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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 July 2013

**by S Holden BSc MSc CEng TPP MRTPI FCIHT**

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

**Decision date: 15 July 2013**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/13/2198614**

**37 Ainsworth Avenue, Ovingdean, Brighton BN2 7BG**

- 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 Ms Linda Eklind against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
  - The application Ref BH2013/00856 was refused by notice dated 15 May 2013.
  - The development proposed is a part two storey, part single storey rear extension.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

## Reasons

3. Ainsworth Avenue is characterised by good-sized, detached dwellings in well-proportioned plots. No 37 is a two storey house with an attached garage/utility room on the western elevation. These elements have mono-pitched roofs. To the rear there is a single storey extension with a flat roof, which is a predominant feature of the rear elevation and occupies more than half the width of the house.
4. The proposal is to enlarge the existing single storey rear extension by extending it across the full width of the main house and incorporating an additional storey. This two-storey extension would have a flat roof. In addition there would be a new single storey rear extension that would protrude approximately 5m beyond the new two-storey element. It would project some 7m beyond the rear elevation of the host property, so that the rear of the house becomes an 'L' shape. This element would also have a flat roof.
5. There is no objection in principle to an extension being of contemporary design or incorporating a flat roof. However, it is necessary to demonstrate that the overall scale of the proposal respects the proportions of the host property and that new features can be satisfactorily integrated with the existing building. The fenestration proposed for the first floor would be an improvement on the existing, rather utilitarian appearance. However, the overall depth, height and width of the proposal would comprise a substantial and bulky addition to the property. It seems to me that this would be out of proportion with the original dwelling and simply overwhelm the rear elevation, subsuming its features.

6. I consider the depth of the single storey element would be excessive, as it would effectively almost double the depth of this part of the house. Although the proposal would make use of the change in levels it would still be a bulky addition that would not relate well to the proportions and features of the existing house.
7. The extension would also incorporate the use of a parapet wall that would protrude above the existing eaves. This would create an awkward relationship between the flat roof of the extension and the pitched roof of the host property, particularly as it would span the full width of the house. To my mind this would not be an effective integration between the host property and the contemporary design of the extension.
8. On my site visit I saw that a similar feature is present on two nearby houses, which served to illustrate the difficulties of such an arrangement. However, in both those cases the extension did not occupy the full width of the host property and was therefore less dominant than the current proposal would be in relation to No 37. I am therefore not persuaded that use of this feature elsewhere in the vicinity is a justification for permitting the appeal proposal.
9. I acknowledge that neither element of the extension would be visible from the public realm. In addition, the house is sited on a plot of generous proportions and adequate separation distances between the extension and the adjoining properties would be retained. The proposal would therefore not give rise to the extended house appearing cramped on its plot. Neither would be any adverse effects on the surrounding street scene.
10. However, for the reasons set out above, I conclude that notwithstanding the lack of harm to the wider street scene, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property arising from its overall height, depth and bulk. In this respect it would fail to comply with saved Policies QD2 and QD14 of the Brighton & Hove Local Plan, which seeks development that is well designed, sited and detailed in relation to the host property.

### **Other matter**

11. The appellant states that the proposal would not give rise to any loss of amenity to neighbouring properties and I note that the Council appears to be satisfied on this matter. However, on my site visit I saw that the adjoining property at No 35 has several windows in the side elevation facing No 37. Two of these windows serve a kitchen. The only other window serving this room looks out on the rear garden but is small and faces north. From my observations I am of the view that the outlook from the kitchen windows facing No 37 could be adversely affected by the height and bulk of the proposed extension, notwithstanding the separation distance between the adjoining properties. This adds weight to my concerns about the scale of the proposal.

### **Conclusion**

12. For the reason given above, and having regard to all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Sheila Holden*

INSPECTOR