
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2014

by L Gibbons BA (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27 January 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/13/2209986

26 Lustrells Crescent, Saltdean, East Sussex BN2 8AR

- 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 & Mrs Graham against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2013/03180, dated 12 September 2013, was refused by notice dated 11 November 2013.
 - The development proposed is a rear facing dormer to an existing loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow in a residential area with similar properties nearby. Although it is set down from the road, due to the hilly nature of the area it is higher than properties to the rear of Lustrells Crescent, which are along Tremola Avenue.
4. The appeal proposal is for a rear facing dormer. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 12 Design Guide for Extensions and Alterations (SPD) 2013, at section 3.5 refers to dormer windows clearly being a subordinate addition to the roof. Although the proposed dormer is set below the main ridge height and in from the walls of the bungalow, I consider it would be of a size and scale which would be out of proportion with roof of the host property.
5. The areas of tile hanging and spacing between the two windows add to the bulk of the proposed dormer, resulting in a structure which would be very prominent on the roof. The SPD refers to flat roofs being acceptable to reduce the bulk of dormer windows. However, the appeal proposal incorporates a slight pitch to the dormer roof and this would create the appearance of additional height, adding to the prominence of the dormer. Therefore, in my opinion the proposed dormer would not be a subordinate addition to the roof and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property.

6. The proposed dormer window would not be directly visible from Lustrells Crescent; however from the rear it would be far more prominent. The host property and properties on Tremola Avenue have wide, but relatively short back gardens. The slope and nature of the gardens results in the properties on Lustrells Crescent being more prominent and visible at the rear than those on Tremola Avenue. Due to its design and size, the proposed dormer window would therefore be very visible from the rear of Nos 9 and 11 Tremola Avenue and from the gardens of adjacent properties along Lustrell Crescent thereby causing harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
7. I conclude that the appeal proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would conflict with policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005 which amongst other things seeks to ensure that extensions and alterations are well designed in relation to the property and the surrounding area. It would be contrary to the SPD and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to the need for high quality design.
8. The appellants' submitted that there is a wide range of dormers and loft conversions locally as well as within the wider area of Saltdean. This includes a large side dormer at No 30 Lustrells Crescent and dormer windows on Nos 9 and 11 Tremola Avenue. However, I am not aware of the circumstances surrounding their construction, nor indeed whether they have planning permission. Therefore, I am unable to give them significant weight in considering the proposal before me.
9. The appellants' have referred me to the conservatory at No 22, which was visible on my site visit. However, this does not directly parallel the appeal proposal and in any event, each proposal must be judged on its own merits. Whilst I recognise that the materials proposed would match those of the host property, due to the form and size of the dormer window I still consider that it would have a harmful effect on the overall appearance of the property and the surrounding area in general.

Other matters

10. The appellants' refer to the National Planning Policy Framework particularly in relation to good and inclusive design and whilst I sympathise with the appellants' concerns to make efficient use of the space within the house, this is not a sufficient reason to justify the proposal before me. Although the appeal proposal would add to the variety of housing stock within the area in a sustainable location and would incorporate water and energy-saving measures, these do not outweigh the harm I have found in respect of the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, having regard to all other matters including concerns of overlooking and loss of privacy raised by neighbours, the appeal is dismissed.

L Gibbons

INSPECTOR