



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 December 2024

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V1260/W/24/3344018

1 Castledene Crescent, Poole BH14 8DP

- 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 Harlequin Homes against the decision of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council.
 - The application Ref is APP/24/00091/F.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing and the erection of 2 dwellings with associated access and parking (revised scheme).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In support of their case, the appellant refers to a planning permission granted by the Council for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of 2 dwellings at 5 Castledene Crescent (No 5). This planning permission is still extant but the development has not commenced and the current occupiers of No 5 have advised that the permitted development may not be carried out. Even so, in my assessment I have regard to the potential for the 2 dwelling scheme to be implemented. Also, I have considered appeal decision reference number APP/V1260/W/21/3278049, which relates to No 5 and precedes the planning permission granted by the Council.
3. Since the Council's decision on the application leading to this appeal, the Secretary of State has published a written ministerial statement entitled "Building the homes we need" (the WMS). I have had regard to this in my assessment.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a modest dwelling with eaves just above the ground floor windows and first floor accommodation within the hipped roof space. It lies in a small cul-de-sac where there is a mix of dwellings, although all of the residences are detached, are set back in their plots and have pitched roofs that slope back away from the road. The cul-de-sac has a spacious feel where buildings are visible but not overly dominant.

6. The proposed units would be set back a similar distance from the road compared to the existing house. However, they would be taller with accommodation over 3 floors and each would have a separate gable frontage. The development would be more visually prominent than the existing property due to its greater height and overall mass. It would have a noticeable effect on the local townscape as it would be seen from the cul-de-sac, from neighbouring properties and from a short stretch of Sherwood Avenue.
7. The pair of houses would appear unusual amongst the nearby detached dwellings as they would be attached. Also, the development would lead to 2 narrower plots that would go against the spacious layout of properties on Castledene Crescent. The 2 front doors would be hidden from the road and no boundary feature would be provided to the front to demark the sub-division of the site. Even so, the double gable frontage would lead to the building being perceived as a pair of semi-detached dwellings rather than a single residence.
8. Also, the tall pair of gables to the front would stand out as odd and overly dominant features amongst the sloping roof frontages of properties on Castledene Crescent. Furthermore, the timber screening would not entirely conceal the large second floor windows and these would be out of character with the traditional style of fenestration seen within the cul-de-sac.
9. The approved development for No 5 would also sub-divide the plot with each dwelling having a gable frontage. However, these houses would be detached with a gap in between and so they would maintain a sense of space. Also, they would not include adjoining gable roofs nor glazing at second floor level to the front. As such, even if the development permitted at No 5 was constructed, the appeal scheme would still appear unusual.
10. The proposed units would be of a contemporary design. Housing of a modern appearance is seen alongside older properties on Sherwood Avenue. Indeed, 59 Sherwood Avenue (No 59) is a recently constructed house that lies adjacent to the entrance into Castledene Crescent. However, No 59 and other nearby modern houses face towards Sherwood Avenue, whereas the appeal development would be more readily apparent within the context of the cul-de-sac. The Inspector in the aforementioned appeal for No 5 refers to Castledene Crescent as having its own discrete, spacious character. By reason of the plot subdivision as well as its prominence and incongruity, the development would be incompatible with this cul-de-sac context. Any similarity in style and appearance between the proposal and dwellings elsewhere would not address the lack of sympathy with the Castledene Crescent properties.
11. The proposed dwellings would cover more of the site area than the existing house. However, space would be retained to the front and the back of the units and so the resultant plot coverage would be appropriate. This acceptable aspect of the scheme does not address nor override the unsympathetic elements as identified above.
12. For these reasons, I conclude the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. In these regards, it would not accord with policies PP27 and PP28 of the Poole Local Plan 2018 (the LP). Amongst other things, these look for proposals to preserve an area's character and to reflect local patterns of development and neighbouring buildings.

Other considerations and planning balance.

13. The conflict I have identified with LP policy in respect of the main issue means the proposal would not accord with the development plan when read as a whole. It follows to consider whether other factors justify granting planning permission contrary to the development plan.
14. The latest information¹ indicates the Council can only demonstrate a 1.6 years' worth of housing land supply when considered against a 4 year requirement for land. This represents a shortfall of land for 8078 dwellings. A situation exists as defined under footnote 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Accordingly, paragraph 11(d) of the Framework applies and so the adverse impacts of the proposal need to be weighed against its benefits.
15. The development would lead to a more efficient use of land within a location that is suitable for new residences. It would be a windfall development that is supported under paragraph 70(d) of the Framework. It would make a small contribution to the housing stock but this is of significant importance in light of the considerable shortfall in housing land as well as the support for building homes as set out in the WMS. Also, the scheme would generate construction employment and future residents would support local businesses. The proposal would also potentially lead to a slight enhancement to biodiversity.
16. At the same time, the Framework states that developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, even while allowing for appropriate innovation or change such as increased densities. Innovative design is only encouraged so long as it fits in with the form and layout of its surroundings. Development that is not well designed should be refused.
17. When considering the Framework policies as a whole, the unsympathetic form and poor design of the development and the subsequent harm to the area significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits of the proposal. The presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out under paragraph 11 of the Framework does not apply. Consequently, I find insufficient justification to grant planning permission contrary to the LP.

Other Matters

18. The Council raises concerns over the effects of the development on a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area, a Ramsar site and a Special Area of Conservation associated with Dorset Heathlands. Also, there are concerns over the effects on Poole Harbour Special Protection Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Ramsar site. However, I need not consider these issues further as I am minded to dismiss the appeal for other reasons. A finding that the development would be acceptable in these regards would be a neutral factor and so it would not influence my overall conclusion.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR

¹ Table 8, The Council's Housing Land Supply Statement 1.4.2024