

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 July 2017

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/17/3175721

31 Twyford Road, Coldean, Brighton, BN1 6ED

- 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 David Castagnetti against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2017/00117, dated 13 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension with gable end roof and creation of front entrance and porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is an end of terrace dwelling forming a gable fronted feature to the row of 3 homes. It is in an established residential locality which is characterised by semi-detached and terraced houses of a similar period which, along with relatively generous gardens and varied ground levels, come together to create an area of pleasing appearance. The proposal is as described above. It would primarily create new living accommodation and two double bedrooms below a pitched roof with its ridge running parallel to the road and a side gable to the driveway alongside leading to communal garage blocks.
 4. The Council is concerned that the side extension, given its scale and appearance, would not be subservient to the existing dwelling and would thus cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the property and the street scene. The Council argues in the relevant report that the site is a corner one and this leads to the need for greater spaciousness to remain than might otherwise be the case.
 5. For my part whilst the property lies alongside a driveway to garages I would not class this plot as a corner site, the return is not on widespread public view as such, and the street in practical and visual terms leads up to the 'true' corner with Ingham Drive to the north west. I would also say that the concept
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of subservience has to be treated with some flexibility at times, for example on measurement of comparable additional width. This is especially so when one is dealing with an unusually generous side garden and a far from normal existing terrace which is not symmetrical because of the one gable fronted house. The appeal property is consequently in principle suited to a, road-parallel, ridge solution as an extension. Attention also has to be paid to reasonable scope for forward porch projections on existing or new build elements, particularly when varied building lines and styles and scales of porches are found very nearby.

6. However, having said all of this, in my opinion the proposed extension is regrettably overly-large and would step into the category of being excessive and thus aesthetically harmful. There is little evidence locally of large two storey massing coming so close to a side boundary as planned here and spacing and areas of openness are attractive characteristics of the neighbourhood. The scheme would spread just too far across the plot and too greatly reduce the sense of the space and the practical scope for landscape. Similarly the first floor element would be over dominant relative to the original property and not sufficiently set back to offer appropriate subservience. This would be greatly compounded by the use of an excessive roof form which would simply have a ridge which is too high, it being on a plane with the original property, and excessive bulkiness. Taken as a whole the extension would lack suitable subtlety and would not represent good design. At this scale it would be jarring on the eye and harmful to the streetscene.
7. The Brighton and Hove Local Plan includes Saved Policy QD14 which, amongst other matters, seeks well designed extensions and alterations that should protect local distinctiveness, complement the host property and its locality, have regard to spacing and siting, and not detract from the local character. This is reflected in the advice and objectives of the Council's SPD12 Design Guide for Extensions and Alterations publication albeit that document is *guidance* and cannot be expected to cover every eventuality. Given the nature of the scheme I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the relevant development plan policy and the pertinent aims of the SPD.

Other matters

8. I sympathise with the wish of the Appellant to increase internal space. I can see that there would be no harm to the residential amenity of neighbours and that no objections have arisen. I note that the Appellant has offered to reduce the ridge height if this was the critical determining factor but I have other concerns with the scheme and I have to consider the plans that are before me. A planning condition on the one matter of the roof would not be appropriate and would not resolve matters in any event. I can see the disappointment over the determination of the case and the delay to the Appellant was regrettable. I recognise that there are other examples of side extensions cited by the Appellant. I would conclude that some work successfully in visual terms, others less so. However for reasons of position, scale or form none are directly comparable to the appeal scheme which, in any event I must assess on its own merits.
9. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.

10. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policy which I cite mirrors relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR