



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 May 2017

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/17/3170255

23 Holmwood Gardens, Bristol, BS9 3EB

- 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 Andrew Lambert against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/05435/H, dated 7 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2016.
 - The development is a loft conversion with rear flat roof dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a relatively modern, half-timbered detached dwelling standing within a secluded estate of similar properties. The appellant proposes a loft conversion. To facilitate this a flat-roofed dormer would be inserted in the rear roof slope, extending across almost its full width. The flat roof would be set just below ridge height, and the rear wall of the dormer would be set just above the eaves.
 4. The front of the property would be unaltered other than for the insertion of rooflights to which the Council does not object. I have no reason to object to these features either.
 5. The dormer's design, in my view, can be appropriately described as bulky, box-like and utilitarian. Its scale and size would be such that it would dominate the roofslope and imbalance the dwelling's appearance at the rear. Whilst its materials would match those of the host property, this would not overcome the inherent design deficiencies.
 6. The appellant considers that the dormer would be obscured from view. But as I saw, although the dormer affects the rear alone, it would nevertheless be plainly seen from some viewpoints along the public highway running through the estate, and from adjoining properties. It would prove prominent and highly noticeable from these points.
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7. Reference is made to Supplementary Planning Document Number 2, entitled 'A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions' (SPD). The appellant asserts that the proposal is in accordance with its guidance on dormer windows.
8. However, the SPD text provides:

'There are many examples of inappropriate dormer window extensions that due to being too large in relation to the roof-slope have a or poor relationship to the original roof form....Large, box-like dormers are inappropriate for the majority of domestic properties. To achieve a good design it is necessary to pay particular attention to the size and form of the roof, and the arrangement and proportion of existing windows.'
9. I do not share the appellant's view as to the dormer's compliance with the SPD. To my mind, on account of its size and box-like appearance, it would fall squarely into the category of inappropriately designed dormers described in the SPD's text.
10. I conclude that the proposed roof modifications would harm the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings. Accordingly, a clear conflict arises with those provisions of policy BCS21 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy, and policy DM30 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, directed to promoting high quality urban design and that alterations to existing property should respect the siting, scale, form, proportions, details and the overall design and character of the host building and the broader street scene.

Other matters

11. Given that I saw no other examples of poorly designed dormers of this type within the estate, I am also mindful that a successful appeal could encourage others to pursue similar proposals, which the Council may find difficult to resist, thus accentuating the harm.
12. Although precedent is seldom a good reason, in itself, to refuse permission, in this case it is considered material, given that a successful appeal could and probably would probably lead to greater visual harm. Accordingly, the matter of precedent serves to reinforce my conclusions on the main issue.
13. I note the references to other development plan policies, but those to which I have referred are considered the most relevant in this case. I have also noted the references to the *National Planning Policy Framework*.
14. All other matters referred to in the representations have been taken into consideration, including the points made by local residents. Whilst I understand the privacy concerns raised, I share the Council officers' view, for the same reasons, that an objection on this basis is not sustainable. No other matter raised is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR