

**4/01358/15/FHA - SINGLE-STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND LOFT CONVERSION WITH REAR DORMER.  
145 GEORGE STREET, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 2EJ.  
APPLICANT: Mr Higgins.**

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[Case Officer - Martin Stickley]

## **Summary**

The application is recommended for approval.

The principle of residential development is considered acceptable in the sites location within a town and residential area. The original scheme conflicted with the aims of the Berkhamsted Conservation Area (Policy CS27 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (September 2013) and saved Policy 120 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 (DBLP)). However, after several amendments, the scheme is now considered acceptable.

The proposed works would not have any adverse impact on the appearance of the dwelling and would not significantly detract from the street scene. The development would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties. The access and car parking is deemed satisfactory. Therefore, the proposal is acceptable in accordance with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework; Policies CS4, CS11, CS12 and CS27 of the Core Strategy and saved Policies 58 and 120, and saved Appendices 5 and 7 of the DBLP.

## **Site and Surroundings**

The application site comprises a late Victorian mid-terrace dwelling on the northern side of George Street. George Street is mainly formed of terraces of small mid-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings of the 'two-up two-down' variety. The property is of yellow stock brick construction with red brick dressings and a single-storey front bay. The surrounding area is characterised by properties similar in size and appearance.

The site is located within the Berkhamsted Conservation Area and the Bank Mill Character Area (HCA3). A number of the terraced dwellings along the street have previously been modified to the rear with a variety of extensions and several dormers. On-street parking is limited and only a few dwellings benefit from private parking.

## **Proposal**

The application seeks planning permission for a single-storey rear extension measuring 3.047m in depth and 2.025m in width, with a maximum height of 3.432m and a maximum eaves height of 2.481m. A parapet wall would run down the curtilage boundary on the north-western flank, measuring 2.677m in height.

The proposal also comprises a loft conversion including a rear box dormer and two roof lights.

## **Referral to Committee**

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

## **Planning History**

None.

## **Relevant Policy**

### National Planning Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

### Dacorum Core Strategy 2006-2031

NP1 - Supporting Development  
CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages  
CS10 - Quality of Settlement Design  
CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design  
CS12 - Quality of Site Design  
CS27 - Quality of the Historic Environment  
CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction  
CS31 - Water Management  
CS32 - Air, Water and Soil Quality

### Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011

Policy 58 - Private Parking Provision  
Policy 120 - Development in Conservation Areas  
Appendix 5 - Parking Provision  
Appendix 7 - Small-scale House Extensions

### Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Area Based Policies (May 2004) - Residential Character Area [ BCA3: Bank Mill ]  
Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Policy Statements: Development  
Residential Areas Berkhamsted

## **Summary of Representations**

### Neighbouring Properties

*136 George Street (02-Apr-15)*  
*138 George Street (02-Apr-15)*  
*140 George Street (02-Apr-15)*  
*143 George Street (02-Apr-15)*  
*147 George Street (02-Apr-15)*  
*65 Ellesmere Road (02-Apr-15)*  
*66 Ellesmere Road (02-Apr-15)*  
*67 Ellesmere Road (02-Apr-15)*

*No comments received.*

Berkhamsted Town Council

*Object.*

*The scale, bulk, height and design of the rear dormer is out of keeping with the traditional form of the building and thus detracts from the Conservation Area.*

*Contrary to Core Strategy Policies CS11, CS12 and CS27 and the Saved Local Plan Policies 120 and Appendix 7.*

*We note the absence of a drawing of the front elevation showing the proposed roof light.*

### Conservation & Design

*The proposed single storey rear extension features a glazed lean-to roof of a suitable pitch and is fairly small scale, it is a subservient addition to the property and I have no objection to this part of the proposal.*

*I have concerns regarding the scale and form of the rear box dormer; it is large (covering over half the roof), bulky and sited too close to the ridge and eaves line and the gable end.*

*The purpose of dormers is to provide light and ventilation to attic spaces – not additional roof space. The existing proposed dormer is of poor design, I suggest the dormer design / scale is amended.*

*I recommend the dormer is reduced (halved) in size and brought away from the eaves, ridge and gable end. It should contain one casement window. My preference for it would be to be sited above the first floor window (and above proposed single storey side extension) rather than in its current proposed position where it has an awkward relationship with the roof of the two storey rear extension.*

*Roof lights should be of a conservation type, metal framed with a vertical central bar and sit flush with the roof. It would be preferable if the front roof light could be omitted. Policy CS27 Quality of the Historic Environment – All development will favour the conservation of heritage assets. Development will positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas.*

*The poor design of the dormer window fails to preserve the character or appearance of the Berkhamsted Conservation Area and is contrary to Policy CS27 and paragraph 131 of the NPPF, recommend refusal.*

#### *Comments on amended scheme*

*The box dormer has been greatly reduced in scale and is now of an acceptable design and has been moved away from the roof of the rear wing. It is unfortunate the dormer has not been aligned above the first floor window but this is not a reason for refusal.*

*Roof lights should be of a conservation type, metal framed with a vertical central bar and sit flush with the roof.*

*Policy CS27 Quality of the Historic Environment – All development will favour the conservation of heritage assets. Development will positively conserve and enhance the appearance and character of conservation areas.*

*The revised dormer design is now considered acceptable and the lightweight glazed infill to the side of the rear extension is of an appropriate design and scale, the proposed alterations are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the*

*Berkhamsted Conservation Area in accordance with Policy CS27 and paragraph 131 of the NPPF, recommend approval.*  
Network Rail

*No comments.*

## **Considerations**

The main issues of relevance to the consideration of this application relate to the impact of the works upon the character and appearance of the dwelling and the Berkhamsted Conservation area in accordance with Policies CS12, CS13 and CS27 of Dacorum's Core Strategy. Other issues of relevance relate to the impact of the proposed additions and alterations on the character and appearance of the street scene, the impact on neighbouring properties and the impact on car parking.

### Effect on Appearance of Building and Conservation Area

An assessment of the impact of the proposed works has considered the impact on the appearance of the building. There will be particular consideration to the collective role that the appearance of the dwelling serves in the character of the conservation area.

Under the development guidelines of the Residential Character Area BCA3 (Bank Mill), extensions should be subordinate in scale and height to the parent building. This must be balanced against the guidance of Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy which requires development to respect adjoining properties in terms of scale and height (amongst other things).

It is noted that numerous properties along George Street have been extended to the rear, including 75 George Street, which previously received planning permission for a large flat-roof two-storey extension. There are also a number of dwellings which have gained planning permission for dormers (including 33B, 65, 75, 118, 125, 151, 155 and 162). Specific attention should be drawn to an application made for 65 George Street, which granted planning permission for large rear dormer in 2008 (4/00240/08/FHA).

Policy CS27 of the Core Strategy and saved Policy 120 of the Local Plan state that Development within a Conservation Area is permitted provided it is carried out in a manner which preserves or enhances the established character or appearance of the area.

In terms of materials and design, the rear dormer would be set down from the main ridge line and would be clad in materials similar in appearance to the roof. The proposed extension would also match the existing dwelling and surrounding area in terms of materials and roof form in accordance with saved Policy 120 and saved Appendix 7 of the DBLP, and Policies CS12, CS27 of the Core Strategy.

Section 4.3.2 (Materials and Roofscape) in the Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Policy Statements (SPG) states that "the adoption of non-traditional roof forms has eroded some of the architectural importance of the area" and "flat roofs are not in keeping with the pitched roofs in the area and should be refused". It is felt that the roof form of the proposed single-storey extension is more in-keeping with the historic character of the area when compared to the existing flat roof extensions on the road. Our Conservation and Design department have positively commented on this

element of the proposal by stating *"the proposed single-storey rear extension features a glazed lean-to roof of a suitable pitch and is fairly small scale, it is a subservient addition to the property and I have no objection"*.

Both Berkhamsted Town Council and Conservation objected to the proposed rear dormer, commenting on the scale and design. The architect was approached and an amended scheme was submitted (21-May-15). Further comments from Conservation and Design were positive towards the amendments - *"the revised dormer design is now considered acceptable, the proposed alterations are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Berkhamsted Conservation Area in accordance with Policy CS27 and paragraph 131 of the NPPF, recommend approval"*. Berkhamsted Town Council's objection still holds.

In conclusion, it is felt that the scheme, after the amendments, has reached an acceptable outcome in line with the guidance set out in BCA13, saved Policy 120 and saved Appendix 7 of the DBLP, and Policies CS12, CS13 and CS27 of the Core Strategy.

#### Effect on Street Scene

The proposed extensions are set back from the front elevation and views from the public realm are obscured. A number of properties along the terrace have already received similar modifications and therefore the proposal would not detract further from the character of the street scene. There is one roof light proposed on the front roof slope, however, there are numerous examples of similar roof lights along the street. As stated on drawing MMH-GS02-PA(B), the roof lights would be flush-fitting, conservation style and metal framed with a vertical centre bar, as requested by Conservation and Design.

The proposed dormer would be set down from the ridge and is therefore not visible from the front. The rear of the property has long distance views, but given the nature of the application within a domestic setting the dormer window will not have a detrimental effect on the character of the Conservation Area in accordance with Policy CS27.

In conclusion, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character of the street scene in accordance with Policies CS11, CS12 and CS27 of the Core Strategy.

#### Effect on Amenity of Neighbours

Consideration has been given to the impact that the proposed extension would have on the adjoining neighbours. Policy CS12 states that regarding the effect on the amenity of neighbours, development should avoid visual intrusion, loss of light and loss of privacy.

The application site currently has two directly adjoining properties, 141 and 147 George Street. It should be noted that both neighbouring properties have previously extended to the rear. The proposed single-storey extension would not extend beyond the existing two-storey rear projection and therefore the proposal would not excessively enclose or seriously affect the day lighting to an adjoining owners habitable rooms in accordance with saved Appendix 7 of the DBLP.

The proposal would not have an adverse impact with regards to loss of privacy or overlooking. There are no proposed flank windows at first-floor level. The proposed dormer would not cause any greater impact than when compared to the existing first-floor rear facing windows. Therefore, with regards to loss of privacy and overlooking

the proposal is acceptable in accordance with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy and saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan.

In conclusion, there would be no harm to the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties as a result of this proposal. The proposed extension would not impact the immediate neighbouring properties in terms of visual intrusion, loss of light and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy and saved Appendix 7 of the DBLP.

### Access and Parking

The need for and ability to provide additional off-street parking should be taken into account when considering proposals for extra bedroom accommodation (saved Appendix 5 of the DBLP). The proposal would involve the creation of one additional bedroom, transforming the existing two-bedroom dwelling to a dwelling with three bedrooms. A dwelling of this size would generate a maximum requirement of 2.25 on site car parking spaces; 0.75 above the existing requirement for the existing two-bedroom dwelling on the application site.

The application site does not provide for any off-street parking (similar to other properties) and relies on car parking on George Street and surrounding residential streets. However, the site is located proximate (walking distance) to the local centre within Berkhamsted. It is not therefore considered that the shortfall of 2.25 car parking spaces would place undue stress on the surrounding road network. It follows that the parking arrangements are acceptable in accordance with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy and saved Policy 58 and saved Appendix 5 of the Local Plan.

It should also be noted that the utilisation of the roofspace with rooflights creating a further bedroom would fall outside planning control. The Highway authority have commented on similar applications along the street and have raised no objections to the additional parking demand.

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 or such other materials as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the Berkhamsted Conservation Area in accordance with Policy CS27 of the Core Strategy.

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

## **MMH-GS02-PA(B)**

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

### **Article 31 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 2012.