



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2008

by **J M Trask** BSc (Hons) CEng MICE

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

The Planning Inspectorate
4/11 Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

☎ 0117 372 6372
email: enquiries@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Decision date:
20 August 2008

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/A/08/2069721

53 Hill Brow, Hove BN3 6DD

- 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 Grenville Homes against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
- The application Ref BH2007/02762, dated 18 July 2007, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2007.
- The development proposed is the demolition of the existing bungalow with redevelopment of 2 new 3 storey houses.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and the provision of cycle parking.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies within the Woodlands character area. Although the existing building on the site is single storey, the dwellings in the area are predominantly large detached houses set in generous plots. As a result of the slope in the land, the dwellings on the same side of the road as the appeal site are set above road level while those on the opposite side of the road are at a lower level. The dwellings vary in size and design to some extent but are set back from the road by a similar amount with most front gardens laid to lawn with some planting. Accordingly the area has a reasonably regular character and appearance, albeit with some limited variation.
4. The proposed houses would have 3 storeys and, as a result of the proposed excavation to road level, these would be evident from the street. The apparent height of the proposed houses would be unusual in the area and while other nearby properties have garage accommodation at road level and houses at a higher level, the height of the front elevations and massing of the proposed development would make it stand out from others. This effect would be particularly noticeable for the house on plot B, given its proximity to the low level dwelling at 51 Hill Brow. The reduced ground level at the front of the appeal site would also be incongruous in the area.

5. The materials proposed for the external surfaces would differ from others nearby and this, together with the large area of hardstanding proposed, would increase the prominence of the proposed houses. Some landscaping at the front of the site is indicated on the drawings but it has not been demonstrated that this could be sufficient to ensure a degree of continuity with others along the frontage or that it would be of high quality. These matters are fundamental to the success of this scheme and therefore it would not be reasonable to require them by imposition of a condition. Few details and no assessment of the trees that would be lost have been provided and this adds to my concerns.
6. While the area could accommodate some degree of variation, the combination of the massing and unusual features of the proposal, together with the lack of mitigating landscaping, would result in it being a prominent development that would detract from regularity of the area. The proposal would conflict with Policies QD1, QD2, QD15 and QD16 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan.
7. No provision for secure cycle storage is indicated although I am content that there would be room for this and therefore this is not a reason to dismiss this appeal.
8. The appellant has referred to the efficient use of previously developed land for housing in accord with national and local guidance. However, I have seen no evidence of a need for housing sufficient to outweigh the harm and the conflict with the development plan that I have identified.
9. Despite my conclusion in respect of cycle storage, I consider that my conclusion on the effect on the character and appearance of the area is a reason sufficient in itself to dismiss this appeal. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J M Trask

INSPECTOR