

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



34 Gaping Lane, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2JQ

**Householder planning application:
Insertion of rear dormer window (retrospective)**

September 2025



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by INTOUCH PLANNING LTD, to support a householder planning application for insertion of a rear dormer window, as a retrospective application. The site address is 34 Gaping Lane, Hitchin SG5 2JQ.
- 1.2 The Statement provides an assessment of the planning policy framework relevant to the proposal, as well as other relevant material considerations, based on a contextual understanding of the site and the locality.

2. Site description

- 2.1 The site comprises a two storey mid-terrace dwellinghouse, within the main urban area of Hitchin. The dwellinghouse is not listed and is not located within, or adjacent to a Conservation Area. The site has vehicular access from a rear driveway, accessed from Bedford Street.
- 2.2 The neighbouring properties are Nos. 32 and 36 to either side, with No. 32 being the end-terrace, which has a side dormer window. No. 44 has a rear dormer window, as the opposite end terrace property. The following Figure shows an aerial view of the site.





Figure 1 – Aerial view of the site

3. Planning history

- 3.1 14/01556/1HH - Single storey side extension – Planning permission granted.

4. The existing development

- 4.1 The existing development comprises a rear dormer window, as an L shape with part on the main roofslope and part on the outrigger.
- 4.2 The materials are of dark grey composite cladding in woodgrain effect, a dark grey membrane roof and black windows.
- 4.3 The extension provides an enlarged loft conversion which was originally converted some 20 years ago. The rear room is a home office room, with bathroom provided to the originally created bedroom in the loft conversion.



- 4.4 The following Figures show the existing site plan, second floor plan and elevations.

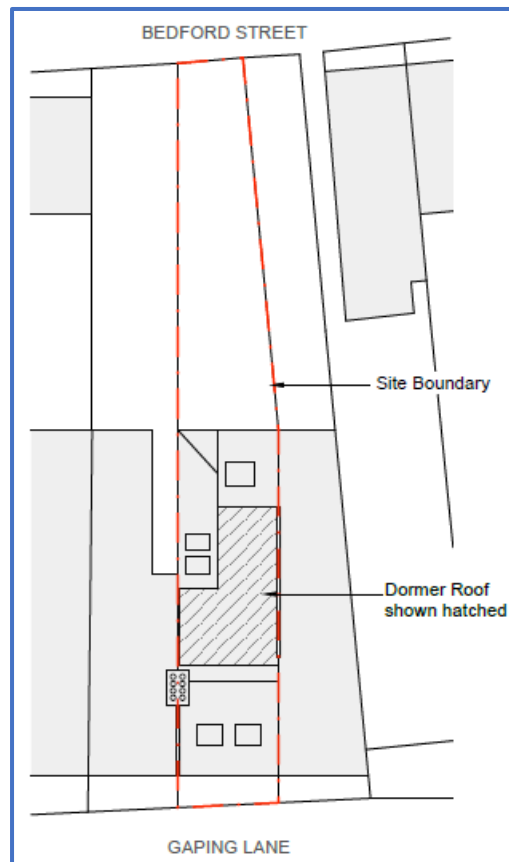


Figure 2 – Existing site plan

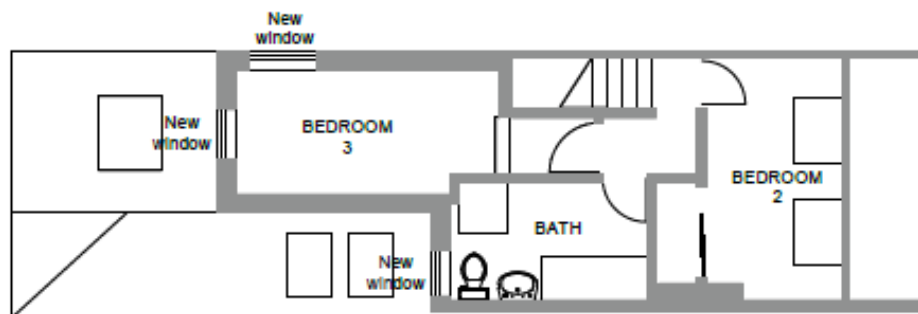


Figure 3 – Existing second floor plan





Figure 4 – Existing front and rear elevations

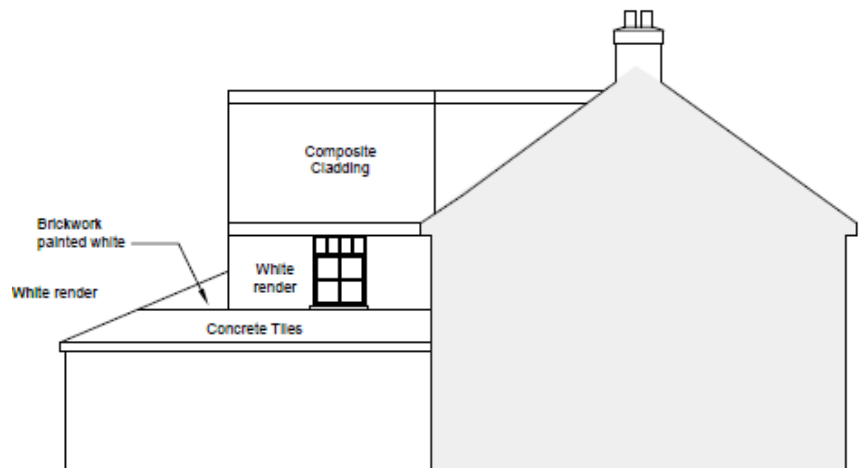


Figure 5 – Existing left side elevation



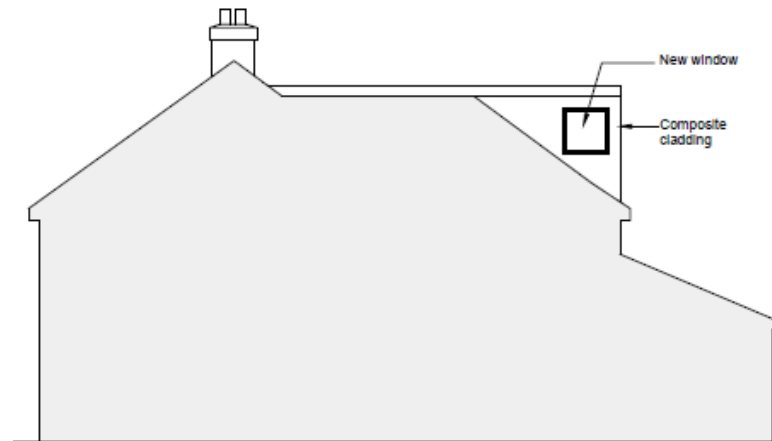


Figure 6 – Existing right side elevation



Figure 7 – View of existing rear elevation with rear dormer window





Figure 8 – View of existing rear elevations of the adjacent properties

4.5 The proposal consists of the following drawings:

- 011 - Pre-existing and existing site plans
- 012 - Pre-existing floor plans and elevations
- 013 - Existing floor plans and elevations

5. Relevant planning policy

5.1 The following policies within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan are considered to be of relevance to this application, followed by relevant Sections of the NPPF:

5.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031)

- SP1 Sustainable development in North Herts
- SP9 Design and Sustainability
- D1 Sustainable design
- D2 House extensions and replacement dwellings
- D3 Protecting living conditions
- T1 Assessment of transport matters
- T2 Parking



- 5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance
Vehicle Parking at New Development
- 5.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Section 12. Achieving well-designed places

6. Design and appearance

- 6.1 In regard to the design of the proposal, the objectives of the NPPF include seeking to secure the creation of high quality, sustainable buildings and places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places). This 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 Herts Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.
- 6.2 The existing roof extension is considered appropriate in design, scale, and appearance, being subordinate and subservient in the overall roofscape of the dwelling. It is considered that the addition has no harm to the appearance of the dwelling within the street scene.
- 6.3 The works are very close to being permitted development. The rear of the extension is permitted to be up to the rear wall line of the first floor under permitted development. It is only not set up by 200mm from the side and rear eaves lines on the outrigger part of the dormer, that makes the overall size not permitted development. The first dormer element on the main roofslope is set up by 200mm and so would be permitted development for this part, in terms of sizing.
- 6.4 It is strongly asserted that this actual difference between the existing development and what would otherwise be permitted development, causes no harm to the visual amenity of resulting appearance on the property, or



upon the character of the area. The addition is set within the overall terrace, whereby the non-200mm set in feature is unseen from public views of the terrace, from Gaping Lane.

- 6.5 The addition is well screened by the roofline of No. 32, from the only view further along Gaping Lane. This is shown in the following photograph and demonstrates the perfectly acceptable appearance of the roof extension in the street scene.



Figure 9 – View of the development from Gaping Lane (on right, with side dormer window at No. 32 to left)

- 6.6 In regard to the composite cladding in dark grey – this is widely seen in the local area, featured on the dormer windows at many properties. Examples of where this modern and attractive cladding has been used upon a clay tiled roof are, at 58 Gaping Lane and 41 Talbot Street.
- 6.7 Therefore, the material and overall appearance is considered acceptable and matching to various other examples of the same dormer roof extensions in the locality. Images of these examples are shown below.





**Figure 10 – Examples of grey clad dormer windows on clay tiled roofs
at 58 Gaping Lane (left) and 41 Talbot Street (right)**

6.8 In regard to Section 12 of the NPPF, the development does indeed function well in providing a suitable sized bedroom or home office area, with the subordinate design adding to the overall quality of the area, for the lifetime of the development. The scheme is considered to be visually attractive as a result of the good architecture and high quality materials, with no harm upon the visual amenity of the street scene.

6.9 Overall, the design, form and appearance are in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 of the NPPF and with Policies SP9, D1 and D2 of the Local Plan.

7. Impact upon neighbouring living conditions

7.1 The objectives of the NPPF seek to ensure that developments secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers (Section 12 – Achieving



well-designed places). This principle is reflected in the provisions set out in Policy D2 and D3 of the North Herts Local Plan.



- 7.2 Policy D3 of the North Herts Local Plan sets out that planning permission will be granted for developments proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions.
- 7.3 The proposal is considered to have no detrimental impact on the living conditions of any neighbouring properties. The roof extension has no dominating impact upon any rear windows or amenity spaces. The rear window faces down the garden only. There is a flank elevation window but this only faces the rearmost part of the adjacent gardens, causing no loss of privacy for neighbouring occupiers. The addition therefore has no impacts of dominance, loss of light or privacy upon any nearby dwellings.
- 7.4 Therefore, the development would not result in any harmful impact upon the living conditions of any neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is in accordance with Local Plan policy and, with Section 12 of the NPPF.

8. Access and parking provision

- 8.1 In regard to access, this is to remain unchanged from the existing rear access driveway for one vehicle. It is considered that the development retains sufficient levels of off street car parking provision for the enlarged dwelling. There has been no increase in bedroom number, as the pre-existing was four bedrooms with the loft conversion already providing to bedrooms to the second floor. The existing works have essentially relocated a bedroom on this floor and created a central bathroom.
- 8.2 The development therefore has no adverse impact upon the highway network and is in accordance with Policy T1 and T2 of the Local Plan and with the Parking SPD, within this highly sustainable location being so close to the plentiful amenities of Hitchin town centre.



9. Conclusion

- 9.1 In conclusion of the development, the existing dormer window roof extension has no harm upon the visual amenity of the street scene, or character of the property and the overall area.
- 9.2 The works are extremely close to being permitted development, with the difference being undiscernible between the permitted development requirements and the as built works. There would be no publicly viewed benefit in altering the addition to achieve this very minor difference.
- 9.3 The overall size, design and appearance causes no harm to the visual amenity of the locality and is largely unseen from the Gaping Lane street scene. The materials are of contemporary but high quality and of an attractive appearance.
- 9.4 The development has no harm upon the living conditions of any neighbouring properties by way of dominance, loss of light or loss of privacy. Parking provision is ample as existing on site within this highly sustainable location.
- 9.5 The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the provisions of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable for the grant of planning permission accordingly.

