
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2013

by K Stone BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 October 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/13/2204001

1 Waldegrave Road, Brighton, BN1 6GR

- 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 Peter Crawhurst against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2013/01400 was refused by notice dated 28 June 2013.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion with traditional flat top dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issue in this appeal is whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Preston Park Conservation Area.

Procedural matter

3. Since the determination of this application the Council has formally adopted supplementary planning document 12 'Design Guide for extensions and alterations' (SPD12) which has superseded supplementary planning guidance BH note 1 'Roof alterations and extensions' which is referred to in the reason for refusal. I will therefore give weight to SPD12 as a material consideration and consider the appeal on that basis. The appellant has been afforded an opportunity to comment on the SPD and has provided representations.
4. The Council's description of development as it appears on the decision notice and the public consultation information differs slightly from that above in that it also refers to 2 roof lights to the front. The appellant's grounds of appeal also refer to these elements. They form part of the development proposed and I have had regard to this in my consideration of the appeal.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site is located in the Preston Park Conservation Area which was developed in the mid to late 19th century and is predominantly residential with a relatively tranquil character. Many of the streets within the conservation area contain two storey houses. Although there are variations in design, the traditional materials and general consistency of form and style contribute to the

cohesive character of the Conservation Area. Waldergrave Road drops dramatically downhill towards the south with the appeal site at the bottom of the road ensuring the roofscape, within which there are some examples of modest dormers, plays an important role in the character and appearance of the area.

6. The proposal includes two small roof lights to the front elevation and two smaller dormers towards the edges of the rear roof slope. The Council have not raised any concerns with these elements of the proposals and following my site visit I see no reason to differ from those conclusions. On this basis I would agree that they preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.
7. The larger central dormer on the rear roof slope is of significantly greater proportions than the other two proposed dormers. It contains larger areas of cladding either side and below the window resulting in the structure having a heavier appearance contrary to the advice on 'Dormers and Rooflights' in SPD12. The bulkier appearance accentuates the misalignment with the roof of the projection below which thereby appears unusual. The combination of these elements draws attention to the uneven spacing of the three dormers. I find that the proposals therefore provide a roof alteration which would be an incongruous addition to the roof. Whilst it may not be particularly visible from the street, except for limited views, it would be from many of the surrounding properties. The development would thereby detract from the consistency and attractive proportions of the roof form in the area harming the character and appearance of the house and the conservation area.
8. The harmful impact that other examples of older roof extensions in the locality have on the character and appearance of the conservation area does not justify the further harm that results from the appeal scheme. I also note the examples of recent approvals provided however these differ in terms of their design and form. The central dormers are smaller and have less cladding either side of or below the window compared to the appeal proposal. These do not therefore have the same impact as the proposal the subject of this appeal.
9. The appellant has raised concerns about accommodating an internal staircase and its impact on the interior of the house layout. However this is not a public benefit and I have not been made aware of other public benefits which may weigh in favour of the proposal which would be sufficient to weigh against the harm identified albeit that this is less than substantial to the significance of the conservation area.
10. I conclude that the proposal fails to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area for the reasons set out above. In consequence the proposal also conflicts with Policies QD1, QD14 and HE6 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005 which require new developments to be of a high standard of design that takes account of local characteristics and preserves or enhances conservation areas. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Kenneth Stone

INSPECTOR