

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Tabitha Kaye.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01615/FPH	First floor side extension over existing single storey side extension.	Ashbrook Cottage Lower Titmore Green Little Wymondley Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 7JT

Submitted Plan Nos

2801_244_001 2801_244_002 2801_244_003 2801_244_004 2801_244_005 2801_244_006
2801_244_007 2801_244_008 2801_244_009 2801_244_010 2801_244_011

1.0 Policies

SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN13	Protecting Green Belt Land
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
SP9	Design and Sustainability
D1	Sustainable design
D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild
D3	Protecting living conditions
T2	Parking

2.0 **Relevant Site History**

- 2.1 **22/03096/FPH:** First floor side extension (as amended by plans received 23 March 2023). **Withdrawn.**
- 2.2 **18/02987/FPH:** Single storey rear extension. **Conditional Permission.**
- 2.3 **96/00655/1HH:** Two and single storey side extensions incorporating double garage. Single storey rear extensions (as amended by plan received 14.6.96). **Conditional Permission.**

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

3.2 **Wymondley Parish Council** – No comments received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The application site accommodates a two-storey detached dwelling situated along Lower Titmore Green, Little Wymondley. The site benefits from a large rear garden and on-site parking provision. The site is brushed over by the Green Belt.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 First floor side extension over existing single storey side extension.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- Impact on the Green Belt;
- Design and impact on local character;
- Impact on neighbour amenity;
- Highways and parking matters;
- Impact on the environment;
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Impact on the Green Belt

Assessing Inappropriate Development

4.3.2 Policy SP5 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (NHLP) states that development proposals in the Green Belt will only be permitted where they would not result in inappropriate development, or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated. Policy GB1 of the Wymondley Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) states that proposals within the Green Belt should comply with Government Green Belt policy. These policies are commensurate with Paragraph 154 of Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that development within the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the exemptions, including:

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

The NPPF glossary defines 'original' as "a building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally."

- 4.3.3 Ashbrook Cottage has been extended on multiple occasions in the past. Available planning history for the site dates to 1996. Cross referencing the site and floor plans from the 1996 permission with earlier Ordnance Survey maps, and photographs provided by the applicant of the dwelling prior to the 1996 extension, indicate what aspects of the dwelling were 'original'. Based upon these sources, the Gross Internal Floor Area (GIA) of the original dwelling is determined to be approximately 176.7 sqm.
- 4.3.4 The extensions permitted under 96/00655/1HH increased the total GIA to approx. 298.3 sqm. The extension permitted under 18/02987/FPH increased the total GIA to approx. 308.3 sqm. The current proposal would increase the GIA to approx. 336.9 sqm. Cumulatively, the extensions would result in a 90.6% increase on original.
- 4.3.5 The above assessment does not account for outbuildings. It is established by case law that a detached structure can be considered an extension to a building, providing that the building is within domestic curtilage. While the site hosts a non-original outbuilding, the contribution of this outbuilding to the overall calculation would not have a significant impact.
- 4.3.6 North Hertfordshire District Council do not have a published threshold for what is considered to be a 'disproportionate addition'. From a quantitative perspective, a cumulative 90.6% increase (or above) over original is disproportionate. However, it has been shown in case law (see appeal decision APP/N0220/A/00/1056193) that a purely quantitative analysis of disproportionality is not a balanced approach. Harm to openness, and the overall scale of the proposal, should also be considered. In accordance with this holistic approach, I consider that the proposed extension would not be a disproportionate addition as the proposed extension would be contained within the existing built form of the dwelling (see 4.3.7), and therefore does not constitute 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt.

The Five Purposes of the Green Belt and Openness

- 4.3.7 While a scheme may not be 'inappropriate development', it is still important to assess whether the proposal would have an adverse impact on the five purposes of the Green Belt, as outlined by paragraph 143 of the NPPF, as well as harm to its openness, as required by paragraph 153. Taking each in turn:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas* – the proposed development would be minimal in scale and would not increase the footprint of the dwelling. Therefore, the proposal complies with 143(a);
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another* – see above;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment* – see above;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns* – N/A;

e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land – N/A.

The proposal would be a first floor extension above the existing side extension. Therefore, the proposal would not increase the footprint of the dwelling and would constitute a minimal increase in built form. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on openness.

Design and Impact on Local Character

- 4.3.8 Policies D1 and D2 of the North Herts Local Plan (NHLP) require that development proposals respond positively to the site's local context. Policy D2 specifies that extensions to houses should be sympathetic to the main dwelling in terms of scale, form and orientation. Policy HOD2 of the WNP reiterates the requirement for design to reflect local character. These policies are broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.3.9 The proposed first floor extension would appear both sympathetic and subservient to the main dwelling. As described in the above section, the scale of the proposed extension would be modest in scale and would not exceed the footprint of the existing side extension. The roof of the first floor extension would be commensurate with the dual-pitch design character of the main dwelling. The proposed slate roof tiles, timber windows, and brickwork would match the main dwelling for visual continuity.
- 4.3.10 Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies D1 and D2 of the NHLP, as well as Section 12 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbours

- 4.3.11 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development which would not harm the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and encourages the use of mitigation measures where necessary. Policy D3 is generally reflected by the provisions of the NPPF.
- 4.3.12 The present side extension is constructed along the east boundary which borders neighbouring property, 8-9 Lower Titmore Green. The existing side extension is set back from the principal elevation and therefore does not sit completely parallel with the west flank of 8-9 Lower Titmore Green. There is a small gap between the properties.
- 4.3.13 As such, the combined scale and siting of the proposed first floor extension would not give rise to unacceptable overbearing or overshadowing impacts to 8-9 Lower Titmore Green. The first floor element would not feature any east facing windows in order to mitigate overlooking of 8-9 Lower Titmore Green. Therefore, the proposal accords with Policy D3 of the NHLP and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Highways and Parking

- 4.3.14 The scheme does not propose to alter the existing parking and access arrangements. The site is well served by 2no. on-site parking areas which can accommodate the creation of an additional bedroom. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policy T2 of the NHLP and Policy HOD3 of the WNP.

Climate Change

- 4.3.15 Policy D1 of the NHLP outlines the Council's commitment to supporting climate change mitigation. The proposed development is not large enough in scale to cause significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore complies with Policy D1 of the NHLP and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.15 This is a form of development which is exempt from BNG Legislation, defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 due it falling under the scope of the 'de minimis' exemption.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 In the absence of material planning reasons to the contrary it is my view that planning permission is **GRANTED**.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None applicable.

5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which

form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. The extension(s) hereby permitted shall be built in external materials to match the existing dwellinghouse unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the locality and to comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Sarah Kasparian	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 13 August 2026	