

MC/12/1227

Date Received: 29 May, 2012

Location: 24 Station Road, Rainham, Gillingham, ME8 7PH

Proposal: Installation of dormer to rear, rooflight to front and external staircase to rear to facilitate conversion of first floor and loft to a 1-bedroomed flat

Applicant: Mr Phipps

Agent: Mr Rogers KCR Design 10 Fourth Avenue Gillingham Kent ME7 2LR

Ward Rainham North

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 29 January, 2014.

Recommendation - Approval with 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 Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

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

Drawing number 01 Revision A, site location plan and block plan scale 1:200 received 29 May 2012

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

- 3 Prior to the residential unit being occupied full details including, position (to the rear of the building) and the level of illumination of the lighting that is to be installed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The subsequently approved details shall be in place and operational prior to the unit being occupied and thereafter maintained for the duration of the residential unit being provided.

Reason: To safeguard conditions of amenity and personal safety of future occupiers within the scheme of development permitted in accordance with Policies BNE2 & BNE9 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see planning appraisal section and conclusion at the end of this report

Proposal

The submitted application is for the installation of dormer to the rear, roof light to the front and external staircase to the rear to facilitate conversion of the first floor and loft space to a 1 bedroom flat

The flat would comprise a lounge, kitchen/diner and shower room at first floor and a bedroom in the roof and loft space.

Relevant Planning History

GL/75/243B	New shop front and conversion of residential property into an optician (as amended plan received on 17/2/77) Approved 23 February, 1977
GL/75/243A	Change of use from dwelling to Ophthalmic optician practice. Approved 1 September, 1976
GL/75/243	Change of use from wholly residential to residential with shop use on ground floor. Refused 19 December, 1975

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour notifications to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Ten representations have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds.

- Detrimental effect that an external staircase and rear entrance would have on residents in Maplins Close and Station Road
- Impact on parking provision in the area
- Security issue with access to the rear of the site
- Loss of privacy to neighbouring sites
- The proposed staircase is too narrow

Development Plan Policies

The Development Plan for the area is the Medway Local Plan 2003. The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have

been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 and are considered to conform. A material consideration is also the adopted Medway Housing design standards 2011.

Planning Appraisal

Background

The creation of a dwelling over commercial premises is normally permitted development under The Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order as amended 1995. However in this instant the proposed development requires planning permission because of the proposed rear dormer addition and external staircase.

Principle

The building is currently used by an accounting firm as an office at ground floor and office with lounge, kitchen and shower room at first floor.

The works involved would change the layout of the building so that the ground floor would still be used by the accounting firm and the first floor would be converted to a new residential unit. There are a number of other commercial buildings in the locality that have converted the upper floors to residential. No 33 Station Road has both front and back dormer additions. Also no's 66 and 68 have rear dormer extensions. Therefore neither the dormer addition nor loft conversion is uncommon in the locality. Given that there has been a precedent set in the area, the development proposed would in principle be acceptable.

Policy H4 of the Medway Local Plan encourages the use of the upper floors of commercial buildings within urban areas for residential purposes. This type of development contributes to the vitality and economic viability of a town centre by utilising upper floors of commercial buildings that are often under used.

Design

The only external changes to the built form on the site would be the introduction of a roof light to the front and a dormer window and external staircase to the rear. The surrounding area comprises of a number of examples, as mentioned above, of this type of development. On balance it is considered that the proposed dormer addition and external stair case would not detract from the elevational appearance of the building and given that most of these changes would not be widely seen from a number of vantage points there is no objection to the development and the proposal accords with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Amenity

To the rear, the application building, like the majority of others in the area, has first floor windows and as such there is already a degree of mutual overlooking between adjoining properties. There would be a perception that people using the proposed external staircase would create some overlooking. However given that there is only a

small area at the top of the staircase it is unlikely that people would use this area like a terrace or balcony area and spend long periods of time there. As such, therefore, it is considered that this element of the proposal would not cause undue harm to the amenities of the occupiers of the adjoining properties, particularly as these have commercial use at the ground floor and the back garden is not used as a residential garden/amenity area. Given the works proposed there would be no objection in terms of loss of privacy.

It is also considered that the proposal would not adversely impact on daylight, sunlight and outlook of neighbours.

The new residential accommodation would be split over two floors, the existing first floor and the former roof space. Although part of the development proposes the introduction of a new external staircase, it is outlined in the design and access statement that access to the flat would be via the existing internal staircase. However, even if rear staircase was used as the entrance to the flat this would not adversely impact on the internal layout of the flat and habitable area that would be created.

The proposal would create a habitable floor area of about 48sqm This would be lower than the Medway Housing Design standards (interim) 2011 that seeks 50sqm for one bed dwelling. Whilst the size of the unit proposed is smaller than the standards it is considered that, given the fall back position of what can be achieved under permitted development which would result in creation of a significantly smaller unit than proposed, the proposal is acceptable and accords with Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003

As the proposed rear stairs would be at the end of a long and narrow garden and is dark at night it considered appropriate to impose a condition that requires the installation of movement sensitive lighting to the rear of the building to ensure safety of the future occupants of the property. The proposal therefore accords with Policy BNE8 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Highways

The application site has no provision for off road parking. To the front of the application site there are double yellow lines and to the rear there is a controlled parking zone. However given that the application site is within a town centre location and close proximity to the railway station and bus stops no objection is raised in terms of Policies T1 and T13 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

Local Finance Considerations

None relevant

Conclusion and Reasons for Approval

The dormer will not be out of character with the area, the staircase will not cause unacceptable harm to neighbour amenity and the proposed flat is larger than could be provided under permitted development. On this basis the proposed development

is considered acceptable and in accordance with the above mentioned Development Plan policies. The application is accordingly recommended for approval.

The application would normally be dealt with under delegated powers but is being referred to Committee for determination due to the extent of the representations received expressing a view contrary to the recommendation.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here <http://planning.medway.gov.uk/dconline/AcolNetCGI.gov>