

**4/02771/15/FHA - LOFT CONVERSION.  
12 NASH CLOSE, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 1FB.  
APPLICANT: Mr Bryant.**

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[Case Officer - Emily Whittredge]

## **Summary**

The application is recommended for approval. The development is acceptable in principle within the residential area and the rear dormer would only be partially visible from Gossoms End and would not be prominent within the street scene. It would not cause harm to neighbouring amenities or place undue pressure on car parking.

## **Site Description**

The application site is located within the recently-built Stag Lane development as a planned residential estates, 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 mid-terrace house within a cul-de-sac leading from Sheldon Way. The terrace backs on to a private car park to the rear of Nos. 57-60 Gossoms End and limited views of it can be seen in the gap between Nos. 60 and 61. The terrace itself has an angle in it with the application property and No. 10 forming the 'corner', with several houses to either side. The house is constructed in brick with a slate roof, white painted timber window frames and a tiled open canopy over the front door.

The development of this estate was granted subject to the removal of Permitted Development rights including alterations to the roofs under Classes B and C.

## **Proposal**

The application seeks to carry out a loft conversion including the construction of a box dormer on the rear roof slope and two roof lights in the front roof slope.

## **Referral to Committee**

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

## **Planning History**

Application 4/02672/05/FUL for construction of 150 dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping (including deculverting of the River Bulbourne) and amenity space at land off Stag Lane, Berkhamsted was granted on 27 June 2007.

Condition 27 of this permission removed permitted development rights for extensions (specifically development under Classes A, B, C, D, E, F and H of Part 1 Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order (as amended)) to enable to local planning authority to retain control over the development in the interests of safeguarding the residential and visual amenities of the locality.

## **Policies**

## National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
Planning Practice Guidance

## Adopted Core Strategy

NP1 - Supporting Development  
CS1 - Distribution of Development  
CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages  
CS11- Quality of Neighbourhood Design  
CS12 - Quality of Site Design

## Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Appendices 5 & 7

## Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents

Environmental Guidelines (May 2004)

## Advice Notes and Appraisals

Sustainable Development Advice Note (March 2011)

## **Summary of Representations**

### Berkhamsted Town Council

#### **Object**

Nash Close comprises part of the Stag Lane development. There are no dormers to the estate. The roofscape would be materially altered. The dormer was very wide and was almost the width of the house. The Committee queried if the dormer was the 1m minimum from the flank and party walls and the position may not be in character with the neighbouring properties CS12

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

#### 10 Nash Close -

We are supportive of the application. They have explained why they withdrew and resubmitted. The window sizes are better now they match the other windows. I have considered if there will be any overlooking of our garden and there will be hardly any.

Given the local housing market a loft conversion is the most cost effective way get more space and retain local friends, families, nursery, schools, jobs etc.

So we are supportive and hope the application is approved first time without the need for any appeals which would only add cost to the applicant and local taxpayers.

#### **Considerations**

The principle of the extension to this dwelling within the residential area is considered acceptable subject to compliance with Core Strategy policies CS11 and CS12.

Policy CS11 of the adopted Core Strategy (Quality of Neighbourhood Design) states that within settlements and neighbourhoods, development should:

- a) respect the typical density intended in an area and enhance spaces between buildings and general character;
- b) preserve attractive streetscapes and enhance any positive linkages between character areas;
- c) co-ordinate streetscape design between character areas;
- d) protect or enhance any positive linkages between character areas;
- e) incorporate natural surveillance to deter crime and the fear of crime; and
- f) avoid large areas dominated by car parking.

Policy CS12 (Quality of Site Design) states that on each site development should:

- a) provide a safe and satisfactory means of access for all users;
- b) provide sufficient parking and sufficient space for servicing;
- c) avoid visual intrusion, loss of sunlight and daylight, loss of privacy and disturbance to the surrounding properties;
- d) retain important trees or replace them with suitable species if their loss is justified;
- e) plant trees and shrubs to help assimilate development and softly screen settlement edges;
- f) integrate with the streetscene character; and
- g) respect adjoining neighbours in terms of:
  - i) layout; ii) security; iii) site coverage; iv) scale; v) height; vi) bulk; vii) materials; and viii) landscaping and amenity space

#### Design and impact on streetscene

The dwellings have a simplicity in their form and a consistency in their overall design quality. It is for this reason that Permitted Development rights have been removed, specifically to control and prevent any insertions into the roofscapes. However, the objective of removing these rights is not to prevent all development, but to ensure that any alterations are sympathetic and would not be harmful to the streetscape or to the character of the residential area.

The application property is located in a terrace with only its front elevation visible within the estate itself. Views of the rear roof slope are severely restricted by its location, which is to the rear of a row of shops on Gossoms End, approximately 50 metres away from the public highway. The only views to the rear roof slopes of Nash Close are available through a 2.4 m gap between Nos. 60 and 61 Gossoms End. The application site itself is to the rear of No. 59. The rear elevation can only be viewed at an angle through this narrow gap, and only half of the roof slope can be seen from any angle from the public highway, and at a significant distance from any public vantage point.

The proposed box dormer is large in scale, although it is set down and back from the ridge and eaves, with a small setback from the party walls. However, this must be weighed against both its visibility and its relative prominence in the street scene. As

described above, because of the location of the site, there are only partial public views of the rear elevation from any angle. The rear dormer would not be visually prominent as it is set at a significant distance from the highway. Further, the external materials of the dormer can be controlled by a condition. These would be expected to be sympathetic to the existing dwelling and to match the appearance of the estate. The roof lights in the front roof slope would be expected to be a conservation style in a colour to blend with the roof tiles, akin to the details proposed at No. 65 Sheldon Way.

The development would have a modest impact on the street scene and would not cause significant harm to the appearance of the estate or to the wider area. As the full dormer would not be visible from the public highway and there would be no prominent views, it is not necessary to reduce the width of the dormer to comply with the design advice in Local Plan Appendix 7. The roof lights would be sympathetic in appearance, and on balance it is not considered that there are grounds for a refusal of a rear dormer in this location.

### Other Material Considerations

There is recent case history within the estate at 65 Sheldon Way wherein a loft conversion and rear dormers were allowed at appeal. The inspector found that the scale and design of the dormers would not be harmful to the appearance of the street scene, despite the prominence of the roof slope within the estate. Parking issues were not considered to be a sufficient reason for the refusal of the application when there was adequate street parking nearby. A proposal for a large box dormer at adjoining 63 Sheldon Way was refused by the local planning authority, and the decision has not been appealed.

It is likely that further loft conversions will be sought in the Stag End estate, but each must be considered on its own merits. Where development is granted, the local planning authority will normally have control over such matters as colour and materials. The layout of the estate is highly variable and each dwelling is subject to different degrees of prominence.

### Parking

The loft conversion would potentially add another bedroom to this 2-bed dwelling. At present there are two parking spaces allocated to this dwelling. Appendix 5 of the saved local plan requires that 3 bed houses have 2.25 spaces; thus the proposed development has very close to the required number of parking spaces, and as demonstrated by the appeal decision at Sheldon Way, local street parking is likely to meet parking demand at present. Other three-bed dwellings within the estate have two parking spaces each, and it would be unreasonable to require a third allocated space for the application property.

### Impact on neighbouring amenity

The proposed dormers and rooflight would cause no material loss of privacy to neighbouring properties and thus have no impact on residential amenities.

### Conclusion

The proposed dormer would not be prominent in the street scene and all views from

the public highway would be severely limited. It is therefore considered that the development would not have a significant detrimental impact to the surrounding area or to the character of the estate. Roof lights have been allowed elsewhere in the estate, and subject to a condition on materials, the development would accord with the requirements of Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy.

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 **Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, the roof lights hereby permitted shall be flush fitting conservation style.**

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the surrounding estate in accordance with Policy CS11 of the Dacorum Core Strategy.

- 3 **The development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the materials specified on the approved drawings or such other materials as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with Policy CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy.

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

Site location plan  
DD 7240.1 A. CL

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