

ITEM NO.

5

COMMITTEE DATE:

26/04/2010

APPLICATION NO:

10/0295/03

FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

APPLICANT:

Mr L Dart

PROPOSAL:

Extension to front of existing house and raising of existing roof to provide habitable accommodation within roof space.

LOCATION:

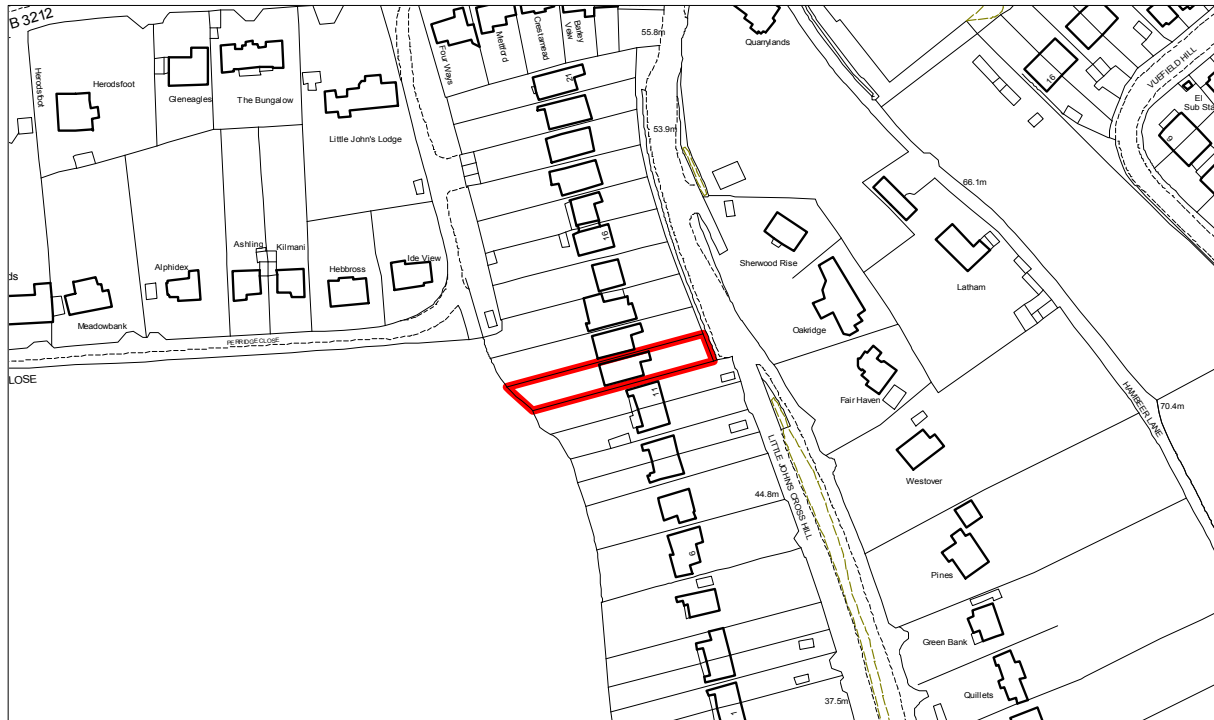
12 Little Johns Cross Hill, Exeter, EX2 9PJ

REGISTRATION DATE:

01/03/2010

EXPIRY DATE:

26/04/2010



Scale 1:2500

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HISTORY OF SITE

No relevant site history

DESCRIPTION OF SITE/PROPOSAL

12 Little John's Cross Hill is located within the Alphin Brook Conservation Area. Little John's Cross Hill rises up the valley in a northerly direction through a deep cleave which opens out at the brow of the hill where the houses are succeeded by a row of bungalows which line the western side of the road. 12 Little John's Cross Hill is the first bungalow in the stretch and is adjacent to the Edwardian row of semi-detached dwellings which are highlighted in the Conservation Area Appraisal as having a neutral impact upon the character of the area. The row of bungalows are however indicated as not making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. However, the group of bungalows are similar in design and scale and are discrete and modest in the streetscene.

Like the other bungalows, No. 12 is situated within a narrow but lengthy plot with the depth of the existing bungalow also far exceeding the width. The property is set well back from the road frontage and benefits from an integral garage with associated access point and drive off Little John's Cross Hill. There is pedestrian access either side of the property and a large

amount of enclosed private amenity space to the rear. The property has a hipped roof which fronts the road and a tile and red-brick finish. The existing garage dominates the front elevation due to the lack of a front entrance point and by reason that it is set forward of the rest of the property. The property sits above road level with the front amenity space and access drive sloping down towards road level.

This application seeks to gain permission to bring the building forward to be nearly in line with front building line of the garage. The proposed bay window would sit in line with the existing front line of the garage and the eaves of the main roof would slightly overhang this line. The main part of the proposal is to create a first floor level of accommodation and in order to achieve sufficient head height the roof will be lifted by approximately 1.4 metres. This additional height would be achieved by the insertion of a rendered band around the property which will be disguised by extended eaves on the front elevation. A small projecting gable roof will be over the garage and the up-and-over metal garage door is to be replaced. The proposed first floor level of accommodation would be lit solely by rooflights, two on the front, one on the rear, four on the southern side elevation and two on the northern side elevation.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT

The application is supported by a combined Conservation / Design Statement. This highlights that a bay window is proposed on the front elevation to raise the character of the facade as well as provide a focus. Further, new garage doors are proposed in lieu of the more functional roller shutter that currently exists. It is indicated that to minimise the change in height it is proposed to slope the front roof down to the top of the bay window as this retains the relationship of eaves line to its neighbours.

The statement details that the proposed design to the front elevation provides an overall enhancement which will benefit the street scene. The additional height is hidden within the design and the living room extension provides an opportunity to provide a focus in the form of a bay window.

REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of objection has been received which highlights concerns regarding the loss of natural light to the neighbouring property and which raises concerns that the proposal is out of character with the neighbouring bungalows and it will significantly change the structure and appearance of the street.

CONSULTATIONS

The Head of Environmental Health comments that construction/demolition work shall not take place outside the following times: 8am to 6pm (Mondays to Fridays); 8am to 1pm (Saturdays); nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

PLANNING POLICIES/POLICY GUIDANCE

Central Government Guidance
PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment

Devon County Structure Plan 2001-2016
CO6 - Quality of New Development
CO7 - Historic Settlements and Buildings

OBSERVATIONS

Although highlighted in the appraisal as not making a positive contribution to the character of the designated area, no. 12, in association with the rest of the bungalows which line the western side of the road, do have a certain character and appearance which is strengthened by a degree of similarity in regard to their scale and massing and their position within the street. Several of the properties have dormer windows of varying forms however, none set a precedent which the Authority would wish to see replicated. No. 12 is adjacent to the two-storey semi-detached properties and this factor coupled with the natural gradient of the road, does give scope to the principle of a small increase in the roof height to achieve an additional level of accommodation. During the course of pre-application discussions, it was indicated that an increase in the height could be favourable given the above. This was providing a suitable design could be achieved, which sought to enhance the appearance of the property and its contribution to the area and which allowed for the preservation of the streetscene. It was considered that the existing front elevation which has no focal point and which is dominated by the garage would need to be enhanced rather than preserved given that the proposed changes would effectively increase the prominence and scale of the front elevation.

There are two elements to the proposal, the raising of the roof and how this is presented and the treatment of the front elevation. These two elements are clearly linked. With regard to the increase in the height of the building the resulting roof form appears top heavy and awkward. The insertion of a render band draws attention to the fact that the upper level is an addition instead of blending with the existing elevations. The bulk of the roof, which is only punctuated by rooflights, brings little to the streetscene and the lowered eaves to the front gives a disjointed appearance to the roof. The side eaves are higher than the eaves of the neighbouring bungalow whilst the front eaves are lower than the eaves of the neighbouring bungalow. The lowered front eaves increase the perceived expanse of roof and given that this is only punctuated by two small rooflights, it appears very dominant and top heavy. Whilst the actual height is not considered to be discordant with the buildings either side, offering as it does, a transition from two-storey to single height, the presentation of roof results in a bulky and awkward element within the streetscene.

The treatment of the front elevation is also viewed equally as unfavourable. Bringing forward the main building line at ground floor level is considered to reduce the visual impact of the garage element, which is currently an unfortunately dominating element on the facade. It was suggested during pre-application discussions that the treatment of the front elevation would need to be improved in order to give the building a positive feature which would contribute to the appearance of the streetscene and which would give the property a distinct character. The introduction of a basic bay window which is dated in appearance does not contribute positively to this elevation and is a poor reference to the bays on the neighbouring two-storey properties which are well proportioned and link to the overall design concept. The gabled roof above the garage seeks to add visual interest however, it merely results in the introduction of a pitched roof which relates uncomfortably with the main roof. The internal dimensions of the existing garage are 2.4m x 4.5m, the Highways Engineer from Devon County Council indicated informally that such dimensions would not meet current requirements for a garage which are 3.5m x 6.0m. A proposal that deleted this element may be more appropriate.

It is not considered that the works proposed would have a significantly detrimental impact upon either of the neighbouring properties either by way of loss of light or loss of privacy. There is a small side window to No. 13 which serves a bedroom, this may be partially overshadowed however, this is not considered to be significant enough to warrant a refusal.

The position of the building and its surrounding context do allow the principle of an increase in the ridge height to be considered however, the architectural approach to achieving this is fundamental. It should ensure that any such development results in solution which offers an improvement to the front elevation of this property and achieves a positive element within the wider streetscene. The current proposal fails to achieve this and creates a building which would appear discordant and lacks a clear design concept or feature to make it a positive element within the streetscape.

It is considered that the proposal is contrary to Local Plan Policies C1 and DG1 which seek to secure developments which harmonise with the scale, massing and design of the original house and which ensure the preservation if not enhancement of the character and appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

WESTERN AREA WORKING PARTY

This application was presented to Members of the WAWP on 6 April 2010. The concerns regarding the impact upon the streetscene were raised and the presentation of the front elevation of the property were discussed. Members shared these concerns and considered that the design may be inappropriate and would result in a discordant feature in the streetscene.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed development is located within the Alphin Brook Conservation Area. The proposal is contrary to Planning Policy Statement 5, Policies CO6 and CO7 of the Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016, Policies C1 and DG1 (f), (g) and (h) of the Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995 to 2011 and to the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document 'Householder's Guide to Extension Design' because the proposed development would:
 - (i) by reason of its size and design form unsympathetic additions, which would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the existing building;
 - (ii) by reason of its size and design result in a discordant building which would have a detrimental impact on the character of the wider streetscene and the wider visual amenity; and
 - (iii) neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Local Government (Access to Information) 1985 (as amended).

Background papers used in compiling the report:

Files of planning applications available for inspection from the Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter: Telephone 01392 265223