

**4/03957/15/FHA - SINGLE STOREY REAR AND TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION, FORMATION OF A LOFT CONVERSION WITH A REAR DORMER. NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS WITH DOUBLE CAR HARDSTAND TO REAR..  
66 HIGH STREET, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 2BW.  
APPLICANT: Mr Kirchgaesser.**

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[Case Officer - Ross Herbert]

## **Summary**

The application is recommended for approval. The proposals have been significantly improved and refined through proactive engagement with the Conservation Team. The scheme is now considered to be acceptable for approval. There would be no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the locally listed terrace, the street scene, or the Conservation Area. There would also be no adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties. The Highway Authority has raised no objections to the propose off-street parking area.

## **Site Description**

The application site is located to the north of Berkhamsted High Street, within the town centre, Conservation Area, area of archaeological interest and adjacent to a Grade II listed building. 66 High Street comprises of a two storey, Victorian end of terrace dwelling located on the south side of the High Street, on the junction with Ravens Lane. The property forms a part of 'Sibdon Place', a terrace of five houses (66 – 74, even). The terrace is included upon the list of locally important buildings in Berkhamsted.

## **Proposal**

The application seeks planning permission for a single and two storey rear extension, loft conversion, together with a new car parking bay (two spaces) to the rear of the site, requiring a new cross over. The proposal has been significantly amended throughout the application process following negotiation with both the planning and conservation officers.

## **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)  
NPPG

## Adopted Core Strategy

NP1 - Supporting Development  
CS1 - Distribution of Development  
CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages  
CS8 - Sustainable Transport  
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

Policies 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21, 120  
Appendices 3, 5, 7

## Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents

Environmental Guidelines (May 2004)  
Accessibility Zones for the Application of car Parking Standards (July 2002)

## Advice Notes and Appraisals

Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Berkhamsted

## **Summary of Representations**

### Berkhamsted Town Council

#### Object

The Council objected on the grounds of loss of on-street parking space, scale, and the deleterious effect on the Conservation Area. Additionally, the vehicular access on to a busy through road would be hazardous.

Reference CS11 and CS12.

### Conservation and Design

#### Initial comments

66 High Street is a two storey, Victorian end of terrace dwelling located on the south side of the High Street within the Berkhamsted Conservation Area. The property forms a part of 'Sibdon Place' (the name plaque remains in situ), a terrace of five houses (66 – 74, even). The terrace was architect designed and built in the 1860s, it is a fine example of a remarkably unaltered Victorian terrace and is included upon the list of locally important buildings in Berkhamsted; the terrace makes a strong positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Sibdon Place is of red brick construction with buff brick and stone dressings, flower and leaf moulded patterned brick panels in the front gables. There is moulded brick

banding across the whole façade, the uppermost band has a repeating sycamore fruit motif along its length. It is an attractive, balanced terrace with nos. 66 and 74 having shallow gabled front bays; to the rear are two-storey projecting wings. No. 66 is on the corner of the High Street and Ravens Lane – its red brick side elevation with windows is visible and prominent in the street scene. The rear of 66 is also visible in views up Ravens Lane. The terrace has retained its timber sash windows to the front elevation, in part due to the Article 4(2) Direction that covers the terrace. At present no. 66 looks to be vacant with one of the front windows boarded up.

A request for pre-application advice was submitted in 2015. The current application proposes various alterations to the property, these are as follows:

Two storey rear extension - The property already has a two storey rear wing, with a later two storey extension attached. The application proposes a shallow gabled two storey rear extension, adjacent to the existing rear wing. Whilst it does not project out all that far, the proposed additional gable gives a rather cluttered appearance to this rear elevation. The original rear wall line would be lost through the proposed two-storey extension and the rhythm of rear elevation of the terrace would be disrupted, this part of the proposals is considered to detract from the design and appearance of the terrace.

Dormer in rear roof slope- The proposed dormer, which would sit above the proposed two storey rear extension looks out of character within this terrace. Whilst it is set down from the ridge and is fairly small in relation to the existing roof slope it is still rather bulky, this is exacerbated by the amount of slate hanging either side of the window.

The principle of inserting rear dormers within this terrace is also an important consideration. A previous application for a rear dormer to no. 68 High Street (adjacent) was strongly resisted by Conservation and the current loft conversion to this property has rear roof lights only. A large dormer was constructed on the rear roof slope of no. 74 High Street but this was before the architectural interest of the terrace was recognised, this dormer is also not visible within the street scene. Any dormer to no. 66 High Street would be very visible from Ravens Lane, as such it is suggested the loft is converted without the use of a dormer, a couple of conservation roof lights to the rear roof slope would be a better alternative.

The application shows an en-suite bathroom within the attic, this may be acceptable in principle however it is not clear whether any alteration to or removal of the shared chimney stack would be required; the loss of this chimney stack would not be acceptable.

A window within the upper part of the gable end is proposed, as part of the loft conversion. The window size should be reduced and it should adopt the same detailing and material construction as the existing windows on this side elevation.

Single storey side extension in side yard, No objection to this, the extension would infill the side yard and not project out beyond it. It is of modest design and proportion and will not be a visible element within the street scene – it is suggested the roof incorporates some glazing to give the extension a more lightweight feel and appearance.

The application also proposes the demolition of part of the side boundary wall to create a parking area to the rear of the property. The boundary wall steps up Ravens Lane, it is of brick construction with rounded stone capping, the railings are missing. At regular intervals along the wall are tall brick piers. The two piers at the end of the wall would be retained according to the plans but the wall between them removed, the loss of some of this boundary wall would be unfortunate – the wall and railings are included in the description of this locally listed building and are considered to enhance the Conservation Area. To allow two cars to park in this small space a car turntable is proposed. More details are required in relation to the design and appearance of the turntable, to assess whether it would preserve the character / appearance of the conservation area.

An additional consequence of creating the parking area will be to make views of the rear elevation from Ravens Lane much clearer than they are at present.

As outlined above, whilst some aspects of the proposal are acceptable the proposed two storey rear extension and the roof dormer would fail to preserve or enhance the Berkhamsted Conservation Area or the Locally Listed terrace 'Sibdon Place'. Recommend refusal.

#### *Further comments*

Further to our meeting this morning I have the following points / suggestions:

The plans are currently inaccurate, two further windows need to be shown on the side elevation (facing Ravens Lane) and the side elevation (proposed plans) shows the former pre-app proposal (for raising the ridge of the rear gabled), this needs to be omitted.

The levels inside (within the rear wing) are to be raised by c 300mm as part of the proposed alterations, it would be helpful if a plan showing a section through the rear wing could be produced showing the new floor levels and ceiling levels and their relationship with existing windows / openings. The existing windows should not be moved / blocked / raised as part of the alteration works.

At the site meeting it was agreed that the dormer and loft conversion were to be omitted from the proposed scheme - this is welcomed.

The main issue related to the proposed two-storey rear projection to allow access from the current stairs through to the rear wing, avoiding bedroom 3. The gabled projection proposed is not acceptable, it is overly assertive in its design, disrupts the traditional form of the Victorian property and harms its character / appearance. At the site meeting it was agreed that officers would meet to discuss any options for extending the property in this location.

Further to this it is suggested that sketch drawings are produced for a small two-storey extension with flat roof.

The extension should be no larger than necessary to allow for access from staircase through to rear wing, it should not project the full width of the rear or project out so far. The flat roof should preferably sit under the eaves of both rear wing and main roof. A contemporary approach to its finish is suggested, perhaps with oak cladding or similar. An extension of this type may still be considered to harm the character / appearance

of the conservation area and the locally listed property however it is an option that is worth exploring.

The ground floor extension infilling the side yard could also be flat roofed (to relate better to the possible 2-storey rear projection), perhaps with a small lantern to allow light to the kitchen. Otherwise the extension could have a monopitch slate roof as previously discussed.

I hope this covers the main points discussed,

#### *Further comments*

As discussed, some comments on the latest draft plan:

The first floor extension. This seems to be going along the right lines but is there scope to reduce the width of the first floor element and possibly its depth? The curve, timber cladding and a zinc roof make this a clear modern addition.

The ground floor extension should be set back slightly from the existing rear wing. Will this element require any roof lights?

The window within the gable end (to serve the loft conversion) should be reduced in size (smaller 1-over-1 sash) and a brick window head added. The 3 roof lights within the rear roof slope should be reduced to 1 or 2.

The bathrooms will require soil vent pipes and other pipe work, running pipework down the front or side elevation of the property would not be acceptable.

The levels inside (within the rear wing) are to be raised by c 300mm as part of the proposed alterations. The existing windows should not be moved / blocked / raised as part of the alteration works. The side windows (ground and first floor) within the rear wing facing Ravens Lane should not be moved or altered in any way to accommodate this 300mm raising of floor levels.

#### HCC Highways

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

Decision Hertfordshire County Council has no objection to the principle of the proposed rear extension, subject to the inclusion of the following informatives to the grant of planning permission.

Condition SHC 08: Prior to the commencement of the use hereby permitted the vehicular access shall be constructed to a maximum width of 5.4m plus the transition kerb in accordance with the Hertfordshire County Council residential access. Arrangements shall be made for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and traffic movement.

SHC 18: Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, pedestrian visibility splays measuring 2m x 2 metres shall be provided to each side of the access where it meets the highway and such splays shall thereafter be maintained at all times free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway . Note this may mean lowering the existing brick piers to archive this safety requirement.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

#### Informatives

New or amended crossover – construction standards AN1) Construction standards for new/amended vehicle access: Where works are required within the public highway to facilitate the new or amended vehicular access, the Highway Authority require the construction of such works to be undertaken to their satisfaction and specification, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. If any of the works associated with the construction of the access affects or requires the removal and/or the relocation of any equipment, apparatus or structures (e.g. street name plates, bus stop signs or shelters, statutory authority equipment etc.) the applicant will be required to bear the cost of such removal or alteration. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

#### Storage of materials

AN2) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

Description of the Proposal The location of the proposed development is at the rear of 66 High Street, Berkhamsted. The proposed development is for a single storey and two storey rear extensions. The applicant also wishes to create two off street parking spaces to the rear garden area by having a new simple vehicle crossover off Ravens Lane. This is shown on the submitted plan.

Site Description The site is situated in a residential neighbourhood and close to the town centre. There does not appear to be any existing off street parking associated with this site, hence the request to allow off street parking to the rear garden.

#### Analysis

A Transport Statement or Assessment are not required as part of this application due to the small size of the proposed development. This is in line with Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide requirements.

#### Highway Impact

## Trip Generation

The trip generation profile is not required as the development proposed for a new access and is unlikely to impact on the overall function of the local highway network.

## Road Safety

There are no collisions recorded within the vicinity of the development site. ie junction with High Street and Ravens Lane. Given that the development is unlikely to add trips to the road network, it is also unlikely that the changes to the development site will negatively impact the safety of the highway.

## Vehicle Access

The proposed double width access will pass through the last section of a section of on street parking at the top end of Ravens Lane. Opposite and further down there is a combination of limited waiting and controlled parking spaces (permit). However, this section from the end of the junction protection double yellow lines with the High Street to some thirty metres past this point to the start of some more no waiting at any time waiting restrictions allows for approximately 5 cars top park, all day long. The proposed new access will prevent approximately the last 5m of this free to park section of Ravens Lane from being parked upon by all except the owners or visitors to 66 High Street. Outside of this use it could help by freeing up space and forming a longer section of passing room at the junction with the High Street. Currently there is a bottle neck pinch point due to this on street parking.

## Car Parking and Cycle Parking

### Car Parking

The car parking provisions for the development site are off-street. The proposed changes will require the lowering of kerb. However, the parking provision will need to accord to The Dacorum Borough Council's Parking Standards and it will be for the Dacorum Borough Council to determine the appropriateness of the level of parking provided.

### Cycle Parking

No details regarding cycle parking are provided. Cycle parking is required to be provided at 1 space per unit in order to adhere to the Dacorum Borough Council standards and guidance.

## Servicing Arrangements

The servicing arrangements are not expected to change with the proposed new access.

## Accessibility

The overall accessibility of the site will remain unchanged as part of this planning application. There are bus stops are along the A4251, High Street. The services run

frequently, in both directions linking the towns of Berkhamsted with Hemel Hempstead and Tring. The train station is close to the development site too. There are no formal cycling facilities in the vicinity of the development site. There is part of one near the junction of Bank Mill but it is not a complete system. There are footways on both sides of Fieldway with acceptable pedestrian connectivity within the local area.

### Travel Plans

The applicant has not submitted a travel plan as part of this application. The scale of the development falls below the threshold that requires either a Travel Plan or a Statement

### Planning Obligations/ Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

It is not considered that any planning obligations are considered applicable to the proposed development.

### Conclusion

The highway authority would not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission subject to the above conditions and informatives.

### HCC Historic Environment

In this instance, due to the small scale of the proposed development and its nature, the impact on the historic environment is likely to be small, and therefore no archaeological condition is required. However, the development site is in an archaeologically sensitive area, adjacent to the High Street (which follows the line of Roman Akeman Street) and in the core of the medieval town.

I would therefore request that you attach an informative to the planning permission (if you are minded to grant consent) for the applicant to contact this office prior to the commencement of groundworks, so that a site visit may be made at the appropriate time. I suggest the following wording:

*'Prior to the commencement of development the applicant must contact the archaeology team via [historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:historic.environment@hertfordshire.gov.uk) to enable the inspection of groundworks in order to ensure a record is made of any significant assets of archaeological or historic interest that may be present.'*

### **Comments received from local residents:**

#### 68 High Street

I am emailing you today to comment on planning proposal 4/03957/15/FHA at 66 High St Berkhamsted. Living directly next door at 68 High St I feel, in general the proposal looks fine! But I do have 1 main concern and 1 slight concern! My slight concern is the dormer window for the loft conversion!

When we went for planning for our loft conversion, we were only allowed Velux conservation Windows! Not a dormer! As it wasn't in keeping with the conservation look required, if a dormer window now goes next to our windows, this would look very odd!



But my main concern is the rotary turntable for parking at the bottom of the garden! For the applicant to get access to this it would mean losing 1-2 car park spaces in Ravens lane!

When I moved into my property 25 years ago I could park outside my house! Now I have to park down either Ravens lane or Victoria rd! As you are probably aware parking is at a premium in this area and with the addition of the roundabout at the bottom of Victoria rd and the planning given to the Rex cinema (with no parking allocated) In the last 10 years it has become very difficult to park at any time of day! I am sure Highways are aware of this!!! If we lose any more spaces we may have to park in other side roads in the area! Causing more issues for Highways!

### 38 Clunbury Court

Raised concerns in relation to access to rear of Clunbury Court for maintenance, and loss of on-street parking spaces on Ravens Lane.

### 8 Ravens Lane

Raised objection due to removal of on-street parking spaces.

## **Considerations**

The main issue of relevance to the consideration of this application relates to the impact of the proposal upon the character of the existing dwelling and the Conservation Area, however with the impact of the proposed parking to Highway Safety and Parking. Other issues of relevance relate to the impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties.

### Policy and Principle

The site is located in an urban area and the principle of providing domestic extensions is acceptable in accordance with Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy. Policy CS27 of the adopted Core Strategy requires all development to positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas.

### Effects on appearance of building

The proposed scheme now is considered to facilitate the necessary extension of the property to allow functionality of the first floor whilst still retaining the original character and design of the parent house. The single storey extension now has a flat roof and is set slightly back from the existing rear build line of the rear wing. It would be constructed in brick to match existing, with the rear elevation being clad in larch cladding. It is considered to assimilate well with the proportion and form of the parent house. The proposed two storey extension has been significantly refined and reduced in size from the original proposal in order to avoid a bulky addition. Indeed the two storey element has been designed having specific regard to the advice of the Conservation Team by simply providing a link through the existing first floor space, without competing with the parent house. The first floor extension is of a modern contrasting design and form, which would complement the original dwelling and offer the important link at first level needed to allow the property to be brought to modern

day standards. The first floor link extension would be clad in larch cladding and would have a zinc roof, like the ground floor extension.

The proposals would now be in-keeping with the character and appearance of the host building in compliance with Core Strategy Policy CS12.

#### Impact on the street scene/Conservation Area

The site is located within Berkhamsted Conservation Area and there are prominent and clear views to the side and rear of the property from Ravens Lane. The property also forms part of a locally listed terrace. In liaison with the Conservation Team, the scheme has been substantially altered to remove the dormer windows to the rear together with significant modification to the two storey rear extension and improvements to the single storey extension. As such the proposal is now for a single storey rear extension, together with a small first floor link. This is considered to allow movement and utilisation of the first floor of the dwelling without compromising the character of the property or indeed resulting in a negative feature within the Conservation Area. The dormer windows have also been removed, with only a single conservation style roof light proposed on the rear roof slope.

It is considered that the proposed scheme would now preserve the character and appearance of this part of the Berkhamsted Conservation Area, in compliance with Core Strategy Policy CS27. The proposals would be in-keeping with the character and appearance the street scene in compliance with Core Strategy Policy CS12.

#### Impact on Neighbours

Policy CS12 states that, with regards to the effects of a development on the amenity of neighbours, development should avoid visual intrusion, loss of light and loss of privacy. The proposed scheme would have no adverse effect on the amenity of the neighbouring properties through loss of daylight, sunlight or privacy. The proposal has been amended significantly with the first floor rear element now simply forming a link through to the existing rear wing. The ground floor extension would not project as far as that of the immediate neighbour and would have no detrimental impact. The dormer window has been removed from the scheme and there would be no overlooking as a result of the proposals.

#### Impact on Highway Safety

The Highway Authority has been consulted on the application and has raised no objections to the proposed off-street parking area and turn-table, subject to the imposition of conditions in relation to the width of the access and visibility splays. These have been added to the recommendation accordingly. It is therefore considered that the proposals would result in no adverse impact on highway safety or the freeflow of traffic. The proposals would allow cars to exist the site in forward gear with adequate visibility splays maintained.

The existing property currently has no off-street parking available. It is considered that the creation of two off-street parking spaces at the property will help to alleviate on street parking on Ravens Lane in the immediate vicinity of the property, by taking up to two cars off the street. Neighbouring residents in Ravens Lane have raised the issue of the creation of the new parking area removing an on-street parking space. Whilst a

section of on street parking would be lost through the creation of the new access, the proposals would still result in an improvement to the existing parking situation locally by creating two off-street spaces, and so the proposals are considered to be an improvement.

RECOMMENDATION - That planning permission be GRANTED 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 constructed in accordance with the materials specified on the approved drawings.**

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and in the interests of the visual amenities of the Conservation Area.

- 3 **The vehicular access hereby permitted shall be constructed to a maximum width of 5.4m plus the transition kerb in accordance with the Hertfordshire County Council residential access. Arrangements shall be made for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway carriageway.**

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and traffic movement.

- 4 **Pedestrian visibility splays of 2 m x 2 m shall be provided before any part of the development is first brought into use, and they shall thereafter be maintained, on both sides of the entrance to the site, within which there shall be no obstruction to visibility between 600 mm and 2 m above the carriageway.**

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

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

**WREN NAJ 24 2015**  
**WREN NAJ 24c 2015 Scheme C**  
**Location Plan**

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.