

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 April 2017

by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 28 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/17/3170224

30 Grand Crescent, Rottingdean, Brighton BN2 7GL

- 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 Jemma Fenton against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2016/05109, dated 24 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion, garage conversion and installation of bi-fold doors to south facing ground floor elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of No 30 Grand Crescent and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within a residential area. Many of the properties are substantial although smaller dwellings are found in the area. Designs of properties including the roof vary significantly and this is a key characteristic of the area. Due to the sloping nature of the area the roofline of the dwellings is a particularly dominant feature of the street scene. Dormers are found in the area, with a few exceptions these are small dormers that sit centrally within the roof.
 4. No 30 Grand Crescent is a detached two storey dwelling. It differs from other properties as it has a much more symmetrical appearance when seen from Grand Crescent and The Park to the south. It also has a smaller total roof area than the majority of dwellings in the area, and is smaller in scale than its immediate neighbours. The appeal site has a planning history which includes two refused planning applications. The scheme before me seeks to overcome the previous concerns of the Council. Changes include the removal of the second floor accessible south facing balcony and the design of the dormers.
 5. The Council refers to the Design Guide for Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2013. This indicates that dormer windows should be kept as small as possible and clearly be a subordinate addition to the roof, set appropriately in the roof space and well off the sides, ridge and eaves of the roof.
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6. I accept that the proposal has been designed to make the most of views to the south and west, and to provide light and practical space for the occupiers. However, the proposed dormers would be large features containing double sash windows. The dormers would be high up enough within the roof that they would be highly visible in longer views from The Park even with the larger properties close by. Due to their position close to the ridgeline the dormers would considerably unbalance the appearance and general symmetry of the house when seen from The Park and from Grand Crescent. They would have a considerable size and bulk that would appear as prominent additions on the roof. I consider they would not be proportionate with the scale of the existing house.
7. The proposal would incorporate a barn-hip roof on the southern elevation with full glazing for the bedroom window. However, the design of this roof would not unbalance the appearance of the house and would be proportionate to the house. It would not be seen as an overly prominent addition even though it would be visible from The Park. Areas of glazing looking towards the sea are not uncommon within the area, and the window at the second floor would be acceptable in that context. However, this does not outweigh the harm I have found in respect of the dormers.
8. I have been referred to a number of developments within the immediate area. This includes two dwellings on Cranleigh Road that have dormers which are placed on the ridge line. However, I have not been provided with the circumstances which led to them being considered acceptable or indeed whether they have planning permission. Many of the dwellings referred to by the appellant are much larger in scale and proportions than the appeal site. As such I consider they differ from the appeal scheme. In any event, I have considered the proposal on the specific circumstances before me.
9. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of No 30 Grand Crescent and the surrounding area. It would be in conflict with saved Policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005 (retained 2016). This amongst other things seeks extensions and alterations that is well designed, sited and detailed in relation to the property to be extended, adjoining properties and to the surrounding area. It would be contrary to the SPD.

Other matters

10. Views of the windows of the rear rooms of No 12 The Park are possible from the first floor of No 30. The second floor window would incorporate obscure glazing at the bottom and it would be set back within the roof thereby limiting direct views of the rear of No 12. There would be no access to the small area outside of this window. There would therefore be no loss of privacy for the occupiers of No 12. However, this does not justify the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Gibbons

INSPECTOR