



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2013

by David Hogger BA MA MRTPI MCIHT

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

Decision date: 21 March 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/13/2191430

5 Coombe Vale, Saltdean, Brighton BN2 8HN

- 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 Joe Gladwell against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2012/03371 was refused by notice dated 18 December 2012.
 - The development proposed is described as the demolition of the existing garage and the erection of a two storey side extension with rear first floor dormer extension (part retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the demolition of the existing garage and the erection of a two storey side extension with rear first floor dormer extension at 5 Coombe Vale, Saltdean, Brighton BN2 8HN in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref BH2012/03371, dated 17 October 2012, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Plan; Block Plan; 427/02B and 427/03.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matter

2. On my visit I saw that work has commenced on the construction of the side extension, which the Council has confirmed was approved under planning application BH2012/01740. Work on a first floor dormer has also started, which I am told is permitted development. This proposal would result in an extension to the width of the dormer and in essence this is the nub of the Council's concern. Although there is only one main area of dispute between the appellant and the Council, for the avoidance of doubt I have considered all elements of the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed rear dormer on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider street scene.

Reasons

4. The existing dormer is about 5.5m wide but it does not sit centrally in the extended roof and consequently appears incongruous. The Council acknowledges that it is of a poor design and I agree. The extension to the dormer would provide a greater level of balance in the appearance of the rear elevation of the property and although the dormer would extend across much of the rear roof slope, it would be lower than the ridge line and it would appear as a more integral element of the dwelling. The proposed window in the dormer extension would reflect the characteristics of the corresponding ground floor window. The extended dormer would be a significant feature but I consider it would sit more comfortably than the existing dormer in relation to the appearance of both the host dwelling and the wider street scene.
5. The Council has published Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled 'Roof Alterations and Extensions' which has been subject to public consultation and to which I attach moderate weight. One of the guidelines advises that 'the symmetry of the building must be retained' and this proposal would achieve that objective more fully than is currently the case.
6. I saw no other dormers nearby of similar dimensions but the wider context within which the dormer would be seen does include two properties with smaller dormers to the front, in Looes Barn Close. This is not a matter on which my decision has turned but the fact that there are other dormer windows nearby does add weight to my main conclusion which is that the proposed dormer would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the locality or the host dwelling.
7. Concern has been expressed by a neighbour regarding potential overlooking. However, the distance between the appeal property and nearby dwellings is sufficient to ensure that the extended dormer would not result in a significant loss of privacy and I note that the Council agrees.
8. With regard to the side extension and porch I consider that, when complete, they would not cause harm to the appearance of the host property or the character of the street scene because of their design and the use of appropriate materials. In conclusion I consider that the requirements of saved policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan, which seek to ensure that extensions to properties would be well designed and compatible with the surrounding area, would be met.

Conditions

9. The Council suggest one condition regarding the use of matching materials and I impose it to ensure that the development would respect the character and appearance of the host property. For the avoidance of doubt I also impose a condition requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans.

David Hogger

Inspector