The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2011

by Simon Miles BA(Hons) MSC MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31 January 2011

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/A/10/2138146
Upper Dene Court, 4 Westdene Drive, Brighton, Sussex BN1 5HF

- 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 Anstone Properties Ltd against the decision of Brighton and Hove City Council.
- The application Ref BH2010/01329, dated 5 May 2010, was refused by notice dated 16 July 2010.
- The development proposed is a roof extension to provide a single two bedroom apartment.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Procedural Matter

2. Although the site address is given as 2 Westdene Drive on the appeal form, the appellant has confirmed in writing that the site is correctly identified as 4 Westdene Drive on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to one of two detached apartment blocks fronting Westdene Drive, a residential road which otherwise comprises mainly single and two storey dwellings of modest size. The wider locality is likewise made up mainly of small houses and bungalows. Therefore, whilst many of these other dwellings include dormer windows to the roofs, the absence of dormer windows on the appeal building serves to minimise its bulk when read in conjunction with the predominantly smaller scale of development within which it is set.

5. Because of this, I am concerned that the proposed rear dormer windows would add considerably to the bulk of the roof. Furthermore, the size and shape of the proposed dormers relates poorly to the treatment of existing fenestration, whilst the large number of dormers proposed would give the roof a cluttered

and top-heavy appearance. This would harm the character and appearance of the host building and inappropriately increase the bulk of its roof, such that it would appear disproportionately large and bulky in relation to the surrounding houses and bungalows.

6. In reaching this view, I acknowledge that there would be only limited views of the proposed dormer windows from Westdene Drive, whilst the rooflight windows proposed to the front elevation would not significantly alter the shape or bulk of the roof. However, due to the steep fall of the land in an easterly direction, there are far reaching views of the rear elevation from a considerable number of the residential properties to the east. From this direction the additional bulk of the proposed dormers would be clearly seen in the context of the surrounding small houses and bungalows.

7. For these reasons I consider that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It follows that saved Policies QD1, QD2 and QD14 of the adopted Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005 and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Note 1: Roof Alterations and Extensions are not satisfied, insofar as these policies and guidance seek to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to the visual quality of the environment, taking account of local characteristics, such as the height, scale, bulk and design of existing buildings, whilst ensuring that extensions and alterations are well designed in relation to the host property.

8. As the Council points out, a previous scheme was refused and dismissed at appeal. However, this latest scheme is of a different design and I have therefore based my assessment on the merits of the proposal now before me. Having done so, the harm that I have identified above is significant and over-riding. This harm is not outweighed by the need to make full and effective use of previously developed land, because this objective should be achieved without compromising the quality of the environment. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal does not succeed.

Simon Miles

INSPECTOR