

M Scott / Architectural Design

Planning Statement

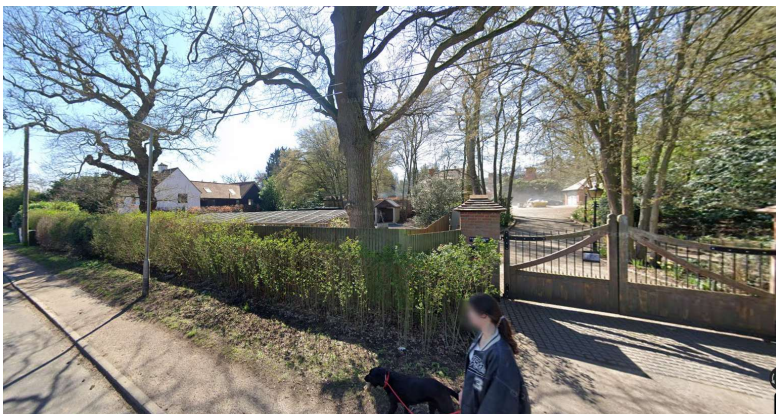
Full Planning Application

For

Erection of one detached three-bedroom dwelling with detached double garage, associated landscaping and ancillary works.

At

Land within the curtilage of No. 77 Park Lane, Knebworth, SG3 6PP.



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of one detached three-bedroom dwelling with detached double garage, associated landscaping and ancillary works on land within the residential curtilage of No. 77 Park Lane, Knebworth.
- 1.2. The application follows positive pre-application discussions with North Hertfordshire Council under reference 26/00489/PRE. The Council's response concluded that the principle of residential development on the site could be supported, subject to detailed design considerations and the submission of a full planning application.
- 1.3. The proposal has been amended following the pre-application advice, including the repositioning of the detached garage further forward within the site to create a stronger building line, improve the overall layout and provide improved rear amenity space.
- 1.4. This statement assesses the proposal against the relevant planning policies, with particular regard to Green Belt policy, Previously Developed Land, Grey Belt, housing need and sustainable development.

2. Site and Planning History

- 2.1. The application site forms part of the residential curtilage of No. 77 Park Lane and is located between the existing dwelling and Park Lane. The site is enclosed by existing residential development, boundary treatments and established vegetation, creating a contained parcel that is visually separated from the wider countryside.
- 2.2. The site contains existing permanent structures including blockwork outbuildings and a greenhouse, together with an established vehicular access from Park Lane. The Council's pre-application response recognised that the site could reasonably be considered to fall within the definition of Previously Developed Land.
- 2.3. The site lies approximately 1 kilometre from Knebworth railway station and benefits from access to local shops, schools, services and public transport connections, representing a sustainable location for modest residential development.
- 2.4. A previous outline application (Ref. 23/02675/OP) was refused in December 2023 on the basis that the proposal was considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt and that very special circumstances had not been demonstrated.
- 2.5. The current application differs in its assessment of the site's planning context, having regard to the site's established built form, existing structures and its potential status as Previously Developed Land.
- 2.6. Since the previous decision, national Green Belt policy has evolved through the introduction of Grey Belt within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024 version). The current proposal has therefore been assessed against the updated policy position, including the provisions relating to Previously Developed Land and Grey Belt.
- 2.7. The relevant planning history for the site is summarised below:
 - **92/00561/1** – Detached double garage/workshop with flat over – Granted conditional permission on 25 June 1992.

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- **91/01199/1** – Outline application for detached dwelling with garage (design, external appearance and landscaping reserved) – Refused on 31 October 1991.
- **91/00734/1** – Formation of additional vehicular access – Granted conditional permission on 22 July 1991.
- **90/00982/1** – Rear conservatory – Granted conditional permission on 9 August 1990.
- **23/02675/OP** – Outline application for residential development – Refused December 2023. The application was refused on the basis that the proposal was considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt, resulting in harm to openness, and that very special circumstances had not been demonstrated.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The proposal seeks planning permission for one detached three-bedroom dwelling with a detached double garage, associated parking, landscaping and ancillary works.
- 3.2. The dwelling has been designed to respond positively to the character of Park Lane, reflecting the scale, form and appearance of surrounding residential development.
- 3.3. Following the pre-application advice, the garage has been moved forward within the site to create a stronger relationship with the existing street frontage and improve the overall site arrangement.
- 3.4. The proposal provides appropriate private amenity space, parking provision, cycle storage, refuse storage and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1. The proposal has been considered against the National Planning Policy Framework (2023 and December 2024 version), including:
 - Section 2: Achieving sustainable development;
 - Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - Section 11: Making effective use of land;
 - Section 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places;
 - Section 13: Protecting Green Belt land;
 - Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
 - Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 4.2. Relevant policies within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011–2031) include:
 - Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire;
 - Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution;
 - Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt;
 - Policy SP8: Housing;
 - Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability;
 - Policy T1: Assessment of Transport Matters;
 - Policy T2: Parking;
 - Policy D1: Sustainable Design;
 - Policy D3: Protecting Living Conditions;
 - Policy NE4: Biodiversity and Geological Sites.

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4.3. The proposal has also been considered against the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2031) policies relating to village character, housing density, sustainable buildings and design and Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Vehicle Parking at New Developments
- Design SPD – July 2011
- Sustainability SDP – Sept 2024

5. Planning Assessment

5.1. **Principle of Development, Previously Developed Land and Green Belt:**

5.1.1. The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and within the wider gap between Old Knebworth and Knebworth. The Green Belt purpose of preventing neighbouring settlements from merging is therefore a relevant consideration.

5.1.2. However, the site represents a contained parcel of land within an established residential context. It forms part of the residential curtilage of No. 77 Park Lane, contains existing permanent structures, and is enclosed by residential development, boundary treatments and existing vegetation. The site is visually separated from the wider countryside and does not represent an open undeveloped parcel extending into the surrounding Green Belt.

5.1.3. The Council's pre-application assessment recognised that the site could reasonably be considered Previously Developed Land and considered that it may reasonably be regarded as Grey Belt. The assessment concluded that the site does not strongly contribute to the Green Belt purposes of checking unrestricted sprawl, preventing neighbouring settlements from merging or preserving the setting and special character of historic towns.

5.1.4. Whilst the site lies within the wider separation between Old Knebworth and Knebworth, the Council recognised that the site forms only a small part of this wider gap and is well contained by existing development and defined boundaries. The proposed single dwelling would therefore have only a minor effect on the visual separation between the settlements and would not weaken the wider settlement gap.

5.1.5. The proposal represents a form of limited infill development within an established residential frontage and would replace existing built development with a modest dwelling. It would not result in a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared with the existing developed nature of the site.

5.1.6. Having regard to the updated provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024 version), the proposal would make efficient use of a contained site that could reasonably be considered Previously Developed Land and may reasonably be regarded as Grey Belt. The development would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt and represents an appropriate form of residential development, subject to the assessment of other planning considerations.

5.2. **Sustainable Location:**

5.2.1. The site benefits from a sustainable relationship with Knebworth. The village provides access to shops, education facilities, leisure facilities and public transport services.

5.2.2. The Council's pre-application response acknowledged that the site is within reasonable walking distance of Knebworth railway station and local facilities and considered that the location may

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satisfy the sustainability requirements of Paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024 version).

5.2.3. The proposal would therefore make efficient use of land in an accessible location.

5.3. Design, Amenity and Highways:

5.3.1. The proposed dwelling has been designed to reflect the established character of Park Lane, with a scale and form consistent with neighbouring residential properties.

5.3.2. The layout provides suitable separation distances, private amenity space and would not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, outlook or daylight.

5.3.3. The proposal utilises the existing vehicular access and provides appropriate parking, cycle storage and refuse arrangements in accordance with adopted standards. High-level vehicle tracking has been undertaken to demonstrate that vehicles can safely enter, manoeuvre within the site and access the proposed double garage.

5.3.4. The previous application received no objection from Hertfordshire County Council Highways, and the current proposal maintains a similar approach.

5.4. Ecology, Landscaping and Sustainability:

5.4.1. The proposal includes a Landscape Plan providing details of planting, boundary treatments and ecological enhancements.

5.4.2. Existing vegetation will be retained where practicable and supplemented with additional planting where appropriate. Ecological enhancements, including opportunities for bird and bat boxes, will be incorporated to provide biodiversity improvements in accordance with Policy NE4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031).

5.4.3. The dwelling has been designed to incorporate sustainable construction principles, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure, photovoltaic panels to south-facing roof slopes, an air source heat pump, water-efficient fittings and a fabric-first approach to energy efficiency in accordance with the Council's Sustainability SPD.

6. Response to Pre-Application Advice

6.1. The application has been amended to directly respond to the Council's pre-application recommendations.

6.2. The key changes and supporting information include:

- The detached garage has been moved forward to improve the building line and overall layout.
- The proposal has been supported by a full planning application rather than an outline submission.
- The planning case has been updated to reflect the Council's conclusions regarding Previously Developed Land and Grey Belt.
- A Landscape Plan has been prepared to demonstrate planting, boundary treatments and ecological enhancements.
- Sustainability measures, including renewable energy technology and electric vehicle charging, have been incorporated.

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- Cycle storage, refuse storage and parking arrangements are identified within the submitted plans.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The proposal represents a modest, well-designed residential development on a contained parcel of land within an established residential frontage.
- 7.2. The Council's pre-application response recognised that the site could reasonably be considered Previously Developed Land and may reasonably be regarded as Grey Belt. The principle of residential development was considered capable of being supported, subject to detailed considerations.
- 7.3. The proposal makes efficient use of a contained site with characteristics consistent with Previously Developed Land, contributes towards housing delivery, responds positively to the character of Park Lane and safeguards neighbouring amenity.
- 7.4. Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought.

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