



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2024

by H Faulkner BSc (Hons) MSc PGCE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/24/3339956

17 Parsonage Close, Christchurch BH23 2GB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Natalie Joyce against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref is 8/23/0913/HOU.
 - The development proposed is for a loft conversion including rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dormer on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a mid-terrace house within a relatively recent housing development. Houses on the estate follow a similar theme in terms of design and materials. All of the houses are two storeys although some have small, pitched roof dormers within the front elevations as part of their design. At the site visit two examples of dormer windows on rear roof slopes were observed (2 Parsonage Close and 10B Bronte Avenue) which have been added since the houses' original construction.
4. To the northeast of the site is Wildfell Close a cul-de-sac forming part of an older housing development. A short terrace of houses back directly onto the site and a grassed amenity area is adjacent. The rear of the appeal property is visible from those houses, the amenity area and also from the road.
5. The appeal property and its terraced neighbours have been designed so that the eaves at the rear are at a lower level. There are no first floor windows in the rear elevation, rooflights have been installed instead. The appeal property is in the centre of the terrace and the roofs on either end of the terrace are hipped. There are no other dormer windows within the terrace or other rear roofs facing towards Wildfell Close. The appeal dwelling and those either side have a unifying appearance in terms of their design and scale and this consistency has an attractive appearance that contributes positively to the area's character.
6. The proposed dormer window would span the entire width of the rear roof slope of the property. Although windows are proposed within the dormer the solid to

void ratio would appear excessive. The dormer would appear top heavy on this property, despite being set in from the eaves, and this would have a harmful impact on the dwellings appearance, as well as unsettling the uniform and symmetrical design of the terrace. The appellant suggests that the use of hanging tiles would make the dormer appear less noticeable. They also state that the siting of the dormer in the centre of the terrace lessens the impact. Whilst this may help to some degree, the bulk of the dormer would still be apparent in both public and private views.

7. The appellant argues that the Council's criticism of the dormers design belies the fact that this type of dormer is commonplace in what can be built under permitted development and that the size of the dormer is within the permitted development limits. The appeal property and others on this estate do not benefit from permitted development rights due to the imposition of a restrictive condition. The type of dormer described by the appellant is not a common feature in the immediate surroundings and do not therefore form part of the character of the area. Where other dormers are in place within the Parsonage Close estate they have required planning permission. They have also been erected on a different style of house and appear smaller in scale.
8. Both parties reference the height of the appeal property being lower than the surrounding houses and being of a differing style. The Council stating it has a noticeably lower pitch and that the other approved dormers are at a higher level. The appellant argues that the lower eaves line means that the dormer is more 'contained' within the roof slope. Regardless of the height of the building the excessive width of the dormer and bulky form are considered harmful in terms of its appearance within the terrace and the wider area.
9. The original consent for the houses within Parsonage Close removed permitted development rights for extensions and alterations. The appellant claims that the proposed dormer window would be "permitted development" if this condition had not been in place. In their submission they assume that this is to enable the Council to have a degree of control over future development that they would not otherwise have had and that the houses were potentially sensitive to future alterations. Their concern is that the presence of the restrictive condition could mean that all houses should remain as unaltered as possible. No evidence has been provided by either party to clearly demonstrate why the condition was imposed. The proposal is assessed against the relevant development plan policies. There is no 'fallback' position to consider in this case as the permitted development right referred to has been removed.
10. For the reasons set out above, it is therefore concluded that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of both the host dwelling and the surrounding area. It would conflict with Policies HE2 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 -Core Strategy (CEDLP) and H12 of the Christchurch Local Plan and the aims of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These require schemes, amongst other things, to be compatible with or improve their surroundings, be sympathetic to local character and appropriate in design and scale.
11. Policy KS1 of the CEDLP relates to sustainable development and is not specifically relevant to matters of character and appearance and therefore no conflict is found with this policy so far as it relates to these matters.

Other matters

12. In considering the councils inclusion of Policy KS1 the appellant argues making the most of the space available in a property is the most sustainable way to provide additional living space. Even if this were to be accepted it would not outweigh the harm identified by the unacceptable design.
13. Neighbouring properties on Wildfell Close have raised concerns about overlooking from the dormer window. However, as the appeal is dismissed for other reasons it has not been necessary in this instance to address those concerns.

Conclusion

14. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. It is therefore concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Faulkner

INSPECTOR