

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Thomas Howe.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02012/FPH	Roof extension of two side dormer windows and associated solar panels (Development partially carried out). Reinstatement of the ridge to its original height.	40 Whitehill Road Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 9HP

Submitted Plan Nos

PL.101 PL.102 PL.103 PL.104 PL.105 PL.506 PL.507 PL.508

1.0 Policies

D1 Sustainable design

D2	House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild
D3	Protecting living conditions
T2	Parking
SECN12	Achieving well-designed places
SECN14	Meeting climate change,coastal,flooding

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 No previous site history.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Neighbour Representations –**

1x Objection – 2 Passingham Avenue:

- Harm to outlook from dwelling (No. 2 Passingham Avenue).
- Loss of privacy.
- Visually intrusive form of development.
- Out of scale.
- Sense of overlooking and loss of privacy from side windows.
- Raises concern regarding neighbouring dwellings and their privacy levels.
- Disruption from presence of dormer window.
- Desire for original rear outlook to be re-instated.

3.2 1x Support - No. 44 Whitehill Road:

“Having read the planning application I believe that, subject to the recommended modifications described therein, the proposed development will comply with the requirements raised by the Conservation and Enforcement Team.

I support the application.”

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 No. 40 comprises a detached two storey dwelling off Whitehill Road, adjacent to a public amenity area, on the corner with Passingham Avenue. The site is within Hitchin, with the site sitting towards the brow of Whitehill Road, a long sloping road down to Stevenage Road. Levels drop to the south and east away from the site.

4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Planning Permission is sought for:

- ☐ Roof extension of two side dormer windows and associated solar panels (Development partially carried out).
- ☐ Reinstatement of the ridge to its original height.

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 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design of the development appropriately and positively responds to the site's local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development. Policy D2 of the Local Plan requires extensions to houses and the erection or replacement of buildings to incorporate design that is sympathetic to the main dwelling in terms of its scale, form and orientation and does not harm the character and appearance of the locality around the site. These policies are broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4.3.3 As existing, the dwelling benefits from box dormers to the side roof slopes, forming a single structure given they over sail the ridge of the main dwelling. The dormers are clad in grey horizontal cladding, with white window openings. Up-standing solar panels are present to both dormer windows, angled to face south, and are projecting above the roof level of these dormers. The chimney has been extended in height to exceed the height of the dormer windows.

- 4.3.4 Prior to the development, the building comprised a two-storey dwelling with a gable to the principal and rear elevations, with a single storey extension to the front. The

materials of construction of the original dwelling were brick, red/clay tiles and hanging tile, though the tile was subsequently replaced with white render. Fenestration comprises white UPVC units.

- 4.3.5 Proposed is an amendment to these existing dormers, whereby their scale is reduced to set their principal elevation back to a relatively central position within the roof slope. Solar panels would be located on the now exposed part of the roof, and the materials of these dormer windows would be changed to a hanging tile, colour to match the main roof of the dwelling. The ridge line would be re-instated, and to the front, the dormers would be set below this ridge, to form two separate dormer windows. An up-standing solar panel would be sited to the southern dormer window. A single solar panel would be proposed to the single storey front extension.
- 4.3.6 As observed on site, it is considered that the proposed dormer windows would benefit from some degree of screening from view by the neighbouring dwelling, to the south, and when viewed from the north, by the large tree within the adjacent amenity land. The change to a hanging tile to match the main roof is considered to further mitigate visual impacts arising from the proposed dormer windows, given the dormers would to some extent be read against the roof bulk rather than as additional structures over and above the main roof form of the dwelling. The street scene does not benefit from side dormer windows similar to what is present and proposed, though there is some variation, whereby dwellings either present with gables to their principal or side elevations, and where some dwellings are unique in the street scene with varieties of roof forms, scales and materials of construction. I consider that this is a noticeable change, and would in some degree change the character of the street scene to this part of Hitchin, even with the relative obscurity benefited from their location.
- 4.3.7 I consider that the reduced height of the solar panels would provide some degree of visual improvement, given the reduction in height over the main ridge of the dwelling. As existing, this is considered to appear incongruous given its projection above the ridge, and the reduced scale is considered to provide some degree of visual harm mitigation. The proposed panel to the front extension is not considered to be harmful to character given its modest scale.
- 4.3.8 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The design and appearance are therefore acceptable.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 4.3.9 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development that does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and where necessary encourages the use of mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. This is generally reflected by the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.3.10 The application site is neighboured to the side/south by No. 42 Whitehill Road, and to the side/north by No. 2 and 4 Passingham Avenue. It is noted that objections have been received from the occupiers of No. 2, citing privacy, outlook and dominance issues in their comments. The rear elevation of this neighbour predominantly sits beyond the existing rear elevation of the dormer/dwelling with most windows looking directly out towards open sky, though, the dormer window would likely be visible from these

windows and the amenity spaces serving this property. A photo is submitted by this neighbour demonstrating the view perspective from their rear elevation, up and towards the location of the existing dormer windows.

- 4.3.11 The proposal would result in a reduction in built form, whereby a portion of the dormers would be removed, resulting in a reduction in the scale of built form adjacent to this neighbour. The dormer windows would be constructed from materials to match the main roof, and would partially blend into the roof slope when viewed from the side elevation. No. 2 is set at a marginally higher level than the application site, and therefore, the combination of the reduced scale, the materials of construction and this land level is not considered to result in a 3D bulk or visual dominance that would be unacceptable. Given that the dormer windows as existing and proposed are set against the existing silhouette of the dwelling, I do not consider that they would overshadow this neighbour or be so significantly harmful to outlook that they would be objectionable.
- 4.3.12 The dormer windows would benefit from obscure glazed windows to the side elevations, featuring a top hung fan light that would be non-opening below 1.7m above the finished floor level of the room it would be serving. A window would be proposed to the rear elevation of one of the dormer windows, similar to what is existing on site at present. The obscure glazed and this window were observed during the site visit, and it was not considered that the viewing aspect from these windows, would be harmful or detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. It is noted that the neighbour raises concerns regarding the sense of overlooking as existing and proposed, and this is acknowledged, however, given the degree of obscurity and the lack of opening to these windows below 1.7m, I do not consider that the actual overlooking would be sufficient to be harmful to the amenity of rooms and amenity spaces to the rear of No. 2 Passingham Avenue. The rear window would allow for some views down into neighbouring gardens, and this is noted, however, the existing first floor rear windows already allow for a rearward view into these neighbour gardens, and therefore, the change in outlook created by this additional window is not considered to be harmful to neighbouring amenities. I consider it is prudent to condition that the obscure glazed windows remain as obscure glazed in the interest of preserving the amenity afforded to neighbouring occupiers.
- 4.3.13 The additional bulk created by the proposed dormer windows, over the original dwelling would be noticeable from most adjoining gardens, however, given they would not project beyond the rear elevation of the dwelling, or significantly above the height of the roof, it is not considered that the dormers would be visually intrusive or dominant, and would not significantly overshadow other neighbouring properties. The obscured side windows, and similarity between the rear window to the dormer and the original first floor rear windows are not considered to allow for unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy for other neighbours to the site.
- 4.3.14 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would result in no unacceptable detrimental impact upon neighbouring occupiers and is therefore compliant with Policy D3 of the local plan and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.15 The proposed development would be served by a minimum of two parking spaces that are off-street, therefore impacts to parking provision locally would not be harmful.

Environmental Implications:

- 4.3.16 The proposed development, by virtue of its limited scale in general terms together with the sustainable location 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.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

- 4.3.17 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.

Other Matters:

- 4.3.18 It should be noted that the development does not benefit from a Permitted Development fall-back as existing, and is the subject of an enforcement appeal. Permitted Development rights may be applicable whereby the existing structures are removed and the roof returned to its original state before being re-altered by introducing compliant dormer windows. This hypothetical fall-back position is noted and is a material consideration.
- 4.3.19 This application, subject to approval, would be bound to a 6-month commencement period, and 9-month completion period, following discussions with the planning agent. A consequent of not completing the works within 9 months of the date of this decision would open the Local Planning Authority to investigate a breach of condition.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and is considered to comply with the necessary provisions of the Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. Grant conditional permission.

4.5 **Alternative Options**

- 4.5.1 None applicable.

5.0 **Recommendation**

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

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 6 months of the date of this decision (10 May 2026), and shall be completed within 9 months of the date of this decision (10 August 2026) and shall be retained on site thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of character and design, in accordance with Policies D1 and D3

of the Local Plan 2011-2031.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. The windows to the side elevations of the dormer windows hereby permitted shall be permanently glazed with obscure glass, and non opening below 1.7m above internal finished floor level and shall be retained as such thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the privacy of the occupiers of the adjacent dwelling and to comply with Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage and during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. 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  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 10 November 2025	