



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2012

by David Warden MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 September 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/12/2178972
28 Denton Drive, Patcham, Brighton BN1 8LS

- 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 Martin Humphrey against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2012/00474, was refused by notice dated 21 May 2012.
 - The development proposed is a porch to the front of the house facing the road with a canopy roof to each side of the porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') was published in March 2012, at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. I have had regard to it in reaching my decision.
3. The Council has confirmed that, along with the plans listed in the refusal notice, it made its decision based upon drawing reference 'E' received on 20 February 2012. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The Council raise no issue in respect of the living conditions of nearby residents, having regard to the features of the proposal, I find no reason to disagree. The main issue in this case, therefore, is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located in an area that is predominantly residential in character. Denton Drive typically comprises of pairs of semi-detached two-storey dwellings, many of which are arranged in groups that share a similar design. The appeal property forms part of a group of four such pairs, which have walls that are largely rendered, with a brick/painted brick plinths, and gabled ended main roofs. These properties, along with others on this side of the street, occupy an elevated position. Furthermore, Denton Drive rises up steeply from its junction with Carden Avenue and there is an open green area opposite the appeal property. As a result, the front elevations of these properties are prominent within the streetscene.
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6. A number of porches have been added to the properties in Denton Drive and the surrounding streets. These show variation in size, style, roof form and materials. The porch to the front of the attached neighbour, No 26 Denton Drive, is larger than most others that I saw nearby, although its bulk is somewhat relieved by the hipped slopes of its roof. The appeal scheme would be similar in many ways to this adjoining porch. It would be constructed in suitable materials, with its door facing the street, and would include better separation from the existing front windows than that present at No 26. However, the proposal includes a large gable end facing the street that would, to my mind, appear overly dominant. Furthermore, the proposed attached canopy roofs, whilst hipped at either end, would occupy much of the width of the front of the dwelling and would be at odds with the relatively simple frontages of these properties. Rather than 'breaking up' the front of the house and adding interest, I find that these features would cause visual harm, particularly when viewed alongside the existing front porch at No 26.
7. My attention has been drawn to examples of other existing porches and canopies nearby, which I was able to view at the site visit. In particular, a number of the properties in nearby Dale Drive have porches, including some with gable ends facing the street, and adjoining pitched roofs. However, these gable ends are typically smaller than that proposed and the pitched roofs, which are over bay windows, are a common feature of that street. I also saw some gabled fronted porches at the opposite end of Denton Drive, but these are some distance from the appeal property. I note that no objections to the planning application were received and that the appellant states that there is some local support for the proposal. However, none of these factors overcome or outweigh the harm that I have identified would be a consequence of the appeal proposal.
8. All in all, notwithstanding the variation in the existing porches found nearby, the proposal, which would occupy a prominent position, would appear overly dominant and at odds with its immediate surroundings to a degree that would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This would be contrary to policy QD14 of the Brighton & Hove Local Plan 2005 ('LP'), which seeks, amongst other things, to protect local character by ensuring extensions are well designed in relation to both their host property and those nearby.
9. Having regard to the Framework, the LP, which was adopted in July 2005, is not of any significant age. Moreover, I have not been provided with any substantive evidence that would lead me to conclude that, in the context of this appeal, the relevant LP policies are inconsistent with the Framework. Therefore, whilst the policies in the Framework have been considered, in light of the facts in this case, they do not alter my overall conclusion.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Warden

INSPECTOR