N.H.D.C.
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Design and Access Statement

Proposal for a Two-Storey House and Part Single, Part Two-storey Rear Extension on Land at 28, Ermine Close, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5EE

1.0 The Site and Local Context

1.1 The site lies within the urban area boundary of Royston as designated in the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 and wherein the proposed development is acceptable in principle. It is not subject to any specific protective policy designations under the plan.

1.2 The site is at the end of a terrace of four houses. It is situated within an immediate residential area comprised of similar terraced blocks with a strong uniformity of layout, architectural style and external materials.

2.0 The Proposal and Relevant Planning Background

2.1 This application is for the enlargement of the existing house with construction of a part single-storey, part two-storey rear extension. Bedroom numbers would increase from two/three to four. In addition a new house would be attached to no.28. It would have two bedrooms.

2.2 The scheme as now presented is a revision to that which was refused under planning application reference: 17/02418/1. The changes address matters of size and design which contributed to the refusal. The proposed development no longer has any hipped elements and no valley feature between the proposed house and the proposed extension to the existing house. All new roof forms would conform to the gable-end style prevailing in the area. In addition, the overall size of the proposed new house has been reduced by shrinking its width so that it would be 1.6 metres from the side boundary of the site rather than 0.9

metre as was previously proposed. This would leave visually meaningful open space between the south elevation of the proposed new house and the site boundary with the Public Footway. Furthermore, it would significantly 'water down' the differential between the positioning of the south elevation of the proposed house and that of the building-line set by nos. 2 to 10, Ermine Close which begins at a distance of more than 20 metres (more than 65 feet) away from the new house and which, it is respectfully asserted, should not, in reasonable consideration of planning merits, provide a reference point against which *absolute* conformity must be achieved.

3.0 Relevant Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework

3.1 Introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 reduced national planning guidance from in excess of one thousand pages to less than one hundred. In doing so it's advice is less detailed, less prescriptive and provides fewer opportunities for the discovery of barriers to place in the way of allowing development through the scrutiny-driven approach that Central Government believes has too often developed into a search for problems rather than solutions in decision-making.

3.2 This simplification of guidance allied to the encouragement of positive thought is a deliberate strategy in the cause of promoting economic development and achieving a significant increase in housing provision. The purpose of the NPPF is to engender and allow for a positive approach to the accommodation of development, with the ***"golden thread"*** running through both plan and decision making being the presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be allowed to go ahead ***"without delay"***. At paragraph 49 of the NPPF it states in relation to residential proposals that:

"Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

3.3 The NPPF wants decision-makers to give all possible credit to the positive contribution that a development would make and avoid the practice of automatically relegating the good beneath the first sight of a perceived problem, which has all too often happened even where the basis of harm in that problem is completely subjective or speculated. The NPPF is a document that has been conceived to reverse this negative tendency and expects decision-makers to be absolutely certain that, if planning permission is not to be granted, material harm would be the result of granting planning permission, and would be so clearly bad that it would not be outweighed by any benefits that the development would bring.

3.4 With regard to parking, the NPPF does not dictate minimum or maximum parking standards. To avoid the risk of constraining or making development more difficult to achieve by insistence on a 'one-size-fits -all' minimum or maximum approach it takes a more flexible and responsive approach in advising that provision be determined on a site-by-site basis taking into account a range of factors that will vary according to any given situation.

3.5 For all development types the NPPF instructs at paragraph 197 that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should always be applied when determining planning applications. Residential development in urban areas is, by virtue of this location, sustainable development.

Relevant Saved Policies of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2

3.6 The following policies and adopted guidance are those most relevant to consideration of the planning merits of the proposed development. Their requirements, expectations and objectives, as appropriate to the site itself and its immediate context, have been acknowledged in the conception and formulation of the proposal:

8: *'Development in Towns'*

9: ***'Royston's Development Limits'***

21: ***'Landscape and Open Space Patterns in Towns'***

28: ***'House Extensions'***

55: ***'Car Parking Standards'***

57: ***'Residential Guidelines and Standards'***

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

'Vehicle Parking at New Development' adopted 2011

'Design' adopted 2011

4.0 Layout and Design

4.1 The concept and philosophy behind the proposal is straightforward:

- Most efficient use of land appropriate to local context to accord with the objectives of the Local Plan and national policy guidance in the NPPF. Maximisation of site development potential *within* acceptable planning parameters, having particular regard to the medium density nature of the locality.
- Sustainable development to increase quantity and improve the quality and choice in the local housing stock to accord with the objectives of Local Plan and national policy guidance in the NPPF.
- Improvement of existing housing stock.
- Respect for the amenity of neighbouring residential property occupiers.

4.2 The proposed house would represent an obvious, natural and visually agreeable extension to the existing terrace. Architectural details and materials would pick up those of the wider terrace composition thereby ensuring harmonious assimilation into the street-scene. The proposed extension would also be a natural response to the existing house in terms of design-form and materials.

4.3 Careful siting of the proposed development (extension and new house

together) in relation to neighbouring residential properties would ensure no prejudicial impact on the amenities of their occupiers by over-bearing physical presence, material reduction in ambient daylight or over-looking and loss of privacy. The proposed new house would itself be similarly immune from adverse effects by existing properties.

4.4 The site frontage for the existing house would be unchanged. For the new house it would be a balanced mix of hard surfacing for off-street parking purposes and lawn /landscaping. All new hard surfacing would be permeable in nature in the interests of sustainable drainage and of a material visually appropriate to the location. Hard surfacing to provide off-street parking for the existing house would be laid at the bottom end of the site. Details of materials of construction and additional soft landscaping can be secured by the Council as necessary through the imposition of a reasonable conditions.

4.5 The proposed house would be served by a good sized, regular shaped private amenity area with private sitting out space. The private amenity area serving the existing house at no.28 would be reduced in size but not below a point of adequate functionality. The expectations of paragraph 145 of adopted SPD *'Design'* would be met.

4.6 Waste and recycling bins would be storable out of conspicuous public view to the side or rear of the proposed dwelling with other small recycling receptacles capable of being kept within the proposed dwelling. For the existing house, waste and recycling bins would be storable discreetly close to its front elevation or within the new hardstanding area to the rear.

5.0 Access

5.1 The site is within an urban area boundary and as such is a preferred location for development in accordance with policies of the Local Plan. A range of facilities to meet day-to-day needs is within walking and cycling distance of the application

site. There is a bus route on nearby Old North Road providing public transport to the town-centre which has a main-line rail connection to London and Cambridge. Occupiers of the proposed dwelling would therefore have the ability to access a full range of facilities and services, including educational, cultural, community, shopping, and employment opportunities, without enforced reliance on the private motor car. This would accord with the sustainable development objectives of national policy in the NPPF and relevant policies of the Local Plan.

5.2 The proposed dwelling would be accessed from Ermine Close via a new dropped kerb. The site frontage would provide for two new, off-street parking spaces. Two-off street parking spaces would also be provided for the existing house by way of a new hardstanding at the bottom end of the site accessed via an existing dropped kerb. The level of provision for both properties would accord with the minimum standard for properties with two or more bedrooms as indicated by adopted SPD: *'Vehicle Parking at New Development'(2011).*

5.3 Adopted parking standards SPD also promotes the provision of secure cycle parking/storage. This parking requirement can be achieved for the existing and proposed dwelling within the plots and to the Council's satisfaction, by agreement under the terms of a planning condition(s) if this be deemed to be necessary.

5.4 The proposed development would be constructed in compliance with the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations to allow reasonable access and use to all persons, regardless of disability, age or gender.

6.0 Trees

6.1 No trees or other landscaping of high public visual amenity value would be lost as a consequence of the proposed development. New landscaping can be accommodated on the site to the Council's requirements and be securable by

planning condition(s).

7.0 Biodiversity

7.1 There are no species of protected flora and fauna known or suspected to exist on the site. No part of the site constitutes valuable wildlife habitat.

8.0 Statement of Community Involvement

8.1 The proposed development is of a relatively benign nature and modest scale and would have no appreciable environmental effects on, or adverse implications for, the wider local community. The occupiers of immediately neighbouring properties have been considered in the design and siting of the proposed extension and dwelling with the objective being to ensure that their residential amenities would not be affected to a material and harmful degree. All adjoining property owners/occupiers will be formally consulted for their views by the Council as part of the planning application process.

9.0 Flood Risk

9.1 The application site lies within Environment Agency designated Flood Risk Zone 1 where little, if any, risk of flooding has been identified. No special protection or amelioration measures are necessary.

11.0 Conclusion

11.1 The proposed development would comply with the objectives of all relevant national policy guidance related to ensuring the unimpeded provision of sustainable housing and all directly relevant local policies and supporting guidance/standards and no interests of acknowledged importance would be harmed by it. These factors indicate that a grant of planning permission, subject to relevant conditions as necessary, is appropriate.