

---

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 February 2016

**by Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 10 February 2016**

---

**Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/15/3136052**

**80 Coombe Vale, Saltdean, Brighton BN2 8HL**

- 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 C Vincent against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
  - The application Ref BH2015/01719, dated 14 May 2015, was refused by notice dated 17 September 2015.
  - The development proposed is a roof extension.
- 

### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a roof extension at 80 Coombe Vale, Saltdean, Brighton BN2 8HL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref BH2015/01719, dated 14 May 2015, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
  - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: P/692/01; 02; 03; 04; 05B and 06A.
  - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal property comprises a detached bungalow located on a corner plot on the south-west side of Coombe Vale. It is set back from the road and has a tall evergreen hedge along the site frontage. Facing the road, there is a large projecting gable elevation which runs through to the rear elevation, and to the side of that and at right angles to it, a hip roofed projection incorporating a large flat roof dormer. The surrounding area in the vicinity of the site is characterised by bungalows with a number of dormer windows in the front elevations. Roofs to the bungalows tend to be gable ended in the main, either facing the road or running at right angles to it.

4. Part of the proposal involves the raising of the gable ended section of the property by approximately 0.8m to provide additional space within the roof area. The Council raises no objections to this and I see no reason to take a different view given that the property currently sits slightly below No 78 because of the dip in the road at this point, and it is well separated from Nos 85 and 87 Westfield Avenue North. The Council is concerned however that the extension of the existing dormer into the main roof area would not be contained within the roof slope and would dominate the roof area, contrary to guidance within its Supplementary Planning Document 2013 – design guide for extensions and alterations (SPD).
5. However, the property is not prominent in the street scene, being set well back from the road frontage. The dormer would not be seen when approaching from the north because it would be screened by the gable ended element of the roof. From the south it would also be partially screened by the boundary hedge running along the side of No 87 Wakefield Avenue North and the difference in road levels, and is set well back from the front elevation. I acknowledge that the proposed dormer would be large, but that is already the case and the extension would not significantly add to that. I note that the main window would match the size and proportions of ground floor windows in the north-east facing gable end. Materials would also match that of the existing dormer and the extended dormer would continue to be set in from the front main wall. Having regard to those issues, I consider that the dormer would remain reasonably integrated with, and subordinate to, the main building. Additionally, given the variety of roof forms, roof alignments and other dormer windows within the immediate area, I do not consider that there would be any visual harm arising.
6. Although it could be argued that the proposal might be contrary to guidance within the SPD in that it would not be as small as possible and would adjoin part of the main roof, the SPD is guidance only and, as the appellant points out, seeks to establish broad design principles. As such it cannot be applied rigidly and each situation must be considered on its individual merits. The general principles in the SPD behind design and appearance is that the original design of the building and its setting should form the primary influences on design of extensions and for the reasons set out, there would be no harm in this instance.
7. The Council raises no objections in terms of any impact to residential amenity and having considered that issue at my site visit, I see no reason to take a different view.
8. In the light of the above there would be no conflict with Policies QD2 or QD14 of the Brighton & Hove Local Plan 2005 in that the proposal would be well designed in relation to the property to be extended and its relationship to the surrounding area, taking into account local characteristics. Although there would be minor conflict with design guidance in the SPD, rigid compliance with such guidance is not necessary in this case. Conditions requiring the development to be built in accordance with the approved plans and for matching materials are necessary in the interests of good planning. Accordingly, the appeal should be allowed and planning permission granted.

*Kim Bennett* INSPECTOR