



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 August 2023

by **D Cramond** BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/23/3325035

22 Tumulus Road, Saltdean, Brighton, BN2 8FS

- 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 Adam Gholam against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2022/03735, dated 2 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is the remodelling of an existing detached dwelling including the erection of an additional two storeys.
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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 a detached bungalow with a floor level below the road and land falling to the rear with views seawards. It is on a residential suburban road with a mix of generally mid twentieth century bungalows and houses. At the point of the appeal property the road is rising to the south west and properties and roofs generally reflect this by stepping up. The appeal property is something of an exception because, as a result of its diminutive nature, the downhill neighbour has a higher ridge. The overall scene is of established character and, while many of the properties are unremarkable in design, they come together to form a neighbourhood with a pleasing appearance. The proposal is as described above and is designed in the art deco idiom with clean lines, white render and flat roofs encompassing a set-in top storey.
 4. I touch on the relatively low ridge of the present appeal site property above and given this anomaly it is self-evident that a higher structure could reasonably occupy this plot. However, to my mind there comes a point where logical stepping, or at least some proximity to it, would be lost and an over-tall house would simply look out of place. Unfortunately, the dwelling alterations proposed via this appeal would fall into this category. Even allowing for ground levels it would be too tall and stand appreciatively and jarringly above other homes in this stretch of road.
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5. Notwithstanding the set-in at the top floor this visually uncomfortable situation would be aesthetically magnified by the bulk of the structure proposed. There would be little in the way of subtle touches in relation to diminishing the sense and reality of an unduly bulky building, exacerbated by proximity of a large part of it to side boundaries and a harsh and awkward juxtaposition with the form of the neighbouring homes. Regrettably the appeal proposal would be an unfortunate incongruity to the prevailing characteristics of the area. It would be unduly and uniquely strident in the streetscene and appear as over-development.
6. Policy CP12 of the City Plan Part One and Policies DM18 and DM21 of the City Plan Part Two are relevant. Taken together and amongst other matters, these policies seek well designed and suitably scaled development that should protect the character, visual quality and the local distinctiveness of an area, and be of suitable design given local context. In all the circumstances I conclude that the appeal scheme would conflict with these planning policies. It would also run contrary to the relevant aesthetic objectives of the Council's 'SPD12' document which looks in some detail at design guidance for alterations and extensions with the aim being to achieve a good fit with the existing environment.

Other matters

7. I do understand the Appellant's wish to modernise the property and gain from its vantage point. It is noted that the Appellant amended the scheme during the application in an attempt to work positively with the Council's planning team. I recognise that variety can at times add interest and quality to an area but I am not persuaded that this degree of radical change is appropriate in this calm streetscene. I appreciate the architectural legacy in parts of the settlement and I have reviewed the other art deco influenced examples drawn to my attention. However, I found none to have directly comparable immediate or wider contexts and, in any event, I must assess this case on this site on its own merits.
8. 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.
9. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered; the Council's policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

10. 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