

**ITEM NO.**

8

**COMMITTEE DATE:**

06/09/2010

**APPLICATION NO:**

10/1161/03

FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

**APPLICANT:**

Mr L Dart

**PROPOSAL:**

Ground floor extension on east elevation and increase in roof height to provide additional living accommodation

**LOCATION:**

12 Little Johns Cross Hill, Exeter, EX2 9PJ

**REGISTRATION DATE:**

12/07/2010

**EXPIRY DATE:**

06/09/2010



Scale 1:1250

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### **HISTORY OF SITE**

10/0295/03 - Extension to front of existing house and raising of existing roof to provide habitable accommodation within roof space. REF 27/04/2010

### **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 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. This would provide additional accommodation at ground floor level in the form of an extended living room which would be served by a three paned casement window. In addition, at ground floor level, the garage would be converted to provide a utility area. This would see the removal of the garage door and the insertion of a double paned casement window. 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 when measured from the central ridge. This additional height would be achieved by the insertion of a number of additional brick courses around the property. The originally submitted proposal showed the roof extension to include the introduction of a gable end on both the front and the rear elevations. Following concerns about the additional bulk that this would add to the rear, the proposal to be determined is for a gable end at the front and a hipped roof on the rear of the property, in accordance with the revised plans submitted. The gable end will have a render finish although the extension will in all other parts have a brick finish.

The first floor level of accommodation will be served by seven roof lights, three on each side and one to the rear. These would be double paned rooflights. On the gable end there would be a double paned casement window.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT**

The application is supported by a combined Conservation / Design Statement. This statement is relatively brief with regard to its justification for the proposal. However, it does highlight that the garage door has been removed following previous comments regarding the visual appearance of the front elevation. It also draws attention to the natural step in roof profile from the two-storey dwelling to the single storey bungalows that the proposal provides.

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

Three letters of objection have been received with regard to the initial scheme which included the gable end to the rear of the property. The revised scheme is currently under consultation and responses will be verbally reported to the Committee.

The three letters of objection received share a number of concerns. The main issues are the visual impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the streetscene and thus the Conservation Area and the impact that the proposal would have on the amenity of neighbouring residents. With regard to the impact upon amenity the main concerns are the loss of light to neighbouring properties and loss of privacy.

### **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

Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011  
C1 - Conservation Areas  
DG1 - Objectives of Urban Design  
DG4 - Residential Layout and Amenity

Exeter City Council Supplementary Planning Document  
Householder's Guide to Extension Design (adopted 16 September 2008)  
Alphin Brook Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (February 2009)

## **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. During the course of determining the previous application Committee Members were also of the opinion that in principle the property could be extended but, the proposed design was poor and did not serve to enhance the appearance of the property or the wider area.

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. Following the previous refusal the Agent has sought to improve the handling of the front elevation. The rendered area ties in comfortably with that on the neighbouring two-storey dwelling giving a characteristic link whilst not appearing contrived as the previous rendered band did. The proposed fenestration provides an improved visual presentation which is aided by the removal of the garage door which was a dominating element on this elevation. The inclusion of timber casements will ensure that the windows have sympathetic proportions and will not appear too weighty. The brick course detailing above the windows will again provide some form of visual interest and thus it is considered on balance, that the appearance of the front gable will sustain the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposed development site is long and narrow and thus the building sits close to its boundaries and close to neighbouring properties. The neighbouring residents have raised concerns regarding the proposal. The concerns relate to the loss of light from habitable rooms and the potential loss of privacy. Having visited the neighbouring properties numbers 13 and 14 Little John's Cross Hill, these concerns are understood. The originally proposed gable end would have included a window in the rear elevation which could have led to an element of overlooking of the rear amenity space associated with these properties. The removal of the gable end addresses these concerns as the first floor accommodation proposed would be served by rooflights only, and it is not considered that these would afford

views into neighbouring properties which would be any worse than potential views which could be gained by adding rooflights to the roof of the existing building.

The neighbour at No.13 has expressed concern regarding the loss of light to a bedroom which has a single aspect to the applicants property and, to a lesser degree, the main bedroom which aspects to the front. It is considered that the impact on the main (front) bedroom would be minimal but it is acknowledged that there will be some loss of light to the second bedroom. However it is not considered that this impact would not be sufficient to justify refusing the application.

The previous application was refused not because of the principle of the extension but because of the awkward way in which it was handled from a design perspective. It is considered that the current proposal is more sympathetic to the existing character of the building and streetscene. It is also considered that the removal of the rear gable end reduces the bulk proposed and removes the potential for direct over looking of the private rear amenity space of neighbouring residents. It is considered that obscure glazing could be applied to the roof lights in order to ensure privacy levels are maintained. With regard to the loss of light and overshadowing it is acknowledged that there will be an impact. However, it is considered that on balance it is not sufficient to warrant a refusal.

It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Local Plan Policies C1, DG1 and DG4 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 as well as protecting amenity levels.

### **WESTERN AREA WORKING PARTY**

The application was presented to the WAWP on 17 August 2010 and it was recommended by officers that given the letters of objection received, a site inspection should be undertaken. Members of the WAWP agreed.

### **SITE INSPECTION PANEL**

The Site Inspection Panel viewed the impact of the proposal on the streetscene and the character of the conservation area and acknowledged the improvements to the front elevation. The neighbouring property was also visited in order to assess the impact of the proposal on the light levels in the bedrooms.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE** subject to the following conditions:

- 1) C05 - Time Limit - Commencement
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 12 July 2010 together with the site location plan and drawings numbered and two drawings numbered 09013L02.01 Revision A and 09013L04.01 Revision A, as modified by other conditions of this consent.  
**Reason:** In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.
- 3) C17 - Submission of Materials
- 4) The rooflights to serve the hereby approved roof extension shall be obscure glazed, details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and retained there after in accordance with these approved details.  
**Reason:** To protect the amenity levels of neighbouring residents in terms of privacy.

- 5) The timber casements shall receive a painted finish within one month of installation unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
**Reason:** To protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6) Prior to the commencement of the Development hereby approved, full details of all joinery shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be carried out in accordance with these approved plans.  
**Reason:** To protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7) Construction/demolition work shall not take place outside the following times of 8am to 6pm (Mondays to Fridays); 8am to 1pm (Saturdays); nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.  
**Reason:** To protect the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 8) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1995 or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order, no alterations shall be made to the front elevation of the dwelling shall be made without the formal consent of the Local Planning Authority.  
**Reason:** In order to protect the visual amenity of the surrounding 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