

<b>4/00508/18/FHA</b>	<b>GARAGE CONVERSION</b>
<b>Site Address</b>	<b>19 LAUREL CLOSE, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HP2 5ET</b>
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>MRS T NORCOTT, 19 LAUREL CLOSE</b>
<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>James Gardner</b>
<b>Referral to Committee</b>	<b>APPLICANT IS MEMBER OF STAFF</b>

## 1. Recommendation

1.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED**.

## 2. Summary

2.1 The application would not result in an unacceptable reduction in parking provision and, by extension, would not result in an adverse impact on highway safety, thus according with saved policies 57, 58 and Appendix 5 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004). In accordance with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), it is considered that the level of parking provided would be sufficient having had regard to the accessibility of the location and the current parking arrangements.

2.2 The external alterations to the front elevation would result in a satisfactory appearance and do not give rise to concerns. As such, the proposal accords with saved Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004) and Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

## 3. Site Description

3.1 The application site is located on the southern side of Laurel Close and comprises a modern terraced property. It is externally finished in a mixture of brick, cream painted render, with concrete interlocking tiles on the roof. There is a modest flat roof dormer on the front roof slope which is clad in lead and a small porch canopy above the front door. To the front there is a driveway with space for up to 2 vehicles in a tandem arrangement and a small area of lawn.

## 4. Proposal

4.1 Planning permission is sought to convert the existing integral garage into habitable accommodation.

## 5. Relevant Planning History

4/01466/11/FUL

Construction of four terraced 3-bed houses with access from laurel close.

Land at 99 Adeyfield Road, Hemel Hempstead.

Granted.

4/00261/18FHA

Garage conversion.

17 Laurel Close, Hemel Hempstead.

Granted.

## 6. Policies

### 6.1 National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

## 6.2 Adopted Core Strategy –

NP1, CS1, CS2, CS4, CS8, CS9, CS11, CS12

## 6.3 Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policies 57, 58, Appendices 5 & 7

## 6.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents [include only those relevant to case]

- Accessibility Zones for the Application of car Parking Standards (July 2002)

## 7. **Constraints**

- Residential Area

## 8. **Representations**

### Consultation responses

8.1 Not applicable.

### Neighbour notification/site notice responses

8.2 No responses received.

## 9. **Considerations**

### Main issues

9.1 The main issues to consider are:

- Policy and principle
- Impact on Street Scene
- Impact on Highway Safety

### Policy and Principle

9.2 The application site is located within a residential area of Hemel Hempstead wherein, in accordance with Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy (2013), appropriate residential development is encouraged.

### Impact on Street Scene / Appearance of Building

9.3 Saved Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (1991 - 2011) promotes good design practice on house extensions; in particular it states that extensions should harmonise with the original design and character of the house in terms of scale, roof form, window design and external finishes. Whilst it is acknowledged that the conversion of a garage to habitable accommodation would not generally be classed as a house extension, the design principles are nevertheless relevant. The guidance is clearly concerned with achieving a satisfactory visual relationship between the extension and the main house. The considerations in this case are no different. In addition to the above guidance, policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy seek to ensure that new development preserves attractive streetscapes and satisfactorily integrates with the streetscape character.

9.4 The external alterations include replacement of the garage door with a UPVC window to

match the window above, infilling the surrounding area with brick and covering with a matching render.

9.5 Subject to the use of matching materials, which will be secured by condition, the alterations do not give rise to any concerns from a visual perspective. Additionally, providing a habitable room at ground floor level would create an active frontage and incorporate natural surveillance which helps to deter crime and the fear of crime. The benefits of an active frontage also extend to visual improvements to the area; indeed, the manner in which a dwelling addresses the street is an extremely important consideration. By providing windows in this elevation it is considered that there would be visual improvements.

9.6 The development is therefore considered to comply with saved Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan and Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy.

#### Impact on Highway Safety

9.7 Policy CS9 states that the traffic generated by new development must be compatible with the location, design and capacity of the current and future operation of the road hierarchy, taking into account planned improvements and cumulative effects of incremental development.

9.8 Policy CS12 seeks to ensure developments have sufficient parking provision. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that if setting local parking standards authorities should take into account the accessibility of the development, the type, mix and use of the development, availability of public transport; local car ownership levels and the overall need to reduce the use of high emission vehicles. Saved Policies 57 and 58 (and associated Appendix 5) of the Local Plan promote an assessment based upon maximum parking standards. This is not consistent with Policy CS12 and the NPPF and, accordingly, more weight is given to the 'case by case' approach to parking provision prescribed in national policy and CS12. That said, the maximum standards contained within saved Appendix 5 remain material planning considerations.

9.9 In general the conversion of an integral garage to habitable accommodation does not require planning permission provided it complies with the criterion set out in Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. In this instance, however, the right to convert the garage has been removed by virtue of condition 12 of planning permission 4/01466/11/FUL. The full wording of the condition is as follows:

***Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order) (with or without modification) the garages hereby permitted shall be kept available at all times for the parking of vehicles associated with the residential occupation of the dwelling and it shall not be converted or adapted to form living accommodation.***

Reason: *In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 58 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan.*

9.10 The rationale for imposing this condition was clearly articulated in the case officer's report, the relevant section of which has been reproduced below:

*Local residents have described how they suffer from parking and congestion on Laurel Close. However, this is a result of the existing houses on Laurel Close (and nearby properties), not the proposed development. The highway concerns and examples raised by the Laurel Close Residents Association are existing situations. We can not blame houses that do not exist for double parked cars in Treballan Drive or six cars parked on the corner of Hardy Road / Laurel Close / Treballan Drive.*

*It is clear, however, that the new houses must provide enough off-street parking to serve their needs. Councillor Wood has indeed called-in this application on parking grounds. Appendix 5 of the DBLP states that 3-bedroom houses in this area should provide 2.25 spaces. The driveways are over 10 metres in length and this would be sufficient for two cars. When combined with the integral garage each house within the proposed development would provide 3 parking spaces. The garages can be controlled by condition to ensure that they remain available to provide the opportunity for car parking. As such this development is providing sufficient on-site parking to ensure that it does not exacerbate any existing parking difficulties or safety concerns.*

*It should also be noted that the Highways Authority have not raised an objection to the proposals, subject to two conditions. The provision of pedestrian visibility splays and the prevention of mud and other debris from entering the highway are both in the clear interest of highway safety and should therefore be secured by condition as required by the Highways Authority.*

The imposition of the condition was appropriate as the unrestricted conversion of the garages of all four houses has the potential to reduce the parking provision to below the Council's maximum parking standard within an area of noted parking stress.

9.11 A total of twelve parking spaces were originally provided - an overprovision of two spaces - so there is scope to reduce the number of spaces and still be policy compliant. Planning application 4/00261/18FHA has recently been granted for the conversion of the integral garage of 17 Laurel Close to habitable accommodation, reducing the excess number of parking spaces from two to one. Should this application be granted the number of excess spaces would be reduced to zero, but this would still be in compliance with the maximum standard. Consideration also needs to be given to whether in actuality a space is being lost. Given that that garage is limited in size and that it would be necessary to move up to two vehicles already parked on the driveway to extricate a vehicle parked in the garage, which would be totally impractical, it is debateable whether any of the garages are used for parking.

9.12 The proposal is considered acceptable. It would comply with the maximum parking standards set out in saved Appendix 5 of the Dacorum Local Plan, and Policy CS8 of the Dacorum Core Strategy which states that development should provide sufficient, safe and convenient parking based on car parking standards, safeguarding residential amenity and ensuring highway safety.

#### Response to Neighbour comments

9.13 No comments have been received from neighbouring properties.

#### CIL

9.14 Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy requires all developments to make appropriate contributions towards infrastructure required to support the development. These contributions will normally extend only to the payment of CIL where applicable. The Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was adopted in February 2015 and came into force on 1 July 2015. This application is not CIL liable due to it resulting in less than 100m<sup>2</sup> of additional floor space.

## **10. Conclusions**

10.1 As outlined above, the key considerations to this application relate to the impact of the visual changes on the original dwelling / street scene and the impact on parking in the immediate vicinity. The visual changes are minor and are considered to result in an overall improvement. In terms of the parking considerations, the dwelling would retain two off-road parking spaces, which meets the maximum standard, and it has been confirmed by the

applicant that the garage is not currently used for parking as it is insufficient in size and cannot accommodate a modern vehicle.

10.2 The development proposed accords with the relevant local and national policies and is acceptable in planning terms.

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

1	<p>The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>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.</p>
2	<p>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/documents:</p> <p>Plan 1</p> <p>Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.</p>
3	<p>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.</p> <p>Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development, in accordance with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (2013).</p> <p>Article 35 Statement</p> <p>Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. 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.</p>