



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2013

by Simon Miles BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 19 June 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/A/12/2189799

31 Melbourne Street, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 3LH

- 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 Mrs Alyousif against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2012/02826, dated 28 August 2012, was refused by notice dated 2 November 2012.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a three storey block comprising 5 No flats.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a small parcel of land in Melbourne Street, which is characterised by a mix of traditional and contemporary buildings built at varying scales, including a tall modern apartment block further along the road. This particular site lies between a traditional two storey terrace and modern three storey housing units.
 4. The proposed development would be attached to, and most closely associated, with the modern units. These units present a somewhat greater bulk to the street when compared with the adjacent traditional terrace. However, this is relieved by the slight setback of the main front elevation behind lightweight glazed staircases. The proposed new block, whilst adopting a somewhat different design, lacks a comparable setback, having a large and prominent front projection.
 5. As a result, the development would appear inappropriately dominant and discordant in the street scene. I acknowledge that the appellant's approach would align the front projection with the adjacent traditional terrace, which is set closer to the road. However, without any setback or articulation to alleviate the massing of the upper storey, the adjacent traditional terrace would be
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overpowered by the greater bulk of the front projection. It is this excessive height and bulk of the front projection that would accord the development its unwarranted prominence in the street scene.

6. In other respects, the development, despite its considerable depth, would step down in height towards the rear and would be sufficiently articulated to achieve an acceptable relationship with the adjacent buildings. Nevertheless, the prominent and obtrusive effect the development would have on the street scene detracts from the overall quality of the scheme.
7. This leads me to conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal is contrary to saved Policies QD1, QD2, QD3 and HO4 of the adopted Brighton & Hove Local Plan 2005 in terms of the need to ensure that development, whilst making efficient and effective use of sites, is of an appropriate design, taking account of the height, scale, bulk and design of existing buildings, and makes a positive contribution to the quality of the environment.
8. These policies are not inconsistent with the approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. In particular, whilst seeking to increase the supply of housing, good design is identified as a key aspect of sustainable development. This is a case where the proposal is broadly acceptable in principle but fails to achieve an acceptable design. In these circumstances, and given the importance attached by the government to the design of the built environment, the balance weighs against approval.
9. Overall, whilst the proposal is not without merit, my findings provide a compelling and over-riding reason why the development should not be permitted. It follows that the appeal should not succeed.

Simon Miles

INSPECTOR