

Design & Access Statement

15 The Crescent, Hitchin, SG4 7RE
Retrospective new build

1. Introduction

This application seeks planning permission for the construction of a sympathetically designed new build to the side of No. 15 The Crescent. The site currently comprises a single end-of-terrace dwelling set within a generous plot, together with a detached outbuilding. The property benefits from triple-aspect views over an adjacent pedestrian footpath, a common amenity space, the access road, and the rear garden.

The proposal intends to provide additional accommodation for an extended family, supporting the long-term multigenerational occupation of the property. The new build is designed to preserve and enhance the character of the existing dwelling and the wider street scene.

2. The Site and Surrounding Area

The site lies within St Ippolyts village and is positioned adjacent to a small open green space. The established character of the area comprises short terraces of 2–5 dwellings, typically displaying single or double gable forms at the terrace ends. No. 15 occupies a spacious corner plot with a broad, double-gated front driveway. The dwelling sits approximately 10 metres back from the adjacent highway and around 6 metres from the side boundary.

To the north of the dwelling stands a disused brick outbuilding, formerly in Class A use. This structure is now derelict and used only occasionally for storage. Its removal forms part of this proposal. The total application site area is approximately 420 sqm.



Front view from The Crescent



Side view from the Crescent Common



Rear view from the pedestrian side access path

3. Planning History

A previous application (ref: **15/00230/1**) for a detached property on this plot was refused. The decision cited concerns relating to the development's design, depth, and relationship with No. 13 The Crescent, concluding that the proposal would appear incongruous and unsympathetic to the open character of this part of the village.

The subsequent appeal (**APP/X1925/W/15/3137769**) upheld the refusal, although the Inspector notably accepted that:

- The proposal constituted infill development,
- Such infill would not significantly harm the openness of the locality, and
- The principle of infill development in the Green Belt is acceptable under national policy.

This revised scheme fully addresses the previous concerns through a more restrained and contextually grounded proposal—a joined new build rather than a detached dwelling. It accords with the existing Local Plan, the emerging Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

To respond to past objections, the following design principles have been applied:

- a) A more sympathetic design, closely referencing adjacent architectural forms;
- b) Re-scaling and repositioning the extension to respect the relationship with the site boundary and neighbouring properties;
- c) A revised roofscape that enhances and complements the terrace;
- d) An architectural language that reflects surrounding variation while retaining consistent, recognisable features of the Crescent.

4. The Proposal

4.1 Siting and Layout

The proposed new build is positioned to the side of the existing dwelling, following the removal of the derelict outbuilding. Its siting opens up the boundary adjacent to the pedestrian footpath, improving visibility, permeability, and the sense of openness along this edge.

The new build sits comfortably away from the rear elevation of No. 15, allowing both the host dwelling and the new build to retain functional and private rear garden areas. The massing has been carefully controlled to ensure there is no unacceptable overshadowing or loss of amenity to neighbouring properties.

The layout provides both front and rear aspects to the new build, with a feature side window positioned to overlook the adjacent common amenity space. This provides natural light to the stairwell without creating any issues of overlooking or loss of privacy.

4.2 Appearance and Design

Although No. 15 is an end-terrace dwelling, the wider terrace exhibits a notably asymmetric character. The prevailing architectural pattern features a sequence of single-gable stop-ends and occasional double-gable stop-ends. Recognising this, the new build adopts a double-gable form that reinforces and enhances the architectural rhythm of the terrace row.

Materials and detailing will complement the host dwelling, integrating the new structure seamlessly into its context. The proposal therefore strengthens local distinctiveness without competing visually with neighbouring buildings.



Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation

5. Access

The existing vehicle and pedestrian access arrangements to No. 15 will be retained. The removal of the outbuilding enhances the openness and usability of the side access adjacent to the footpath, creating an improved relationship between the site and the public realm.

The parking area will be shared between the two properties, with the newly constructed dwelling intended to accommodate extended family members. Level thresholds and clear circulation routes ensure that the new building remains easily accessible for family members of all ages.

6. Client Statement

The applicant recognises the site's planning history and the need for a sensitive and policy-compliant design. The long-term intention of the proposal is set out below:

“It has become a family decision that an extension in terms of a new build to this property is required so that more living space can be provided for a growing family. Having grown up in a village that the family children know and love, it is the family's wish to bring up their own children in the same environment, cared for by close family and friends.

Due to the high cost of purchasing another local property, the decision to extend the existing family home into a new build at the side is far more financially viable.

The extension will provide much-needed accommodation for a young and expanding family in an area that supports strong community ties that have been built over many years.”

7. Conclusion

This retrospective proposal of the new build represents a significant improvement on previous schemes, responding directly to earlier concerns while delivering a high-quality, contextual addition to No. 15 The Crescent. The new build respects the scale, form, and character of the village, enhances the appearance of the terrace, and provides essential accommodation for the applicant’s multigenerational family.

It is considered that the application fully accords with local and national planning policy and merits a favourable decision.