

**Report to District Development  
Management Committee**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Report Reference: DEV-005-2016/17**

**Date of meeting: 8 June 2016**

**Subject: Planning Application EPF/0883/16 – Erection of front and rear dormer windows as part of a loft conversion at 13 Churchfields, Epping.**

**Responsible Officer: James Rogers (01992 564110)**

**Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)**

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**Recommendation:**

- (1) That the committee grant consent subject to the following conditions:
1. The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this notice.
  2. Materials to be used for the external finishes of the proposed development shall match those of the existing building, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Report:**

*This application is before this Committee since it has been submitted on behalf of Councillor Chris Whitbread (Pursuant to The Constitution, Part Two, Article 10 (f)).*

**Description of Site:**

1. The application site is located on the residential estate known as Churchfield which is located to the east of Epping High Street, just to the north of Homefield Close. The existing building is a two storey dwelling situated within a relatively small plot. The adjacent neighbour is a similarly designed two storey dwelling within a comparatively sized plot to the application site. Homefield Close is located to the south of the site abutting the rear garden area of no.13. The rear elevation of the closest neighbour on Homefield Close is approximately 20m from the rear elevation of no.13 Churchfield. The application site is not located within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Green Belt and it is not in a conservation area.

**Description of Proposal:**

2. The proposed development is for the erection of front and rear dormer windows to the existing roof slope.

**Relevant History:**

EPF/0666/86 – Erection of 13 dwellings – Approved with permitted development rights removed.

## **Policies Applied:**

CP2 – Protecting the quality of the rural and built environment  
DBE9 – Loss of amenity  
DBE10 – Design

The above policies form part of the Council's 1998 Local Plan. Following the publication of the NPPF, policies from this plan (which was adopted pre-2004) are to be afforded due weight where they are consistent with the Framework. The above policies are broadly consistent with the NPPF and therefore are afforded full weight.

## **Consultation Carried Out and Summary of Representations Received:**

8 Neighbours consulted:

3 Homefield Close – OBJECTION - This house lies directly behind and directly above my property. It is in a very raised position and I believe it would seriously invade our privacy and lower our property value, if *rear dormer windows* are allowed for the loft conversion of 13 Churchfields. We did have tall trees, which we had cut by half when we moved into our property and would not wish them to have to grow as high as the previous owner had them to preserve the privacy.

Epping Town Council – NO OBJECTION

## **Issues and Considerations:**

3. The main issues to consider when assessing this application are the potential impacts on the living conditions of the neighbours and the design of the proposal in relation to the existing building and its setting.

### Living Conditions of Neighbours

4. The application property has a very small rear garden which backs immediately onto the rear gardens of the single storey properties on Homefield Close. No.13 is on significantly higher ground than these neighbouring properties however the orientation of no.13 is such that the dormers will face the north western side of the rear garden of no.4 Homefield Close and the side elevation of no.5.

5. Given that the properties on Homefield Close are bungalows, there is potential for overlooking from these rear dormer windows, particularly as the application property is on significantly higher ground. However the dormer windows are relatively discrete in the roof slope, not dissimilar to the existing first floor windows which are currently located on its rear elevation. Furthermore there is a very robust amount of screening on the rear elevation of no.13 to the extent that these neighbours are not visible from the ground or first floor and it similarly the neighbours will not be visible from second floor level.

6. The screening on the shared boundary is nonetheless given relatively little weight in this assessment as it is acknowledged that there is no guarantee that this will remain permanently in position. Notwithstanding that, given the similarity of the rear dormer windows to the existing first floor rear windows and its orientation, not directly into private areas of the neighbours, it is

not considered that there would be significant overlooking, which is the test of relevant policy DBE9.

7. No.3 Homefield Close has raised an objection to the application on the basis that there will be significant overlooking of their property. However the dormer windows will not be orientated towards this neighbour and therefore will not offer any direct views into private areas of this property.

#### Design

8. The erection of front dormer windows onto this property will not cause any harm to its character or appearance as they are relatively small and well positioned within the existing roof slope. Furthermore there are many other examples of front dormer windows within the street scene and as such there will be no harm to the character or appearance of the street scene.

9. The rear dormer windows are also well positioned in the roof slope and will not be overtly visible from public viewpoints. As a result there will not be any harm to the street scene.

#### **Conclusion:**

10. The development will not harm the living conditions of the neighbours and the design will not harm the character or appearance of the existing building or its setting. It complies with relevant local and national planning policy.