
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2024

by T Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N4720/D/24/3337383

4 Beulah Grove, Leeds LS6 2NL

- 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 Townsley against the decision of Leeds City Council.
 - The application Ref 23/05848/FU, dated 25 September 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 December 2023.
 - The development proposed is attic conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the proposal on the application form includes wording that is not a form of development and although the front dormer window could facilitate an attic conversion at the site, the proposal could more accurately be described as 'front dormer window' and it is described as such on the appellant's statement of case. I have therefore considered the proposal on that basis.
3. At the time of my site visit a front dormer window was in place that bore some resemblance to that on the plan before me. However, that at the site appeared to extend further up the roof slope of the property towards its ridgeline and therefore it could be larger than that shown on the submitted drawing. I cannot therefore be certain that the front dormer window that I saw on site was the same as that shown on the submitted plan. For the avoidance of doubt, I shall determine the appeal on the basis of the submitted plan.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The proposal relates to a front dormer window on a back to back terrace property within a residential part of Leeds. Front dormer windows form a common feature within the short terrace of which the appeal property is part, with a large example in place at No.6 and more modest examples in place at No.2 and No.8. I accept that front dormer windows are part of the character of the local area having also viewed the nearby streets.
6. The front dormer window shown on the drawings is not excessively sized and it is set in from the sides of the roof and down from the ridgeline. However, the windows within it would show little co-ordination with those below on the front

elevation of the dwelling, their positions within the dormer structure and shape having little relationship with the windows which incorporate a strong vertical emphasis and balanced positioning below. The white horizontal cladding would further be at odds with the traditional brick elevation and dark roofing materials. The visual impact of these facets would be heightened by the front elevation of the dormer being set only minimally back from the eaves and front elevation of the dwelling.

7. The proposed dormer window would therefore have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the terraced block and therefore the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would subsequently fail to accord with policies P10 of the Leeds Core Strategy (2019), saved policies GP5 and BD6 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review (2006) and Policy HDG1 of the SPD¹.
8. Amongst other things, these policies require proposals of good design that are appropriate to their context and which respect the character and quality of surrounding buildings that make up the public realm and wider locality and respect the character and appearance of the locality. Alterations and extensions should respect the scale, form and detailing of the original building.
9. There would also be conflict with SPD guidance in relation to dormer windows to the front. Amongst other things the SPD advises that where dormer windows are considered part of the character of the area, they should be small, well-designed additions which retain the original roof form, constructed of appropriate materials and reflect the proportions and positions of existing windows. The dormer window would not meet all of these criteria.

Other Matters

10. Whilst many dormer windows in the area are finished in white modern materials, I accept that the issue of material finish on the dormer could be addressed via the imposing of a condition to amend materials were I to allow the appeal. Adding such a condition would not resolve the harm arising from other matters identified above, however.
11. Many of the local dormer windows are likely to be of some age. The evidence indicates that approval has recently been granted for a front dormer at 9 Beulah Grove which I was able to view. That, however, is more limited in extent and scale than that before me. Further, those referenced in drawings relating to 8 Glossop Street and 8 Hartley Grove appear better scaled on those roof slopes with a more sympathetic dormer window design which relates better to the front elevations of those dwellings. I therefore afford these examples limited weight.
12. I accept that there are no residential amenity or privacy issues arising, although this is a neutral matter.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

13. There is nothing to indicate that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

T Burnham

INSPECTOR

¹ Leeds City Council – Householder Design Guide – Supplementary Planning Document – April 2012.