

19/01033/APP



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REFERENCE NO	PARISH/WARD	DATE RECEIVED
19/01033/APP	AYLESBURY	19/03/19
LOFT CONVERSION WITH REAR DORMER, FRONT DORMER AND FRONT GABLE	The Local Member(s) for this area is/are: - Alison Harrison	
14 ARCHER DRIVE AYLESBURY BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HP20 1EP	Mary Stamp	
MR M KHAN	Julie Ward	
STREET ATLAS PAGE NO. 102		

### 1.0 The Key Issues in determining this application are:-

- a) Impact on appearance and character of the dwellinghouse, street scene and wider area
- b) Impact on residential amenity
- c) Impact on highways and parking

The recommendation is that permission be **GRANTED**, subject to conditions.

### **APPROVED** 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 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The materials to be used in the development shall be as specified on the submitted application form unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Please also see notes.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to comply with policy GP9 and GP35 of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The development hereby permitted shall only be carried out in accordance with drawing No. 1B (Floor plans and elevations) submitted under cover of agent's e-mail received by the Local Planning Authority on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the details of the development are acceptable to the Local Planning Authority and to comply with the National Planning Policy

Framework.

#### INFORMATIVE(S):

1. In accordance with paragraphs 38 and 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals and is focused on seeking solutions where possible and appropriate. AVDC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service and updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application as appropriate and, where possible and appropriate, suggesting solutions. In this case, concerns were raised with the scale of the dormer and the proposed fenestration which has now been revised and the amended scheme is considered to be acceptable.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The application needs to be determined by committee as the town council has raised material planning objections and have said that they will speak. The reasons for objecting are set out below.

## **3.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The application site lies on the western side of Archer Drive, to the north-east of the wider Aylesbury Settlement, between the town centre and Bierton.
- 3.2 The site comprises a two storey dwelling with a converted garage at ground floor along with a lounge and open plan kitchen-diner. At first floor level there are 4 bedrooms, two of which are served by en-suites and a family bathroom.
- 3.3 The building is constructed of yellow facing brickwork, dark coloured clay tiles and elements of render to the first floor and a brick detailed course.
- 3.4 The front garden is almost entirely hard-surfaced and measures to be 9.5m wide. This indicates that the site could comfortably accommodate 3 parking spaces to the front. That being said, the front boundary of the site tapers so one of the spaces would have a depth of 4.6m where the Council's parking standards indicate spaces should be 4.8m deep.
- 3.5 Permitted development rights were removed under planning permission 96/01504/APP in respect of enlargements to dwellings, outbuildings, fences, gates and walls. The reasons for this stated on the decision notice, indicate that this was to enable the local planning authority to safeguard the amenities of the area and visual amenities of the locality, with particular regard to the layout and design of the estate.

## **4.0 PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for an enlarged gable to the front elevation along with a dormer window and for a dormer in the rear roof slope.
- 4.2 The front gable feature would have a depth of 5.2m, a 45 degree roof pitch and a maximum depth of 4m (measured along the ridge). A window would be inserted at second floor level of the principal elevation within this gable.
- 4.3 The dormer proposed at second floor level in the principal elevation would have a width of 1.2m, a maximum depth of 2.7m and would comprise a dual pitched roof with a height of 2m. This dormer is proposed to serve a bathroom at second floor level (within the roofspace).
- 4.4 To the rear of the dwelling, the box-like dormer (as amended) would have a width of 6.6m, a depth of 3.7m and a height of 2.4m. This proposed dormer, together with the conversion of the loft space would create a games area. The dormer itself would enable sufficient head room to be achieved at the top of the proposed stairs.

## **5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 5.1 96/01504/APP – Erection of 135 dwellings - Approved
- 5.2 09/01221/APP - Two storey and first floor side extension - Approved
- 5.3 16/04471/APP - Conversion of garage into living space (retrospective) – Approved

## **6.0 TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS**

- 6.1 Aylesbury Town Council initially raised no objections to the application but in light of comments received by neighbouring properties, reversed their stance and now object to the proposal due to the development being out of keeping with the street scene and overdevelopment. Concerns are also raised in respect to the rear window which would have a detrimental impact on other neighbouring properties.
- 6.2 *LPA response to concerns raised:*
- 6.3 The concerns raised by the town council and by occupants of neighbouring properties have been carefully considered. In terms of the impact on the street scene, Archer Drive is characterised by front projecting gables and the proposed gable as part of this application is not considered to look incongruous. The front dormer would also be small scale and comprise a pitched roof which is characteristic of the area. This element is considered to comply with the Council's 'Residential Extensions' Design Guide.
- 6.4 With regard to the windows proposed in the rear dormer, this has been significantly amended by the applicant in an attempt to address the concerns raised. Whilst the creation of a dormer window would result in a small level of overlooking to properties in Shepherd Close, it is not considered that the views from the dormer would be significantly more advantageous than views which are already attainable from first floor level. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would be sufficiently harmful to neighbouring amenity that it could be refused.
- 6.5 Further detailed explanation on the above is set out below in this report.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- 7.1 Buckingham and River Ouzel Drainage Board – No comment to make.

## **8.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

- 8.1 Letters of objection have been received from 10 separate persons raising concerns on the following grounds (as summarised):
  - Loft conversion and extension is out of character and out of keeping with other properties on the estate.
  - The dormer window extends virtually the whole width of the house which is an intrusion upon the privacy of neighbours in Shepherd Close, No.'s 24, 25, 26 and 27.
  - Overlooking to No.12 Archer Drive.
  - Property has been extended twice before, having been built over the garage and then the garage converted to living accommodation.
  - Concerns about whether this will become a 6 or 7-bedroomed dwelling and whether there is sufficient parking provision.
  - Invasion of privacy to No.16 and No.18 Archer Drive and No.25 Shepherd Close.

- The proposal is an over-extension of the property and will have a detrimental effect on all surrounding properties and the estate as a whole.
- Overshadowing to neighbouring properties.

## **9.0 EVALUATION**

- 9.1 Aylesbury does not have a 'made' neighbourhood plan. The proposal is therefore to be assessed against policies GP.8, GP.9, GP.24 and GP.35 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP), the Council's 'Residential Extensions' Design Guide and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### ***a) Impact on appearance and character of the dwellinghouse, street scene and wider area***

- 9.2 Policy GP.9 indicates that proposals for extensions to dwellings will be permitted where they protect character of outlook, access to natural light and privacy for people who live nearby; respect the character and appearance of the dwelling and its setting and other buildings in the locality; and accord with published Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on residential extensions and other policies of the development plan.
- 9.3 Meanwhile, policy GP.35 states that the design of new development proposals should respect and complement: the physical characteristics of the site and the surroundings; the building tradition, ordering, form and materials of the locality; the historic scale and context of the setting; the natural qualities and features of the area; and the effect on important public views and skylines.
- 9.4 Of particular relevance to this application, page 9 of the 'Residential Extensions' Design Guide indicates that dormers should generally have pitched roofs, be physically small and set into the roof slope so that they are not a strident feature in the roof slope as a whole. Rear roof slopes, which are less visible, may be able to accept larger additions but these need to be carefully designed as over-dominant or box-like roof extensions can be particularly incongruous. Alterations to the roof, as a whole, should not destroy the original roof form and the materials selected should be compatible with the existing roof material. The accompanying illustrations in the design guide indicate that small, vertically proportioned dormers designed to respect the character of the house are normally acceptable. Box-like roof additions diminish architectural integrity and impoverish the street scene. Bulky dormers of unsympathetic appearance can detract from the elevations below.
- 9.5 Turning firstly to the proposed introduction of the gable in the principal elevation, it was noted at the time of the site visit that this part of Archer Drive is heavily characterised by gables, some small and sited above first floor dormers, whilst others may comprise the whole of the first floor, as is the case with neighbouring dwellings No. 10 and 12 Archer Drive. Similarly, No.23 Archer Drive on the opposite side of the highway is set further forward than its neighbour No.21, and so its side elevation comprises a strong and prominent gable. Farther along the highway, at the entrance to Shepherd Close, No.20 and 22 Archer Drive have strong gable character, and the orientation of No.1 Shepherd Close and No.1 Wesley Close also shows prominent gables to the side elevations. As such, it is not considered that the gable itself would be prominent or harmful to the street scene. The proposed window would indicate that there is accommodation at second floor level and it was noted from the site visit that there were no similar indications in neighbouring houses. Nonetheless, this element in itself would not be considered harmful to the character of the street.
- 9.6 The proposed dormer to the front, as with the above, would be the only example within the immediate street scene. However, it would be small scale and comprise of a dual pitched roof which would match that of the original dwelling. Given its small scale and use of

appropriate materials, it is considered that the dormer would comply with the Council's design guide.

- 9.7 Turning to the rear of the dwelling where a larger box-like dormer is proposed, this would only appear readily visible from the rear gardens of dwellings in Shepherd Close or from neighbouring gardens belonging to houses in Archer Drive, if those occupants were to stand at the end of their gardens. Due to the limited gaps between dwellings in Shepherd Close, Archer Drive and Lawrence Close, the rear roof slope of the application dwelling is not readily visible from those highways. It is considered therefore that the dormer would not be prominent from within the wider locality, but it is accepted that the dormer would be visible from neighbouring gardens.
- 9.8 As initially proposed, the dormer would have had an intrusive and potentially overbearing appearance as it was largely glazed almost the full width of the dormer. The width of the dormer has now been revised (by reducing its overall width by 1.2m) and the fenestration has been revised, resulting in smaller windows separated into two separate openings, rather than the continuous glazing across the width of the dormer. This is considered to have a far lesser impact and is now deemed acceptable as it would not be an overly strident or overbearing form of development. It is a further consideration that, had permitted development rights not been removed under the original planning permission, the dormer may have otherwise been lawful without requiring express planning permission.
- 9.9 As such, the proposal is considered to comply with policies GP.9 and GP.35 of the AVDLP, the Council's 'Residential Extensions' Design Guide and the NPPF.

***b) Impact on residential amenity***

- 9.10 Having carefully considered the objections raised, it appears that one of the predominant concerns relates to the potential for overlooking. At the time of the site visit, the rear elevations and gardens of properties in Shepherd Close were observed. Although the rear dormer would be sited at a higher point than the windows at first floor level in the application building, it is likely that the views from the dormer would be similar to those already attainable at first floor level. In other words, the elevation of the dormer would not provide sufficiently advantageous views of neighbouring gardens than what could already be achieved and so it is not considered that the dormer would significantly reduce the level of privacy that neighbouring properties could reasonable expect to enjoy in this locality.
- 9.11 In terms of the physical presence of the dormer, it would not be considered to materially impact on the sunlight and daylight reaching neighbouring dwellings and their gardens. There may be some minimal impact to sunlight reaching the garden of No.12 Archer Drive but due to the orientation and relationship of the buildings, this impact would be limited to early mornings during the height of summer.
- 9.12 To the principal elevation, the proposed works would not likely have an impact to neighbouring properties as a result of their scale. Windows would be inserted at second floor level but these windows would look out towards the highway and then driveways of dwellings on the opposite side of Archer Drive. The nearest of these neighbours measures to be approximately 20m away.
- 9.13 In summary, given the positioning of the proposal and its relationship relative to the neighbouring properties in terms of scale, position of windows and orientation, it is considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the neighbouring amenity. Therefore the proposal accords with policy GP.8 of the AVDLP and the NPPF.

***c) Impact on highways and parking***

- 9.14 The existing dwelling (as enlarged) comprises of 4 bedrooms and so in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards SPG, three off-street parking spaces should be provided. Although the dropped kerb does not extend the full width of the plot, the existing hard-surfacing can accommodate 3 parking spaces. As set out above, one of these spaces would only have a depth of 4.6m and therefore 0.2m shorter than that required in the SPG, this however is an existing situation and not as a result of this proposal.
- 9.15 The proposal would include the conversion of the loftspace and the submitted plans indicate that the second floor level would be used as a games area. It is noted that a bathroom would also be included as part of the conversion works. A couple of objectors have raised concerns that this level could in fact be used as 2 or 3 additional bedrooms instead of a games area. Whilst the Council cannot control the use of this room, it is noted that the parking standards do not require additional parking spaces beyond a 4-bedroomed dwelling. So if additional bedrooms were created, there would be no additional requirement.
- 9.16 In light of the existing parking arrangements on site, the proposal is considered to accord with policy GP.24 of the AVDLP, the NPPF and the Council's SPG Parking Guidelines.

Case Officer: Daniel Terry