

**4/00119/12/FHA - FIRST FLOOR SIDE EXTENSION (AMENDED SCHEME).  
HIGHFIELD, SHOOTERSWAY LANE, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 3NP.  
APPLICANT: MISS A HOWARD.**

[Case Officer - Nigel Gibbs]

[Grid Ref - SP 97898 07771]

### **Summary**

The application is recommended for approval.

The site is located in an area where residential development is acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy 2 of the Borough Plan. The extensions design will appear as an integral part of the existing dwellinghouse. There will be a reduced gap between Highfield and Arewa but sufficient spacing will remain within the street scene's roofscape to maintain the existing and inbuilt original original spacious character of the area.

The extension will appear overbearing and result in a loss of light to the landing window of Arewa, however, as this is a secondary window it is considered there would not be a case to refuse the application due to these physical effects. There will be no harm to the residential amenity of other dwellinghouses.

### **Site Description**

Highfield is a detached two storey neo Georgian dwellinghouse located at the north eastern end of Shootersway Lane. It forms part of a group of five very distinctive identically designed early 1970's houses.

Highfield, Arewa, and no.1 form a visually cohesive row fronting part of Shootersway Lane. They are very prominent within the street scene occupying a set back spacious setting when viewed/approached from the junction with Greenway. The units feature a slight stagger, spacing between their respective flank walls and difference in levels. They are all distinguished by their yellow brickwork, parapet and low profile hipped roofs and identical detailing. The very distinctive detailing includes deep flat roof portico/ column supported roof canopies at their front elevation. Each is served by flat roof double garages within their respective large front gardens fronting Shootersway Lane.

The study window at the front of Arewa adjoins the garage serving Highfield. The common boundary between the lower Arewa and Highfield in the vicinity of this window and the garage features a 'honeycomb' wall.

The major change within this part of the street scene has been the first floor side extension at no.1, creating a '5 first floor window' front elevation, as compared with the original '4' first floor feature.

The remaining two dwellinghouses within this group are Applecross and Somersall. They are located to the south west fronting a different part of Shooterway Lane.

### **Proposal**

This is for the construction of a first floor side extension on the north eastern side of the dwellinghouse. It is of an identical design detail to the existing dwellinghouse in terms of the roof, detailing and materials. The extension will measure 1.65m in width and the whole depth of the existing building. It will be inset 1.1m from the common boundary with Arewa and 2.2m from the south western flank wall of Arewa. This wall will incorporate an obscure glazed bathroom window.

## **Referral to Committee**

The application is referred to the Development Control Committee due to the contrary views of Berkhamsted Town Council.

## **Planning History**

Planning Application 4/01949/11/ FHA. First floor side extension, garage conversion and brick constructed single storey link. Withdrawn.

Planning Permission 215/72. Five of houses at Shootersway Lane. There were no conditions controlling future changes to the dwellings or the permanent retention of the garage for parking.

Highfield has not been subject to any apparent changes since its construction.

## **Policies**

### National Policy Guidance

PPS1 and PPS3

Circulars 15/92, 11/95, 03/05, 06/05 and DCLG 01/06

Draft NPPF

### East of England Regional Plan

Policies S53 and ENV 7

### Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policies 1, 2, 9, 11, 13 and 58  
Appendices 3, 5 and 7

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

Environmental Guidelines  
Residential Character Area BCA 12:Shootersway

## **Representations**

### Berkhamsted Town Council

Object for the following reasons:

- The proximity of the side extension to the neighbouring property, Arewa, would be out of character with the spacing of the three properties and less than that recommended in the Character Area Appraisal
- It would restrict light to the neighbouring property Arewa

Contrary to Policy 11 and BCA 12, Dacorum Borough Local Plan

**(Note:** The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow residents of two neighbouring properties to object to the application. They circulated photographs to members at the meeting. They raised the following objections:

- Objected to the close proximity of the first floor extension to Arewa
- Reduction of light to Arewa into stairway
- Overlooking into a private garden).

#### Response to Neighbour Notification / Site Notice / Newspaper Advertisement

Arewa. Fundamental objection supplemented by a range of annotated photographs.

- Arewa with the two other dwellings either side face south.
- The houses have been built on quite small frontage plots areas to a ubiquitous design and layout some 35 years ago giving the appearance of spaciousness and further allowing sunlight to penetrate each home with purposeful practical designed flat roof top garages and kitchen area.
- The house design layouts were skilfully planned and built staggered back to each other by 1.8m with Highfield being further away in from 'the lane' allowing minimum light to each home in a confined area.
- The 3 homes are built at the top of the steep valley side with each property stepping away to each other on the east side. Highfield is the furthest away being naturally the higher of the 3 dwellings by approx 750mm at ground level higher to Arewa. The land drops away to No. 1 by 750mm.
- The distance between each and all the property house walls lines is 1.9m i.e. 3.8.m between each house wall.
- The extension is 3.8m away from the only double glazed window on this side of Arewa facing westwards. Therefore the extension would seriously deprive and obscure sunlight and block the natural solar warmth and brightness to Arewa.
- There has been 33 years of 'Right to Light'. The development would be an obstruction.
- The site is prevalent to northern winds and given the closeness of the 2 homes with higher facing walls there will be increased air pressure giving rise to discomfort and probably future building damage.

1 Shootersway Lane. Fundamental Objection. In summary :

- Loss of sunlight. 85% loss Arewa.
- Precedent for a future similar proposal at Arewa with a resultant similar adverse effect upon no.1.
- Reference to the reasons for the application; not functional/ family but speculative etc.

## **Considerations**

### Policy and Principle

The site is located within a defined residential area of Berkhamsted. There is no objection in principle to domestic extensions.

It is necessary for domestic extensions to accord with DBLP Policy 11. In this regard they should be appropriate in a range of ways. These include design, scale, bulk, height and materials. This is on the site itself, in relation to adjoining properties and in the context of longer views. There is also a requirement to respect to the townscape, density and general character of the area in which the development is set and there is the avoidance of harm to the surrounding neighbourhood and adjoining properties. This includes visual intrusion and loss privacy.

Associated DBLP Appendix 7 addresses the approach to Small Scale Domestic Extensions. In summary this expects, inter alia, design harmony with the existing house and the maintenance of the common design characteristics of the street scene. Side extensions require the most careful consideration, with strict requirements for prominent additions when clearly visible. It is observed that side extensions can often upset the balance of the front elevation of a dwellinghouse and a gap should be left between buildings and side boundaries. There is the associated reference to the need to avoid the creation of a 'terraced or semi detached character'.

This approach is reinforced by DBLP Appendix 3 under the 'Spacing of Dwellings'. It expects the provision of sufficient space between residential buildings to avoid cramped layouts and the maintenance of residential character. It also acknowledges the approach of DBLP the supplementary planning guidance 'Development in Residential Areas'. In this respect the character appraisal for Shootersway HCA 12 explains that there are no special requirements for extensions.

### Design/ Visual Implications/ Impact upon the Street Scene

The group of 5 dwellings are very distinctive part of the street scene. This is due to their location and unique design. No. 1, Arewa and Highfield are particularly prominent when viewed and approached from Greenway appearing as a visually cohesive group with respect to their design and complemented by their spacing.

The most key relationship within the street scene is between nos 1 and Arewa, This is due to their significant spacing and the associated focal point for views and approaches from Greenway. Highfield's relationship with Arewa complements this visual focus. There is less spacing between these houses than the Arewa/no.1 spacing. This is due to Highfield's 'off centre' position.

The maintenance of the current visual continuity and cohesive appearance of this group of 3 houses is a critical issue in the application's consideration. In this respect the major changes

resulting from the proposal are the increased massing of Highfield and the reduced spacing between Highfield and Arewa.

In the context of the expectations DBLP Policy 11 and Appendix 7 the extension will harmonise with the original design and character of Highfield. This is in terms of its scale, identical roof form/window design and external finishes. In respect of scale it will not dominate the appearance of the building but appear as an integral part. The extension will replicate the existing design detailing. Also it will echo how no.1 has been extended seamlessly, creating a 5 window first floor front elevation, with the visual fusion of 'old' and 'new; being very effective.

In terms of the relationship with the surrounding area under Appendix 7 the extension will maintain the common design characteristics of the group. This is with regard to the roof line and form, the building pattern and design details. The existing visually coherent roof/ overall group design will remain visually intact. Also the proposal will establish a symmetrical relationship between Highfield and no.1 in terms of their same building width to each side of the 4 front window Awewa.

In the context of the resultant maintained design cohesion the key issue is whether the remaining space between Highfield and Arewa is sufficient. The reduced wall to a wall to wall relationship has to be considered in conjunction with the retained spacing between the respective roof profiles of Highfield and Awewa. There will remain some space between the two dwellings. On balance, based upon viewing their relationship from various angles within the street scene it is concluded that there will be an adequate level of physical separation and therefore they will not appear cramped.

#### Impact on Neighbours

There will be a definite adverse impact upon the landing window of Arewa. This is due to the extension's closeness and height. The property will appear more overbearing from this window and will result in a loss of light. However, bearing in mind the secondary nature of this window it is considered a case for refusal could not be substantiated.

There will be no harm to the residential amenity of any other dwellings.

#### Other Matters

At least 3 parking spaces and a turning area are provided within the curtilage of the property which meets the adopted parking guidelines for a property of this size. There are no apparent other objections.

#### **Conclusions**

It is fully acknowledged that this is a sensitive proposal. On balance the development's roof profile will ensure that the extension can be accommodated within the existing street scene without fundamentally disrupting the long established visual relationship between Arewa and Highfield.

RECOMMENDATION - That planning permission be **GRANTED** for the reasons referred to above and subject to the following conditions:

- 1 **The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 **The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match in size, colour and texture those used on the existing building.**

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

- 3 **The bathroom window of the extension shall be installed with obscure glass at all times and only the top hung parts shall be openable.**

Reason:

- 4 **The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans :**

**Drawing Nos. Site Location Plan, 1202/01, 1202/02, 1202/03 and 1202/04.**

Reason: To safeguard and maintain the strategic policies of the local planning authority and for the avoidance of doubt.

NOTE 1:

This decision to grant planning permission has been taken for the following reason, having regard to the policies and proposals in the development plan set out below, national planning policy/guidance, regional planning guidance, to all other material planning considerations, including relevant supplementary planning guidance, the imposition of conditions, the response from Berkhamsted Town Council and to neighbour notification/publicity.

The site is located in the built up residential area of Berkhamsted wherein domestic extensions are acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy 2 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011.

The extension's design will appear as an integral part of the existing dwellinghouse. There will be a reduced gap between Highfield and Arewa but sufficient spacing will remain within the street scene's roofscape to maintain the existing and inbuilt original spacious character of the area.

The extension will be visually intrusive, oppressive and overbearing and cause a loss of light to the landing window of Arewa. However as this is a secondary window and refusal for these reasons could not be substantiated. There will be no harm to the residential amenity of other dwellinghouses.

There are no apparent no highway/ parking, and the crime prevention/security objections. An Environmental Impact Assessment is not necessary.

NOTE 2:

The following policies of the development plan are relevant to this decision:

**East of England Regional Plan**

SS3 and ENV 7

**Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011**

Policies 1, 2, 9, 11, 13 and 63

Appendix 7

**Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Environmental Guidelines

Area Based Policies BCA 12

**Dacorum Draft Core Strategy**

Policies CS 1, CS4, CS10, CS11 CS12