

Planners overruled in Bonnyrigg dormer window row

A decision to refuse planning permission for a dormer window on the roof of a high street building has been overturned after councillors heard there were near identical extensions on the other side of the road.

Midlothian planners had rejected a proposal to extend the attic of the top floor property in Bonnyrigg High Street, ruling the proposed dormer would be 'unsympathetic' to the building and not 'in character' with its original look.

However a meeting of the local authority's Local Review Body heard several buildings in the street already had attic dormers, including one across from the applicant's property.

And councillors pointed to a 'mish mash' of designs on the street, as they went against officers granting permission for the new extension.

Applicant Habibur Khan said they believed the attic conversion should be allowed not only because other attics in the street already had conversion but the additional space would help with a local and national housing crisis.

They told the appeal: "Beyond the planning design points, I would like to draw attention to a wider, pressing issue – the national and local housing crisis, especially the acute

shortage of suitable homes for families and individuals.

“My intention behind the dormer is to create additional living space to help meet these needs, whether for my own family or to increase the availability of housing in the private rental sector.

“The extension would provide much-needed accommodation without requiring new land or large scale development.”

During the review body meeting Councillor Connor McManus said the variety of buildings on the high street made it difficult to establish how it should look.

He said: “It is so different depending on where you look, it is difficult to pin down what is traditional.”

And fellow review body member Councillor Colin Cassidy added: “When you went to the street and looked over there were dormers which were not really in keeping with anything and dormer further down the street. It is a mish mash, I can’t see this will make any difference to this street.”

Councillors unanimously agreed to approve the extension with an added condition requiring the material used to blend in with the slate roof.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter