

To:

North Herts Council

22.07.2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Objection to Application Reference: 24/01405/FPH

This objection letter is written on behalf of our client Mr Tony Bains, a longstanding resident at 10 Deacons Way, adjacent to 11 Deacons Way, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2UF ('the Site') subject of planning application reference 24/01405/FPH for a two storey side extension and recover existing garage roof ('The Proposal').

We have listed separate reasons for objection to the Application under appropriate headings.

The main considerations for this objection letter are:

- Character, Design & Residential Amenity
- Parking

Character, Design & Residential Amenity

Policy context

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2023 states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Development should:

- a) Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) Be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 states that the Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. The Council support new development where it is well designed and located and responds positively to its local context.

Policy D2: House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings states that planning permission for house extensions will be granted where:

- a) The extension is sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, roof type, window details, materials and the orientation of the main dwelling; and
- b) The extensions do not dominate adjoining properties and:
 - (i) it is well related to the floor levels of adjoining properties,
 - (ii) there is an appropriate distance between the proposed extension and the windows of the adjoining properties; and
 - (iii) spacing between buildings ensures there is no harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene.

Assessment

The proposed extension is positioned very close to the boundary with the neighbouring property. This proximity creates an overbearing impact, reducing the light available and contributing to a sense of enclosure. The proposed bathroom window would overlook no 10 whilst the snug windows on the ground floor would directly overlook the driveway area. This is in direct conflict with Policy D2, which requires extensions not to dominate adjoining properties.

Given the position of the property at the end of the drive, the extension's positioning and massing will be highly visible from Deacons Way and no 10. Given the angle of the properties Nos 10 and 11 Deacons Way will be read as a single large dwelling leading to a perception of over development. The visual prominence of the extension will disrupt the existing streetscape, contributing to an overdevelopment appearance that is out of character with the surrounding properties. This is contrary to the objectives of Policy D2 with requires extensions to maintain appropriate distances to ensure no harm to the character and appearance of the streetscape.

Furthermore, the irregular shape of the site, combined with the proposed extension's positioning, which reduces the legibility of the existing garage and departs from the prevailing urban form, results in a layout that appears cramped and incongruent with the existing structures. The proposed extension projects forward from the existing building line at no 10 contributing further towards a feeling of a cramped appearance. This detracts from the visual coherence and character of the area, whilst also causing a detrimental impact upon no 10 visual amenity, contrary to the objectives of Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

Parking

Policy Context

Policy SP6: Sustainable transport of the Local Plan states that the Council will deliver accessibility improvements and promote the use of sustainable transport modes insofar as reasonable and practicable. The Council will e) Assess development proposals against the parking standards set out in this Plan and having regard to relevant supplementary advice.

Assessment

The proposed extension removes one parking space whilst simultaneously reducing the availability of on-plot parking, which is a concern in a small cul-de-sac where the provision of parking is very constrained. The reduction in available parking exacerbates existing parking pressures, leading to increased on-street parking and congestion, which is contrary to sustainable development practices and Policy SP6.

Conclusion

The proposals result in an unacceptable, harmful impacts related upon character, design and residential amenity as well as parking. They are contrary to Local Plan Policy as well as the Policies in the NPPF.

Due to the reasons above we propose that the Application be refused. Please acknowledge receipt of this objection by return.

Yours Sincerely,

Planning Voice

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