

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2023

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

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

Decision date: 22ND September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z0116/D/23/3326832

85 York Road, Bristol, BS6 5QD

- 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 Michael Moore against the decision of Bristol City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/05402/H, dated 4 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2023.
 - The development is a loft conversion – erection of rear dormer and installation of 3 rooflights on the front roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion – erection of rear dormer and installation of 3 rooflights on the front roof slope at 85 York Road, Bristol, BS6 5QD in accordance with the terms of the application Ref P22/05402/H, dated 4 November 2022, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule to this decision.

Main issue

2. The appeal property is located within the Montpelier Conservation Area (CA). Accordingly, the main issue is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

Reasons

3. York Road is a lengthy street displaying a variety of house types and designs. The appeal property forms part of a small, attractive terrace set above road level. The dwelling has a red brick façade with a prominent bay and bath stone detailing, and a red pantiled roof. The garden to the rear of the property is tiered on account of the changing ground levels.
4. The applicant proposes to erect a rectangular box-like dormer in the rear elevation, which would occupy most of the roof's rear plane. The Council's SPD¹ provides detailed guidance on the design of roof extensions and alterations, and in this case the Council considers the dormer to be at odds with the guidance. In its view, the dormer is too large, poorly designed and would have a dominating, harmful effect on the dwelling and its surroundings. The Council has no objection to the rooflights at the front, and I have no reason to disagree.

¹ A Guide for Designing House Alterations and Extensions - Supplementary Planning Document Number 2 (2005)

5. The appellant requires the additional accommodation to create what is described as a family home in a sustainable location. He takes the view that the dormer has very limited effects on the CA since it is visually enclosed, and views of the structure would be limited to neighbouring gardens. Several examples have been provided of instances during the last decade or so where the Council has granted permission for similar proposals within the CA. For its part, the Council considers that the circumstances in those cases are not directly comparable.
6. The Council acknowledges the existence of a dormer structure on a neighbouring house at No 79, and that this was granted planning permission less than a decade ago. On this basis the Council says that '*..the principle of an addition to the roof may be acceptable*'. However, it points to the Montpelier Character Appraisal which suggests that roof extensions can and have had detrimental impacts on the architectural integrity of individual buildings. I note, however, that the Appraisal was published several years prior to the planning permission being granted for No 79. I saw two other examples of dormer extensions on dwellings further west than No 79.
7. In my view, the terrace's front elevation, rather than the rear, make the most significant contribution to the CA, not least because of its' attractiveness and exposed position in the street. The rear of the property is visually sheltered and seen only by neighbouring residents from their gardens. In circumstances where dormer additions are not wholly uncharacteristic local features, the one proposed would not stand out.
8. Thus, regard to what I saw, and notwithstanding the Council's comments on its' detailed design, the rear dormer would have little or no impact on the public realm or on the CA as a whole. At worst it would have a neutral impact. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not harm the BCA, whose character and appearance would be preserved. Accordingly, no conflict arises with those provisions of policies BCS21 & BCS22 of the Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy (CS), and policies DM30 & DM31 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (DMP), directed to protecting the city's heritage assets.

Conditions

9. In the interests of visual amenity, I shall impose the Council's suggested condition in respect of external materials.
10. It is also necessary, in the interests of certainty, that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
11. Little detailed information is provided as to the design or specification of the rooflights, so I shall impose a condition requiring the design to be agreed before installation. To my mind, conservation style rooflights, as proposed, would be best suited to this prominent front elevation roofscape.

Other matters

12. I have noted the references to other development plan policies but those to which I have referred are considered the most relevant having regard to the

particular circumstances of the case. I have also taken account of the references to the *National Planning Policy Framework*.

13. All other matters raised in the representations have been considered but none outweigh those considerations that led me to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1). The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2). The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos 1-3; 4-11 & 12-19 (the latter dated 4 May 2023).
- 3). The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing dwelling.
- 4). Prior to their installation details of the proposed rooflights shall be submitted to the local planning authority for its approval and the rooflights shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.