
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2024

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 22 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/24/3337494

3 Coombe Road, Puddletown, Dorset DT2 8RZ

- 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 & Mrs Rawlings against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref P/FUL/2023/05503, dated 22 September 2023, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2023.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of a detached ancillary building to a holiday let.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of adjacent residential occupiers in relation to privacy, noise and disturbance; and
 - whether car parking and turning arrangements would be satisfactory.
3. Whilst not raised by the Council as reasons for refusal, the parties were invited to comment on the following additional main issues:
 - whether the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for the occupiers in relation to outlook and external amenity space; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the Poole Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) in relation to nutrient neutrality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The proposal is to change the use of a recently constructed garage/workshop building located in front of No 3, a chalet bungalow on the eastern side of Coombe Road, to a holiday let. The building would not be extended, and the change of use would only involve minor alterations to window and door openings, namely replacing the roller shutter garage door with infilling and two high-level windows, rooflights facing away from the road and inserting a new

window on the road facing elevation¹. These physical changes would not be particularly noticeable to neighbours or passers-by and consequently the character and appearance of the area would not significantly change. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy ENV12 of the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan 2015 (the LP) which requires the siting, design and materials of development to complement and respect the character of the surrounding area.

Living conditions of adjacent occupiers

5. The holiday accommodation would have high level rooflights facing east towards the host property and high level windows facing north towards the parking area/driveway serving Nos 2 and 3. One window would face west towards the road, away from the adjacent properties. There would consequently be no loss of privacy for nearby occupiers.
6. However, the proposal would introduce a new unit of accommodation in a relatively small area close to the front facing windows of No 3 and side facing window of No 2. In this constrained space there would be additional comings and goings associated with the holiday let, particularly extra car movements with parking, turning, engines starting and doors opening/closing, sometimes late at night. This would cause significant noise and disturbance to nearby occupiers compared to the current ancillary use. The proposal would therefore conflict with LP Policy ENV16 which precludes development that detracts significantly from the amenity of the area and the quiet enjoyment of residential properties.

Car parking and turning

7. No 3 currently has two parking spaces in front of the property and the adjacent property No 2 one space, both at the end of a joint driveway used for turning purposes. Whilst the proposal originally included an additional space in front of the holiday let, this was subsequently deleted as it would restrict manoeuvring and turning on the driveway. The revised proposal is for one of the host property's two spaces to be allocated to the holiday accommodation and the other for the use of No 3. Since No 3 is a two-bedroom dwelling², the Council advises that this would satisfy their parking standards.
8. Despite the loss of the garage space and the need for an additional space for the holiday let, it would therefore appear that the existing spaces would meet the numerical requirement. The turning arrangements on the joint driveway would therefore remain unchanged and as workable as now.
9. The car parking and turning arrangements would therefore be satisfactory and comply with LP Policy COM9 and Puddletown Neighbourhood Plan Policy 16. These require parking provision in accordance with the Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset Residential Car Parking Study and its location convenient to the premises concerned to avoid parking on the highways.

Living conditions for the occupiers

10. The holiday let is designed for a maximum of two people with a combined living/kitchen/bedroom space. This would be adequate in terms of floorspace.

¹ A further small window on the south facing elevation towards No 4 would be barely perceptible.

² Advised by the appellant.

However, the living area would only have two rooflights and the bedspace two high level windows and one smaller window facing the road. The latter window would not serve the kitchen area or living space directly. Whilst the Council do not raise any concerns, the living area would be unduly enclosed, not offering a satisfactory outlook, and the position would not be mitigated by the provision of any external amenity space. Overall, the holiday accommodation would offer unsatisfactory living conditions for its occupiers. It is appreciated that the occupiers would only stay for short, temporary periods but the quality of accommodation would not be acceptable even for limited stays. The proposal would therefore conflict with paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires a high standard of amenity for future users.

Poole Harbour

11. The site lies within the catchment area of the Poole Harbour SPA where sewage generated by additional overnight accommodation is likely to increase nutrients in the water unless mitigated. This would, in combination with other plans and projects, be likely to affect the integrity of the habitats concerned. Whilst measures are now in place to address phosphorus pollution this is not the case for nitrogen and the proposal includes no mitigation to offset the additional nutrients that would be generated.
12. The appellant argues that the downstairs wc in No 3 is due to be converted to storage and that earlier changes to the bathroom arrangements in No 3 will offset the increased sewage from the holiday let. However, it is not clear how such changes would reduce the sewage generated by the existing property if the number of occupants remains the same.
13. The proposal would therefore adversely affect nutrient neutrality in the Poole Harbour SPA in conflict with LP Policy ENV2 which precludes development which is likely to have an adverse effect on its integrity.

Conclusion

14. The proposal would provide a unit of holiday accommodation which would have economic benefits for the area. However, this is outweighed by the noise and disturbance that would affect adjacent occupiers, the unacceptable standard of accommodation that would be provided and the adverse impact that would result in relation to the integrity of the Poole Harbour SPA.
15. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR