



Planning Committee Date	14 th June 2022
Report to	Cambridge City Council Planning Committee
Lead Officer	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
Reference	22/00857/HFUL
Site	41 Barrow Road, Cambridge
Ward / Parish	Trumpington
Proposal	Loft conversion with rear dormers
Applicant	Mr Jon Gisby & Mrs Kate Wilson
Presenting Officer	Charlotte Peet
Reason Reported to Committee	Called-in by Cllr Olaf Hauk Cambridge City
Member Site Visit Date	N/A
Key Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Design, Scale, Layout, Landscaping2. Heritage Assets3. Residential Amenity4. Flood Risk
Recommendation	REFUSE

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The application seeks permission for loft conversion with rear dormers.
- 1.2 The proposal would seek to convert the roof of the dwelling to habitable space to provide a landing area, storage area, bedroom and bathroom. To accommodate this conversion the applicant seeks to install two dormer windows, one at the end of the projecting hipped element and one to the main roof slope.
- 1.3 Officers recommend that the Planning Committee refuse the application.

2.0 Site Description and Context

None-relevant		Tree Preservation Order	
Conservation Area	X	Local Nature Reserve	
Listed Building		Flood Zone 2	X
Building of Local Interest		Green Belt	
Historic Park and Garden		Protected Open Space	
Scheduled Ancient Monument		Controlled Parking Zone	
Local Neighbourhood and District Centre		Article 4 Direction	

- 2.1 The proposal site comprises a two storey detached property which fronts onto Barrow Road.
- 2.2 Barrow Road has a special character which is defined by a low-density layout with large, arts and crafts style dwellings set within deep plots. There is some variety in the architectural detailing of the dwellings, however the dwellings are unified due to their style and scale. In addition, the wider street scene is consistent with an open and leafy feel due to the wide and green verges that line the street.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks permission for loft conversion with rear dormers.

4.0 Relevant Site History

Reference	Description	Outcome
09/1090/FUL	Single storey front extension, ground/first floor remodelling and loft conversion - works include front, rear and side dormers.	Permitted

21/02259/HFUL	Loft conversion to include rear dormer and change hipped roof to gable	Refused
21/05066/HFUL	Loft conversion with rear dormers	Withdrawn

- 4.1 The earlier consent was partially implemented through the erection of the single storey front extension; however the loft conversion and dormer windows were not implemented at this time (ref. 09/1090/FUL).
- 4.2 The application refused was not given permission due to its harm to the character and appearance of the locality, house and wider Conservation Area. The more recent application was withdrawn following notice from Officers that the application had not successfully addressed the reason for refusal.

5.0 Policy

5.1 National

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide 2019

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) Cycle Infrastructure Design

Circular 11/95 (Conditions, Annex A)

Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)

EIA Directives and Regulations - European Union legislation with regard to environmental assessment and the UK's planning regime remains unchanged despite it leaving the European Union on 31 January 2020

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Environment Act 2021

ODPM Circular 06/2005 – Protected Species

Equalities Act 2010

5.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018

Policy 1: The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy 55: Responding to context
Policy 56: Creating successful places
Policy 58: Altering and extending existing buildings
Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of historic environment
Policy 62: Local heritage assets

5.3 **Neighbourhood Plan**

N/A

5.4 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Biodiversity SPD – Adopted February 2022
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD – Adopted January 2020
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted November 2016

5.5 **Other Guidance**

Barrow Road Conservation Area Appraisal (2016)

6.0 **Consultations**

6.1 **Conservation Officer – Objection.**

6.2 41 Barrow Road dates from 1935 and was designed by Spalding and Myers as part of the planned Barrow Road development, which is in a consistent Arts and Crafts style with shared materials and details.

6.3 In relation to future development, the conservation area appraisal (2016) recommends the “Preservation of the roofs: the common ridge height; the sweep of the roadside of the roofs with no dormers, roof-lights or solar panels; to retain the chimneys in their present form” and states that “The architectural unity of the road depends in large measure on the similarity of tiled roofs and chimneys and the shared palette of materials. Apart from No.26, the houses on the road share a common language of hips and gables with a common ridge height and carefully detailed chimneys, mostly in brick but some rendered.”

6.4 Local Plan Appendix E advises that “Roof extensions should relate well to the proportions, roof form and massing of the existing house and neighbouring properties. They must be appropriate in size, scale and proportion to the existing house and adjoining...” and that “Proposals for roof extensions are unlikely to be acceptable where they: perpetuate forms of existing, but poorly designed roof extensions in particular; or are insensitively designed large ‘box type’ roof extensions which show little respect for the existing roofline or for the scale, design and proportions of the existing property and its neighbours.” (paras E5-E6). and furthermore that “...the more visible a roof is from public areas, the more important it will be for to be well designed.” (E18).

- 6.5 The proposed roof extensions would primarily be visible from private gardens and would not have a significant impact on appearance of the property from the public realm, although due to their inappropriate scale and design they would be harmful to the conservation area and cannot be supported.
- 6.6 The form of flat-roofed dormer extension would be at odds with the architecture of the house and neighbouring houses which are wholly composed of hipped tiled roofs. The dormer would have a dominant impact on the rear roof slope which would be mostly obscured or altered, an effect exacerbated by the tiled linking section between dormer and projecting hipped roof. The scale of the full height glazed doors is considered disproportionately large in relation to openings on the floors below, giving the roof an overly dominant presence.
- 6.7 The design and proportions of the former to the hipped dormer would be less dominant due to its smaller scale, although it would be a prominent projecting element that fails to take account of the predominant material and detailing of the existing building and surrounding conservation area.
- 6.8 Taking the above into account, I consider that the proposals would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.9 The proposals would fail to comply with Local Plan policies 58, 61, Local Plan Appendix E, Barrow Road Conservation Area Appraisal
- 6.10 With reference to the NPPF and the effect on the significance of the heritage asset, paragraphs 190, 193, 194, 196 and 202 would apply.

7.0 Third Party Representations

- 7.1 Four representations in support of the application have been received.
- 7.2 The following reasons have been given:

- Respecting conservation area appraisal
- In keeping with surrounding area
- Modest additions to house
- Existing examples of dormer windows
- Meeting the needs of family

8.0 Member Representations

- 8.1 Cllr Olaf Hauk has made a representation supporting the application on the following grounds:
- The application that is identical to one that they made earlier in 2022 which they were told would likely be rejected. This application was a revised version of an application made in 2021, and

substantial changes have been made to that original proposal to address the issues raised by a previously assigned planning officer.

- However, our understanding is that there was still a concern about the size of one of the dormer windows on the back of the house which was deemed to have an impact on the conservation area and the character of the house because of its size (even though reduced from the initial application).
- The applicants disagree with that assessment given that the back of their house has already had several major changes from its original character: notably a conservatory extension and corridor, modern French doors, and large bifold metal doors into the kitchen.
- The proposed dormer window is also significantly smaller than the dormer windows that their neighbours at no 43 have both front and back. And given that the proposed dormer window is at the back of the house, and is additionally shielded by chimneys, it would be almost impossible to see it from the street or any publicly accessible viewpoint. In addition, the application has now been out to consultation three times and has garnered no negative comments from the very active community that protects the interests of the Conservation Area, and the applicant has on this most recent occasion ensured that their near neighbours state their long-standing positive approval of the application through submissions on the planning portal.
- Finally, if the grounds for rejection are that this dormer window will have an adverse impact on the conservation area, the applicants find it difficult to offset that against the approval recently given for a three story house opposite theirs, with multiple dormers and balconies, and a floor space up to three times that of their house and other near neighbours, and which generated a substantial and ongoing volume of objections from across the Barrow Road community. It is hard to see how their proposal for a dormer at the back of their house has a relatively more negative impact on the conservation area than this approved application, and several others that have recently been approved.
- Having spoken to the applicants, and visited the site, I agree with these assessments and agreed to call in the application for consideration by the Planning Committee. I believe we would all be delighted if the application can be recommended for approval without this step still being necessary.

9.0 Local Groups / Petition

9.1 Not applicable

9.2 The above representations are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the representations are available on the Council's website.

10.0 Assessment

10.1 Design, Layout, Scale and Landscaping

10.2 Policies 55, 56, and 58 seek to ensure that development responds appropriately to its context, is of a high quality, reflects or successfully contrasts with existing building forms and materials and includes appropriate landscaping and boundary treatment.

10.3 Paragraph E.5 of the Roof Extension Design Guide (2018) states:

“Roof extensions should relate well to the proportions, roof form and massing of the existing house and neighbouring properties. They must be appropriate in size, scale and proportion to the existing house and adjoining properties and must not be so large as to dominate the existing roof or to overwhelm their immediate setting.”

10.4 This application follows two recent applications which also sought to convert the loft and install dormer windows. The first application which was refused sought to install a large dormer window to the rear roof slope and convert the rear projecting hipped element to a gable (ref. 21/02259/HFUL). This application was refused as it was considered that the proposed box dormer and hip to gable extension would result in excessive, dominating additions to the dwelling that would significantly detract from the attractive features of the existing building, locality and Conservation Area.

10.5 The second application sought to install two dormer windows, one would be sited on the main rear roof slope and the other would extend from the hipped element (ref. 21/05066/HFUL). The dormer on the main roof slope was reduced in depth and width by a minor degree from 2.6 metres to 2.4 metres and 6.6 metres to 6.4 metres from the refused application. The materials were also altered on part of the dormer window, so that it would be finished in vertical hang tile. The main section of the dormer window would still be finished in zinc cladding.

10.6 This application was withdrawn following notice from Officers that the application would be refused due to the adverse visual impact from the dormer within the main roof slope. At this stage the Officer gave informal advice that the dormer window should be reduced in size and height.

10.7 This application is identical to the application which was withdrawn, and so the Officers concerns have not been addressed. It comprises a loft conversion and two rear dormers. The first dormer is located on the main roof slope, it is broken up into two parts, one larger finished in zinc cladding and one smaller and finished in hanging tile. The zinc element

has a height of 2.7 metres, the hanging tile element has a height of 1.8 metres, and both elements extend to just below the ridge line. The second dormer extends from the existing hipped element and forms a projecting pitched gable.

- 10.8 In this case, the proposed dormer window on the main roof slope is considered to comprise an insensitively designed 'box type' roof extension which is not supported by the Roof Extension Design Guide (2018). It does not relate well to the proportions nor roof form of the existing house, due to the box shape and significant bulk and massing that is created through the height and width of the extension.
- 10.9 The hipped roof is an extremely important characteristic of the main house, which the proposal does not successfully reflect or contrast with, instead the proposal comprises a dominating feature which extends across the majority of the roof slope. The proposed extension is considered to be inappropriate in size and scale as it extends across the entire ridge line, with the tiled section even extending beyond the main roof slope onto the projecting element so that relationship between the main roof slope and the projecting element is obscured.
- 10.10 The proposed windows to the dormer are full height, and would appear totally out of scale with the existing openings to the main house. The openings would dominate the existing fenestrations of the main house, rather than respecting the hierarchy which should give primacy to the lower levels openings on the main house. The full height windows comprise overly tall elements which make the dormer extremely prominent when viewed from the rear.
- 10.11 It is acknowledged that some of the massing has been broken up from the refused extension due to the change in materials, however it is not considered the proposal submitted represents a meaningful change to the refused application. Indeed, due to its size, massing and proportions it would continue to comprise an entirely prominent extension that would detrimentally impact the existing property, locality and Conservation Area.
- 10.12 In the Design and Access Statement, the applicant has presented one example of a dormer window within the context of the site at No. 43 Barrow Road. This dormer was permitted in 2013, under the previous Local Plan (ref. 13/1353/FUL). Cllr Hauk has also highlighted other examples of dormer windows and modern development within the surrounding area. Officers acknowledge that the adjacent dormer window does form part of the existing context, and does span a reasonable width across the roof slope, however the overall proportions of the dormer window, including the style of openings related in a better manner to the roof slope and did not overly dominate the rear elevation of the property in the same way that the proposed development would.
- 10.13 Notwithstanding this, each application is assessed on its own merits, and in this case, the dormer window would fail to successfully reflect or

contrast the existing built form. Although the application has received support from some surrounding occupiers due to the surrounding development, the Roof Extension Design Guide (2018) specifies that roof extensions which perpetuate forms of existing, but poorly designed roof extensions will not be supported.

- 10.14 The second dormer window on the hipped element responds in a slightly better manner to the architecture of roof slope due to its pitch. It does not however follow the form the existing roof given that its projects as a gable rather than with a more sensitively design hipped roof. It is more proportionate to the main roof, however as submitted with the flat roof dormer on the main roof slope it does contribute to dominating impact, and represents a prominent addition to the roof.
- 10.15 Officers acknowledge that roof extension can help residents to meet their needs for additional accommodation and that local residents have not objected to the design of the proposal, however in this case the proposed development is a poor-quality design that would fail to contribute positively to its surroundings. The proposal fails to comply with Cambridge Local Plan (2018) policies 55, 56, 58, 61 and the NPPF (2021).
- 10.16 **Heritage Assets**
- 10.17 The application falls with the Barrow Road Conservation Area.
- 10.18 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that a local authority shall have regard to the desirability of preserving features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular, Listed Buildings. Section 72 provides that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 10.19 Para. 199 of the NPPF set out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Any harm to, or loss of, the significant of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
- 10.20 Policy 61 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) requires development to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets, their setting and the wider townscape, including views into, within and out of the conservation area. Policy 62 seeks the retention of local heritage assets and where permission is required, proposals will be permitted where they retain the significance, appearance, character or setting of a local heritage asset.
- 10.21 Barrow Road Conservation Area is characterised by low-density development, with wide green verges and arts and craft style houses. The

road has been subject to some alteration, however the architectural style of the properties remains a strong unifying characteristic.

- 10.22 The proposal is not visible from the street scene, however is sited within the Conservation Area and would be visible from private views. Cllr Hauk highlights this in their comments, suggesting that the proposal would not be visible from public views and would be obscured by the existing chimneys. Officers acknowledge this, however through appeals it has been confirmed that “lack of visibility does not automatically equate to lack of harm” within the Conservation Area and that views from private gardens can be acknowledged in the Conservation Areas assessment (ref. APP/B5480/D/19/3227917).
- 10.23 As is highlighted in the Conservation Officers comments, the Barrow Road Conservation Area Appraisal states that “The architectural unity of the road depends in large measure on the similarity of tiled roofs and chimneys and the shared palette of materials. Apart from No.26, the houses on the road share a common language of hips and gables with a common ridge height and carefully detailed chimneys, mostly in brick but some rendered.”
- 10.24 The issues section provides recommendations to ensure that the unity of the road is not degraded through further alterations, and states that “Preservation of the roofs: the common ridge height; the sweep of the roadside of the roofs with no dormers, roof-lights or solar panels; to retain the chimneys in their present form.”
- 10.25 The Conservation Officer has advised that that the scale and design of the dormer windows would result a dominating presence that would be harmful to the Conservation Area.
- 10.26 Officers agree with the concerns raised by the Conservation Officer, the proposal would be in clear conflict with the Conservation Area appraisal, as it would not respect the common language of hipped roofs, and would conflict with the recommendation that seeks to preserve the roofscape. It is acknowledged, that the dwelling has been subject to some alteration as is highlighted in the representation by Cllr Hauk, however the key characteristics such as the roof scape have been retained and the alterations relate mainly to modest alteration at ground floor level. It is considered that to allow the insensitive proposal would be at detriment to the character of the Conservation Area.
- 10.27 It is considered that the proposal, by virtue of its scale, massing and design, would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal would give rise to harmful impact on the identified heritage assets and is not compliant with the provisions of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, the NPPF and Local Plan policies 60 and 61.
- 10.28 **Amenity**

- 10.29 Policy 35, 50, 52, 53 and 58 seek to preserve the amenity of neighbouring and / or future occupiers in terms of noise and disturbance, overshadowing, overlooking or overbearing and through providing high quality internal and external spaces.
- 10.30 Neighbouring Properties
- 10.31 The site has two adjoining occupiers, No. 39 and 43 Barrow Road, which both comprise large detached dwellings in reasonably wide set plots.
- 10.32 The proposal comprises a loft conversion and two dormer windows within the rear roof slope, the flat roof dormer within the main roof slope would serve a bedroom, and the smaller dormer window on the projecting element would serve the landing area.
- 10.33 Given the nature of the proposal set within the roof slope, it would not project beyond the rear elevation of the dwelling as to impose on the windows and rear amenity space at the neighbouring dwellings. Due to this, the proposal would not result in loss of light or an overbearing impact to the adjoining dwellings.
- 10.34 The proposed extensions would introduce new windows in both dormers at roof level to serve a bedroom and landing area. The bedroom is considered to be a habitable room, however the landing area is considered to be non-habitable. The existing windows at first floor level serve two bedrooms and a bathroom in between.
- 10.35 Given that the dwelling comprises windows at first level which serve bedrooms with an outlook to the rear, it is not considered that the proposal would substantially change the views to the neighbouring properties.
- 10.36 The proposal adequately respects the residential amenity of its neighbours.
- 10.37 **Flood Risk**
- 10.38 The rear of the proposal site is located partially within Flood Zone 2 (medium). Given that the proposal would be contained entirely at roof level, it would not be considered to increase surface flood risk. Therefore the proposal is considered to be compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2018) policy 32.
- 10.39 **Other Matters**
- 10.40 The proposal site adjoins an area of Protected Open Space beyond the rear boundary, given that the proposal would impact the main house and be set a reasonable distance from the rear boundary, it would not be considered to result in harm to this area.
- 10.41 The proposal could not be erected under permitted development rights as defined by The Town and Country General Permitted Development Order

2015 (as amended) because the proposal site is within a Conservation Area. Part (f) of Class B, Schedule 2, Part 1, states that development is not permitted if the dwellinghouse is on article 2(3) land which includes Conservation Areas.

10.42 **Planning Balance**

10.43 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

10.44 In this case, the proposal would result in excessive and dominating roof extensions that would fail to respond positively to the form and appearance of the existing house, locality and Conservation Area. The flat roof dormer would comprise an insensitively designed box type addition, which would detract from the attractive features of the existing property and Conservation Area through its excessive bulk, mass, height and windows. The pitched dormer would increase the prominence of the additions at roof level and fail to respect the form of the existing house.

10.45 The proposal would not have any public benefit; however Officers do note that the proposal would provide private benefits to the occupiers through the ability to extend their home.

10.46 Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the statutory requirements of section 66(1) and section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, as well as all other material planning considerations, the proposed development is recommended for refusal.

10.47 **Recommendation**

10.48 **Refuse** for the following reasons:

1. The proposal would result in excessive and dominating roof extensions that would fail to respond positively to the form and appearance of the existing house, locality and Conservation Area. The flat roof dormer would comprise an insensitively designed box type addition, which would detract from the attractive features of the existing property and Conservation Area through its excessive bulk, mass, height and windows. The pitched dormer would appear increase the prominence of the additions at roof level and fail to respect the form of the existing house. The proposed development would be contrary to policies 58 and 61 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and paragraphs 190, 193, 194 and 196 of the NPPF (2021).

