

Householder Application

## design and access statement

Chester Cottage, Pig Lane, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 7PA

Proposed new roof with raised ridge and dormers (front and rear),  
new single storey rear extension and changes to fenestration.

On behalf of [REDACTED]

Ref: FL/CC/das

Brian Parker  
BA MSc MRTPI

MRP Planning  
10 Orient Close, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1AJ



## Preliminaries

I have a BA (Hons) in Geography and an MSc in Urban and Rural Planning and I am a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

The information and evidence in this Statement have been prepared and are given in accordance with the guidance of the RTPI and I confirm that the views expressed are my genuine professional opinions.

Brian Parker, July 2023



# 1 Introduction

1.1 A Design and Access Statement is usually required with a planning application to set out the case for the proposal. This Statement seeks to explain the policy context and the design principles that have shaped the proposal, which have also been informed by the reasons behind the Refusal of an earlier scheme under Ref: 3/22/1808. The Statement is considered proportionate for a household application.

# 2 The Site and Proposal

2.1 The Site is a residential plot comprising a single detached dwelling, between houses to the north and south with an existing vehicular access off Pigs Lane. The immediate vicinity includes a number of dwellings of various sizes, clustered to the north of Twyford House and set within a rural area between the River Stort and Bishops Stortford (see Figs 1 and 2 below). Many of the current dwellings appear to have been converted from other uses (e.g. from farm buildings) and extended over the years.



Fig. 1 The site sits amongst a cluster of dwellings, many apparently converted (Source: East Herts Council GIS)



Fig. 2 Beyond the residential curtilages, the area is rural in nature (source: © Google Earth)

- 2.2 The proposal is for a new roof with a raised ridge and two dormers (one of the front elevation and one on the rear), to construct a new single-storey rear extension and changes to the fenestration.
- 2.3 As referenced above, an earlier scheme for a much more substantial proposal was Refused under Ref: 3/22/1808 (See Appendix 1 – Decision Notice). Responding positively to the Council’s main concerns and criticisms as set out in the Officer Report (Appendix 2), the current scheme has been significantly reduced in bulk and scale. In particular, instead of nine major dormers (and two minor ones on the rear roof), the present scheme proposes just two.
- 2.4 Consequently, whilst the ridge height of the roof has been raised by a similar amount to accommodate the two dormers, the roofscape is entirely different from the 2002 scheme. And whilst this proposal, too, is for a gabled roof, this must be seen within the context of the immediate vicinity, where gabled roofs proliferate. In that regard, I agree with the Officer Report when it stated that whilst the change from hipped to gable would “alter the character of the existing bungalow” that this would not “be to its detriment”.
- 2.5 Please refer to drawings © Steve Johnston, Divine Design Consultants Ltd:  
Xxx  
Xxx  
Xxx  
Etc.
- 2.6 I consider the information in this Statement and the drawings listed above to be sufficient. If the Council believes additional information is required, please advise me at the earliest opportunity.

### 3 Planning Policy and Context

3.1 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF confirms that “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”. The relevant elements of the Council’s Development Plan are considered to be the 2018 District Plan and the All Saints, Central, South and Part of Thorley Neighbourhood Plan.

#### East Herts District Plan 2018

3.2 The most relevant policies are considered to be:

GBR1 – Green Belt;

DES4 – Design of Development;

HOU11 – Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings, Residential Outbuildings and Works within Residential Curtilages;  
and

TRA3 – Parking Provision.

#### All Saints, Central, South and Part of Thorley Neighbourhood Plan (“the NP”)

3.3 Whilst this Adopted NP is part of the development plan and, so, a material consideration, there are no obvious specific policies which apply. The general objective of high-quality design is a persistent thread in the NP but the two policies which may be considered of most relevance, HDP 1 and HDP, make no reference to ‘extensions’ or ‘householder’ applications. As HDP1 concentrates on the redevelopment of brownfield and HDP2 is concerned with (a) conservation areas; (b) major schemes; and (c) innovative schemes, this Statement will focus on the District Plan and the previous Reasons for Refusal.

#### The NPPF

3.4 The current NPPF was published in July 2021, replacing previous versions which themselves replaced the previous range of Guidance Notes and Policy Statements. Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states, amongst other things, that the Framework “... is a material consideration in planning decisions”. A consultation version of a revised NPPF has been published but currently carries no weight. In any case, in my view none of the proposed changes would affect how this scheme should be considered.

3.5 Whilst most of sections of the NPPF are relevant to this Application, I consider that the more important ones are:

“Achieving sustainable development”, Section 2;

“Decision-making”, Section 4;

“Making effective use of land”, Section 11;

“Achieving well-designed places”, Section 12; and

“Protecting Green Bet Land,”, Section 13.

#### Planning Practice Guidance (“the PPG”)

3.6 The PPG was published on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 (with updates since) and replaced all previous planning guidance documents.

## 4 Addressing the previous Reasons for Refusal

- 4.1 The underlying reason for the three elements of the previous refusal (Appendix 1), was the scale of the extensions. This, the Council concluded, caused the scheme to be unacceptable in Green Belt terms and also because of the nature and impact of the scheme's design.
- 4.2 The current proposal has learned from that Refusal decision by reducing the scale significantly. Most notably the bulk of the roof conversion has been reduced dramatically. Nine dormers have been limited to two, the proposed bedrooms in the loft area have been removed and the GIA on the first floor decreased by c. 100m<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.3 The substantial reduction in the number and scale of dormers has numerous effects. For a start it makes the scheme compliant with Policy HOU11 (d) of the District Plan which states: "roof dormers may be acceptable if appropriate to the design and character of the dwelling and its surroundings. Dormers should generally be of limited extent and modest proportions, so as not to dominate the existing roof form".
- 4.4 Because the dormers no longer dominate, the whole perception of the roof changes. Whilst higher than exists now, the new ridge height can be seen to be in keeping with other ridge heights in the vicinity, rather than just one element of an unacceptable roofscape. The gabled ends are also in keeping with the local vernacular, too: yes, the design is different from the existing dwelling but it is reflective of local character and appearance such that, in my view, the proposed roof fits in with the surrounding area rather than conflict with or dominate it.
- 4.5 Furthermore, because the two modest-sized dormers are located centrally on the roof, the potential for overlooking and harm to privacy is greatly reduced to levels most neighbours experience of each other's gardens.
- 4.6 In terms of the redesigned rear ground-floor extension, like the previous one this would be: modest in scale; a subservient addition to the dwelling; and unseen from any public land.
- 4.7 Looked at in the whole, the scheme represents a substantial reduction in scale and bulk from that refused last year. In my view, this is a positive response to the reasonable concerns set out in the Officer Report.
- 4.8 Policy GBR1 defers to the Green Belt policies in the NPPF. Paragraph 149 c), regards "the extension or alteration of a building" as appropriate development "provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building". There are no formulae to determine what extent of development amounts to proportionate or disproportionate. Instead, the individual circumstances of an application must be taken into account. In the previous refusal, the Council (understandably, in my view) was concerned about the large number of dormers which dominated both the front and rear roof slopes and the consequential increase in internal floor space and overlooking. Those concerns have been addressed by the substantial reduction in dormers and floor space.
- 4.9 Clearly, the proposal still seeks a further increase in size. That increase, however, is far less than was previously proposed and, when seen in the context of the immediate vicinity, will result in a dwelling of comparable size, height, scale and bulk to its neighbours that together define the residential character of this part of Pig Lane. Unlike the 2022 scheme, there is nothing "disproportionate" about the proposed family home. It will be bigger than the original dwelling but will amount to a modest-sized family home amidst a variety of other dwellings, some much larger.

- 4.10 If neighbouring dwellings were much smaller, or if the home was on higher land, or if the site was exposed by a lack of high boundary treatment, the present scheme could be looked at less favourably. However, given the larger houses nearby, the higher land to the north and the extent of walls, fences and hedgerows that surround the site, the extensions proposed for this family home can be seen as proportionate such that it accords with paragraph 149 c) of the NPPF.
- 4.11 In respect of other matters identified in the previous Officer Report: the off-street parking situation is considered to remain sufficient; and the alteration to fenestrations has been referenced in the description of the proposal.

## 5 Conclusion

- 5.1 This Statement and the attached drawings have demonstrated the applicant has learned from the previous Refusal under Ref: 3/22/1808, by making substantial reductions to the current scheme to extend a family home.
- 5.2 As set out above, the new design has taken on board the concerns set out in the Officer Report and Decision Notice to deliver a modest family dwelling of a style and scale which is entirely proportionate with the site and with the surrounding area. In my view, it is a reasonable example of appropriate development in the Green Belt and because it will meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, it is also a clear example of sustainable development.
- 5.3 On those bases, it is respectfully requested that Permission is Granted.

Brian Parker  
BA MSc MRTPI  
July 2023

Appendix 1 – Decision Notice Ref: 3/22/1808/HH  
Appendix 2 – Officer Report Ref: 3/22/1808/HH