



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 November 2024 by J Reed MPlan

Decision by Rachel Hall BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J4525/D/24/3350172

33 Francis Street, Fulwell, Sunderland SR6 9RQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Alan Smith of Blacksmith Property Ltd against the decision of Sunderland City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00717/FUL.
 - The development proposed is 'create attic conversion with 2 extra bedrooms and 1 bathroom'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed front dormer on the character and appearance of the appeal building and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal building is one of a number of single storey terraced properties on Francis Street (the Street) where there is a high degree of uniformity of building scale and roof form. A small number of properties along the Street feature box dormers on their front roof slope. However, the vast majority of houses on both sides of the Street are of a consistent form and scale, with simple pitched roofs and without front dormers. This consistency of roof form is an attractive and characteristic feature of the surrounding area. As such, the existing appeal building makes a positive contribution to that character.
5. The proposed front dormer would comprise a prominent addition to the roof slope of the appeal building, detracting from the pleasing simplicity of roof form that is prevalent here. Given the single storey nature of the buildings, the dormer would be particularly visible in the street scene, from both directions along the Street. The Council's Development Management Supplementary Planning Document (June 2021) (SPD) identifies single storey terraces such as this one as unique to Sunderland. It therefore seeks to resist new front dormer windows unless at least 50 percent of properties in the same terrace have already been altered by the addition of such a dormer. Whereas only a small

proportion of houses have front dormers on this Street. Consequently, the approach in the SPD and the presence of other front dormers does not justify allowing a further front dormer here.

6. Therefore, the proposed front dormer would harm the character and appearance of the appeal building and surrounding area. Consequently, it would conflict with Policy BH1 of Sunderland City Council's Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033 (January 2020). This generally seeks to ensure developments achieve high quality design having regard to locally distinctive features.

Other Matters

7. It is not a matter in dispute that the proposed rear dormer could be implemented under permitted development rights. Whilst other improvements to the dwelling involving reinstating traditional architectural features and improving its energy efficiency may be beneficial, there is no substantive evidence to indicate that these are dependent on the appeal scheme. Also, evidence that the proposal would address a particular need for 3 and 4 bedroom houses in the Roker area is not sufficiently persuasive.
8. Nonetheless, the provision of additional jobs during the construction phase would be a short term, modest benefit. Also, the proposal would create additional living space for the current occupants. However, these modest benefits are not sufficient to outweigh the enduring harm that the proposed front dormer would cause to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The planning history of other front dormers on the Street and the circumstances under which they may have been granted is not before me. As such, and given the harm identified from the proposal, those existing dormers do not alter my reasoning.

Conclusion and Recommendation

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

J Reed

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

10. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Rachel Hall

INSPECTOR