

# Fuller Long

2nd April 2025  
Planning Department  
North Herts Council

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Householder Application for Retrospective Planning Consent at The Old Vicarage, Church Road, Kings Walden, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8JX**

This letter is written in support of a householder planning application on behalf of Mr Chris Parsons, the freehold owner of the property. The application seeks retrospective consent for the replacement of existing windows within the property, to improve their appearance and energy efficiency.

This letter sets out the proposal, as well as providing an assessment of the scheme against relevant national and local planning policy.

This letter is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- Application forms;
- Window specification sheet; and
- Suite of application drawings.

### **Site and Surrounds**

The site comprises a private detached residential dwelling and garage surrounded by garden land with a large driveway to the front. It is set back from the road with no other dwellings in close proximity. The property is located off Church Road, Kings Walden.

The site is surrounded by farmland to the north and west. To the east and south the site is bound by Church Road which leads into Kings Walden. Kings Walden itself is characterised by large residential dwellings set back from the road within large plots.

The site is identified in local planning policy as falling within the Green Belt.

The property is not listed, nor within a Conservation Area.

### **Planning History**

The property benefits from a recent planning consent (reference 24/02033/FPH), gained on the 8th of November 2024, for the following development:

*"Single storey rear extension; attached front garage and single storey side extension to provide 1-bed ancillary annexe following demolition of existing garage".*

The extensions are to allow for the applicant's mother to live with the family and the modifications which are the subject of this application are associated with the desire of the applicant to improve the aesthetics and efficiency of the property.

### **Proposal**

The proposals reflect the replacement of the existing windows throughout the property. Due to a miscommunication with the builders the windows have already been installed and as such this application is retrospective in nature. The previous windows were of poor quality, in uPVC and an unattractive faux wood plastic brown finish. Photos are provided below (Images 1 and 2).

The replacement windows are more energy efficient aluminium frame units, with thermal breaks to minimise heat loss, to meet the latest building regulations as well as to improve the aesthetics of the property and match the surrounding houses.

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The window specifications accompany this application and an indicative image of the replacement windows is provided below (Image 3).

In total, 14 windows have been replaced. These are in the exact same locations and of the exact same dimension and form as the previous windows. The difference will therefore only appear as a change in colour from brown to white.



**Image 1 and 2. Existing windows**



**Image 3. Indicative image of replacement windows from supplier**  
(applicants' windows are not leaded)

## Planning Policy Context

The Development Plan for Hart District Council comprises:

- The North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (adopted November 2022);

Other material considerations include:

- The North Herts Design Supplementary Planning Document (2011);
- The North Herts Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2024);
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024); and
- National Planning Policy Guidance (2024).

The most relevant planning policies are outlined below.

## Local Plan

**Policy D1** relates to **Sustainable Design**. It states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals which respond positively to the site's local context, and which seek to maximise sustainability. It also states that it will support proposals which future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle, as well as those which reduce energy consumption and waste.

**Policy SP5** deals with the **Countryside and the Green Belt**. It confirms that development proposals will only be permitted where they would not result in inappropriate development or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated.

**The Design Supplementary Planning Document** recognises the importance of high quality design, using high quality materials which are appropriate for the site and surrounding area.

Ensuring properties are energy efficient is a priority on both a national and local level. **The Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2024)** focuses on achieving sustainable communities including through the incorporation of high quality design. It notes the importance of having air tight windows and buildings to minimise heat loss and reduce energy consumption.

## Planning Consideration

The proposals are minor in nature and focus solely on replacing poor quality windows. The property is not listed, nor within a conservation area. The proposals also do not represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt. However, given that the new windows proposed are different in appearance to the existing the council have advised that the replacement windows do not fall within permitted development rights and planning consent is required. As such, the assessment of their appropriateness focuses on their impact on the character and appearance of the property and wider area. An assessment against the relevant local plan policies is provided below.

## Character and Appearance

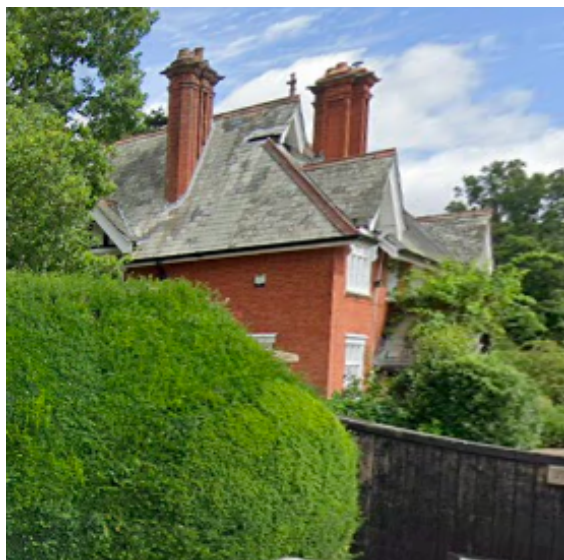
The previous windows were uPVC in a faux wood brown colour. They were not original and are not in keeping with surrounding properties where windows tend to be white (Images 4 - 5 below). They did little to compliment the red brick of the existing building or to add definition to the façade. The replacement windows provide slimmer more elegant frames with a flush wood framed appearance, though they will be constructed of aluminium for durability. The replacement windows are of a high quality design and replace the plastic cheap finish with a far more sophisticated finish which will enhance the character of the property.

The property is set back from the street and the windows will be barely visible from the street scene. The change will therefore have a very limited impact on the character of the surrounding area and this minimal impact, in our opinion, is only positive.

The size and form of the windows will remain as existing, and no additional windows are proposed.

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It is therefore considered that the proposals comply with the councils policies and SPD's in terms of design and appearance, and respect and enhance the setting of the property and surrounding area.



Images 4 and 5. Properties on Church Rd with white windows, typical of the surrounding properties

## Energy Efficiency

Improving sustainability and energy efficiency of properties is a national and local priority. Replacing the existing poor quality uPVC windows with new, secure aluminium windows directly addresses these aims. The previous windows were drafty and in varying states of decay. Their replacements, which incorporate thermal breaks to minimise heat loss, will significantly improve the energy efficiency of the property to meet the latest building regulation requirements.

## Conclusions

The proposals seek retrospective consent to replace the previous poor quality uPVC windows within the property. The replacement windows will be more energy efficient and more appropriate to the character of the property and surrounding area. The property is set back from the road and therefore the visual impact is limited and the proposals minor in nature.

It has been demonstrated that the proposals comply with the development plan and it is therefore politely requested that planning permission is granted.

Your sincerely

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Fiona Flint  
Planning Consultant  
FullerLong