

Design & Access Statement

29 & 30 Oughton Head Way
Hitchin
SG5 2LA



Raise existing roof ridge of both properties, insertion of roof windows to front roof face and dormer to rear roof to facilitate conversion of loft space into habitable accommodation. Addition of single storey rear extension to no.29

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support the joint planning application for 29 and 30 Oughton Head Way, Hitchin.

The properties are located within the Butts Close Conservation Area, and as such, careful consideration has been given to preserving the character and appearance of the existing buildings and their surroundings.

The application site comprises of a pair of two storey semi-detached dwellings, with number 30 previously being extended at the rear, reflecting a pattern of development seen within the surrounding area. The buildings are constructed primarily of painted brick, with exposed brick chimneys and a parapet wall serving as a fire break between the two dwellings.

To the rear, the properties benefit from enclosed gardens bounded by natural screening and mature trees, which provide separation from neighbouring properties along Bedford Road. As a result, the rear elevations are not visible from the public realm.

Relevant planning policies have been carefully considered in the proposals to ensure that they preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and do not have a detrimental impact.

SITE CONTEXT

The Butts Close Conservation Area is characterised by a mix of terraced and semi-detached properties with varying ridge heights. There is an abundance of development in the vicinity including box dormers displaying a range of architectural styles, forms, and materials. The area does not follow a rigid or uniform pattern of development, contributing to its informal and diverse character.

Neighbouring Crispin Terrace is located to the East side of No.29 and 30. All first floor windows facing the site are non-habitable and obscured glazed, the terraces gardens are located away from the applications plot on the opposite side of the row.

The application properties are not listed buildings or on the Register of Buildings of Local Interest for Hitchin.

The site is located in close proximity to Hitchin town centre, providing convenient access to a range of local amenities, services, and public transport links.

Access to the properties is taken from Oughton Head Way, where on street parking is provided to serve the dwellings.



Figure 1 – Butts Close Conservation Area Map.

PROPOSALS

Number 29

No. 29 proposes the conversion of the existing unused roof space to provide a habitable bedroom with shower room. The design incorporates a rear facing box dormer set in from the side of the roof and back from the eaves to minimise visual impact.

A modest increase in ridge height is proposed to achieve appropriate headroom; however, as the adjoining property shares identical proportions, this will maintain the balanced and symmetrical appearance. The adjusted ridge line will remain visually recessive, sitting between the existing chimney stacks and therefore not resulting in any adverse impact to the street scene.

The existing parapet detail will be replicated and raised slightly to accommodate the increased ridge height, maintaining a cohesive and streamlined transition between the original structure and the proposed dormers. This approach ensures that the established form and character of the building are preserved.

At ground floor level, a single-storey rear extension is proposed to enhance the internal layout and provide an improved living environment. The extension will facilitate a functional and open-plan arrangement between the lounge and kitchen/dining areas, improving the overall flow of the dwelling. While similar in principle to the existing rear extension at No. 30, the proposed extension at No. 29 will be more modest in scale and constructed within the footprint of the existing rear addition.

Careful consideration has been given to the selection of materials to ensure the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The development is driven by the need to provide a more adaptable living space, supporting modern patterns of living, including home working, which the current layout does not adequately provide.

Number 30

Similar to No. 29, No. 30 proposes the conversion of the existing unused roof space to create a habitable bedroom with shower room. The design mirrors that of the adjoining property, resulting in a symmetrical and cohesive form that contributes positively to the overall appearance of the pair of dwellings and the wider Conservation Area.

The proposal has been developed with regard to the character of the host building and its setting, ensuring a balanced and complementary addition. The need for additional accommodation arises from the requirements of a growing family, making the efficient use of the existing roof space both practical and appropriate.

It is also noted that ground levels rise away from the application site, with neighbouring properties situated at a slightly higher level. As a result, the proposed increase in ridge height would not give rise to any significant impact on the surrounding area.

Overall, the proposed development for both properties responds positively to Policy 28 of the Local Plan, Policy D2 of the Emerging Local Plan, and aligns with the core design principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

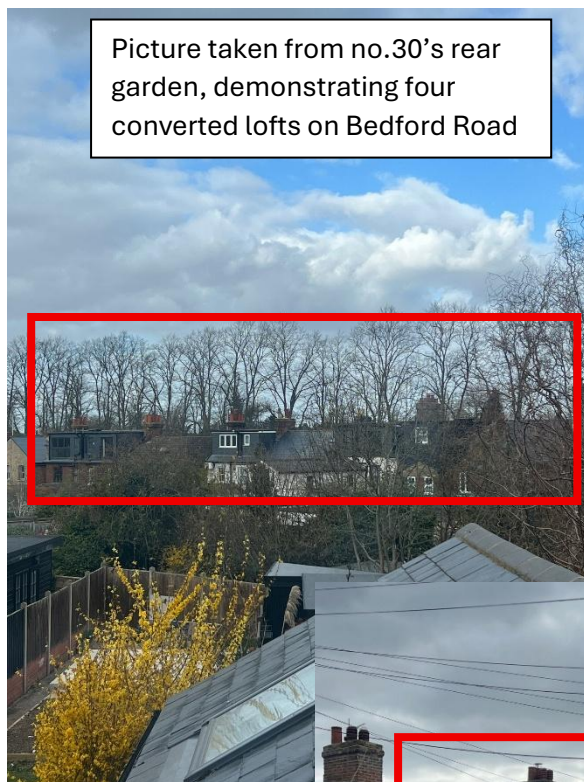


Figure 2 – 3D View of No.29 & 30, illustrating the balanced design between the two properties.

MATERIALS

- Painted brickwork to match existing
- White Render to no.29 Rear Extension
- Slate Tiles to Dormer Walls
- GRP Resin Flat Roof
- Slate Roof Tiles colour & style to match existing
- UPVC Mock Sash Windows
- Aluminium Roof Windows

LOFT CONVERSIONS WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY



Picture taken from no.30's rear garden, demonstrating four converted lofts on Bedford Road



Converted loft at no.25 Oughton Head Way facing onto no.29's garden – 20/00946/FPH



Converted loft on Bedford Street, facing from front of No 29 & 30



Planning permission was granted in 2021 for Nos. 49 & 51 Bedford Road (Ref: 21/0040/FP) for a comparable form of development, including an increase in ridge height and the introduction of rear box dormers.

The officer's report for that application acknowledged the varied ridge heights within the surrounding area and concluded that, given the dormers were positioned to the rear, the proposals would not result in harm to the character of the local vernacular or the conservation area.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposed development has been carefully designed to respond sensitively to the character and context of the surrounding area. The scale, form, and detailing of the loft conversion and rear extension ensure that the proposals remain subordinate to the host buildings and preserve the overall appearance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings.

Furthermore, it is noted that there are a number of properties within the surrounding area that feature box dormers of a similar design and appearance. As such, the proposed dormers would not appear incongruous but instead reflect an established pattern of development within the Conservation Area.

Taking into account the existing variations in built form, the limited visibility of the rear elevations, and the rising land levels up the road, the proposals would not result in harm to neighbouring amenity or the character and appearance of the Butts Close Conservation Area. The development therefore represents a considered and appropriate response to both the site constraints and the needs of the occupants.

March 2026