

**4/02453/15/FHA - LOFT CONVERSION WITH REAR DORMER (AMENDED SCHEME).  
257 HIGH STREET, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 1AB.  
APPLICANT: Oakwood Property Solutions Ltd - Mr Grice.**

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[Case Officer - Jason Seed]

## **Summary**

The proposal comprises a loft conversion that is of an acceptable design and is to be constructed of materials to match the existing roof and as such, is considered to comply with Policies CS12 and CS27 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (September 2013), saved Policy 120 of the DBLP and accompanying Appendix 7 - Small Scale House Extensions.

## **Site Description**

The subject site comprises a terraced two-storey late Victorian dwelling house which is situated on the southern side of High Street, Berkhamsted. The property is locally Listed and is also subject to the following constraints: Article 4 Direction, Area of Archaeological Importance, Berkhamsted Conservation Area, Town Centre.

The surrounding area is largely commercial although a number of residential units are also present.

## **Proposal**

The application proposes a loft conversion and rear dormer.

## **Referral to Committee**

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

## **Planning History**

4/01837/14/FHA LOFT CONVERSION  
Withdrawn  
10/06/2015

4/00892/15/ENQ ADVICE ON DORMER WINDOW (PREVIOUS APPLICATION 4/01837/14/FHA)  
Unknown  
22/04/2015

## **Policies**

### National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

### Adopted Core Strategy

NP1 - Supporting Development

CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages  
CS12 - Quality of Site Design  
CS27 - Quality of the Historic Environment

#### Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policy 10 - Optimising the Use of Urban Land  
Policy 120 - Development in Conservation Areas  
Appendix 5 - Parking  
Appendix 7 - Small Scale Residential Extensions

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance

Environmental Guidelines  
Accessibility Zones

#### Advice Notes and Appraisals

Sustainable Development Advice Note (March 2011)  
Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Berkhamsted

### **Summary of Representations**

- Berkhamsted Town Council - Concern was expressed about the flat roof of the dormer which was considered to be out of character with the neighbouring properties and stated that a pitched roof would be preferable. Further stated that the dormer should be a minimum 1m from the flank and party walls.
- Conservation and Design - No objection
- Historic Environment Unit - No objection

### **Considerations**

#### Policy and Principle

Policy CS4 states that in residential areas, appropriate residential development is encouraged. The proposal site is situated within a residential terrace and as such, the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable.

#### Effects on Appearance of Building

Paragraph 7.1 of the Environmental Guidelines SPG states that all development should be of high quality. However, where conservation areas and/or Listed buildings are affected, there is a need for special care and attention to detail with regard to design, colour and materials.

The application is a resubmission of a previous application (4/01837/14/FHA) for a rear dormer which was withdrawn. The Council's Conservation and Design Officer acknowledges that the two 'separate (in appearance) dormers that are proposed are an improvement on the previous scheme which proposed a large, single window dormer which is considered to be out of keeping with other examples within the local area.

The dormer is proposed to be located at the rear of the property and no changes are proposed to the front of the property. The Council's Conservation and Design Officer has been consulted on the proposal and has stated that dormers are not a feature of most Victorian terraced houses but they do not have any objection in principle to the addition of a rear dormer. Whilst initial concerns were expressed regarding the scale and impact of the dormer upon the character / appearance of Camilla Terrace, these were overcome and withdrawn following further discussion and consideration of the site, its context and the proposal's particulars.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the dormer would be the only one present within the terrace, there are a number of examples of similar dormers with a mix of roof types (pitched and flat) within the immediate area and as such, it is considered that the introduction of the proposed dormer would not result in an incongruous addition and as such, it is unlikely that it would adversely impact upon Camilla Terrace.

Appendix 7 states that it is preferable for dormer windows to be located on the rear roof slopes and should meet the following guidelines:

- (a) the dormer window should not extend above the ridgeline of the existing roof, but should be brought as far as possible below the ridge;
- (b) the dormer margins should be set in a minimum of 1 m from the flank walls (including party walls with adjoining properties) and set in from the main rear wall; and
- (c) the dormer should be clad in materials similar in appearance to the roof.

In respect of (a), the dormer is proposed to be positioned below the ridgecap of the ridgeline of the existing roof and as such, is acceptable.

The requirements of Paragraph (b) have been raised by Berkhamsted Town Council. The inseting of the dormer by 1m from the party walls was discussed with the applicant but it was considered that such a set in would result in an unacceptable reduction in the height of the area above the proposed staircase. The proposed dormer is set in approx. 300mm from each party wall which is considered to provide sufficient space to minimise the visual impact of the dormer whilst maintaining both the 'separation' and symmetry of the two windows.

Furthermore, a recent appeal decision (APP/A1910/D/15/3016580) in the Conservation Area at 3 Montague Road, Berkhamsted was allowed for both a front and rear dormer within the Berkhamsted Conservation Area with the rear dormer failing to provide a minimum distance of 1m from the flank wall. As such, the failure of this proposal to meet the criteria provided by Paragraph (b) is considered insufficient reason for refusal in this instance.

The dormer is proposed to be finished in lead facing and slate with a lead covering on the roof. It is considered that these materials are in keeping with those of the existing roof and as such, the proposal complies with the requirements of Paragraph (c).

Taking the above into consideration, it is considered that the proposal will not result in an adverse impact upon the appearance and historic integrity of this locally Listed Building in the Conservation Area and as such is considered to comply with Policy CS27 of the Core Strategy.

### Impact on the Street Scene and Berkhamsted Conservation Area

It is considered that the dormer will not be visible from the High Street and as such, will not result in an adverse impact upon the street scene in this respect. Furthermore, the Council's Conservation and Design Officer has stated that the rear roof slope of the property is partly visible from Cowper Road but is not in prominent public view. Given these considerations it is considered that the proposal will result in an unacceptable impact upon the Berkhamsted Conservation Area and as such, complies with Policy CS27 of the Core Strategy and Saved Policy 120 of the DBLP. The Conservation Officer raises no objections in terms of the impact on the Conservation Area.

### Impact on Trees and Landscaping

No trees or landscaping will be affected by the proposal.

### Impact on Parking and Highway Safety

Appendix 7 states that the need for and ability to provide additional off-street parking should be taken into account when considering proposals for extra bedroom accommodation. The loft conversion would result in the addition of one bedroom. However, it is considered that the applicant would be able to use the loft as a bedroom without planning permission which would be outside of the Council's control. It is therefore considered that, in addition to the additional factors discussed below, the use of the loft as a bedroom would not justify a refusal of planning permission on parking grounds.

The site is situated within Zone 2 as defined by the Council's 'Accessibility Zones' SPG and as well as the subject property benefitting from an existing off-street parking space, it is considered that the site is situated within in an accessible and sustainable location. As such, it is considered that no additional parking is required within the context of the Council's 'maximum' parking standards.

Furthermore, it is considered unlikely that the proposal will result in an adverse impact upon highway safety.

### Impact on Neighbours

A number of rooflights are contained within the roof slope of No. 235 but due to their orientation (positioned to the east of the dormer) it is considered that the dormer will not result in an unacceptable loss of sunlight / daylight to the roof area of No. 235. As such, it is considered that the dormer window will not result in an adverse impact upon neighbouring properties.

### Sustainability

Due to the scale of the proposal the opportunity for enhancing the site's sustainability credentials are limited. However, the extension will be built to modern building standards which are considered acceptable.

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Policy CS35 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 the 1st July 2015. This application is not CIL Liable.

## **Conclusion**

It is considered that the proposed dormer window is of an acceptable design and will not adversely impact upon the locally Listed host property or the wider Berkhamsted Conservation Area. Furthermore, it will not adversely impact upon the street scene or any neighbouring properties. As such, it is considered that the proposed development complies with Policies CS12 and CS27 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (September 2013) and saved Policy 120 of the DBLP and accompanying Appendix 7 - Small Scale House Extensions.

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

257HSBLoff/1

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the materials specified on the approved drawings .**

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the Conservation Area.