

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2023

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6TH December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/23/3330670
44 Austin Avenue, Poole BH14 8HE

- 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 P. D. Adams against the decision of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application ref. APP/23/00579/F, dated 16 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2023.
 - The proposal is for erection of a extensions (front, side, rear and new second floor), alterations and contemporary remodel of existing dwelling with a relocated access to the site and associated boundary alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of a detached, two-storey house on Austin Avenue with off-street parking to the front. It is located on a quiet and well-maintained residential thoroughfare where there is no prevailing architectural style to the properties; Austin Avenue is characterised by dwellings of various size, design and detailing. This notwithstanding, at my site visit I saw that all main roofs to buildings in the streetscene are pitched in nature, which to my mind suggests that there is a particular local distinctiveness that warrants protection.
4. Conversely, the proposed extensions would introduce substantially different, flat-roof elements to Austin Avenue that would appear incongruous when viewed in the context of other buildings in the street scape. Whilst I am cognisant that Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that decisions should not prevent or discourage appropriate innovation or change, I consider that the use of prominent flat roofs at upper floor levels such as those proposed by this appeal scheme would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and discordant to the local setting.

5. The appellant has drawn my attention to other re-modelled houses along Austin Avenue at nos. 26, 35, 41 and 47. Whilst these demonstrate varying architectural designs, they all incorporate pitched roofs and as such are not comparable to the scheme before me.
6. I also appreciate that the wider locality comprises buildings with flat roofs. However, it is noteworthy that none of the examples listed by the appellant are within Austin Avenue. This is clearly demonstrated in the aerial image provided in grounds of appeal, which shows Austin Avenue snaking across the centre of the photo and an absence of flat roof properties. In any event, the appearance of other dwellings would be a neutral consideration in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.
7. I acknowledge those other matters that have been advanced in support of the development and referenced as common ground in the appellant's statement. However, none of these points could outweigh the harm I have identified above.
8. I am cognisant that an amended scheme has been permitted by the Council since the appeal was submitted. This notwithstanding, the approved plans show a pitched roof design that would be more sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing house and those in the surrounds, and as such I consider that it would not justify the appeal proposals before me.
9. I find that the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the local area. It would be in conflict with Policy CS41 of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy 2012, Policy BAP2 of the Boscombe and Pokesdown Neighbourhood Plan 2019, and the Council's adopted Residential Extensions: A Design Guide for Householders (2008), which collectively seek to secure new development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would also be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Conclusion

10. Based on the above and all other matters, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR