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planning application AWDM/1552/15

1 message

Michelle Martindale [redacted] 27 November 2015 at 13:20
To: "planning@adur-worthing.gov.uk" <planning@adur-worthing.gov.uk>

for the attention of Matthew Porter, re planning application AWDM/1552/15

11 Queens Place,

Shoreham-by-Sea,

West Sussex, BN43 5AA,

27th November, 2015.

Matthew Porter,
Planning Services Development Management,
Portland House,
44 Richmond Road,
Worthing,
West Sussex, BN11 1HS.

Dear Mr Porter,

This is the fuller, follow-up letter to my note of 17/11/15, relating to the loft conversion, involving a dormer window, at 12 Queens Place.

As stated previously, my objections will be focused under planning criteria:
'Design, appearance, materials, character'
and 'Effect on ...Conservation Areas.'

Since this proposal was first brought to my attention, I have on several occasions been to look, from just beyond the garden end, at the dormer on no. 7 Queens Place (adjacent to a similar but somewhat older structure on no.8). I am told that the proposed development for no. 12 is much the same as that on no. 7, and would be built by the same company. My response, after a careful look at these structures - a reaction that has only increased with further experience - is that they are intolerably out of keeping with the shape and design of these terraced homes. They loom disproportionately large on the buildings, distorting their appearance, and presenting aggressive angles, top-heavy weighting of the roof-lines and far too much black/dark grey colouring to the line of sight. (I have enquired, without obtaining a good answer, why the dormer has to be so relentlessly black-clad, rather than allowing some surfaces that could be painted the same colour as the house walls.) The terraced houses of Queens Place are narrow and not very tall, and the placing of such large dormers on their roofs radically distorts their design. I have envisaged what such a structure would be like in my more immediate vicinity, and know that it would be overbearing and intimidating.

As regards the classification of Queens Place as part of a 'Conservation Area', I am aware how non-specifically and flexibly this definition is applied, but if he classification is to be worth anything at all, those who apply it must surely give some thought to the character of the buildings/homes in that area.

Since the eighteenth century, the admired design virtue of terraced housing is that it allows individual private dwellings to partake of the greater aesthetic scope of a street or community development. Queens Place, to be sure, is relatively relaxed and low-key, as terraces go, and allows certain sorts of individual variation. But developments that permanently alter the nature of the street, in a Conservation Area, should, surely, be undertaken only with the greatest circumspection. I am aware that more attention is accorded by you to the street side of the houses than to the backs, but it is not logically possible to ignore the backs completely

whilst allowing the homes to be part of the Conservation Area. For the reasons outlined above under 'Design etc.', the building of a dormer of the proposed kind would be detrimental to the 'conserved' character of the street. The fact that some dormers have previously been allowed does not justify further encroachments. With such top-heavy developments, the more disruptions to the roofs there were, the more destructive it would be of the road's character.

I have to say that I have been somewhat surprised by the lack of detail and individual quality in the plans submitted for no/12. It really does look like a generic, 'one-loft-conversion-fits-all' type of proposal. I am surprised, too, that your office is prepared to accept such faint and low-quality planning designs, when I know that in the past, anyone submitting a planning application to the same office had first to organise (and pay for) proper architect's drawings. I am familiar with the impact of other councils, such as Hackney and Haringey in London, where inappropriate and intrusive additions to houses are evidently allowed on a regular basis, and have seen the havoc that this has wrought on streets which had been reasonably harmonious. I would like to hope that Adur and Worthing Councils would be more careful about preserving the quality and character of our area's streets, and give some greater priority to the welfare of the communal environment.

I submit these objections in full awareness of the implacability and bureaucratic nature of planning regulations, but with full confidence in the justice of my observations, and in sure and certain knowledge of my own feelings on the matter.

I would be happy to expand on or elucidate any of the above points, if asked to do so.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Martindale (Mrs).

PS I should be most grateful if you could let me know that you have received this letter, just to reassure me that the e-mail service is working as it should.