

4/03560/15/FHA - REMOVAL OF EXISTING CONSERVATORY, CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND REAR DORMER, INSERTION OF NEW ROOFLIGHTS AND WINDOWS AND RELOCATION OF FRONT DOOR. 1 DOCTORS COMMONS ROAD, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 3DW.

APPLICANT: Mr & Mrs Ross.

[Case Officer - Rachel Marber]

Summary

The proposed single storey rear extension and loft conversion with an associated rear dormer through size, position and design would be a subservient, congruous to the appearance of the group of town houses, parent dwelling house and Berkhamsted Conservation Area. Furthermore, the proposed would not adversely impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring residents. The proposal therefore coheres with the NPPF (2012), appendixes 3 and 7 policy 120 of the Dacorum Local Plan (1991) and policies CS4, CS11, CS12 and CS27 of the Core Strategy (2013) and Queens Road SPG Area Character Appraisal (2004).

Site Description

The application site is located to the north of Doctors Commons Road, Berkhamsted. The site comprises of a three storey terraced dwelling house which falls within the Berkhamsted Conservation Area and Queens Road Area Character Appraisal (BCA5). The dwelling house is externally finished in red brickwork grey tiled pitched roof. To the front of the property there is a driveway formed of hardstanding which leads to a single garage; parking provision would be sufficient to accommodate two domestic cars.

The property was built as part of 10 identically designed town houses. Each town house is regimented in regards to architectural detailing, height, size and build line.

Proposal

The application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing conservatory, and construction of a single storey rear extension and loft conversion with an associated rear dormer. In addition, the proposal would also incorporate the landscaping of the rear garden, with paving. The proposed alterations would accommodate additional living space at ground floor and increase the dwelling house size from a three bed into a four bed property.

Subject to Conservation design concerns amended plans have been received, removing the originally proposed first floor and second floor Juliet balconies.

Referral to Committee

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

Relevant History

No Relevant History

Policies

National Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Adopted Core Strategy

CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages
CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design
CS12 - Quality of Site Design
CS27 - Quality of the Historic Environment
CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Policy 13 - Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations
Policies 120 - Development in Conservation Areas
Appendix 3 - Gardens and Amenity Space
Appendix 7 - Small-scale House Extensions

Advice Notes and Appraisals

Area Based Policies- Development Residential Areas Berkhamsted
Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Berkhamsted
Sustainable Development Advice Note (March 2011)

Summary of Representations

DBC Conservation

"Nos. 1 - 19 Doctors Commons Road is a terrace of circa 1960s townhouses that step up Doctors Commons Road in pairs. They are of brick construction, 3 storeys with integral garages at ground floor level.

The application proposes the removal of the existing conservatory and construction of new single storey rear extension. The proposed design will suit these modern properties.

A rear dormer is proposed, there are no other rear dormers within this terrace so the proposed flat roofed dormer will be a noticeable addition at roof level and disrupt the current roofscape. However, it is at the rear and whilst visible from the rear (Lincoln Court) and, at a distance, from Charles Street it will not be readily visible within the street scene. The proposed Juliet balcony and doors at roof level increases the visual prominence of the dormer, omitting the doors / balcony and replacing with windows

would be preferable.

Similarly the loss of the first floor windows and replacement with doors, side lights and Juliet balcony will change the pleasing regularity of the fenestration that this rear elevation currently retains however as this is to the rear the alteration is not considered to harm the character of the conservation area.

The front door is currently recessed with a small lobby area externally. The application proposes bringing the front door forward so it is flush with the front elevation – whilst this may disrupt the rhythm of the front elevation it is a fairly insignificant alteration.

As referred to above, the proposed alterations are generally acceptable however an amendment to the dormer is suggested."

Berkhamsted Town Council

Objection

"Both roof lights to the front elevation and the dormer to the rear would be precedents for the terrace and thus materially affect the roof scope. The Juliet balcony at first floor is superfluous. The street scape is affected. The property is in the Conservation Area. Accommodation provision in the roof space would amount to over-development. Contrary to CS11 and CS12."

Key Considerations:

Principle of Development

The application site is located within a residential area, wherein accordance to policy CS4 of the Core Strategy (2013) the principle of a residential extension is acceptable 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 upon the character and appearance of the Berkhamsted Conservation Area and the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Effect on Appearance of the Conservation Area and Existing Building

Saved appendix 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (1991), policies CS11 and 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.

Paragraph 64 of the NPPF states that permission should be refused for developments of poor design which fail to improve the character and quality of an area. Policies CS27 of the Core Strategy (2013) and saved policy 120 of the Dacorum Local Plan (1991) reinforce this, in addition to stating that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets in considering the impact of proposed

developments within a Conservation Area.

Furthermore, the Area Character Appraisal for BCA5 Queens Road highlights that extensions should be subordinate in terms of scale and height to the parent building.

The proposed rear extension would have an approximate depth of 5 metre, width of 4.9 metres and height of 3 metres. This would result in a total proposed additional floor space (factoring in the previously existing conservatory) of 8.4 m². The proposed rear dormer would measure 3.7 metres in width, 4 metres in depth and 2.2 metres in height; 14.8m² of floorspace. Subsequently the proposed elements are considered of modest size and would not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

In accordance with the submitted application the proposed rear extension would be of simple traditional design, comprising painted render walls and a flat roof. The proposed rear dormer would be prepatinated zinc cladded with a flat roof. These materials are considered acceptable for this type of alteration; complying with policies CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and 120 of the Local Plan (1991).

The proposed alterations would be relatively visible from the flats on Charles Street, and properties on Kings Road. Nonetheless, the rear extension would not appear incongruous in relation to the group of dwellings due to other single storey rear extensions, existing and proposed, on properties 15 and 3 Doctors Common.

Due to the sensitive location of the dwelling house, the DBC Conservation Officer was consulted on the proposal. The following representation was provided:

"Nos. 1 - 19 Doctors Commons Road is a terrace of circa 1960s townhouses that step up Doctors Commons Road in pairs. They are of brick construction, 3 storeys with integral garages at ground floor level.

The application proposes the removal of the existing conservatory and construction of new single storey rear extension. The proposed design will suit these modern properties.

A rear dormer is proposed, there are no other rear dormers within this terrace so the proposed flat roofed dormer will be a noticeable addition at roof level and disrupt the current roofscape. However, it is at the rear and whilst visible from the rear (Lincoln Court) and, at a distance, from Charles Street it will not be readily visible within the street scene. The proposed Juliette balcony and doors at roof level increases the visual prominence of the dormer, omitting the doors / balcony and replacing with windows would be preferable.

Similarly the loss of the first floor windows and replacement with doors, side lights and Juliet balcony will change the pleasing regularity of the fenestration that this rear elevation currently retains however as this is to the rear the alteration is not considered to harm the character of the conservation area.

The front door is currently recessed with a small lobby area externally. The application proposes bringing the front door forward so it is flush with the front elevation – whilst this may disrupt the rhythm of the front elevation it is a fairly insignificant alteration.

As referred to above, the proposed alterations are generally acceptable however an amendment to the dormer is suggested."

Subject to the Conservation Officer's comments, the rear dormer was simplified by removing the originally proposed Juliet Balcony. In addition, the first floor Juliet Balcony was also removed due to privacy concerns; the amendments are considered to be an improvement from the original scheme and acceptable.

Overall, it is considered that the rear extension and loft conversion would be subservient, congruous additions to the appearance of the group of town houses, parent dwelling house and Berkhamsted Conservation Area; accordingly the proposed coheres with the NPPF (2012), appendixes 3 and 7 policy 120 of the Dacorum Local Plan (1991) and policies CS4, CS11, CS12 and CS27 of the Core Strategy (2013) and Queens Road SPG Area Character Appraisal (2004).

Effect on Amenity of Neighbours

The NPPF outlines the importance of planning in securing good standards of amenity for existing and future occupiers of land and buildings. Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (1991) and policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), seek to ensure that new development does not result in detrimental impact upon 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 or privacy. Moreover, appendix 7 of the Local Plan advises that alterations should be set within a line drawn at 45 degrees from the nearest neighbouring habitable window.

The proposed rear extension would breach the 45 degree line as drawn from the rear habitable windows of neighbouring property 3 Doctors Common. Nonetheless, number 3 currently has a planning application pending consideration for a single storey rear extension (4/03700/15/FHA) identical to the proposed. As a result it is not considered that there would be a significant loss of daylight to neighbouring ground floor doors/windows as a result of the proposed.

No invasion of privacy would occur as a result of the rear extension due to no windows proposed on the side elevations of the extension. Furthermore, the proposed roof lights and French doors are appropriate in size, position and height; in-keeping with the existing fenestrations of the dwelling house. In addition, the proposed rear dormer would not result in a loss of privacy due to a 57 metre (approximately) separation distance from the properties opposite (16 – 19 Lincoln Court).

Appendix 3 of the Local Plan states that rear extensions should not result in a

momentous loss of rear garden space; a 9.7 metre (approximately) deep garden would be preserved as a result of the proposed. This would fall marginal short of the 11.5 metres recommended, however, this shortfall is not considered reason enough to refuse the application.

Thus, the proposal would not further impact upon the residential amenity and privacy of neighbouring residents. As a result the rear extension and loft conversion in regards to residential amenity is acceptable in terms of the NPPF (2012), appendixes 3 and 7 of the Local Plan (1991) and policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

Impact on Car Parking Provision

The Council's Parking Standards within appendix 5 of the Local Plan (1991) requires two off street parking spaces for four bed dwellings within Residential Zones 1 and 2. The application seeks to increase the number of bedrooms from three to four, which would not require an increase in parking provision. In addition on-site parking provision would be sufficient to accommodate two domestic cars. As a result, it is not considered that the proposal would impact on the safety and operation of the adjacent highway. The proposal meets the requirements of policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and appendix 5 of the Local Plan (1991).

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: In the interests of the visual amenities of the Berkhamsted Conservation Area; in accordance with policy CS12 and CS27 of the Core Strategy (2013) and saved policy 120 of the Local Plan (1991).

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

100 A
101 A
200 C
201 A

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

Article 35 Statement

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.