

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 August 2016

by Cullum J A Parker BA(Hons) MA MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 17 August 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/16/3152919

2 Merton Close, Woodingdean, Brighton

- 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 Carl Sedge against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2016/00427, dated 29 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'room in roof with front dormer'.
-

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 street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached house located within a short cul-de-sac comprising five pairs of similar designed properties. Nearby properties; Nos 3 and 4 benefit from large box style dormers on their front elevations. The proposed development in this case seeks the insertion of a dormer style window in the front roof slope with a Juliet style balcony. However, such roof extensions are the exception rather than the norm within the street scene.
4. Whilst it is unclear as to when the dormers at Nos 3 and 4 obtained planning permission, I understand that they predate existing planning policy. What is more those dormers are of a very different design to that proposed in this case, covering a larger area of the front roof slopes, but retaining a sense of balance and proportion to the semi-detached properties as they broadly mirror each other; at least in size.
5. There is no dormer in the front roof slope at No 1 Merton Close. Moreover, dormers are not a typical feature within the wider street scene and where they do exist their form interrupts the overall architectural flow of the street scene, as can be seen by the jarring examples at Nos 3 and 4 when looking at the cul-de-sac as a whole.
6. The proposed development would therefore result in the introduction of a feature that would not only unbalance the visually balanced semi-detached properties of Nos 1 and 2, but would also introduce an incongruent feature

within the front roof slope at odds with the prevailing pattern of development within the area. Whilst it is not for local planning authorities to impose architectural styles or tastes, it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. In this case, through the inappropriate siting, the design, appearance, scale and its visually unbalancing effect the proposal would result in material harm to the character and appearance of the street scene.

7. I acknowledge the appellant's point that visibility of the proposed extension would be limited by the cul-de-sac location, where visits by people walking or driving for example are less likely. However, it would be hard to miss the prominent intrusion proposed into the front roof slope that faces out to the highway, and I do not find that the location of the appeal site provides justification for it to be permitted.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the street scene. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Policy QD14 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005, as supported by SPD12 - Design guide for extensions and alterations 2013, which amongst other aims seeks to ensure that planning permissions for extensions or alterations will only be granted if the proposed development is well designed, sited and detailed in relation to the property to be extended, adjoining properties and to the surrounding area.
9. For the reasons given above, and having taken in to account all matters raised, including the comments of support from neighbours, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Cullum J A Parker

INSPECTOR