
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2016

by Grahame Gould BA MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 March 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/15/3141024

10 Marine Avenue, Hove BN3 4LG

- 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 Mrs Susan Sheftz against the decision of Brighton and Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2015/03387 was refused by notice dated 13 November 2015.
 - The development proposed is '2 No Dormers to front elevation'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Procedural Matters

2. A prior planning application (BH2015/02133), for a development similar to that concerning application BH2015/03387, has recently been the subject of an appeal¹. This earlier appeal was dismissed by a colleague on 20 January 2016 and I have been provided with a copy of that decision by the Inspectorate's case officer. As the appellant in her appeal statement has made a comparison between the proposals subject to applications BH2015/02133 and BH2015/03387, I consider my colleague's decision is a material consideration for the determination of the current appeal.
3. In the course of determining other recent appeals in the Council's area I have become aware of the fact that the Council is intending to adopt the 'Brighton and Hove City Plan Part One' on 24 March 2016. I am therefore aware that while part of the Council's Development Plan is about to be changed, Policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005 (the Local Plan)², will continue to be extant following the adoption of the City Plan.
4. Given the foregoing, and without produce to the parties, I am therefore content that I can determine this appeal having regard to Policy QD14 of Local Plan and that there is no need for me to seek the parties views about the imminent change to the Council's Development Plan.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the appeal property (No 10) and the streetscene within Marine Avenue.

¹ APP/Q1445/D/15/3134942

² Cited in the Council's reason for refusal for application BH2015/03387

Reasons

6. No 10 is a comparatively small, semi-detached bungalow, at the corner of Marine Avenue and Norman Road.
7. The appeal development would involve the insertion of two, flat roofed, front dormers of identical dimensions. In seeking to centre the dormers above two of the bays below, one of which is a porch, these additions would be asymmetrically sited on the roof. This development would therefore leave No 10's roofscape with an unbalanced appearance, which in my opinion would have a jarring presence within the streetscene. This development's shortcomings would be accentuated by: the fact that No 10 occupies a corner position; and the single storey nature of this property, resulting in its roof being in the eye line for passers-by.
8. A characteristic of the roofscape within Marine Avenue is the absence of front dormers, with those that are present being very much the exception. Some dormers are present within Norman Road, most notably at Nos 4 to 11, four pairs of semi-detached houses³, with these dormers being an original component of their host's design. I do not find the presence of these other dormers to be something that weighs in favour of the appeal development.
9. For the reasons given above I find that the appeal development would interfere with the clean and simple lines of No 10's roofscape and would be harmful to the appearance of this property and Marine Avenue's streetscene. As such there would be conflict with the objectives of: Policy QD14 of the Local Plan, which requires extensions to be well designed and appropriately sited; and the Council's design guide for extensions⁴, insofar as the dormers would have a poor appearance. As the development would have a poor appearance there would also be conflict with section 7 (Requiring good design) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Other Matters

10. I accept that the appeal development would not be harmful to the living conditions for the occupiers of neighbouring properties. I also recognise that the appeal development would contribute to the economic and social dimensions to sustainable development referred to in the Framework, however, those contributions, given the scale of the development, would be modest. For the reasons given above I therefore find the foregoing factors would not outweigh the visual harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

11. As I have found that the dormers' appearance would be unacceptable, I conclude that this proposal would not amount to sustainable development for the purposes of the Framework, when it is read in the round⁵, and that this appeal should be dismissed.

Grahame Gould

INSPECTOR

³ Two pairs on each side of the street

⁴ The Brighton and Hove City Council Design Guide for Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document SPD12 (June 2013)

⁵ As stated in paragraph 6