



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 April 2012

by M F Aldous BA(Hons) DipMGT MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 April 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/12/2171554
59 Fernwood Rise, Brighton, BN1 5ER

- 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 Mr C Cano-Menendez against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2011/03862 was refused by notice dated 10 February 2012.
 - The development proposed is roof conversion with rear gable & side dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding residential area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a bungalow situated at the end of an elevated residential cul de sac in the northern part of Brighton. It contains properties of similar design and proportions. The general consistency of size, design and spacing arrangements of dwellings represents an important component of the pleasing suburban character of the area.
4. Some properties have been converted to create habitable accommodation within the roof space. In some cases, such as in the immediately adjoining dwellings, this has been achieved with relatively little amendment to the roof form and the use of roof lights within the plane of the roof. In other instances work has been undertaken by the insertion of dormer windows, which because of their size in relation to the scale and single storey nature of the houses, generally represent much more prominent features within the street scene.
5. The proposal before me seeks to achieve additional space by converting the roof form to provide new rooms at the upper level. I am aware that there appears to be an extant and partially implemented planning permission that would allow for the rear hip to gable element of what is now proposed to be undertaken. As such I do not consider this element to be controversial and shall concentrate, as the Council has done, on the potential visual impact of the two proposed side dormer windows.

6. These two features would project from either side of the property when viewed from the road, facing at short distance to the adjoining dwellings on either side. I am content that given appropriate restrictions on glazing and opening arrangements, any potential damage to privacy considerations could be avoided. In addition, given the distance between properties, topographical variation and intervening landscaping, I do not consider that the living conditions of persons residing in properties to the rear would be harmfully affected.
7. Notwithstanding that, in my view the side dormer features would be visually very prominent, having a disproportionately dominant effect that would heavily distort the established roof line to the detriment of the appearance of the host dwelling and also its context within the street scene.
8. The harmful visual effect caused by the bulk and projecting nature of the dormer features would be emphasised by the very narrow dimensions of the plot width at its eastern end and the general prominence of the appeal property at the head of the cul de sac on high ground. As such the proposal would not be sensitive to local visual amenity and does not accord with the requirements of policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan or the Council's supplementary planning guidance 'Roof Alterations & Extensions'.
9. I am aware that there are occasional examples of existing dormer features in the vicinity, but I have no information regarding the planning history of these locations. However, it is clear to me from what I observed on my site visit that where similarly sized and positioned features of this kind have been constructed they do little to enhance the visual qualities of the area, appearing as rather harmful additions which damage the well established visual and spatial characteristics of the estate.
10. The proposal is in conflict with the adopted development plan, having a harmful visual effect upon the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding residential area. There are no other material planning considerations which overcome this harm. For the reasons set out above, and having had full regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that this appeal should not succeed.

Michael Aldous

INSPECTOR