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Planning Statement

Project Title:
9 Whitethorn Lane

Project Description:
Infill rear extension and alterations to doors and windows.

Applicant:
Jane Lyons

Architectural Designers:
RD Designs and Partners Ltd.



1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by RD Designs & Partners Ltd in support of a householder planning application at 9 Whitethorn Lane, Letchworth Garden City.

The proposals comprise the erection of a single storey rear extension following removal of the existing conservatory, replacement of existing sash windows with conservation style uPVC sash windows, excluding the retained stained glass window, installation of conservation style rooflights and roof glazing, alterations to external openings, internal alterations and associated works.

The purpose of this statement is to explain the proposed development and consider the scheme against the relevant planning policies and the character of the existing property and surrounding area.

This statement should be read alongside the submitted architectural drawings, Design and Access Statement, Heritage Statement and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

The application relates to an established residential property at 9 Whitethorn Lane, Letchworth Garden City.

The property occupies a generous plot containing the main dwelling, ancillary structures, driveway and a substantial rear garden with mature trees and planting.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with detached and semi detached properties set within established plots. Mature landscaping, generous gardens and established building lines make an important contribution to the character of Whitethorn Lane.

The property falls within the Modern Character Area of Letchworth Garden City. Although there is variation in the age and appearance of individual properties, the scale of development and relationship between the houses and their landscaped plots provide a recognisable Garden City character.

The existing dwelling has been altered and adapted over time and currently includes a conservatory to the rear. The proposals seek to improve the existing ground floor arrangement and provide a better relationship between the main living accommodation and rear garden.

3. Proposed Development

The existing rear conservatory will be removed and replaced with a modest single storey rear extension.

Internally, the ground floor will be reorganised to provide an improved kitchen, dining and living arrangement with better circulation and a stronger connection with the rear garden.

Alterations are also proposed to existing window and door openings. Replacement conservation style uPVC sash windows are proposed, designed to closely reflect the proportions and appearance of the existing windows. The existing stained glass window will be retained.

The new rear patio doors and glazed openings will comprise anthracite aluminium framed units with horizontal glazing bars, providing a heritage style appearance.

Conservation style rooflights and roof glazing are also proposed to improve natural light within the accommodation.

External walls associated with the proposed rear extension will be rendered and finished to match the existing property. The proposed flat roof will be finished in black or dark grey EPDM, or similar, with an anthracite grey fascia.

The majority of the proposed works are concentrated to the rear of the dwelling, meaning the established appearance of the property from Whitethorn Lane will remain substantially unchanged.

4. Planning Policy

The application should be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The relevant Development Plan includes the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031, adopted in November 2022. Policies of particular relevance to the proposals include:

Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability

Policy SP12 – Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape

Policy SP13 – Historic Environment

Policy D1 – Sustainable Design

Policy D2 – House Extensions and Replacement Dwellings

Policy D3 – Protecting Living Conditions

Consideration has also been given to the relevant Letchworth Garden City Design Principles and local design guidance.

The general approach of these policies is to support appropriately designed development which responds positively to the character of the existing property and surrounding area, protects neighbouring living conditions and avoids unacceptable impacts upon landscape, biodiversity and the historic environment.

5. Design, Scale and Appearance

The proposed extension is single storey and positioned to the rear of the property.

Its scale is modest in comparison with the existing dwelling and the size of the plot. The extension has been designed to remain secondary to the main house rather than appearing as a dominant addition.

The proposals make use of an area immediately adjoining the existing dwelling and conservatory and do not result in significant encroachment into the established rear garden.

The design approach is deliberately simple. The rendered external walls will be finished to match the existing property, allowing the new work to sit comfortably alongside the existing building.

The anthracite aluminium rear doors and glazing introduce a more contemporary element, but this is concentrated on the rear garden elevation where it will have little influence upon the appearance of the property within Whitethorn Lane.

Replacement sash windows will retain the general appearance and proportions of the existing windows, whilst the existing stained glass window will remain.

Overall, the proposals are considered proportionate to the existing dwelling and appropriate to the character of the site.

6. Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

The proposals have also been considered separately by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

First Stage Approval was granted on 13 August 2026 under reference HA-001271 for the documents identified by the Heritage Foundation as WTL/09/01-06.

The approved scheme includes rendered external walls to match the existing property, a black or dark grey EPDM flat roof with anthracite fascia and anthracite aluminium patio doors with horizontal glazing bars.

The Heritage Foundation process is separate from the statutory planning application and the approval itself confirms that consent from North Hertfordshire District Council may also be required.

The First Stage Approval does, however, demonstrate that the external alterations have already been considered through the separate controls applying to properties within Letchworth Garden City.

Copies of the First Stage Approval and associated approved documents accompany the planning application.

7. Residential Amenity

The relationship between the proposed extension and neighbouring properties has been considered as part of the design.

The additional accommodation is single storey and positioned to the rear of the existing dwelling. Given its scale, location and relationship with the established boundaries, the extension is not considered to result in an unacceptable loss of daylight or outlook to neighbouring properties.

The principal areas of new glazing are directed towards the applicant's own rear garden and do not introduce a significant new overlooking relationship.

The proposals are therefore considered compatible with the continued residential use and enjoyment of neighbouring properties.

8. Landscaping and Trees

The property benefits from a substantial established rear garden containing mature trees and planting.

The proposed development is concentrated immediately around the existing dwelling and conservatory and will not result in significant encroachment into the main garden.

Existing mature trees and the principal areas of established vegetation will be retained.

The landscaped setting of the property will therefore remain largely unchanged and the existing relationship between the dwelling and its generous garden will be maintained.

9. Ecology and Biodiversity

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment has been undertaken by Arbtech Consulting Ltd and accompanies the application. The survey was undertaken on 24 August 2026.

The assessment considered the potential effects of the proposed works on habitats and protected species.

The recommendations and precautionary working methods identified within the ecological assessment will be followed during the works. The report also identifies opportunities for proportionate biodiversity enhancement.

The wall cotoneaster identified within the assessment will be appropriately controlled or removed in accordance with the ecologist's recommendations to prevent its spread during construction. The report identifies this as one of the matters to be addressed as part of the works.

As this is a householder planning application, the development is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement.

The proposals are therefore considered capable of being carried out without unacceptable harm to the ecological value of the site.

10. Access and Parking

No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access serving the property.

The existing driveway and garage arrangements will remain and the proposal does not involve a change in the residential use of the property.

The development will therefore not create any additional parking requirement or materially alter existing vehicle movements associated with the dwelling.

There is consequently no anticipated adverse impact upon highway safety or the operation of the surrounding highway network.

11. Sustainability

The proposals involve the adaptation and improvement of an existing dwelling rather than redevelopment of the site.

The existing building will be retained and improved, making use of the existing property and infrastructure.

The revised internal arrangement and additional glazing will improve natural daylight within the main living accommodation. Replacement windows also provide an opportunity to improve the thermal performance and comfort of the existing dwelling.

The established rear garden, mature trees and principal areas of vegetation will remain largely unchanged.

The proposals therefore provide a reasonable balance between improving the functionality and performance of the existing dwelling and retaining its established architectural and landscaped character.

12. Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposals represent a modest and proportionate improvement to an established residential property within Letchworth Garden City.

The single storey rear extension is appropriate in scale and remains secondary to the existing dwelling. The majority of the alterations are positioned to the rear and the established appearance of the property from Whitethorn Lane will remain substantially unchanged.

The proposed materials have been selected to sit comfortably alongside the existing property and are consistent with the scheme which has received First Stage Approval from Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

The proposals retain the existing access, parking arrangements, mature landscaping and generous garden setting. The submitted ecological assessment has also considered the potential impact of the development upon habitats and protected species and provides appropriate recommendations for the works.

Overall, the proposals are considered to represent an appropriate improvement to the existing dwelling without causing unacceptable harm to the character of the property, the surrounding area, neighbouring amenity or the established landscaped setting.

The development is therefore considered to accord with the relevant provisions of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and represents an appropriate form of householder development at 9 Whitethorn Lane.