



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 September 2021 by Ifeanyi Chukwujekwu BSc MSc MIEMA
CEnv MRTPI

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J4525/D/21/3275113

60 Canon Cockin Street, Sunderland SR2 8PW

- 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 Mrs Kelly Perry against the decision of Sunderland City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00313/FUL, dated 11 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is proposed front and rear dormer extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. The Government published on 20 July 2021 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration in my decision-making, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the proposed front dormer extension upon the character and appearance of the host property and the wider street scene.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. No. 60 is a single-storey terraced cottage which is part of a terrace block comprising nos. 54 to 104 Canon Cockin Street in Sunderland. This is a long street characterised by terraced blocks of distinctive single storey 'Sunderland' cottages on either side of the road. There is an attractive rhythm to the row due to the consistent design of the properties and projecting front bay

windows. Although the roofline would originally have been unbroken, there are a number of properties on each block which feature box dormers on the front elevations. The bulky proportions of those extensions contrasts awkwardly against the simple form of the original pitched roof slope. Nevertheless, despite the occasional front dormers, undeveloped front roof slopes are still the predominant character of the street which retains an attractive character.

6. Furthermore, the Council's Interim Development Management Planning Guidance (February 2020) (the 'SPG') states that terraced cottage properties are unique to Sunderland and it is vital to preserve the character of these traditional street scenes. Consequently, dormer extensions are generally considered to be unacceptable¹. It does however state that in limited instances where at least 50% of properties in the same block as the host property already feature front dormer extensions, there may be scope for carefully designed front dormers to be incorporated.
7. However, front dormers will not be approved even in instances where the percentage of existing dormers is only marginally less than 50%. Only 7 of the 27 properties on this block namely nos. 56, 58, 62, 66, 84, 92 and 98 feature front dormers. This gives a percentage of 26 percent (rounded off) which does not meet the requirement.
8. Though the dormer would be set in from the side boundaries and would also be set down from the ridge of the property's roof as required by the SPG, the SPG also requires that materials used should closely match the existing roof and wherever possible re-use the materials of the existing roof. Flat roof/box dormers as stated by the SPG will be resisted and the proposed box dormer would appear top heavy and intrusive upon the roof slope of the host property. It would thus be visually harmful and have a significant effect on the modest character of the host property and the surrounding street scene. This harm would be further exacerbated by the use of uPVC cladding on the front of the dormer which is contrary to guidance.
9. It is acknowledged that the neighbouring nos. 56, 58 and 62 Canon Cockin Street feature box style dormers to the front, these appear to be of some vintage. Similarly, a previous planning permission granted at the appeal property for erection of dormers to front and rear of property² was a number of years ago and would have been subject to different planning policy considerations. Each proposal must be considered according to its own merits against current local planning policy and guidance. In that context, the proposed front dormer would conflict with current guidance stipulated in the SPG. The current proposal would exacerbate the harmful impact of previous unsympathetic box dormers and the existence of similar development does not justify further harmful development which would result in a continuous run of four properties with front roof alterations.
10. I find that the proposed front dormer extension by virtue of its design, materials, size and location would have a significant harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the host property and the wider street scene. Consequently, it would conflict with the objectives of policy BH1 of the Sunderland City Council's Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033 (2020) which seeks amongst other things to ensure that new development is of

¹ See section 7.5 page 23

² Ref 07/02142/FUL

a scale, massing, layout, appearance and setting which respects and enhances the positive qualities of nearby properties and the locality.

11. Given that the Council has raised no objection to the rear dormer I have considered whether it would be appropriate to recommend that planning permission be granted for the rear element but dismissed for the front dormer. However, the appellant has not specifically requested this, and I note that the floor layout includes a landing area within the front section of the roof which would give access to the rear bedroom. It is not immediately apparent if that could be achieved without some alteration to the front roof slope and therefore it is not clear if the front element is readily visible from the rear dormer. In those circumstances I have not recommended a split decision.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ifeanyi Chukwujekwu

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR