

<b>ITEM NO:</b>	<u>Location:</u>	<b>5 St Marys Close, Pirton, Hitchin, SG5 3RG</b>
	<u>Applicant:</u>	<b>Doctor West</b>
	<u>Proposal:</u>	<b>Single storey rear extension (as amended by drawing 1844 PL01C received 28/09/2016).</b>
	<u>Ref. No:</u>	<b>16/01981/ 1HH</b>
	<u>Officer:</u>	<b>Tom Donovan</b>

**Date of expiry of statutory period:** 10 October 2016

**Reason for Delay** (if applicable)

Committee cycle. Statutory period has been extended until 19th December 2016 to include December Planning Control Committee.

**Reason for Referral to Committee** (if applicable)

Councillor call-in by Cllr. Strong supporting objection from Pirton Parish Council.

## **1.0 Relevant History**

1.1 None relevant.

## **2.0 Policies**

### **2.1 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations**

Policy 5 - Selected Villages beyond the Green Belt  
 Policy 16 - Archaeological Areas of Significance and other Archaeological Areas  
 Policy 28 - House Extensions

### **2.2 National Planning Policy Framework**

Chapter 7 - Requiring good design  
 Chapter 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **2.3 North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan 2011-2031**

The submission Local plan is out for the last public consultation prior to submission to the Secretary of State, scheduled for March 2017. The Policies of the submission Local Plan therefore carry limited weight at this stage (however the policies are to be afforded increased weight and consideration at each stage of the process up until full adoption). The policies of relevance in this instance are as follows:

D1 - Sustainable Design;  
 D2 – House extensions and replacement dwellings;  
 D3 – Protecting living conditions;  
 HE1 - Designated heritage assets  
 HE4 - Archaeology

### **3.0 Representations**

#### **3.1 Public Notice/ Local Residents**

No representations received.

#### **3.2 Pirton Parish Council**

Comments made with reference to the original design (drawing PL01, now superseded):

*"The council OBJECTS to this application on the grounds of the overall design, appearance and materials used plus the effect on the conservation area."*

Revised comments with reference to the revised proposal (drawing PL01C):

*"The weatherboarding and corrugated roof are not in keeping with their surroundings and the flat roof is not recommended in the Village Design Statement. One of our Councillors, who used to live next door to this property, installed a sloping roof when he built his extension and we feel that this property which is in a conservation area should remain in keeping with its neighbouring properties. This extension will be an eyesore."*

#### **3.3 HCC Historic Environment Team**

Response received 22/09/2016:

*"In this instance because of its size, this proposal is unlikely to have an impact on significant archaeological deposits, structures or features. I will be making no comments at this time."*

### **4.0 Planning Considerations**

#### **4.1 Site & Surroundings**

4.1.1 5 St Marys Close is a detached residential property. The property is situated in the Pirton Conservation Area although the properties in St Marys Close themselves are fairly modern, late twentieth century houses. The rear garden borders the south-side of the High Street and the rear of the house is somewhat visible in the streetscene.

#### **4.2 Proposal**

4.2.1 Single storey rear extension.

The extension is proposed to measure 4.5m in width, 3.5m in depth and 3.2m to the top of the flat roof. Included in the width measurement above, it would have a projection of 1.75m beyond the flank wall of the host dwelling. The extension is proposed to have a flat roof whilst weatherboarding (type and finish to be agreed) is proposed for the walls.

According to the agent the reasons for this are to provide *"...a light weight eco-friendly building using reasonably sourced timber with low carbon footprint"* and to enable *"...the use of pad footings thus reducing the dig and cart away of soil for the footings."*

NB. Please note that the design of the extension has been amended during the application process. The initial design featured an extension of similar dimensions to that described above, but it was originally proposed to have a mono-pitch roof and extended out at an angle into the rear garden.

### 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 or appearance of the Pirton Conservation 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 the archaeological record.

#### 4.3.2 Design and appearance

Policy 28 suggests that house extensions are generally acceptable providing they are "*...sympathetic to the existing house in height, form, proportions, window details and materials...*" and "*...pitched roofs are used where appropriate, particularly if the extension is more than the height of a single storey.*"

In addition it is noted that the Pirton Village Design Statement 2003 suggests that "*Flat roofed extensions should be discouraged.*"

#### 4.3.3 In terms of its general height, size and proportions, the proposed extension would be well related to the host building. The additional footprint created as a result of the extension would be modest and would be clearly subservient to the host dwelling.

#### 4.3.4 The areas of concern noted by the Parish Council pertain to: 1) the proposed flat roof and its perceived negative visual impact, and 2) the appropriateness of weatherboarding for the exterior of the extension.

#### 4.3.5 Firstly it should be recognised that Policy 28 of the current local plan recommends that pitched roofs should be used, particularly if an extension is more than the height of a single storey. Pirton Village Design Statement 2003 generally echoes this view.

#### 4.3.6 I think it is appropriate for two storey or first floor extensions to have pitched roofs other than in absolutely exceptional circumstances. For single storey additions, a flat roof can be a useful tool for dealing with certain types of extensions in terms of reducing their size and impact.

#### 4.3.7 In this case the proposed extension would have only a single storey with a relatively modest height of just over 3m. As such I do not believe that it is key for the roof of the extension to be pitched. Indeed, it is noted that the pitched roof extension on the neighbouring property (as referenced by the Parish Council in their comments) is more substantial in terms of its size and height and is therefore, a) more prominent when viewed from the High Street, and b) a larger addition in relation to the host building. As such, I do not consider that it should automatically assumed that a pitched roof is always the most appropriate way to extend a residential property of this type. In my view, the flat roof proposed here would actually reduce the overall bulk and impact of the extension, thereby limiting its intrusion on the streetscene, and would therefore be the most appropriate way of dealing with the roof.

#### 4.3.8 Any potential permitted development fall-back options should also be taken into account when considering any application, and particularly for a house extension. As such, I think it is relevant to point out that, although this particular scheme would not be permitted development, a larger flat roofed single storey rear extension could be erected at the rear of this property as permitted development. The general point is that, although flat roofed extensions are not supported by the Pirton Village Design Statement 2003, flat roofed extensions are often permitted development.

4.3.9 Lastly, the other key design issue pertains to the use of weatherboarding for the external walls of the proposed extension. The precise detail and finish of the proposed weatherboarding is able to be reserved by condition and therefore the Council is able to retain final approval over the finished appearance of the extension. In my view, although weatherboarding is not present on the existing house, given the modest nature of the extension, an acceptable weatherboarded finish would have an acceptable visual appearance and relationship with the main house.

4.3.10 Impact on the Pirton Conservation Area

The host property is tucked away in the north-eastern corner of St Marys Close and, due to the site layout, the proposed extension would not be visible from within St Marys Close and would therefore have little impact on its character or appearance.

4.3.11 The rear gardens of nos. 5 and 6 St Marys Close border the south of the High Street and therefore the rear of both properties have some visibility in the streetscene. It is inevitable therefore that the proposed extension would be somewhat visible from the High Street. However, given the modest nature of the proposed extension and its acceptable relationship with the host dwelling, I do not consider that it would result in any harm to the character or appearance of the Pirton Conservation Area.

4.3.12 Impact on neighbouring properties

Given its modest nature it is my view that the proposed extension would have little impact on the living conditions of any of the neighbouring properties.

4.3.13 Archaeology

Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Team have been consulted on the proposals and have commented that the proposal "*...is unlikely to have an impact on significant archaeological deposits, structures or features.*"

As such, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not result in any harm to the archaeological record and would therefore be compliant with relevant local and national planning policy.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 With due regard given to the key planning considerations highlighted above, it is my view that the proposed extension would be compliant with relevant local and national planning policy and it is therefore my recommendation that planning permission is **GRANTED**.

**5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 In making decisions on applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning legislation, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of the development plan and to any other material considerations. The decision must be in accordance with the plan unless the material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the decision is to refuse or restrictive conditions are attached, the applicant has a right of appeal against the decision.

**6.0 Recommendation**

6.1 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. A sample of the proposed weatherboarding and its finish proposed for the external walls of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced and the approved details shall be implemented on site.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the Pirton Conservation Area.

### **Proactive Statement**

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.