

Design & Access Statement

1 Franklin Gardens
Hitchin
Hertfordshire
SG4 0BS



Context

The site is situated on the eastern side of Hitchin, within convenient walking distance of the town centre and railway station, offering sustainable access to local services and public transport connections.

The existing dwelling is a modest three-bedroom semi-detached house with integral single garage. It occupies a generous corner plot and benefits from well-established boundary treatments, including mature trees, hedgerows, and fencing. These features provide a strong sense of enclosure and privacy to the site.

Use

The proposal seeks to provide a larger, family-sized home that better meets the needs of modern living. In addition, the design incorporates enhanced and dedicated workspace to support home working, enabling a sustainable and balanced relationship between work and family life.

Furthermore, the scheme has been developed with futureproofing in mind, ensuring the dwelling remains adaptable to changing household needs over time. This includes the provision of flexible internal spaces capable of accommodating evolving family circumstances, thereby supporting long-term occupancy and reducing the need for further alterations in the future.

Description of the Proposed Development

The proposal comprises of a single-storey rear extension and two-storey side extension to the existing dwelling. The existing driveway arrangement will be retained, continuing to provide off-street parking for two vehicles. This ensures that the proposal maintains adequate parking provision in accordance with local policy and does not adversely impact on on-street parking conditions.



Fig 1: Existing front side of property

Access

Access to the property is from Franklin Gardens, and this arrangement will remain unchanged as part of the proposal. The development does not alter the established vehicular or pedestrian access to the site.

Parking provision is unaffected by the proposed extensions. The integral garage will remain accessible, and the existing driveway retains sufficient space to accommodate two vehicles comfortably within the site boundary.

In accordance with the North Hertfordshire Supplementary Parking Standards, a minimum of two parking spaces is required for residential properties with two or more bedrooms. The proposal continues to provide two off-street parking spaces and therefore complies with the adopted parking standards, ensuring there is no adverse impact on highway safety or on-street parking provision.

Layout

The existing property is modest in scale and, while functional, its current internal arrangement offers limited flexibility to accommodate contemporary living requirements. In particular, the layout does not readily support dedicated home-working space, the practical needs of family life, or the ability to adapt the dwelling to respond to future changes in circumstances.

The proposal therefore seeks to create a more versatile and sustainable long-term family home.

The single-storey rear extension is designed to enhance and expand the ground floor living accommodation, strengthening the relationship between the internal spaces and the rear garden. This intervention will create a more open, functional and spacious family living environment, better suited to modern patterns of occupation without impacting upon the neighbouring property.

The rear single storey element has been conceived in a manner comparable in scale and function to a modest garden pod structure, which could reasonably be accommodated within the site. However, rather than forming a detached outbuilding, it is linked to the host dwelling via a lightweight glazed passage. This approach provides safe, secure and weather-protected access for the occupier while maintaining a visually lightweight connection that minimises perceived mass along the shared boundary. As such, the proposal does not give rise to any additional detrimental impact beyond what could otherwise be established within the curtilage.

The two-storey side extension provides additional accommodation at both ground and first floor levels, allowing for enlarged living areas and improved bedroom provision. This will enable the incorporation of flexible spaces, including the opportunity for dedicated home-working, while ensuring the dwelling can adapt over time as household needs evolve.

The scale, form and positioning of the extensions have been carefully considered to remain proportionate to the host dwelling and to respect the established character of the surrounding area. The side extension has been designed to sit comfortably within the corner plot, avoiding an overly dominant presence within the street scene.

Its external appearance will reflect the characteristics of the existing property, including matching materials and detailing, ensuring it blends seamlessly with the host dwelling and wider streetscape.

It is also relevant that the corner plot at No. 36 was historically formed from part of the side garden of No. 35 and benefits from a garden depth and width comparable to neighbouring plots. The proposed side extension occupies a smaller footprint than the original side garden subdivision and will therefore result in a proportionate and limited impact, maintaining adequate private amenity space and preserving the spacious character of the plot.

Appearance

In accordance with Policy D2 of the Local Plan, the proposed development has been designed to respond positively to the established character of the area. The choice of materials has been carefully considered to ensure the extensions integrate seamlessly with the existing dwelling and remain in keeping with the prevailing street scene.

The external walls of the proposed extensions will be constructed using brickwork to match the existing property, including matching the vertical hung tiles to the upper portion of the front elevation. The roof of the two-storey side extension will comprise brown concrete interlocking tiles to match the existing roof covering, thereby maintaining visual continuity. The single-storey rear extension will incorporate a flat resin roof, selected to minimise visual bulk and ensure the extension remains subordinate to the host dwelling. A glazed link element is proposed to introduce increased levels of natural light into the enlarged living space, enhancing internal amenity without resulting in any adverse impact on neighbouring properties in terms of outlook or overshadowing.

The design approach to the side extension has also considered other approved and existing extensions within the immediate vicinity, ensuring consistency in scale, form, and architectural expression. As illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, the adjacent corner plot at No. 36 comprises a newer dwelling with a side extension, resulting in a reduced garden area and a more enclosed character. By contrast, the current proposal retains a comparatively generous garden space, preserving an open relationship between the two corner plots and maintaining the spacious character of the street scene.



Fig 2: Photo of front view of corner plots 1 Franklin Gardens & No 36 (new dwelling)



Fig 3: Photo of side view of 1 Franklin Gardens & No.36 demonstrating size and relationship of the corner plots within the street scene.



Fig 4: 3D views of proposal, demonstrating similar appearance of existing host dwelling.

Landscaping

The property is shielded by trees and hedgerow, creating a secluded feel to the plot as you enter Franklin gardens. To comply with Policy D1 the design will incorporate a Sustainable Drainage System by way of new soak aways.

Justification/ Conclusion

In summary, the proposed extensions have been carefully designed to provide a larger, adaptable and future-proof family home while remaining proportionate to the existing dwelling and respectful of the surrounding street scene. The use of matching materials, appropriate scale, and considered positioning ensures the development integrates seamlessly with its context. The proposal maintains adequate parking provision, preserves private amenity space, and accords with relevant local planning policies. As such, it represents a well-considered and sustainable form of residential development.

Home Extension Team