The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2011

by Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 8 November 2011

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/11/2160901
38 Walsingham Road, Hove BN3 4FF

- 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 Dr James Read against the decision of Brighton and Hove City Council.
- The application Ref BH2011/01793, dated 21 June 2011, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2011.
- The development proposed is the construction of a hip to gable alteration, a rear dormer extension and the insertion of rooflights to the front.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal can most appropriately be described as given in the header above and it is on the basis of this description that the appeal will be considered. The gable end has been constructed but the dormer addition has not been completed and is covered in a tarpaulin and not all the rooflights have been inserted. The appeal must, nevertheless, be considered on its own merits.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the consideration of this appeal is the effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the Sackville Gardens Conservation Area, within which the site is located, and the streetscene.

Reasons

4. Despite the variety of designs within the Conservation Area there are important groups of dwellings that have a particularly unified character. Moreover, the appeal concerns one of a number of adjacent properties, which are mainly semi-detached and of a similar design. These all have hipped roofs, as did that at the appeal site prior to the works starting. They are also characterised by features such as two storey bays and yellow bricks. Consequently, the group has a significant degree of uniformity and regularity, contributing positively to both the streetscene and Conservation Area.

5. Furthermore, the dwellings are specifically identified in the Council's *Sackville Gardens Conservation Area Character Statement* as a group. This implicitly acknowledges their importance and consistency, despite the absence of any specific mention of the symmetrical hipped roof form of the overall buildings. The Appellant points out that there are gable ended properties next to others with hipped roofs in the street. However, these are not located within the group of dwellings which include that at the appeal site so that they do not detract from its integrity.

6. The constructed gable end abruptly and unacceptably contrasts with the hips of adjacent properties, as well as severely unbalancing the appearance of the pair of dwellings. This incongruous juxtaposition is readily seen from the street. Moreover, the presence and uncharacteristic additional bulk of the rear dormer extension at the side of the dwelling is also apparent from the road, due to its proximity to the gable end, further exacerbating the undue contrast with neighbouring buildings. The proposal has also resulted in the originally imposing chimney stacks being appreciably reduced in their height and appearing unduly stunted by comparison with others in the vicinity.

7. Because of their number, the rooflights would appear unacceptably cluttered and dominant in the enlarged front roof slope. The rear dormer extension due to the particularly limited gaps to the sides, ridge and eaves would be an overly assertive and box-like addition, appearing somewhat awkward as it partly emerges from the roof of the two storey rear projection. This would be the case despite the windows reflecting the vertical emphasis of those below. It would also be visible from a number of properties to the west and form part of the built fabric of the Conservation Area regardless of the absence of public viewpoints. In consequence, the proposal is unduly detrimental to the architectural integrity of the host dwelling and group and unacceptably diminishes the positive contribution they make to the Conservation Area and streetscene.

8. The Appellant has referred to development permitted elsewhere. However, the additions in Carlisle Road are outside the Conservation Area and the property at 24 Queens Park Rise is in a different Area. In addition, the front dormer addition at 43 Walsingham Road is on the opposite side of the road and not, therefore, within the same group as no. 38. Furthermore, the rear dormer in Walsingham Road, shown in the photograph on page 7 of the Appellant's Planning Support Statement, is noticeably narrower than that the subject of this appeal. Planning permissions at nos. 42 and 44 are also referred to but the full details and background have not been provided so that no meaningful comparison can be made with the current proposal. These other cases therefore lend no significant support to the appeal, which must, in any event, be considered on its own merits.

9. Due to the above factors, it is concluded that the proposal harms the streetscene and the character and appearance of the host dwelling, while failing to preserve that of the Conservation Area. The latter is contrary to the main aim of Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005 Policy HE6. The proposal is also in conflict with Policy QD14, which among other things, intends that extensions should be well designed in relation to the property to be extended and the surrounding area.

10. It is made clear in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) *SPGBH note 1, Roof Alterations & Extensions* that hip to gable alterations on semi-detached dwellings will be unacceptable because of the resultant imbalance, as in this case, and dormer additions should be kept as small as possible. In Conservation Areas rooflights should be kept to as few as possible and not dominate the roof. The proposal therefore conflicts with the SPG and because of the substantial adverse effects described above there are no sound reasons for not applying the guidelines in this instance.

11. The distance from the rear of properties in Carlisle Road means that there would be no unacceptable overlooking. Nevertheless, given the unacceptably detrimental impact and taking account of all other matters raised, it is determined that the appeal fails. In reaching this decision the views of local residents have been taken into account.

M Evans

INSPECTOR