
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2017

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/16/3162702

117 Crescent Drive North, BRIGHTON, BN2 6SG

- 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 Paul Witkowski against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref. BH2016/03010 was refused by notice dated 7 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is alterations to roof to form additional habitable rooms at first floor level.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal dwelling, the group of dwellings of which it forms part, and the streetscene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a single-storey dwelling located within a stretch of similarly designed buildings. Although many have been extended, for the most part the original form and scale is still discernible. The topography is such that at this point in Crescent Drive North the road slopes to the south. The dwellings follow this slope, and as such there is a staggered roofscape, with the appeal property slightly elevated above 119 Crescent Drive North. Within the vicinity of the appeal property the roofs of some dwellings have been extended and include large side-facing dormer windows.
 5. Given the prevalence of dormer windows in the wider street scene there is no objection in principle to a roof extension. However, the appeal property has been widely extended, and the proposal would extend the roof over a large
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proportion of the ground floor of the building. At present the hipped roof form results in a modestly-scaled dwelling at first floor. In contrast, the combination of the replacement of the hipped roof with front and rear gables, the significant increase in the depth of the building at first-floor, and the raised ridge height would result in a far more dominant building. Its bulk would be exacerbated by the large dormer windows, the design of which would be at odds with the Council's published design guidance¹ (SPD12). In particular, the guidance is that the supporting structure for a dormer window should be kept to a minimum to avoid a "heavy" appearance, and that as a rule of thumb a dormer should not be substantially larger than the window itself unless the particular design of the building and its context dictate otherwise.

6. There are other substantial roof extensions in the vicinity, but the majority do not appear to have included the significant increase in ridge height which is proposed in this case. Due to the relative ground levels, the appeal property would appear disruptive and visually intrusive above the roof line of 119 Crescent Drive North, and the full extent of the depth of the first-floor would be perceived. The proposal would not be well designed, sited and detailed in relation to the host property, adjoining properties and to the surrounding area, as required by Policy QD14 of the Brighton & Hove Local Plan 2005²(LP).
7. Whilst I have taken note of existing roof extensions in the vicinity, there is limited information before me to indicate the date and circumstances of their construction³, and the planning policies against which the developments were assessed. However, having considered the proposal on its own merits and context, I conclude that it would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the appeal property, the group of dwellings of which it forms part, and the wider streetscene, contrary to the aims of LP Policy QD14 and adopted guidance in SPD12.

Conclusion

8. In conclusion, the National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and part of its environmental strand is to contribute to protecting and enhancing the built environment. A core planning principle of the Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design, but for the reasons given above the proposal would not comply with this principle and would not be sustainable development supported through the Framework. As a consequence, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR

¹ SPD12 Supplementary Planning Document; Brighton & Hove City Council Local Development Framework: Design Guide for Extensions and Alterations, adopted 20 June 2013

² Brighton & Hove Local Plan 2005 – Policies Retained on Adoption of the Brighton & Hove City Plan Part One (March 2016)

³ The Council's officer report notes that roof extensions at 113 Crescent Drive North were completed in 2004 but there is no record of planning permission having been granted.