
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2021

by Robin Buchanan BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P1425/D/20/3245913

Newhaven Lodge, 12 Brighton Road, Newhaven, East Sussex BN9 9NB

- 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 Chao Xing Shen against the decision of Lewes District Council.
 - The application Ref LW/18/0590, dated 11 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as we put one bikes shed in our front garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The development described in the banner above, which is taken from the application form, started before the date of the application. I saw at my site visit that the development that has been carried out is the same as that which has been applied for, except that it also includes some signage. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including the host building and the streetscene.

Reasons

4. Newhaven Lodge is a two-storey terraced house in use as a guest house. It is similar in appearance to the other terraced houses along both sides of this part of Brighton Road. Most of these houses, including Newhaven Lodge, have relatively narrow and short front gardens, raised a couple of steps above road level set behind low boundary walls, some with low railings above. This part of Brighton Road is on a hill and Newhaven Lodge is towards the lower end near a wide road junction. The road is reasonably straight as it slopes gently upwards past Newhaven Lodge. This pattern and sequence of two rows of terraced houses behind low boundary walls and mainly open, spacious short front gardens is locally distinctive in public views.
5. The bike shed is a silver/grey metal frame supporting a curved clear plastic sheet panel. It is sited on the paved surface of the front garden, next to the inside face of the boundary wall. The panel arcs up from garden level to extend above the wall and wrap over the frame, facing towards the road, to partially

- enclose five metal bike stands within. These are accessed from the open side facing the house. Signage in the form of the words 'Newhaven Lodge' has been applied to the panel with a narrow border strip in the same colour below.
6. The metal frame and cycle stands are relatively thick in profile and form a reasonably extensive structure which can be seen through the clear plastic panel. Conversely, in some views the panel reflects light and mirrors surrounding objects and as a result also has a noticeable translucent presence. Due to its reasonably large dimensions, the bike shed occupies most of the width and depth of the front garden and the top edge of the frame is within quite close horizontal proximity to the ground floor projecting bay window. This part of the bike shed is also reasonably tall and rises vertically to about three-quarters of the height of the window.
 7. Consequently, the bike shed is an inordinately dominant structure that substantially erodes the openness of the front garden and obscures a large part of the lower front elevation of the house. It therefore significantly detracts from the visual integrity and overall appreciation of the house and as it is viewed in the context of the row of neighbouring terraced houses. The screening effect of planting in some front gardens is limited and the bike shed is nonetheless unduly prominent in public views looking up from the lower end of Brighton Road, including in the vicinity of the junction, looking down from the higher part of Brighton Road and in particular when passing next to it along the pavement. In addition, notwithstanding the light colour of the signage, the text part is in a reasonably large font size and the words extend across almost the full width of the panel facing the road at about adult head height. As a result, this sign is overly conspicuous and unduly emphasises the visual presence of the bike shed.
 8. The bike shed is therefore manifestly at odds with the broadly uniform pattern and sequence of the other houses and front gardens along this part of Brighton Road and stands out as an unexpected and unwelcome visually intrusive feature – a clear departure from local distinctiveness that is not compatible with, and does not contribute positively to, the local area.
 9. Considering the above, the development is harmful to the character and appearance of the area, including the host building and the streetscene. It does not accord with Policy ST3 of the Lewes District Local Plan, May 2016 or with Policy CP11(i) of the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy, May 2016. These policies include that development should respect the site coverage, rhythm and layout of neighbouring buildings and materials should be of a type and design appropriate to local vernacular and maintain a sense of place in the local area. It also conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 127. This includes that the design and layout of development should be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and the surrounding built environment and maintain a strong sense of place.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, the appeal does not succeed.

Robin Buchanan

INSPECTOR