



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 November 2009

by **Elaine Benson BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI**

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

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Decision date:
23 December 2009

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/A/09/2108478

3 Camden Terrace, Brighton BN1 3LR

- 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 Ms Nicola Stevenson against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
- The application Ref BH2009/00647, dated 17 March 2009, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2009.
- The development proposed is remove UPVc cladding to upper floor to front elevation and render area to match remainder of front elevation.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issues

2. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the pair of semi-detached properties of which it forms part and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Hill Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached cottage forming part of a long row of houses which front onto a pedestrian route. It lies within the West Hill Conservation Area and is subject to an Article 4 Direction which precludes alterations to the front of the property without planning permission. Camden Terrace is described within the Council's Character Statement for this area as a narrow twitten, dating from around the 19th Century. The cottages in Camden Terrace have some variety in their design and style and some are detached. However, they share a similar appearance, with many being white rendered. I found that there are long views of the cottages in the terrace, albeit oblique and note that it is a well used route.
4. The pair of semi-detached cottages originally had timber lap boarding on the upper part of their front elevations, as does the larger neighbouring house. The front of the appeal cottage has been altered by the installation of UPVc windows and the timber lap boarding was removed and replaced with UPVc cladding. The retention of this cladding was dismissed on appeal (APP/Q1445/C/08/2071381) as it did not match the timber used next door. It is now proposed to remove the cladding and render the area to match the remainder of the elevation.

5. Although I appreciate that many of the cottages in the terrace do not have lap boarding on their front elevation, the appeal property and its neighbour are viewed as a pair. I note that the window material of the appeal property has been changed and consequently its appearance is now slightly different to its neighbour. However, in my opinion whilst the removal of the UPVc cladding is to be welcomed, the absence of timber lap boarding and the proposed rendering of the area would amount to a significant alteration to the balanced appearance of the pair which would harm its appearance. Furthermore it would harm the special architectural interest and appearance of the terrace as a whole which has been formally recognised as important by the Article 4 Direction.
6. I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the appeal cottage and the unified appearance of the pair of semi-detached properties of which it forms part. It therefore conflicts with saved policy QD2 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan (LP) as it would not enhance the positive qualities of the neighbourhood by taking into account local characteristics, and saved LP policy QD14 which requires alterations to be well detailed in relation to the property to take account of the character of the area and to use sympathetic materials. Furthermore, the proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the West Hill Conservation Area as required by saved LP policy HE6 which among other things seeks to prevent the loss of original features which contribute to an area's special character.
7. I have had regard to the appeal decision and photograph relating to an appeal at Lindfield (APP/D3830/A/06/2007549) submitted by the appellant. As this appeal relates to an extension to a cottage described by the Inspector as forming part of an informal group of dwellings in the countryside which already exhibits considerable variety in form and appearance; and noting that a side extension would not necessarily affect the appearance of the main elevation, on the basis of the limited information before me, I consider that the criteria relevant to that appeal site, which also lies within the control of a different local planning authority, are significantly different to those before me. I have therefore given it little weight.
8. In reaching these conclusions I have had regard to all other matters raised, but none is sufficient to outweigh the considerations noted above. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elaine Benson

INSPECTOR