

**4/01677/17/FHA - SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND LOFT CONVERSION WITH FRONT AND REAR DORMERS.  
3 NASH CLOSE, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 1FB.  
APPLICANT: Mr R Kessler.**

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[Case Officer - Sally Robbins]

### **Summary**

The application is recommended for approval.

The proposed extension and loft conversion with front and rear dormer windows would not have an adverse effect on the visual appearance of the existing dwelling house, the immediate street scene or the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore acceptable in accordance with Policies CS11, CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendices 3 and 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2012).

### **Site Description**

The application site is located on the eastern side of Nash Close, which forms part of the recently-built Stag Lane development near Gossoms End in Berkhamsted. This development comprises a mix of flats and houses. The houses themselves are a mix of town houses, terraces, detached and semi-detached. The application site relates to a semi-detached house, which is fairly prominent within the street scene, particularly the rear elevation, which is highly visible from Sheldon Way.

Permitted Development Rights were removed (including Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B and C) when planning permission was granted for the residential development.

The site lies in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and in an area of archaeological significance.

### **Proposal**

The application seeks full planning permission for a single storey rear extension and loft conversion with front and rear dormers.

### **Referral to Committee**

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

### **Planning History**

None

### **Policies**

#### National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

#### Adopted Core Strategy

CS10 - Quality of Settlement Design  
CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design  
CS12 - Quality of Site Design

## Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Appendices 3, 5 & 7.

### **Summary of Representations**

#### Berkhamsted Town Council

The proposals are intrusive and out of keeping with the street scene.

Policies CS11 and 12.

#### **Further comments received regarding amended plans:**

##### Objection

The amendment is unclear because there is a disparity between the text and the actual drawings. Therefore the proposals remain intrusive and out of keeping with the street scene.

Policies CS11 and 12.

#### Historic Environment Advisor (Archaeology)

In this instance I consider that the development is unlikely to have a significant impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest, and I have no comment to make upon the proposal.

#### Response to Neighbour Notification/Site Notice

None

### **Considerations**

#### Policy and Principle

The application site is located in a residential area of Berkhamsted. Core Strategy (2013) Policy CS4 states that appropriate residential development is acceptable in towns and large villages subject to compliance with the relevant national and local policies outlined below. The main issues to the consideration of this application relate to the impact of the proposed extension and loft conversion upon the character and appearance of the parent dwelling, the streetscene and residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

#### Effects on appearance of building and street scene

Saved appendix 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004), policies CS11, CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and the NPPF (2012) all seek to ensure that any new development/alteration respects or improves the character of the surrounding area and adjacent properties in terms of scale, massing, materials, layout, bulk and height.

The single storey rear extension would measure 3m deep and 6.8m wide with an eaves height of 2.4m and a ridge height of 3.5m. The extension would have a mono-pitched lean to roof finished in plain tiles to match the parent dwelling with two small rooflights that would be situated equidistant above the proposed patio doors. The extension would include a further rear facing window and would be finished in facing brickwork and white uPVC windows and doors to match the parent dwelling. The rear elevation is in a prominent location in that there are open views of the rear of the property along Sheldon Way. However, the relatively modest scale and sympathetic design of the extension will not have a significant impact upon the

character and appearance of the parent dwelling. Furthermore, the 2m high wall surrounding the rear garden would shield the majority of the extension from public view, and as such the proposed extension will not be visually intrusive within the street scene.

Turning to the loft conversion, the proposal includes two dormer windows on the front elevation and one dormer window on the rear elevation. Due to the road layout the application site is visible on two sides from Nash Close and Sheldon Way and is thus highly visible in the street scene. Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) states that loft conversions resulting in the need for dormer windows can have a significant effect on the appearance of the house and the street scene. Therefore, dormers should preferably be located on rear roof slopes, which are usually less visible from public view in order to minimise the impact upon the parent dwelling and street scene. Whilst the officer acknowledges that the proposed dormer windows on both the front and rear elevations would be visually prominent, other material planning considerations have weighed in favour of recommending approval for the proposed scheme. These include an allowed appeal for a similar scheme on a neighbouring property at 65 Sheldon Way for a loft conversion with two front facing dormers, one rear facing velux roof light and gable end windows (planning application ref. 4/03188/14/FHA dated 3 November 2014).

The reasons for refusal for 65 Sheldon Way were that the proposed dormers, gable windows and rooflight would be evident in the street scene and contrary to the design of the estate. The Officer further stated that the proposal would fail to maintain the attractive and balanced appearance of the parent dwelling and the consistent rhythm of development within the estate as well as additional parking pressures and is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS11, CS12 and Saved Local Plan Policy Appendix 5 and 7.

In the Inspectors report, the reasons for allowing the appeal were that the front dormer windows would sit within the roof and there would be space between the bottom of the windows and the eaves, to either side and between each window. Further the dormer windows would be set down from the ridge of the dwelling. The materials would complement the existing dwelling and wider area. Overall the windows would be well designed and well proportioned. They would not look out of place on the property. The Inspector acknowledged that the property is in a prominent location, however given that the dormers would be well proportioned and detailed it is not considered that this would be harmful to the overall character of the area.

In addition to the above, it is considered that the modest scale and sympathetic design of the dormer windows would not result in significant harm to the parent dwelling or the street scene. In accordance with Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) the dormer windows do not extend above the ridgeline of the existing roof, but are brought as far as possible below the ridge, the dormer margins are set in by at least 1m from the flank walls and the dormer would be clad in materials similar in appearance to the main roof. The proposed dormers would be small and centrally located within the roof form.

On balance, and taking all of the above into consideration, it is considered that the proposed single storey rear extension and loft conversion with front and rear dormers will not be visually intrusive or harmful to the character and appearance of the parent dwelling or the street scene. Accordingly, the proposed coheres with the NPPF (2012), Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) and Policies CS11 & CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

#### Town Council Objection

Berkhamsted Town Council has objected stating that the proposals are intrusive and out of keeping with the street scene. However, as outlined above, it is considered that the proposed extension and dormer windows are well designed and well proportioned.

#### Impact on Neighbours

The NPPF outlines the importance of planning in securing good standards of amenity for existing and future occupiers of land and buildings. Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2004) and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), seek to ensure that new development does not result in detrimental impact upon the neighbouring properties and their amenity space. Thus, the proposed should be designed to reduce any impact on neighbouring properties by way of visual intrusion, loss of light and privacy.

The rear elevation of the host dwelling faces the side elevation of 61 Sheldon Way, at an oblique angle. As such, it is not considered that there would be any significant loss of privacy with respect to the single storey rear extension or the dormer window. Turning to the front elevation, the proposed dormer windows would not result in a significant loss of privacy with regards to 2-10 Nash Close due to the relative angle of properties and satisfactory separation distances in excess of 23m.

The proposed single storey rear extension and loft conversion would not have a significant impact upon light provision or privacy of neighbouring residents. Accordingly, the proposal is acceptable in terms of the NPPF (2012), Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2004) and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

#### Other Material Planning Considerations

##### **Flood Zone**

A site-specific flood risk assessment has been submitted due to the fact that the proposal is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The submitted flood risk assessment is considered satisfactory for a minor extension within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

##### **Archaeology**

The County Archaeologist was consulted and commented, "In this instance due to its size, we consider that the development is unlikely to have a significant impact on heritage assets of archaeological interest, and we have no comment to make upon the proposal."

##### **Conclusions**

The proposed single storey rear extension and loft conversion with front and rear dormers through scale, position and design would not adversely impact upon the visual amenity of the existing dwelling house, immediate street scene or the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Saved Appendices 3 and 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004), Policies CS11, CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and the NPPF (2012).

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, in accordance with Core Strategy (2013) Policy CS12.

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

**H/6209 A**

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning, in accordance with Core Strategy (2013) Policy CS12.

Article 35

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2015.