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| <b>DELEGATED FILE NOTE</b> |
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**CASE OFFICER:** ...Henry Thomas.....

| APPLICATION<br>REFERENCE | BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF<br>DEVELOPMENT                                                               | APPLICATION SITE                                                   |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25/00396/FPH             | Single storey front, side and rear<br>extensions following demolition of<br>existing garage/store | 25 Harkness Way<br><br>Hitchin<br><br>Hertfordshire<br><br>SG4 0QJ |

**Submitted Plan Nos**

Location Plan   Proposed Site Plan B   12324-01   12324-02   12324-03 C   12324-04 A   12324-05 C

**1.0      Policies**

|        |                                         |
|--------|-----------------------------------------|
| D1     | Sustainable design                      |
| D2     | House exts, replcmnt dwellings outbuild |
| D3     | Protecting living conditions            |
| SECN12 | Achieving well-designed places          |
| T2     | Parking                                 |
| SP1    | Sustainable development in North Herts  |

## 2.0 **Relevant Site History**

- 2.1 24/02299/LDCP - Insertion of rear box dormer window with Juliet balcony including first and second floor side windows to facilitate conversion of loft space into habitable accommodation  
**Granted.**
- 2.2 24/02298/FPH - Single storey front; side and rear extensions following demolition of existing garage/store and hard landscaping works  
**Refused.**

## 3.0 **Representations**

- 3.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – None received.

## 4.0 **Planning Considerations**

### 4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1.1 The application property is a semi detached dwelling located on the west side of Harkness Way. There is a single flat roofed garage sited on the shared boundary with no 23, set back from the front elevation of the property. This is mirrored by a similar structure at no 23. Due to a change

in levels as Harkness Way rises from south to north, the application property and garage sit at a higher level than no 23.

- 4.1.2 The application site is within the settlement boundary for Hitchin where development is generally acceptable subject to policy requirements.

#### 4.2 **Proposal**

- 4.2.1 Single storey front, side and rear extensions following demolition of existing garage/store.

- 4.2.2 The approximate dimensions of the extensions would be:

☐ The front extension would be 6m wide, 1m deep with a front gable and a lean-to roof with eaves at 2.5m and a ridge at 3.45m. It would provide a canopy over the existing front door and over the proposed side extension storeroom doors.

☐ The side extension would be approximately 15m deep, 2.25m wide with a flat roof at the front.

☐ The rear extension would form an L-shape and would join the side extension. This extension would be approximately 4m deep along the boundary with No. 27 and 7.2m along the boundary with No. 23. It would span the full width of the plot of 8.4m and would have a flat roof at 3.5m / 2.92m.

☐ The section of the side / rear extension which replaces the existing rear garage outbuilding would have a lean-to roof and sits at a slightly lower ground level. The roof would have eaves at 2.8m and would join the flat roof at 2.92/ 3.5m in height.

- 4.2.3 The proposed materials are: brick to match existing, roof tiles at front to match existing, flat roof and white uPVC windows and doors to match existing.

- 4.2.4 The proposal is a resubmission of 24/02298/FPH. The scheme has been amended to propose a lean-to roof instead of a flat roof for the deeper element of the side/rear extension which replaces the existing rear garage outbuilding. This element would now sit at a lower ground level. Similarly the proposed patio to the rear would now sit at ground level and therefore has not been included within the description of works.

#### 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 The objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include those seeking to secure the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places (Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places). Paragraph 131 of the NPPF 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 Hertfordshire Local Plan are consistent with the objectives set out within the NPPF.
- 4.3.3 Overall the proposal responds neutrally to the site’s local context. There is a degree of uniformity in the streetscene. There are examples of side and rear extensions in the locality although none appear to be as substantial as the proposals at no 25.
- 4.3.4 The proposals would be sympathetic to the host dwelling in part. The lean-to style front roof feature and porch roof detail would be adequately sympathetic to the host dwelling and streetscene. Matching materials would help to link the new extensions to the host dwelling and maintain the brick, tile roof and white windows that are characteristic of this part of Harkness Way.
- 4.3.5 The side extension would partially dominate the neighbouring property along the shared boundary line due to being built up to the boundary and the changes in levels, but is unobjectionable.
- 4.3.6 The single storey structure would maintain some degree of spacing and a sky view would be maintained from the street.
- 4.3.7 However, the overall size of the extensions would not be in proportion with the host dwelling and would not therefore meet the requirement of Policy D2 for extensions to be sympathetic to the existing house in terms of proportion. The flat roof form is also extensive and would not sit entirely sympathetically with the host dwelling. There would be a degree of overdevelopment of the original dwelling given the substantial increase in size of the ground floor of the property.
- 4.3.8 Where a proposal does not meet the requirements of the policies set out in the Local Plan or the NPPF, an assessment of the degree of harm caused by the failure of the proposal to meet the policy requirements needs to be carried out.
- 4.3.9 In this application, it is considered that whilst harm would be caused by the overall size and flat roof form of the side and rear extensions, the harm would not be sufficient to warrant refusal of the proposal on this basis. Most of the harm caused would be at the rear of the property and not particularly visible from the streetscene. It would incorporate the existing flat roof form of the garage. There would be glimpses of the expanse of side elevation from the street but the rear element would be screened from view from the public realm. The side element is single storey and would maintain the ‘sky view’ gap between the semi detached properties. The plot is substantial to the rear and adequate garden space would remain. There are examples of similar, though not so substantial, extensions in the locality including building up to the side boundary.

- 4.3.10 In view of the above, it is considered that on balance, although some harm would be caused due to the size and form of the extensions in terms of the design and appearance, this harm would not be sufficient to warrant a refusal on this basis. The proposal is therefore unobjectionable in terms of design and appearance.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

- 4.3.11 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.

*Potential Impact on No 27*

- 4.3.12 The rear extension closest to no 27 would not project beyond the rear extension of that property and would be single storey. The deeper extension would be set sufficiently far off the boundary with no 27 that no harm would be caused. The side facing bifold doors and any potential overlooking as a result of the hard landscaping works of the proposed patio would be screened from no 27 by the 1.8m boundary fence.
- 4.3.13 The single storey front extension is modest in depth and would not cause any unacceptable harm.
- 4.3.14 Overall the proposal would not result in any unacceptable harm to the occupiers of no 27.

*Potential Impact on No 23*

- 4.3.15 No 23 sits at a lower level than no 25. The height of the side and rear extensions would therefore appear more pronounced at no 23 due to the change in levels. There is also a change in gradient as the garden of no 25 extends rearwards, resulting in the rear projection along the boundary with no 23 increasing in height above ground level as the garden slopes away to the rear.
- 4.3.16 Within the officer report for the previous application under ref: 24/02298/FPH, the following harm was identified warranting refusal:

*“Due to the depth of the rear projection and its height above the ground level of no 23, potential overlooking could occur from the rear facing bifold doors and particularly from the raised steps down to the garden. This would cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers and fails to meet the requirements of Local Plan policy D3 and the provisions of the*

*NPPF. The harm could not be mitigated through appropriate boundary treatment due to the change in levels between the properties and the drop in gradient rearwards at the application property. It is noted that there is an existing window in the garage/store. However, the proposed bifold doors would be at a higher level and be larger, with raised steps down into the garden, significantly increasing the degree of potential overlooking from the existing situation. It is also noted that the rear elevation is stepped back from the existing rear elevation of the garage of no 23. However, the degree of overlooking would remain unacceptable and be particularly pronounced on the steps down to the garden."*

- 4.3.17 This proposal has been amended to lower the ground floor level and rear patio of the deeper part of the rear / side extension. In my view, this alteration in combination with a 1.8m high close boarded fence would be sufficient to overcome the previous reason for refusal.
- 4.3.18 The proposal would bring the side elevation of no 25 up to the boundary with no 23, resulting in a potentially increased feeling of bulk and overbearing. This could be exacerbated by the change in levels at the property. However, the extensions would be single storey and the area of no 23 affected by the potential increased feeling of enclosure and bulk would be the side access area leading to the rear of the property. This area is not significant to the enjoyment of the amenity of the property. The potential increase in feeling of enclosure by building up to the boundary would therefore be unobjectionable.
- 4.3.19 Whilst there could be some degree of light lost to the ground floor side facing windows at no 23, these windows are understood to serve the hall and a WC which are non-habitable rooms. Potential harm caused to non habitable is generally awarded less weight in the balance of the assessment of impact and harm caused. Any harm arising to the loss of light to these rooms would be unobjectionable.
- 4.3.20 The orientation of the properties means that there would be no unacceptable overshadowing as a result of the proposal.
- 4.3.21 The proposal therefore complies with Policy D3 of the Local Plan.

#### Highways and Parking:

- 4.3.22 The application site has hardstanding to the front of the dwelling which provides parking space for two vehicles. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy T2 of the Local Plan.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.3.23 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.

#### Environmental Implications:

4.3.24 Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The principles set out in Section 14 are reflected in Policy D1 of the North Herts Local Plan, which sets out that development proposal should take all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy consumption and waste, retain existing vegetation and propose new appropriate planting, and future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle.

4.3.25 The proposed development, 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 and Policy D1.

#### 4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies SP1, SP9, D1, D2 and D3 of the NHLP 2011-2031 and Sections 2, 12 and 14 of the NPPF 2023.

#### 4.5 **Alternative Options**

4.5.1 N/A

#### 4.6 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

4.6.1 N/A

#### 5.0 **Recommendation**

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

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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 extension(s) hereby permitted shall be built in external materials to match the existing dwellinghouse unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the locality and to comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 to 2031.

**Proactive Statement:**

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. 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.

|                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Signed</p> <p></p> <p>Anne McDonald</p> | <p>Development Management<br/>North Hertfordshire District Council<br/>Council Offices<br/>Gernon Road<br/>Letchworth<br/>Herts<br/>SG6 3JF</p> |
| <p>Determining Officer</p> <p><b>Date:</b> 31 March 2025</p>                                                                |                                                                                                                                                 |