# Widower faces £25,000 demolition bill over tiny roof extension in Bradford



A widower in West Yorkshire is facing an extraordinary challenge: a £25,000 bill for demolishing his home. Warren Benton, aged 73, has been embroiled in a protracted dispute with Bradford Council regarding an illegal roof extension that juts out just three inches beyond approved plans. This conundrum has escalated into a significant financial burden, exacerbating the emotional strain of being a widowed pensioner.

The saga took a troubling turn when Mr Benton received a £16,000 fine after council officials concluded that the third-storey addition of his flat exceeded the approved plans by 60 cm. The cladding of the extension was judged to overhang the original footprint, contradicting the stipulations that required the structure to be set back. Despite the council's insistence on strict adherence to regulations, neighbours in the conservation area have not raised any objections against the extension, which raises questions about the motivations behind the enforcement.

In a statement Mr Benton made to MailOnline, he described the home as “practically falling down” when he purchased it in 2009. His aim was to rejuvenate a neglected property that was contributing to urban decay, and he has asserted that his alterations were driven by necessity rather than malice. "If I hadn't stepped in, it would have become another derelict house," he maintained, reflecting on the original condition of the building. His efforts included substantial renovations, such as adding steel beams and repairing walls, aimed at making the space habitable for himself and consequently benefiting the community.

However, Bradford Council has remained steadfast in its stance, arguing that the extension is "obtrusive" and detracts from the character of the Idle and The Green Conservation Area. The council's decision to demand the demolition is framed as a necessary measure to uphold planning controls and maintain community standards across the region. Town hall officials have asserted that Mr Benton ignored planning enforcement for over 15 years, suggesting a lack of regard for regulations which, they claim, is critical in preserving the area's aesthetic coherence.

Judge Colin Burn, presiding over the latest court hearing, acknowledged Mr Benton’s lack of ill intent but reiterated that the extension contravened the planning permissions granted. "The extension appears to be somewhat jarring in a row of terraced houses," the judge remarked, further complicating the emotional toll on Mr Benton, who expressed feelings of being unfairly treated. He hopes for a solution, appealing to the council to engage with his proposed modifications by architects that could satisfy both parties.

This situation is not isolated; it reflects a broader issue within local planning enforcement frameworks. Similar cases have emerged in Bradford, highlighting the council's unwavering commitment to enforcing planning regulations. For instance, homeowner Mohammed Azhar faced a similar fate after the council ordered the removal of an extension built without permission, insisting that it posed an overbearing impact on neighbouring properties. Likewise, Dewsbury homeowner Sajeeda Ibrahim was also compelled to tear down an unauthorized extension, illustrating the council's rigorous stance against non-compliance.

As Mr Benton grapples with the potential loss of his home, the sentiments of his family resonate poignantly. His son Connor articulated the impact of the council's demands, stating, "The stress of this is breaking my father," as they navigate the emotional and financial turmoil stemming from a seemingly minor breach. Connor highlighted a pervasive sense of injustice, arguing that the discussion surrounding the demolition of their home, over a few centimetres of height, lacks compassion and understanding for their situation.

The implications of this case emphasize the delicate balance municipalities must maintain between enforcing regulations and understanding individual circumstances. As the landscape of urban planning continues to evolve, stories like Mr Benton's are likely to spur conversations about the role of local authorities in fostering community and preserving lived experiences within their jurisdictions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14714521/Widower-forced-spend-25k-demolishing-home-council-rules-objectionable-extension-THREE-INCHES-limit.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bradford-west-yorkshire-68337540> - A homeowner in Bradford, Mohammed Azhar, agreed to demolish an extension built without planning permission after 12 years of non-compliance. The extension, constructed in 2012, was ordered to be removed by Bradford Council due to its overbearing impact on neighbors. Despite submitting a retrospective planning application in 2011, it was refused, and an appeal was dismissed. Azhar admitted failing to comply with the enforcement notice and was fined £200, with an additional £800 in costs. The council emphasized the importance of adhering to planning regulations to maintain community standards.
3. <https://www.dewsburyreporter.co.uk/news/people/council-orders-demolition-of-extension-built-in-conservation-area-in-yorkshire-without-planning-permission-4373765> - Kirklees Council issued an enforcement notice to Sajeeda Ibrahim, a Dewsbury homeowner, demanding the demolition of an unauthorized single-storey side extension built without planning permission. The extension was deemed incongruous with the main house due to its height, roof design, and use of render. Ibrahim appealed the ruling, arguing the extension replaced an existing conservatory and was necessary due to structural issues. The appeal is under consideration by the HM Planning Inspectorate. The case highlights the council's commitment to preserving the character of conservation areas.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crkmmejv1x5o> - The owner of a derelict building in Thornton, Bradford, Mohammed Farid, appealed against an order to demolish the property after parts of its roof collapsed into the street in June 2023. The council had removed the remaining roof and issued a notice requiring renovation or demolition of the building. Farid appealed both notices, citing insufficient information to represent his case. The appeal was adjourned to November, with the council emphasizing the building's dangerous state and the need for action to ensure public safety.
5. <https://www.asiansunday.co.uk/council-stands-strongly-against-front-house-extensions-as-recent-application-is-denied/> - Bradford Council's Bradford Area Planning Panel refused a retrospective application for a front extension at 149 Rochester Street in Laisterdyke. The council's policy deems front extensions 'unacceptable' unless they are small porches. The refusal aligns with previous enforcement actions against unauthorized front porches in the area, underscoring the council's commitment to maintaining the uniformity and character of residential streets.
6. <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-control/submit-a-demolition-notice/> - Bradford Council provides guidelines for submitting a demolition notice, emphasizing the importance of notifying Building Control six weeks before starting demolition work. The notice ensures that measures are in place to protect neighboring properties, the environment, and public health during demolition. The council encourages the reuse and recycling of demolition materials to contribute to environmental conservation.
7. <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/building-control/building-notice-application> - Bradford Council outlines the process for submitting a Building Notice application, which allows homeowners to start work within 48 hours of depositing the notice. The application is suitable for extensions or alterations to existing houses and does not require detailed drawings. However, it carries certain disadvantages, such as no formal notice of approval and potential challenges in ensuring compliance with building regulations.