

PLANNING STATEMENT

40 Whitehill Road, Hitchin, SG4 9HP

Job Ref: 25/007

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PETER GEORGE TOWN PLANNING



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Section 1: Introduction & Background

- 1.1 Peter George Town Planning is instructed by Mr and Mrs Ormerod to prepare and make a householder planning application to partly regularise and partly modify existing roof extensions at no.40 Whitehill Road, Hitchin, SG4 9HP.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to set out the proposals, provide an analysis against relevant national and local planning policy and ultimately make the case as to why planning permission should be granted.

Background

- 1.3 The Council served an Enforcement Notice in May 2025 in relation to unauthorised roof extensions carried out at no.40 Whitehill Road in late 2024. The Notice was served on the basis that the development would be visually harmful and harmful to neighbours. The applicants have submitted an appeal against the Notice, and such is currently pending a decision.
- 1.4 Separately to this, the applicants had a meeting with the Council's Development and Conservation Manager and Development Management



Team Leader. From this meeting it was indicated that the Council would be open to supporting a modified roof extension scheme on the basis that:

- The external materials should match the existing roof tiles.
- The side windows should be obscure-glazed and non-opening below 1.7m above internal floor level.
- The roof extension should be reduced in scale to meet permitted development tolerances for roof extensions under Part 1, Class B of the GPDO 2015.
- The solar panels would benefit from being set further back, so they are not so visually apparent from the road.

1.5 Accordingly, this application seeks to put forward a proposal that is in complete accordance with the above requirements.



Section 2: Analysis of the Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application property is a modern un-listed property fronting Whitehill Road. It lies to the north-eastern side of the road near to the junction with Passingham Avenue.



Figure 1 - Site Location

- 2.2 Whitehill Road has a primarily residential context, with the majority of development dating to the 1970's. Properties immediately adjacent to the site have a similar form and character to the application property.
- 2.3 The dwelling itself is of masonry construction, interspersed with some areas of white render to the front and rear, and has a concrete tiled roof. It presents its gable end to the street.



- 2.4 The property has been extended on one previous occasion by virtue of a single-storey front extension granted planning permission in 2016 (ref.16/01842/1HH). A roof extension has recently been carried out comprising the addition of dormer windows to each side of the roof-slope with associated solar panels situated on the roof.
- 2.5 The site lies outside of the Hitchin Conservation Area. The property is not listed nor is it of any local historic interest. There are no listed buildings nearby that would influence development. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is not understood to be at risk of flooding from any other sources.



Section 3: The Development Proposal

3.1 The proposed development can be described as follows:

“Part-retention and part-modification of existing roof extensions and associated solar panels together with the reinstatement of the ridge to its original height.”



Figure 2 – Front Elevation No.40 Whitehill Road, Hitchin

The Development as Built

3.2 Building works have recently been carried out at the property involving an extension to the roof. The extension has been constructed with a single flat



roof, with horizontal grey boarding used for its cheeks. Three casement windows have been inserted on the southeast facing flank wall, with a single casement window to the rear. One casement window has been inserted on the north-west facing side. Solar panels have been added to the roof of the dormer.

3.3 The facts are as follows:

- The roof extension is, at its highest point, lower than the highest part of the existing roof (from ground level, the ridge height of the main roof is 7853mm, and the height to the top of the dormer is 7843mm).
- The cubic content of the extension has been calculated as being 65.08m³. This is based on each part of the dormer (i.e. each dormer) having a length of 6441mm, a depth of 4036mm and a height of 2458.
- The survey further identified that the property has a sunken ridge to the front meaning that the main ridge is higher at the rear than it is at the front. This gives the impression that the roof extension is higher than the highest part of the roof, albeit the existing survey drawings confirm that this is not the case.

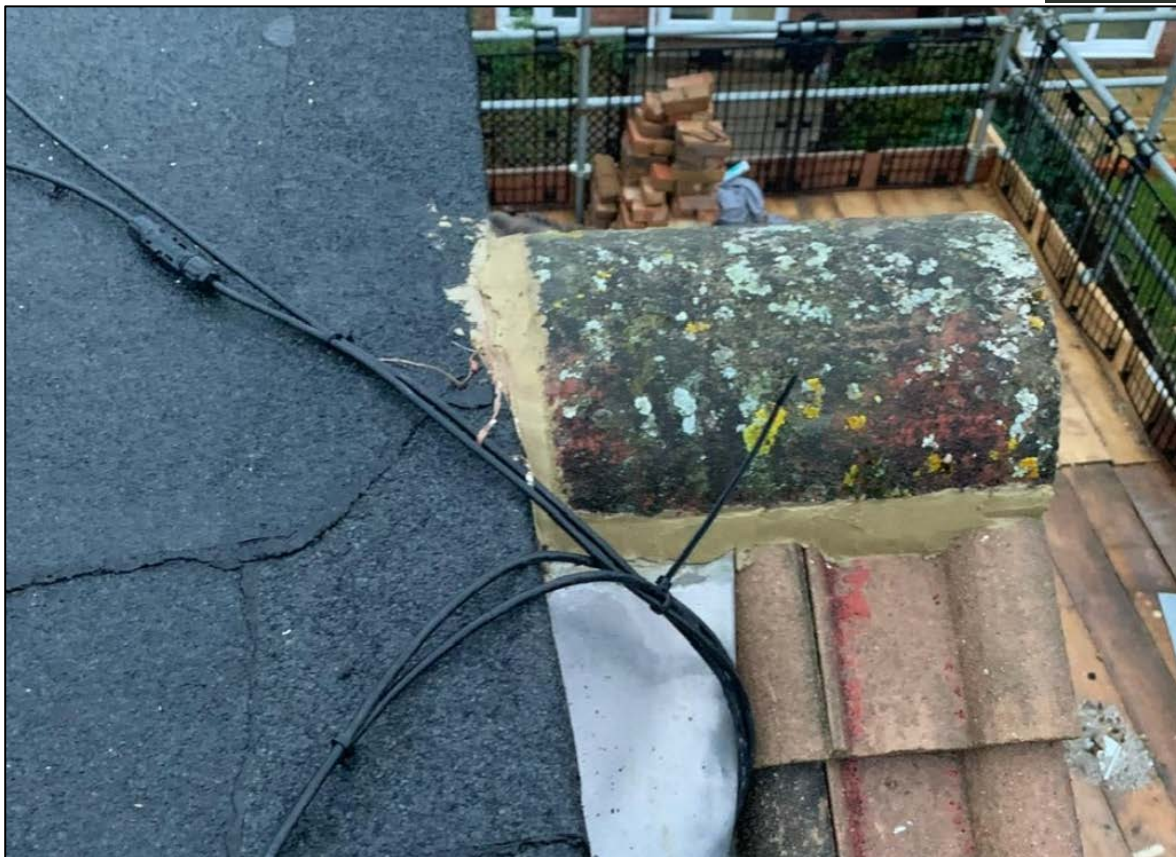


Figure 3 – Photograph showing that the roof of the roof extension is under the existing ridge

The Development Including Proposed Modifications

3.4 It is proposed to modify the existing roof extension as follows:

- Reduction in the length of both of the existing dormer windows to 4912mm to reduce the cubic content of the roof extension to 48.41m³.
- Replacement of 3no. existing windows to the flank elevations with casements that are fixed shut up to 1.7m from finished floor level and which are fully obscure glazed (level 4 privacy glass). One of the existing windows will be removed in its entirety.



- Repairs to the existing roof to remedy the sagging ridge to the front.

These works involve restoring the ridge line to ensure consistency between the front and rear sections of ridge.

- Replace existing cladding with vertically hung roof tiles of a similar appearance to the existing roof (Sandtoft 303 Clay Plain Roof Tile – Old Weathered).
- Solar panels re-sited, primarily to the pitched roof with one two-panel array proposed to be retained on the roof of the extension.



Section 4: Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The Government policies on different aspects of planning are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework).
- 4.2 The relevant sections of the Framework are as follows:
- Section 2: Achieving sustainable development
 - Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport
 - Section 12: Achieving well-designed places
 - Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Development Plan

- 4.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations dictate otherwise.”

- 4.4 The development plan context for the planning application is provided by:
- **North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted November 2022)**



4.5 The following policies are considered relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
- Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy
- Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport
- Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability
- Policy D1: Sustainable Design
- Policy D2: House Extensions, Replacement Dwellings and Outbuildings
- Policy D3: Protecting Living Conditions
- Policy T1: Assessment of Transport Matters
- Policy T2: Parking

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD September 2011
- Design SPD July 2011



Section 5: Planning Analysis

Main Issues

5.1 The main issues in the determination of a planning application are likely to be as follows:

- The impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- Other relevant matters.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy Background

5.2 Local Plan (LP) Policy D2 states that:

“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 details, materials and the orientation of the main dwelling; and

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; and



iii. spacing between buildings ensures there is no harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene.”

Discussion

- 5.3 From discussions with the Development and Conservation Manager and Development Management Team Leader, it is clear that, to be acceptable in design and visual terms, the roof extension should be reduced in size to accord with the tolerances afforded under permitted development and the external cladding material should be replaced with a material that is similar to the existing tile material.
- 5.4 Accordingly, the modifications proposed under this application involve a reduction of the length of both parts of the roof extension (i.e. each dormer) from 6441mm to 4912mm, and a commitment to replace the existing cladding with vertically hung roof tiles of a similar appearance to the existing roof (Sandtoft 303 Clay Plain Roof Tile – Old Weathered).
- 5.5 These steps would firstly result in the roof extension not extending beyond the existing chimney breast thus reducing its prominence in the street-scene, whilst the reduction in size would enable the retention of a greater part of the existing pitched roof. It would also bring the physicality of the



dormer in line with the tolerances allowable under Part 1, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

- 5.6 Together, these steps would ensure that the modified roof extension would not overwhelm the main roof-slope, much of which would still clearly discernible and the predominant feature in the street and ensure that the roof extension would have a design and character in keeping with the existing dwelling.
- 5.7 Related to the above, it is further proposed to reinstate the sunken ridge to its original height. Whilst this would not involve a noticeable increase to the ridge, it is likely to improve the relationship between the modified roof extension and the main roof by ensuring that the roof extension is read very clearly as not extending beyond the ridge.
- 5.8 Lastly, it is proposed to remove the existing solar array from the flat roof and re-site most of these across the various sections of available pitched roof. A two-panel array is proposed to be retained on the flat roof of the roof extension, but this would be sited in the far rear corner and reduced to



a projection of approximately 200mm thus minimising its wider visual impact.

Summary

- 5.9 In all, it is considered that, subject to the proposed modifications, the roof extension would be acceptable in design terms and that it would have an acceptable impact on the street scene. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposals would be compliant with LP Policies SP9, D1 and D2 and Section 12 of the Framework.

Impact on the Living Conditions of Neighbouring Properties

Properties to the North-West

- 5.10 Properties to the north-west include nos.2 and 4 Passingham Avenue. These are a semidetached pair set at 90 degrees to the application property. The distance between the flank boundary of no.40 and between the rear wall of each property is approximately 10m.
- 5.11 The roof extensions that have been carried out involve works within the footprint of the existing dwelling and the extent of the existing roof. As a result, and in light of the distances involved, we do not consider that the roof extensions are likely to be harmful to the living conditions of these



properties in terms of their physicality or size nor would they cause any loss of light to the dwellings or their gardens.

- 5.12 However, as discussed, the proposed roof extension would be reduced in length by approximately 1.5m and thus any impact that the roof extension is considered to have on properties to the north-west would be reduced.
- 5.13 Regarding privacy, it is proposed to replace the currently installed window with a casement window that is top-opening only (1.7m from the floor level of the room within which it is located) and fitted with obscure-glass (likely level 4 or 5). This would bring the windows in question in line with the requirements/conditions that would be applicable were it a PD-compliant scheme and ultimately ensure that there would be no loss of privacy to the occupants of these dwellings.

Properties to the South-East

- 5.14 The property to the south-east is no.42 Whitehill Road. This property has a similar design and is on a similar alignment to the application property.
- 5.15 Given its orientation and relationship between the two dwellings, the roof extensions that have been built would not be harmful to this property in



terms of a loss of light, dominance or any other similar such reason. Loss of privacy would likewise also not be an issue in light of the fact that the two windows to this side will also be top-opening only (1.7m from the floor level of the room within which they are located) and fitted with obscure-glass (level 4/5).

- 5.16 In any event, the situation could be said to be improved by the proposed modifications to the roof extension which involves the replacement of side-facing windows with obscure-glazed casements non-opening up to 1.7m from floor level, and the reduction in the length of the roof extensions.

Summary

- 5.17 If modified as proposed, the development would not be harmful to the living conditions of any of the neighbouring properties.

Highways/ Parking

- 5.18 The existing property has a driveway containing sufficient parking for three cars. This is sufficient parking provision to serve the extended dwelling.

Ecology

- 5.19 As householder development, the application is exempt from Statutory



Biodiversity Net Gain. The development works are unlikely to have any impact upon UK or European protected species.

Other Matters

- 5.20 There are no other matters relevant to a determination on the application.

Conditions

- 5.21 If approved, it will be necessary to agree a timeframe with the Council for the modification and alteration works proposed as part of this application. Given the potential complexity of such in light of the ongoing enforcement appeal, the applicants are open to discussions with the Council to agree the precise wording of these conditions before these are finalised.



Section 6: Summary & Conclusions

- 6.1 This statement supports an application for planning permission to partly regularise and partly modify existing roof extensions at no.40 Whitehill Road, Hitchin, SG4 9HP.
- 6.2 As discussed in the foregoing, the existing roof extension is proposed to be modified in various ways including through a reduction to its length and cubic content, the replacement of the existing cladding material with hung tiles to match, and other adjustments including to the solar panels.
- 6.3 These modifications would align with the recommendations made by the Council and ensure that the proposed roof extension would be subservient to the host dwelling and its roof, would not overwhelm the roof of the existing property; the form of which is largely maintained, and would have a materiality and appearance consistent with the existing dwelling.
- 6.4 Concerns regarding the impact of the roof extension on the living conditions of neighbouring properties have been considered and overcome through a) the proposed replacement of the existing side-facing casement windows with obscure-glazed casements that are non-opening up to 1.7m



from floor level, and 2) the proposed reduction in the length of the roof extension.

6.5 Moreover, as demonstrated in the submission drawings, the modified roof extension would be in accordance with the tolerances allowable under Part 1, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. This is a material consideration that should be afforded weight in the determination of the application.

6.6 In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.