



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2014

by **E A Lawrence BTP MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 17 March 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/14/2212943

18 Middleton Avenue, Hove, BN3 4PJ

- 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 A Page against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2013/04196 was refused by notice dated 28 January 2014.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed first floor dormer to front elevation.
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Preliminary matter

1. On 6 March 2014 the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published by the Department for Communities & Local Government. In relation to this Appeal the NPPG refers to the design statements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which are addressed in this decision.

Decision

2. The Appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the host building and the street scene.

Reasons

4. The Appeal building is located within an area of symmetrically designed pairs of semi-detached houses which are from a limited range of designs. The dwellings follow a linear street pattern and have consistent front building lines, which add to the uniformity and rhythm in the layout and appearance of the buildings and the street scene as a whole.
5. Policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan requires extensions to be well designed sited and detailed both in relation to the host and adjoining properties. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 12: *Design guide for extensions and alterations* is consistent with this. It advises that roof extensions are unacceptable where they would result in an imbalance between pairs of semi-detached houses. Dormer windows should be kept as small as possible and be seen as a subordinate addition to the roof, set well in from the sides of the roof.

6. The proposed dormer window would fill almost the full width of the catslide roof and its roof would project slightly above the existing first floor eaves line. The proposed dormer would project over two metres forward of the catslide roof and the proposed window would be the same size as the ground floor window below and significantly wider than the first floor window on the southern side of the front elevation.
7. As a result of these factors the proposed dormer extension would form a dominant feature on the front elevation of the property. The proposed window would appear top heavy and the overall dormer would appear bulky when viewed from the north and immediately to the front of the site. Due to its size and dominance it would upset the symmetry of the pair of dwellings and appear unbalanced within the street scene.
8. Within Colemans Avenue front dormers set within the front catslide roofs is an established feature of that road and typically matching dormers are provided in each pair of houses. In addition, the vast majority of dormers are smaller than the dormer the subject of this Appeal. They are narrower and their eaves sit slightly below the adjacent first floor eaves line. As a result they form part of the uniformity within the street scene and do not dominate the host buildings.
9. It is noted that there is a front dormer addition on a comparable dwelling in St Keyna Avenue. However that dormer is lower, narrower and does not project as far forward as the Appeal dormer. As a consequence it sits comfortably within the roofslope, is subservient to the host building and is not dominant in the street scene. It does not have a significant impact on the overall symmetry of the pair of houses.
10. In addition to the extensions referred to above, there are a number of front extensions in the locality which have blended into the street scene with varying degrees of success. They appear to have been constructed prior to the adoption of the current Local Plan and SPD and serve to highlight how front extensions can appear overly dominant and can disrupt the rhythm of the street scene.
11. I conclude that due to both the size of the dormer and the proposed window the proposal would materially and unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host building and the street scene. Accordingly the scheme would conflict with policy QD14 of the Local Plan and SPD12. It would also conflict with section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework which deals with design. It states that new development should respond to local character and that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. The scheme would also conflict with the NPPF which states that decisions should aim to ensure that developments should respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings.

E Lawrence

INSPECTOR