The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2014

by E A Lawrence BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 March 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3805/D/14/2212515
5 Downsway, Southwick, Brighton, BN42 4WA

- 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 Mark Boden against the decision of Adur District Council.
- The application Ref AWDM/1390/13 was refused by notice dated 4 December 2013.
- The development proposed is described as proposed loft conversion to create 2No bedrooms and a bathroom in the existing roof space.

Preliminary matter

1. On 6 March 2014 the Planning Practice Guidance (planning guidance) was published by the Department for Communities & Local Government. In relation to this Appeal the planning guidance refers to the design statements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which are addressed in this decision.

Decision

2. The Appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the host building and the street scene.

Reasons

4. Downsway is characterised by uniformly designed houses and bungalows with consistent front building lines and on land which slopes up steeply to the north. The Appeal building is located towards the southern end of the road, within a row of uniformly designed bungalows. The bungalows have broken front building lines and their main roofs are hipped away from the road. The lower roofs of the projecting front wings similarly have either full or half hipped roofs. As a consequence the front roof form of the dwellings collectively makes a significant contribution to the uniformity and rhythm within the street scene.

5. Policy AH7 of the Adur District Local Plan requires the design of extensions to be sympathetic to the host building and the area in general. Section 7 of the NPPF similarly states that new development should respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

6. With the proposed scheme the hipped roofs at the front of the dwelling would be changed to gables. Whilst the resultant roof would appear well proportioned, the gables would project in front of the roofs of the adjacent and nearby dwellings and appear as a visually hard and discordant feature alongside the adjacent hipped roofs. At the same time the gable roofs would disrupt the sense of uniformity and rhythm with the row of dwellings.

7. It is noted that there is a front roof addition on a comparable dwelling a short distance to the north of the Appeal property. Far from setting a precedent, this extension serves to highlight how the introduction of a front gable roof at the Appeal property would disrupt the rhythm of the dwellings fronting this stretch of Downsway. It would appear as a prominent and discordant feature within the street scene and could set a precedent for similar harmful extensions within this part of Downsway.

8. The proposed side dormer extension would be largely screened within the street scene and would be set back from the front building line by more than three metres. It would be set below the main ridge line and above the eaves line and would have a simple flat roof. As a result it would appear subservient to the host dwelling and would be readily assimilated into the existing roof-scape along Downsway. Indeed, within Downsway there have been a number side dormer extensions and where they have been set appropriately back from the front elevation of the property they have blended appropriately into the street scene.

9. The proposed gable roof at the rear of the property would be contained within the rear garden environment where there are a range of existing rear extensions and alterations. As a consequence it would blend in appropriately with the more diverse and informal character and appearance of the back garden environment.

10. As pointed out by the Appellant various roof extensions could be undertaken within the existing permitted development tolerances. However, unlike the proposed front roof extension, any such additions would not detract from the rhythm, character and appearance of the street scene and the area as a whole. Finally, it is acknowledged that the proposed extension would provide additional living accommodation for the Appellant and his family, however in this instance the harm that would be caused by the proposed front roof extension would outweigh the benefits.

11. I conclude that due to the introduction of a gable roof at the front of the property the scheme would materially and unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host building and the wider area. Accordingly the scheme would conflict with policy AH7 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

E Lawrence

INSPECTOR