



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 July 2024

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/D/24/3345667

9 Southlea Avenue, Bournemouth, BH6 3AB

- 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 Mr B Wade against the decision of BCP Council.
 - The application Ref is 7-2024-27234-B.
 - The development proposed is two storey front extension, with new roof and loft conversion with dormers to form additional living accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Appellant has raised a query in relation to whether the Planning Officer undertook a site visit, which they contend would have been required to fully assess the proposal. I note that the Council's Delegated Report appears to refer to a site visit being undertaken. Whether that was the case or not does not affect my determination of this appeal or my assessment of the proposal. If they have any remaining concerns it is a matter that the Appellant should take up directly with the Council.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a large detached two storey property located on the western side of Southlea Avenue. The frontage and sides to the host property appear to retain their original features and form, which includes its low pitched hipped roofs. The property has been extended at the rear but due to the spacing between it and its neighbours the side elevations and roofs to the host are prominent in views from Southlea Avenue. The surrounding area includes similar two storey detached properties mostly with hipped roof but some with gable ends, with variations in terms of their design, detailing, form and pallet of materials. A number of properties have been extended and there are examples of side and front extensions, and of roof dormers to facilitate loft conversions.
5. The appeal proposal involves increasing the existing ridge height by some 1.35 metres and introducing a rear hip to gable roof extension. Two flat roofed

- dormers are proposed on either side of the roof, as extended, together with a two storey front extension.
6. Within the above context, I consider that the design, bulk, height and size of the enlarged and extended roof would be excessive and would represent a poor design, resulting in an inappropriate addition to the host property. The proposal would not be sympathetic to the original design or character of the host property. It would replace the existing well defined and low key hipped roofs with an incongruous and prominent roof extension that would be out of keeping with the proportions of the host property.
 7. The excessive bulk and mass of the new roof would be accentuated by the proposed side dormers, both of which would have a significant bulk, height and width. Both dormers would include a flat roof and would be prominent visually from the road. They would extend across and well above the original roof form which would be lost, as would the hosts character. When looked at as a whole, the appeal proposal would not respect the design and appearance of the host or the surrounding area. It would also dominate the streetscene which does exhibit a certain level of consistency in terms of the retention of original low pitched hipped roofs.
 8. The proposal would not represent a high quality design and would not integrate well with or respect the character of the host. The rear hip to gable extension would be visible from the road and it would further accentuate the excessive bulk, height and size of the proposal. I accept that the proposed two storey front extension would be subservient, due to its set back and design, but as its roof form would integrate with the increase in the proposed ridge height, it adds to the dominance and bulk of the overall proposal. As such, the proposal would not sit comfortably on the appeal site leading to significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.
 9. In view of the above findings, the proposal would conflict with policy CS41 (Quality Design) of the Bournemouth Local Plan: Core Strategy (October 2012) (BLP) where it requires development to secure a high quality of design and to respect or enhance local distinctiveness, as well as the character and appearance of the site and its surrounds. That approach remains broadly consistent with paragraphs 135 and 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) (Framework).
 10. The proposal would also conflict with various principles within the 'Residential extensions: A Design Guide for Householders' (September 2008) (Design Guide) including: part 2.1 which requires extensions to respect the character of the house and not to dominate it; Part 2.2 which requires extensions to maintain or enhance the character of the house and be subservient to it; and, part 3.3 which requires roof alterations and specifically new dormers to be set well below the ridge line and well above the eaves, to avoid flat roofs and horizontal emphasis and to retain as much as possible of the original roof form. Although I note that the new dormers would be set 0.5 metres below the ridgeline, that relates to the new ridgeline as extended and even in relation to the extended roof the width and height of the new dormers would remain excessive.
 11. I accept that the Design Guide should be applied flexibly, but the proposal does conflict with a number of its principles and its general guidance remains, in my view, broadly consistent with that in the Framework. In relation to the latter,

paragraph 135 does state that being sympathetic to local character should not prevent or discourage appropriate innovation or change. However, the appeal proposal results in a development that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host and surrounding area. Although that assessment involves an element of judgement, there is, unfortunately, nothing innovative in the design of the appeal proposal or any other considerations that would lead me to reach a different finding on this issue.

12. The Appellant has referred to examples of other extensions and roof alterations within the road. I note that the Council's Delegated Report indicates that some of these do not involve an increase in ridge height and were built under permitted development. As I observed on site, some of the examples are not comparable to the appeal proposal in that they involve extensions and roof alterations that are subservient and proportional to the host in question and are well-designed. In some examples, new dormers have been designed with pitched roofs, they are small-scale and sit comfortably on the main roof plane without dominating it.
13. Even so, I have not been provided with any planning background to these examples or any evidence as to whether they benefit from planning permission and if so when were they approved or whether they were works undertaken under permitted development. I can only, of course, consider the proposal that is before me and as is required determine it on its individual merits, having regard to the prevailing development plan policies and guidance.
14. Some of the dormer examples referred to are, in my view, of a poor design and quality, and are large, which combined with their flat roofs dominate the roof plane (roofscape) of the host properties in question, and are thus harmful to the character of the area and streetscene. They are not examples of good design that should be followed or replicated and they do not provide any justification for a development that is of a similar poor design and quality. Moreover, none of the examples I viewed appeared to have involved an increase in the original ridge height similar to that proposed or such an extensive change to the design, bulk and size of the original roof, as proposed in this case.
15. None of these examples affect, therefore, the findings I have reached on this issue. Whilst I also sympathise with the Appellants personal circumstances and their need to provide additional accommodation for a growing family, neither this nor any other considerations are sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. I also accept that there were no objections to the proposal from neighbouring occupiers, but again that does not negate the need for the proposal to be assessed against the prevailing development plan policies and guidance.
16. Accordingly, I find that appeal the proposal would fail to comply with policy CS41 of the BLP, various principles in the Design Guide and the corresponding policies of the Framework.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above and having taken all the matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR