



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2014

by **S Holden BSc MSc CEng MICE TPP MRTPI FCIHT**

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

Decision date: 30 October 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1445/D/14/2225663

37 Hawkhurst Road, Brighton, BN1 9GF

- 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 Peter & Sonia Mathers against the decision of Brighton & Hove City Council.
 - The application Ref BH2014/01192 was refused by notice dated 25 June 2014.
 - The development proposed is a two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

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

Reasons

3. Hawkhurst Road is characterised by modest, two-storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings. The houses have generously proportioned front gardens and the street layout includes grass verges and expanses of open space with occasional mature trees. These features give the area an open and spacious appearance.
4. No 37 is an end terrace, two-storey dwelling with a pitched roof. It has an existing, single-storey element with a flat roof that projects just over 1m from the front elevation. The proposal would replace this with a part single, part two-storey extension. The flat roofed, single-storey element would be wider and would project further from the front elevation. The proposed first floor of the extension would be almost flush with the front elevation. The extension as a whole would project 2.5m beyond the rear elevation. A hipped section of roof would link the main ridge to a smaller, hipped roof on the rear of the side extension.
5. Single storey front projections are a common feature on the estate, providing a sense of uniformity to the groups of properties. The increased width and depth proposed at No 37 would therefore be out of character with one of the distinguishing features of the original houses in the locality.
6. The proposed extension would significantly increase the depth of the side elevation of the house. The new flank wall would comprise a large expanse of render that would be visible through the gap between Nos 35 and 37. In my view the proposed placement of the windows would not enhance its appearance or add interest. Consequently, the proposal would appear to be a large and bulky addition that would not respect the features or proportions of the original dwelling.

7. No 37 is in a prominent position within the street scene and can be seen by anyone travelling south along Hawkhurst Road round the long sweeping left hand bend. The houses in this section of the street are characterised by their simple pitched roofs. The alterations to the roof to accommodate the proposed extension would create a complex roof shape incorporating different angles and heights. Consequently, it would appear to be an incongruous addition that would fail to reflect the shape and style of the roof of the host property or those elsewhere on the estate. I consider this would adversely affect the appearance of No 37, the terrace of which it is a part, and its relationship with No 35.
8. The gaps between the houses in Hawkhurst Road are an important feature of the area that contributes to its character. Their regularity and consistency provide a sense of continuity, uniformity and rhythm to the street scene. The proposed extension would significantly reduce the gap between Nos 35 and 37, at first floor level. This would make the houses appear more cramped, to the detriment of the area as a whole.
9. Taken together these factors demonstrate that the proposal would be a poor design that would not be acceptable in its context. It would appear to be a bulky and poorly articulated addition. It would neither be subordinate to the existing dwelling, nor respect its features or those of the surrounding street scene.
10. The appellant drew my attention to a nearby house that had been extended in a similar manner to that which he is proposing for No 37. However, I have no details as to when this property was extended, or how the Council assessed it at that time. In any event, it is not directly comparable with the appeal scheme as it does not include a front projection and is in a less prominent location in the street scene.
11. The Council adopted its Supplementary Planning Document: *Design Guide for Extensions and Alterations* (SPD12) in June 2013. This sets out the Council's approach to the design of two-storey side extensions and is a matter to which I attach significant weight. SPD12 advises that extensions should not dominate or detract from the original building or the character of an area. They should play a 'supporting role' that respects the design, scale and proportions of the host property with a roof that complements the original. In my view the proposal would not accord with this advice.
12. I conclude that the proposed extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would be contrary to saved Policy QD14 of the Brighton & Hove Local Plan, which seeks high quality design that respects its setting, and the specific advice and guidance set out in SPD12.
13. For this reason, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden
INSPECTOR