



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 May 2021

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/W/20/3264223

Former substation to the rear of 59 Lincoln Road, Portslade, BN41 1LL

- 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 Urban East Anglian Properties against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2020/01916, dated 10 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is the change of use from electricity substation (Sui Generis) to office (B1 a) including erection of two storey office building and associated works.
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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 locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is the fenced, cleared, site of a former electricity substation. It fronts a residential road lying between two domestic rear gardens which run lengthways along the side of the street. The area is of established residential character being an estate of generally terraced two storey homes with set-back building lines and pitched roofs. The locality is visually unremarkable albeit the uniformity of the buildings and the openness created by front and other gardens do come together create an area which has a pleasing appearance. The appeal proposal is as described above.
 4. The scheme embodies a flat roofed two storey block directly fronting the footway. In this form and with this positioning it would be in marked contrast to the prevailing pattern of development. Whilst variety can be a positive attribute in some neighbourhoods a key quality of this area is its simple homogeneity. The scheme would look alien by reason of its prominent bulk in the streetscene and its box-like form. Even with the carefully selected
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materials the scheme would lack any visual subtlety. In summary the appeal scheme would not represent good quality design in this context.

5. Brighton & Hove Local Plan Saved Policy QD14 and Policy CP12 of the Brighton & Hove City Plan Part One are pertinent. Taken together and amongst other matters they seek well designed development that should protect the character and visual quality of an area along with local distinctiveness and generally have architectural merit. I conclude that the proposal would conflict with these policies.

Other matters

6. I recognise that the principle of office development has been accepted via approval for a single storey building (ref BH2020/03350); it is the two storey nature of the appeal proposal which concerns me. I can see that the officer's report unfortunately included errors but I have assessed matters afresh and I have visited the site. The viability case and the economic gain which would arise are positive factors which I take into account in the planning balance. However, whilst I have carefully considered this and all other points raised by the Appellant these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
7. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered and the development plan policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

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

D Cramond
INSPECTOR