



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2018

by **S J Papworth DipArch(Glos) RIBA**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 March 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/17/3182784
62 Poplar Avenue, Hove BN3 8PS

- 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 T A von Biel against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2017/00448, dated 16 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is installation of front dormer.
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Application for Costs

2. An application for costs was made by T A von Biel against Brighton & Hove City Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Reasons

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the area, and Policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan requires extensions and alterations to be well designed, sited and detailed in relation to the property to be extended, adjoining properties and to the surrounding area, and take account of the existing space around buildings and the character of the area.
4. Supplementary Planning Document 12 '*Design Guide for Extensions and Alterations*' sets out at section 3.5 the design principles for dormer windows and states that they will not be permitted on front or side roof slopes where they would unbalance a building or disrupt the continuity of a terrace or group.
5. The Design Guide continues with the advice that as a rule of thumb, the Council will seek to ensure that the visual symmetry of semi-detached pairs and the continuity of terraced buildings is retained and where possible enhanced, especially at roof level and on elevations visible from the street. However, where one half of a semi-detached pair of houses has previously been altered and this has created an imbalance, a well-designed alteration that returns symmetry to the pair may be acceptable. Such cases will always be dependent on the individual design merits of the existing alterations
6. Paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment; good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from

- good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
7. There is a dormer on the other part of the semi-detached pair, number 64, and the Officer's Report states that *'it is noted that no recent planning permission has been granted for this'* and goes on to say that it illustrates the harm that the proposed works would create on the street-scene and does not set a precedent for further harmful works. There is some ambiguity in this statement, as although no recent permission has been granted, it does not state whether a less-than-recent permission was granted, or whether the dormer may have been in place so long that it is now immune from action. The inference taken is that whatever its planning history, that was prior to the present Development Plan policies and national advice on good design.
 8. The west side of Poplar Avenue near the site is characterised by two-storey semi-detached houses designed with some variations but a limited palette of materials and architectural details so that there is an attractive similarity among them. Dormers do not feature in that arrangement, number 64 being a prominent and notable exception over a considerable length of the road. Later works have been carried out, such as roof-lights, which appear acceptable, and conversions from hip to full gable end or attached side dormer, but these do not upset the line of the roof slopes to any great degree and do not undermine the contribution of the largely unadorned roof-scape to the pleasant character and appearance of the area. On the east side of the road there are dormers attached to chalet bungalows, these being a distinct group with low eaves and their presence appears well integrated and the variety adds to the street-scene.
 9. The dormer at number 64 has a discordant effect on the pair of dwellings, but more importantly, on the street-scene, appearing to be set too high on the roof and too close to the hip-end, when seen from ground level. The resulting alignment with the bay windows below would not appear well thought-out. The introduction of similar on the appeal property would re-introduce symmetry as referred to in the Design Guide, but that material consideration makes clear the need for the further work to be well-designed. The intention should not be to replicate poor design for the sake of symmetry.
 10. The result of the proposed development in this case would be two poorly-placed dormers in close proximity, and compounding the harm already caused on one half of the pair. That harmful effect would be more prominent for being repeated and would be seen over a considerable part of the road due to the gradient, albeit that trees could filter the views somewhat when in leaf. The proposal would fail to accord with Policy QD14 and the Framework on the quality of design, and the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area is not excused or made acceptable by the re-introduction of symmetry, as the Design Guide makes clear the need for a well-designed alteration that returns symmetry. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Papworth

INSPECTOR