

**4/02175/16/FHA - TWO-STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, SINGLE-STOREY FRONT EXTENSION AND HIP-TO-GABLE ROOF ENLARGEMENT INCLUDING NEW ROOFLIGHTS, BOX DORMER AND LOFT CONVERSION.
160 BRIDGEWATER ROAD, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 1EE.
APPLICANT: MR KENNEDY.**

[Case Officer - Rachel Marber]

Summary

The proposed single storey front extension, two storey side extension and hip to gable loft conversion through size, position and design would not result in severe detriment to the appearance of the parent dwellinghouse or surrounding street scene. Furthermore, the proposed would not adversely impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring residents. The proposal therefore coheres with the NPPF (2012), saved appendices 3, 5 and 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (1991), policies CS4, CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and the Chilterns Park (BCA14) area character appraisal.

Site Description

The application site comprises of a two-storey semi-detached property located to the north side of Bridgewater Road. The plot benefits from a fairly sizable driveway, which could accommodate for at least four domestic cars. The plot also benefits from a modest garden, which continues the upward slope to the rear. There is an existing single-storey full-width rear extension. The site is located within the Chilterns Park Character Area (BCA14).

The property forms part of a wider road of relatively similar properties. Many properties have undergone extensions including front and side extensions. The area has an overall verdant character aspect emphasised by the tree lined street and generous build line of properties to the north.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for a two storey side extension and associated hip to gable loft conversion which incorporates one rear dormer and 3 front and rear roof lights. In addition to a full width, single storey front extension.

Referral to Committee

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

Relevant History

4/00416/12/LDP HIP TO GABLE END LOFT CONVERSION WITH SKYLIGHTS TO FRONT AND REAR AND SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION
Granted
05/04/2012

Site Constraints

Area of Archaeological Significance

Residential Area of Town Village

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

Saved Policies of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan

Appendix 3 - Gardens and Amenity Space
Appendix 5 – Parking Provision
Appendix 7 - Small-scale House Extensions

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Chilterns Park Character Area (BCA14)

Summary of Representations

158 Bridgewater Road, Berkhamsted

We do not do so lightly, but must object to the application in its current form. I have always understood that generally more than very small-scale additions to the front of dwellinghouses are discouraged, demonstrated by the fact that the General Permitted Development Order only allows very modest front extensions to provide porches. The application proposal goes way beyond what could be described as a minimal front extension. Large extensions can dramatically alter the appearance of a property and have a detrimental impact on the character of a streetscene where a group of houses were erected at the same time (as per Bridgewater Road). In addition, there can be impact on the outlook and sense of enclosure of occupiers of neighbouring houses, especially given that living rooms etc. will be sited to the front of the house. The front extension at no. 160 proposes to remove the curved bay of the house (noted as a feature of the area in the Council's Area Based Policies) which matches that of our property and extend directly on the boundary line to approximately 1.85m in length, or what is not clearly marked but appears approximately 1.5m beyond the existing bay. It is clear this introduces a boundary type wall on the front of the house where none exists, directly adjoining our front bay window and substantially reducing the outlook from our living room. The location of the chimney stack on the party wall is such that seating can only be opposite, currently facing a hedge and trees which would be replaced by a large, blank brick wall, which although again not marked on the plan appears some 3 meters in height. The boundary is south-westerly facing, thereby obscuring sunlight creating a dark corner and much diminished outlook in our main living space. It appears that nos. 152 and 164 have been used as precedent, however it is felt these are errors that do not enhance the appearance of the area and should not be repeated. In any case both have material differences in their design compared to what is proposed at 160. No 152 has purposefully been set back from the

boundary line by some half a metre and also extends forward c. 1.2m, as opposed to approximately 1.5m sought under application ref 4/02175/16/FHA. Both these changes mean lesser impact on the neighbouring property. The front building line on no. 164 should be disregarded as what could be achieved. The house has been unsympathetically extended detracting from the appearance of the area. Also critically, the addition does not extend to the boundary and the impact is only upon its own living room, not that of any adjoining property. In summary, even in the context of anomalous permissions that seem contrary to policy, there is still no precedent for any front extensions that impair the neighbouring property as severely as what is proposed under application 4/02175/16/FHA.

The top floor is also badly conceived, as it does away with the three-way pitch roof and just puts a dual pitch in instead. This will increase the bulk of the house considerably given it will be a minimal distance with the boundary line. What is evident is that there will be no characteristics of a purposefully designed pair of semi's if consent were granted to the current application. This is clearly contrary to the Council's Development Principles for the area referred to as BCA14 – Chiltern Park, that specifically states 'the building line should be followed'. In the context of the overall proposals, the front addition in particular contributes a relatively small proportion of the new floor space, at the expense of severely impacting our ability to enjoy our own property. Our neighbours gave us no prior notice of their intentions. Upon receipt of the planning notice we approached and had a cordial conversation expressing our concerns. We had very much hoped they would withdraw the application to revise their plans, but have since been unable to get this confirmed. Given the stakes and limited consultation period, this has left us in a difficult position as we now feel we have no choice but to object to the application. If the proposals could be amended to remove the front addition we would be pleased to withdraw our objection. As a minimum the proposed extension to the front bay window should be removed from the design given my points above. I would be very grateful for acknowledgement and feedback on my comments.

Further comments

Following my email beneath, you may be aware Berkhamsted Town Council are also concerned and object to the subject application. We wish to reiterate, our objection relates very specifically to the demolition and extension to the front bay window. The overall proposals add c. 943 sq ft of new new space almost doubling the size of the dwelling, whilst the extension to the bay contributes only c. 30 sq ft, so 3% of this. At the same time, there is no example on Bridgewater Road of any semi-detached property where the entire front elevation has been brought forward of the original building line. This is an important application as if approved, it has the potential to set precedent and dramatically change the street scene in Bridgewater Road. We would urge you to please persuade the applicant (we have tried) to make what is a very minor amendment to their overall plans and remove the addition to the front bay window. Finally I note that the Dacorum website shows our comments but still register '0' responses and '0' against the application, which perhaps needs correcting?

Further comments

Thank you for notification of two additional plans submitted by the applicants.

These correct a discrepancy, whereby the original floor plan showed the front extension marginally set back from our boundary, whilst the front elevation plan did not. The front

elevation plan now also shows this set 30cm off our boundary in line with the original floor plan. These however remain inconsistent with the 'plan view' which still shows the extension on the boundary. The side elevation plan is also now denoted '*to match building line of adjacent property*'. It does not specify which adjacent property but in either case is misleading. Both 164 Bridgewater Road and 158 Bridgewater Road have small front extensions, in the case of our property at 158 being a garage conversion we inherited. However in both cases these are only small parts of the front elevation and on the opposite side to the party wall. These therefore have zero impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties which are detached and therefore meters away from the nearest window. They are also in line with planning policy which I understand permits small front additions subservient to the original building line. This is in stark contrast to the subject proposals, proposed to be 30cm from our main bay window and with virtually the entire front elevation brought forward of adjoining properties. We still object to the current application because: It is highly detrimental to the aesthetics of the property by removing the curved bay that matches our own, a feature of the property. It is questionable the boundary hedge would survive, but regardless this is c. 1.8m high whilst the wall that would replace the bay and extend forwards is 3 meters high, diminishing our outlook and obscuring natural light. There is no precedent for any semi on Bridgewater Road where virtually the entire front elevation is extended forward. If approved this application potentially opens the floodgates to a drastic change to the existing street scene.

To reiterate, we have no objection to 910 sq ft of the 940 sq ft proposals, including the front addition to the other side of the property similar to 158 and 164 Bridgewater Road. It is specifically the extension to the bay, 30 sq ft and enough room for one sofa, that should be removed for all the reasons above.

Further comments

1) The proposed dormer is denoted as 1m from the edge of the detached side of the property, but not on the party wall side which certainly appears closer. The Local Plan, Appendix 7 (vi) (b) clearly states '*the dormer margins should be set in a minimum of 1m from the flank walls (including party walls with adjoining properties)*'. This measurement should be added and should be a minimum of 1m.

2) The front elevation plan appears to show the front extension roof as two sections each at a different pitch, and unclear how they will join. There are no measurements on any plan showing the max height of either of these roof sections. The higher part appears (from the side elevation plan) to match the height of the existing rear extension, which (in breach of its GPDO consent) is at least 3.4m. These critical measurements should be added making the max height of both parts of the front roofs clear.

3) The Dacorum Local Plan, Appendix 7 (iii) states '*A front extension may be acceptable, if it is fairly small (e.g. a porch, bay window or small room extension)*'. Bringing all parts of the front elevation forward of their original positions is obviously inconsistent with this. The extension to the bay is a bridge too far.

4) Appendix 7 (ii) states '*Any extension should maintain the common design characteristics of the row or street within which a house is located, with particular regard to: c) where features such as windows, doors, roof and wall materials, **bays**, porches, etc are of a consistent design, it is important for any extension or alteration to reflect the original character of a house; this should not alter the character of an area by reducing the space around and between dwellings*'. Again, extension of the bay particularly is inconsistent with this.

5) *The applicant incorrectly advised the committee that the depth of the proposed extension to the front bay has been reduced. The revised side elevation plan does correct an error, where the existing bay was omitted entirely from the earlier drawing, but both versions show the same proposed depth of 1.85m from the main building line behind the bay.*

6) *The applicant has referred to a plan showing application of the 45 degree rule. This has not been provided to us nor on DBC website.*

Contamination

I have no additional comments to make in respect to contamination.

Berkhamsted Town Council

Original Comments

The Committee suspended Standing Orders to allow a member of the public to speak. Neil Saunders, the adjoining semi-detached neighbour to 160 Bridgewater Road, objected strongly to the single storey front extension as it impacted on his adjoining front bay window, excluding light and presenting a blank wall right against the boundary. He had no wish to stop his neighbours from improving their home, but felt this extension was unacceptable and created an unwelcome precedent for other semi-detached houses nearby. The Committee reinstated Standing Orders and the meeting resumed.

Objection

The front extension element of the application was unacceptable for multiple reasons:

- Breaking the front building line
- Bulk and mass – ref. CS12
- Out of keeping with the configuration of the semi-detached house and the street scene generally – ref. CS11
- Loss of amenity to neighbouring property

Amended Comments

“The Chairman suspended standing orders enabling the applicant to talk. He explained that he had been working with guidance from DBC to ensure that the revised plans heeded previous objections. Therefore, the proposed development had been moved back so that the building line was not broken and the extension would now be smaller. His view on the issue of bulk and mass was that other premises in the road had been subject to similar development. The proposals had now been stepped away from the boundary to mitigate any loss of amenity and the hedge along the majority of the front extension had been retained. The pitch of the roof had also been reduced. He pointed out that many curved bays in properties of a similar age had been removed.

the owner of 158 Bridgewater Road, did not concur with the view that the pitch had been reduced. Additionally, although the distance from his own property had been increased there would nonetheless be loss of amenity through obscuring of light and diminished outlook. The

front elevations would seem to be centimetres from his living space and the removal of the front bay window would set a worrying precedent in Brownlow Road. In conclusion, his concerns related to a small percentage of the proposals and he hoped that they would be addressed by the applicant.

The Chairman reinstated standing orders and the meeting resumed. Following a discussion it was agreed that bulk, mass and building line objections would appear no longer to be a concern. However, the drawings were not clear enough for the precise nature of other changes to be fully understood. Therefore previous objections still stand. DBC is asked to ensure that the applicant comes back with a clearer set of drawings.

Object.

The proposals are out of keeping with the configuration of the semi-detached house and the street scene generally.

CS11 refers. Loss of amenity to neighbouring property.”

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 existing dwellinghouse, immediate street scene and residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Effect on Appearance of the Existing Building and Street Scene

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

Moreover, under the development guidelines of the Residential Character Area BCA14 (Chilterns Park), extensions should normally be subordinate in terms of scale and height to the parent dwelling.

In accordance with the submitted application the proposed extensions would be of simple, traditional design, comprising of exposed brickworks walls downstairs and cream render walls as first floor level, with tile hang to match existing and UPVC windows and doors. These materials are considered acceptable and in-keeping with the existing dwellinghouse; complying with policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

It should be noted that several properties along the street have been granted planning permission for flush, full height two-storey side extensions, roof enlargements and loft

conversions. Direct neighbours Nos. 158 and 162 have also received full height two-storey side extensions. As such, the proposed two storey side extension would appear congruous within the street scene. A 1 metre separation distance from the neighbouring boundary with No.162 has also been maintained, preserving the open and suburban character of the area and preventing a terracing effect from occurring.

Furthermore, the application property already has permission for the hip-to-gable loft conversion under Class A of the General Permitted Development Order, granted in 2012. Several properties within the street have already undergone hip-to-gable roof enlargements including Nos. 122, 126, 138, 140 and 166 Bridgewater Road. Especially No. 144 Bridgewater Road which has undergone a flush two storey side extension and hip-to-gable loft conversion in a scheme very similar to the current proposal (4/01782/16/FHA) granted August 2016.

The proposed rear box dormer would be set in from the flank elevation by a metre and would not be overtly visible from the street scene. Thus, the proposed dormer would have no adverse impact on the street scape, preserving both the character and appearance of the existing dwellinghouse and wider street scene.

The six proposed front velux roof lights would not require planning consent under Class C of the General Permitted Development Order (2015).

Similarly, in regards to the single storey front extension other properties within the immediate street scene contain full width front extensions, such as No. 152 Bridgewater. The proposed front porch has also been amended to wrap around the existing bay window feature at first floor level; this would maintain to a degree this characteristic element.

Overall, it is considered that the single storey front extension, two storey side extension and associated roof alterations would not severely detriment the appearance of the parent dwellinghouse and street scene; accordingly the proposed coheres with the NPPF (2012), saved appendix 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (1991), policies CS4, CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and the Chilterns Park (BCA14) area character appraisal.

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. Saved 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 visual intrusion, loss of light and privacy. Moreover, saved 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 two storey side extension would maintain the existing front and rear build line of the parent property. With a single storey rear element which would fall just short of the projection of the existing rear extension. As such the proposal would not breach the 45 degree line as drawn from the neighbouring habitable windows, and as such would not result in a loss of outlook or daylight serving the neighbouring properties.

Furthermore, due to the marginal scale (1.3 metre depth and 3.4 – 3.6 metre height) the single storey front extension is not considered to result in significant loss of daylight and sunlight to neighbouring properties. In conjunction with the north facing orientation of the application site it is not considered that during peak sunlight hours that any noteworthy loss to neighbouring properties would result.

No loss of privacy would result from the proposal, with only two obscure glazed windows proposed on the flank elevation of the side extension.

Thus, the proposal would not further impact upon the residential amenity or privacy of neighbouring residents and is acceptable in terms of the NPPF (2012), saved appendices 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 saved appendix 5 of the Local Plan (1991) requires 2.25 off street parking spaces for four bed dwellings within Residential Zones 3-4. The application seeks to increase the number of bedrooms from two to four, which would require an increase in parking provision. Nonetheless, on-site parking provision would be sufficient to accommodate four domestic cars, and on street parking is available. Subsequently, 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 saved 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 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, in accordance with policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

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

Front Elevation (indexed 19/09/16)
Side Elevation (indexed 19/09/16)
Rear Elevation (indexed 09/08/16)
Ground-Floor Plan (indexed 23/08/16)
First-Floor Plan (indexed 23/08/16)
Loft Floor Plan (indexed 23/08/16)
Plan View (indexed 29/09/16)

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) Order 2015.