

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2021

by **D Cramond** BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 November 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/21/3277263
96 Fallowfield Crescent, Hove, BN3 7NN

- 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 Kristopher Crump against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2021/00541, dated 10 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of additional storey with pitched roof over, single storey rear extension with flat roof over and associated alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on a) the character and appearance of the locality and b) living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow on a narrow plot which includes a shared driveway to a garage at the rear. It is the first such property in an extended row of similar homes running down both sides of this visually appealing stretch of Fallowfield Crescent after the junction with Holmes Avenue. The dwellings turning the corner, and reading as fronting Holmes Avenue, are two storey properties and more typical of houses along that road. The area is one of established residential character and the properties and gardens come together to create a pleasing streetscene. The appeal scheme is as described above and would embody a fully hipped main roof.
 4. The planned works would significantly change the appearance of the dwelling and very markedly increase its size. The effect would be to make this property lose its subtle appearance and innocuous massing and look alien and ill at ease in the context of the immediate adjoining bungalow and those beyond that. The situation is compounded by the narrow plot and tight relationship to dwellings either side. The contrast of two full storeys to the bungalow at No 94 would be too great. Even on the side next to the two-storey corner property the relationship of this new mass would look awkward and unduly cramped because of its proximity.
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5. The Appellant describes the site as a transition plot, and there may be a case for putting it that way, but in any event the building proposed is far from a transition in its full two storey form. Regrettably the property would change from a pleasing and characteristic low-profile property at ease and in place on this Fallowfield Crescent frontage to one which would appear ungainly, incongruous, and cramped in this setting.
6. Brighton & Hove Local Plan (LP) 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.

Living conditions

7. The dwellings either side of the appeal site have side facing windows in close proximity to its boundary and its side elevations just beyond. Most but not all of these windows are secondary however from my observations they do serve a positive function and help to contribute to the amenity within each home. I am concerned that a full height vertical two storey side elevation would unduly impinge upon the light and outlook from these windows to an unreasonable degree. Neighbours would feel a sense of being unduly 'hemmed-in' whether they were inside in the relevant rooms or outside in the abutting external areas. The degree of new physical imposition would be marked and unfortunate.
8. LP Saved Policy QD27 is relevant. Amongst other matters it seeks to ensure that new development would protect good standards of residential amenity in all its guises. Given the foregoing I would conclude that the appeal scheme would conflict with this policy.

Other matters

9. I do understand the Appellant's small local business development aspirations and the wish to extend this dwelling to increase suitability for family occupation. I take the point that materials and external finishes need not be a determining factor given Appellant flexibility on this matter and an ability to use planning conditions; unlike the Council I do not see the question of external finishes as being a reason for refusing the development proposal.
10. As the Appellant notes, there are some 'permitted development' rights to increase building heights and national policy aspirations to make greater use of 'airspace'. However, in this instance I have a scheme before me which has been the subject of a planning application and needs to be determined accordingly. As I indicate above, I find that the proposal would not be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall streetscene and would reduce residential amenity. In my opinion it would represent a step too far in development terms.
11. 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 issues identified above.

12.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

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

D Cramond

INSPECTOR