

Our Ref: SXA/3005884-1

Your Ref: 25/00381/FPH

19 March 2025

North Hertfordshire District Council
Planning Control
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Dear Sirs

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Tall Timbers, 1B Melbourn Road, Royston, SG8 7DB
Planning Reference Number: - 25/00381/FPH

An application has been submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council ("the Council"). The application relates to Tall Timbers, 1B Melbourn Road, Royston, SG8 7DB ("the Site"). The application description is: -

Single storey side extension, installation of rooflights to existing front and box dormer to existing rear roof slope to facilitate conversion of loft space into habitable accommodation, relocation of existing front door and erection of front entrance canopy following demolition of existing chimney, existing side conservatory and detached garage. (the "Proposed Development").

The application has been allocated reference number 25/00381/FPH ("the Planning Application").

We are instructed by residents of Melbourn Road to object to the Planning Application in the strongest possible terms. In our professional opinion we are of the view that the Proposed Development is unacceptable in planning terms and permission should not be granted.

We are a firm of planning solicitors that act for private individuals, developers and local planning authorities.

Planning Assessment

Policy SP1, sets out that the Local Plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire by granting proposals that individually or cumulatively: -

Create a high-quality development that respect and improve their surroundings and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices.

Policy SP9 provides that the Council "*considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development*".

The Council will: -

Support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context.

Design is central to good planning and the achievement of high-quality design is required by Government guidance. Planning policies should promote high quality, inclusive design in buildings. This is important both in terms of function

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and impact. The Council sets out clearly in its Local Plan that “*design which does not make the most of opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area should be refused*”.

The Local Plan recognises that North Hertfordshire has a high quality natural and built environment. Promoting sustainable growth is one of the priorities for the District. Achieving that aim depends on securing development that is of a high quality that is: -

1. Inclusive
2. Reinforces local distinctiveness
3. Fully addressing the creation of a sense of place
4. Safe and healthy environment

Policy D1 relates to Sustainable design, the policy sets out that: -

Planning Permission will be granted provided that the development proposals:

1. Respond positively to the site's local context
2. Take all reasonable opportunities consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme to
 - i. Create or enhance public realm
 - ii. Optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems
 - iii. Reduce energy consumption and waste
 - iv. Retain existing vegetation and proposes appropriate new planting
 - v. Maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas
3. Having regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance

Development proposals should focus on the potential to minimise their impact on the environment not only during construction but for the lifetime of the development. Development should respond to and enhance its surroundings. It is recognised in the Local Plan that good quality design is essential for health and wellbeing.

The Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out that applicants should show how they have taken account of the need for good design in their proposal, taking into account form, layout, character and context. That they have had regard to relevant development plan policies and the design guidance in the SPD. Paragraph 82 of the SPD states that “*any new development should be responding to the existing character*”. Paragraph 83 states that the “*height, volume and shape of a building will have an impact on the surrounding building and spaces*”.

Policy D2 focuses on house extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings

Planning Permission for house extensions will be granted where: -

- a. The extension is sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, roof type, window detail, materials and the orientation of the main dwellings
- b. The extensions do not dominate adjoining properties and
 - i. It is well related to the floor levels of adjoining properties

- ii. There is an appropriate distance between the proposed extension and the windows of the adjoining properties
- iii. Pacing between the buildings ensures there is no harm to the character and appearance of the street scene

There is a need to maintain a high-quality environment in residential areas. The policy requires that consideration must be given to the effect that a proposal may have on living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and the character and appearance of the locality in which the development is proposed. These are matters that can often be overlooked with the desire for increased living space.

The Proposed Development does not follow the principles of good design as required by the Local Plan and the SPD. Good design should respect and improve their surroundings, and we do not accept that the Proposed Development achieves those aims. The Proposed Development does not respond positively to its local context. In our view the Proposed Development conflicts with policies SP1 and SP9.

By virtue of the single storey side extension and the cumulative box dormer the Proposed Development introduces development that is at odds with its local context. It is not in keeping with the surrounding area and street scene.

The extensions proposed are not sympathetic to the existing building. They introduce development that in terms of the height and proportion of the dormer create a sense of over development and dominance of what is currently a modest single storey bungalow. The dormer is not in keeping with the street scene and local character and will be visible from the main road and at street level. The dormer is approximately 9 meters long, which is substantial. It will create an odd “box” effect at the rear of the dwelling, without any character or form that has an adverse impact, in terms of design, on the surrounding area and the neighbouring property.

The dormer will dominate the adjoining property. It is not well related to the floor levels of adjoining property and will create a feeling of over development by virtue of mass and height on the neighbouring property. That impact will occur not only from the adjoining neighbours garden, but also from the adjoining neighbours’ windows on the side elevation. There will be a “towering” effect as the height and bulk of the dormer is disproportionate to the existing dwelling and inappropriate. Such adverse impact is further felt given the proximity of the Proposed Development to the adjacent garden and house.

Further concern is expressed for the introduction of built development by virtue of the single storey side extension, again when viewed from the street and from the neighbouring property this will create an impression of bulk and massing to the current existing bungalow. This is not sympathetic to the existing house.

Whilst the side extension is described as “single storey”, it will of course continue the current form of the pitched roof. This extension is approximately 6 meters in length. It will further add bulk and mass to the existing building, which we do not accept are proportionate. They are not in keeping with the principles of good design. The impact of the additional roof line, and the bulk and “towering” effect of that extension to the adjoining neighbour and the surrounding area is not proportionate and will be dominating.

The dormer and single storey side extension will create an additional bulk and roofline which will undoubtedly cause a shadowing effect on the adjoining property and an impact on the daylight that that property will receive. Aside

from any reduction in daylight the sheer massing of the additional built development will be overbearing and unpleasant.

There has in recent months been a number of changes carried out to the front and rear garden of the property and all landscaping has been removed, including trees. The application makes no effort to introduce any landscaping in order to follow the principles of good design and to mitigate any adverse impacts. Equally no information is submitted with the application in relation to sustainable drainage, improvements on energy and waste or appropriate new planting.

In terms of design, height, form and proportion we do not accept that the Proposed Development is sympathetic to the existing bunglaow, the surrounding area and the adjoining neighbours. The Proposed Development does not adhere to the policies and principles in terms of good design. Given the conflict with the policies, we are of the view that the Proposed Development is unacceptable in planning terms. The planning balance is therefore tipped in favour of a refusal, and we would invite the local planning authority to refuse the planning permission sought.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

Attwaters Jameson Hill

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