential dominance would be reduced by its siting behind the frontages of Nos 9 and 11. It would also be seen from here against the backdrop of two-storey

¹ Local Planning Authority Ref: 7-2020-27799

- buildings that front the A341. In view of these factors, it would not appear overly dominant.
8. The south-easterly extension would result in a ridgeline that would be longer than others in the Close. However, its apparent length would be reduced, to some extent, by its angled orientation on the plot. It would also be at a lower level than the ridge of the front-facing gable, and set well back from the frontage, so would not appear particularly prominent in the street scene. Furthermore, when viewed from the turning head, there are other long ridges visible in Vernalls Gardens and in the development fronting the A341 beyond. Consequently, the ridge would not appear as a discordant feature simply due to its length.
 9. The existing flat-roofed rear dormer would be elongated to largely fill the extended roof slope resulting from the south easterly extension. Although the existing dormer does not reflect the character of the original dwelling, or the others in the Close, it is not readily visible from any public viewpoints. Its proposed extension would not make it any more noticeable. However, the extant permission allows for a flat-roofed dormer in the roof slope of the two-storey building facing the dwelling. As this dormer would be easily seen from the turning head, the fall-back position would result in a greater extent of uncharacteristic flat-roofed dormers being evident in the street scene than the scheme now before me.
 10. The relevant development plan policy that has been drawn to my attention is CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012) (the Core Strategy). It says that new development should, through its scale, density, layout, siting, character, and appearance be designed to respect the site and its surroundings, and contribute positively to the appearance of the public realm. It goes on to say that development which, by virtue of its design, would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity, or character of any part of the Borough will not be permitted. My attention has also been drawn to the guidance in the Council's Residential extensions: A Design Guide for Householders (2008) (the Design Guide).
 11. The Design Guide sets out five basic design principles, the first two of which are relevant to the main issue in this case. They advise that all proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the existing house and its setting, and that proposed extensions and alterations should not dominate the existing building. In this case, the character of the original dwelling has already been largely lost through previous alterations. Implementation of the extant permission would mean that little semblance of its previous form would remain. Consequently, regardless of my decision on this appeal, the original dwelling is already dominated by extensions and alterations, and would be further so as a result of the fallback position. The advice in the Design Guide is, therefore, of little relevance in this respect.
 12. The appeal scheme proposes a significant remodelling of the dwelling that would radically alter its design. However, when judged against the criteria in Policy CS41 of the Core Strategy, its scale, density, layout, and siting would respect the site and its surroundings, and in these aspects, it would not be substantially different to the fallback scheme. In terms of character and appearance, however, the two schemes would differ. The fallback scheme would involve accommodation split between the main dwelling and a two-

storey outbuilding that would be at an angle, and accessed via an irregularly shaped flat-roofed ground floor link. As a result, the dwelling would appear as a disparate jumble of separate elements, with varying roof pitches, and no overall architectural style to bind them together as an integral unit.

13. By contrast, the appeal scheme would achieve the desired accommodation under a single roof, as a coherent whole. The contemporary architectural style that is consistently proposed throughout would draw the various elements of the building together and assist, to some extent, in integrating the existing dormers into the overall design. As an alternative to the fallback scheme, the proposal would, therefore, contribute positively to the appearance of the public realm.
14. In summary, the appeal proposals would result in a dwelling that would differ significantly in its external appearance to others in the Close. However, in the particular circumstances of this case, and for the reasons given above, I conclude that the development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. It would, therefore, accord with Policy CS41 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality.

Conditions

15. In accordance with the legislation, I have imposed a condition limiting the period within which the development must commence. I have also included a condition specifying the relevant plans, as this provides certainty. To protect the character and appearance of the area, I have imposed a condition requiring the submission of external materials for approval. Neither party has suggested that any other conditions would be necessary.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Nick Davies

INSPECTOR