

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Henry Thomas.....

APPLICATION
REFERENCE

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

APPLICATION SITE

24/02073/FPH

Erection of Childrens play/treehouse on raised platform in rear garden (development has commenced)

139 Baldock Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 2EQ

Submitted Plan Nos

140/01

1.0 Policies

D1

Sustainable design

D2

House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild

D3	Protecting living conditions
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts

2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 17/02878/1HH - Two storey rear extension following demolition of existing single storey rear extension, new front porch and works to loft to facilitate conversion into habitable space.

3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Neighbour Consultation & Site Notice** – One objection received. The grounds of objection include:

- ☐ Overlooking of neighbouring garden and dwelling from the platform and stairs;
- ☐ Safety and security concerns

- 3.2 **Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation** – None received.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The site is a semi-detached two-storey dwelling on the south side of Baldock Road in a residential part of Letchworth Garden City. The site has a long garden, approximately 33m.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Erection of Childrens play/treehouse on raised platform in rear garden (development has commenced)
- 4.2.2 The children's play/treehouse is 1.745m wide, 2.11m deep with a single pitch roof peaking at 3.16m down to 3m high eaves. The tree house is consisting of wood, roof felt and wicker garden screening.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The acceptability of the design of the proposed development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the proposed development would have on the environment.

Design and Appearance:

4.3.2 The objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include those seeking to secure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places). Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that “*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable communities*”. In this regard, Policy D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.

4.3.3 The treehouse as existing is modest in scale with materials that are sympathetic to its garden setting. In my view, it is appropriate in scale for its position on the rear boundary and is sympathetic to the existing tree line.

4.3.4 The proposal complies with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and Section 12 of the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

4.3.5 A core planning principle set out in the NPPF is to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This principle is reflected in the provisions of Policy D3 of the NHLP.

4.3.6 In my view, the modest scale would not occasion any material harm to the neighbouring dwellings and would not contribute to any significant loss of light than the existing tree line.

4.3.7 The neighbour to the rear is approximately 30m away. The tree house itself has a rear wooden wall which would screen the rear neighbour. However, there is some overlooking when using the steps up to the raised platform area. The applicant has proposed some wicker garden screening which in my view would address loss of privacy raised by the neighbour.

4.3.8 The treehouse is open to the front and side and therefore provides visibility of the applicants and attached neighbours garden facing towards the host dwelling. The neighbours currently share a low boundary hedge which provides limited privacy. Due to the length of the garden of approximately 33m, the raised platform does not contribute to any significant loss of privacy to the dwellinghouse itself. Due to the size of the treehouse, its usage would primarily be for children and would be unlikely to be used by adults. As such, on balance, I do not consider that the raised platform would contribute to unacceptable harm towards neighbouring amenity.

4.3.9 Concern is raised relating to the loss of security. However, it is considered that the structure would not materially affect the security of neighbouring properties to the extent that planning permission should be refused.

4.3.9 The proposal therefore complies with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

Highways and Parking:

4.3.8 The proposed development would not result in the creation of any additional bedrooms. Therefore, it is my view that the development would not affect the required parking provision of the dwelling.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.3.10 This is a householder application which is exempt from BNG legislation defined under article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Environmental Implications:

4.3.11 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Section 14 are reflected in Policy D1 of the North Herts Local Plan, which sets out that development proposal should take all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy consumption and waste, retain existing vegetation and propose new appropriate planting, and future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle.

4.3.12 The proposed development, would have no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore would be generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF and Policy D1.

4.4 Conclusion

4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies SP1, SP9, D1, D2 and D3 of the NHLP 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 12 and 14 of the NPPF 2024.

4.5 Alternative Options

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions

4.6.1 N/A

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. A 3m high screen (as shown on the approved plans 140/01) shall be erected on the southeast boundary within 3 months of this decision and shall be permanently maintained thereafter.

Reason: To protect the privacy of the neighbouring property and in accordance with Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 7 January 2025	