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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2015

**by Louise Phillips MA (Cantab) MSc MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 06/08/2015**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/15/3022926**

**8 Bramble Rise, Brighton BN1 5GF**

- 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 Oliver Dorman against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
  - The application Ref BH2015/00272, dated 27 January 2015, was refused by notice dated 27 March 2015.
  - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the description of development from the application form. The decision notice refers also to "alterations to fenestration", and I note that the plans show the squaring-off of a front bay window and the insertion of high level windows in the existing south side elevation. These aspects of the proposal are not contentious for the parties and, while I have taken account of them in reaching my decision, they do not affect the outcome of the appeal.
3. Interested parties have raised concerns about business activities being conducted from an outbuilding in the garden of the appeal property. However, neither the outbuilding itself, nor the nature of its use, form part of the proposal before me. Consequently, this matter has no bearing upon my decision.

## Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host property, the attached neighbouring property and the wider area.

## Reasons

5. The appeal property is a semi-detached, chalet-style dwelling with a pitched, clay tile roof, to which flat roofed dormers have been added at the front and rear. It is finished mainly in brick, but part of the front elevation has been rendered. Notwithstanding that both the original detailing and the nature of later alterations varies slightly, the other properties in Bramble Rise have a similar overall appearance.

6. The proposed development is a single storey rear extension. It would be flush with the south side elevation of the main building and continue across the back of the house to the shared boundary with No 10. No 10 has an existing rear extension of a similar depth to that now proposed and, at the boundary, the proposed extension would also be of a similar height. Its dimensions would accord with the design guidance set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)<sup>1</sup> and it would not be out of scale with either the host dwelling or its attached neighbour.
7. However, the design of the extension would be deliberately contemporary, with a curved roof which, viewed from the rear, would be low at the boundary with No 10 and rise to a high point adjacent to No 6 to the south. Its side profile would be essentially flat and it would adjoin the existing roof just below the rear dormer. In my view, the intersection of the old and new roof forms at the south side of the property would be rather successful, but the relationship across the back would be awkward due to the significantly different styles. Notwithstanding its sustainability credentials, the provision of a green roof covering for the extension would draw attention to this.
8. Indeed the extension would include a number of design features which would set it apart from the more conventional style of the host dwelling and surrounding properties. In addition to the asymmetrical roof already described, the rear elevation would have a triangular projection to one side which would cause it to look unbalanced; and the provision of a wrap-around window at the south-eastern corner would afford the extension a futuristic appearance which would be at odds with the prevailing 1950s character of the area. Whilst it is proposed to change the windows in the existing house and to render the walls to match the extension, the fundamental difference in styles and proportions would still be conspicuous.
9. In reaching my decision, I have had regard to the statement in the SPD that *"modern designs using contemporary and sustainable materials will be generally welcomed and the Council would not wish to restrict creative designs"*. Read in context, however, such designs are required to be *"considered holistically with the original/main building to avoid an awkward jarring of materials and forms"*. Reading on, this is to avoid approaches which are *"harmful to the character of a building and its surrounds"*. Similarly, while paragraph 60 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that *"planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes etc."*, this is qualified by the statement that *"it is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness"*.
10. For the reasons already given, I do not consider that the proposed extension would integrate successfully with the host dwelling. A modern design at the rear of the site might well be appropriate in principle, but the particular solution proposed would be poorly related to the overall appearance of the building and this would cause harm. Notwithstanding that No 10 is presently well screened from view by boundary planting, the extension would also detract from the fundamental character of the property as half of a semi-detached pair. However, given the restricted nature of the view from the road,

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<sup>1</sup> Design Guide for Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document, 2013.

which would be limited to the side elevation, I do not consider that the development would cause any significant harm to the wider street scene.

11. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the attached neighbouring property. Thus it would conflict with Policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan, which requires extensions to be well designed in relation to the property to be extended and to adjoining properties.

### **Other Matters**

12. In reaching my decision, I have had regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 7 of the Framework and I accept that the proposal would not conflict with either its economic or social role. Indeed, the construction project would have benefits for employment; and the additional space created would meet the needs of the appellant's family. The dwelling is also in an accessible location relative to local services.
13. However, paragraph 8 of the Framework is clear that to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously. I have found that the appeal scheme would conflict with the environmental role in respect of character and appearance, and the benefits described above would not outweigh the harm which would be caused. Whilst I acknowledge that the extension would be constructed using high quality materials and energy efficient methods, such benefits are not dependent on the particular design proposed.
14. I have also taken account of the concerns raised by interested parties in respect of overlooking to No 6 Bramble Rise, but given my conclusion in relation to the main issue of the appeal, my decision does not turn on this matter.

### **Conclusion**

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Louise Phillips*

INSPECTOR