

Location: **2 Stevenage Road
Knebworth
Hertfordshire
SG3 6AW**

Applicant: **Mrs Jessica Wakefield**

Proposal: **First floor side/rear extension and insertion of front
and rear dormer windows to facilitate loft conversion
(as amended by plans received 3 September 2021).**

Ref. No: 21/02316/FPH

Officer: **Thomas Howe**

Date of expiry of statutory period:

27th September 2021.

Extension of time:

2 March 2022.

Submitted Plan Nos:

AT956-01B, AT956-02A, AT956-03A, AT956-04B and AT956-05B

Reason for referral to Committee:

The application is to be determined by Planning Control Committee by reason of the receipt of a valid written opinion of Knebworth Parish Council contrary to the recommendation of the Development and Conservation Manager which has been supported by Ward Member Councillor Mandi Tandi. Details of the objection from Knebworth Parish Council are included in paragraph 3.3 of this committee report. Councillor Tandi responded to the written notification of the representation with the following –

“I agree that we should call this in.”

1.0 Site History

- 1.1 05/01526/1HH - First floor and single storey rear extensions. Rear conservatory. First floor side extension with dormer windows to front and rear roof slopes. Mono pitched roof above front bay window and formation of entrance canopy. As amended by plans received 12/12/05. – Conditional Permission
- 1.2 05/01118/1HH - Widening of existing vehicular access. Fixing of 0.3m high trellis on existing 2.0m high fence along with side boundary. Amended Plan No.2 Revision 1 received on 06/09/05.
- 1.3 79/01670/1 - Erection of single storey rear extension – Conditional Permission

2.0 **Policies**

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

Policy 28 – House extensions
Policy 55 – Car Parking Standards
Policy 57 – Residential Guidelines and Standards

2.2 **National Planning Policy Framework**

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

2.3 **North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan 2011-2031 - (Approved by Full Council April 2017)**

SP9 – Design and sustainability
D1 – Sustainable Design
D2 – House extensions, replacement dwellings and outbuildings
D3 – Protecting Living Conditions
T2 – Parking

2.4 **Supplementary Planning Document**

Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD (2011)

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 **Site Notice:**

Start Date: 25/08/2021 Expiry Date: 17/09/2021

3.2 **Neighbouring Properties:**

3.2.1 **“2 Stevenage Road lies to the south of our property, 4 Stevenage Road.**

We assume that, as the extension is to be built on the boundary, the window on the side elevation will be obscured glazed and not openable. If that is not the case, for privacy, we request that the proposed side window be obscured glazed and high level opening only as it faces our son's bedroom window.

We are concerned about the impact of the development to the light into our son's bedroom as the proposal involves a double storey extension on the boundary and our property (our son's bedroom in particular) relies on the sunlight coming from that direction.”

3.3 **Knebworth Parish Council:**

“The first floor side extension extends to the boundary which is contrary to NHDC policy which requires first floor extensions to step in by one metre from the boundary.

The height and extent of the gable wall will have a significant detrimental impact on the heavily used narrow footpath into the recreation grounds.

The extension overhangs the boundary. A note on the drawing is incorrect and in itself is not acceptable.

NHDC has also set a precedent when the developer, submitting planning application 17/01622/1, erection of a 3 storey building to provide 9x2 bed flats,

had to move the building. It was originally planned to abut the proposed footpath however NHDC required that it should be moved one metre away from the footpath to minimise the overbearing impact of the building on it.”

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site and Surroundings

4.1.1 No. 2 comprises a detached two-storey dwelling to the east of Stevenage Road within a predominantly residential area in Knebworth. An access track borders the site to the north, providing access to Knebworth Recreation Ground to the rear of the site.

4.2 Proposal

4.2.1 Planning permission is sought to erect a first-floor side/rear extension and for the insertion of front and rear dormer windows to facilitate the conversion of the loft space into habitable accommodation. The scheme was amended marginally with plans received on 3rd September 2021 due to an overhang across the boundary being present in the originally submitted plans.

4.3 Key Issues

4.3.1 The assessment of this application was made from the documents submitted with the application, photos of the site and surroundings taken by the applicant, information relating to the planning history of the site, and images from Google Maps and Street View. A site visit was undertaken in November 2021.

4.3.2 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

4.3.3 The objectives of the NPPF include those seeking to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity (Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places). In this regard, Policy 28 and Policy D2 of the Emerging Local Plan are consistent with the NPPF.

4.3.4 No. 2 is set back from Stevenage Road with gates limiting views and access to the front. The application site is not set within a Conservation Area, however, the local street scene incorporates a traditional design style. The proposed development would be visible within the street scene given the location of the proposed alterations being to the front, side, and rear elevations of the dwelling. The proposed two storey side extension would modestly and proportionately enlarge the dwelling to the side, incorporating a ridge height, built form and materials of construction to complement and be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing host dwelling. It is noted that the proposed side extension would extend to be within 1m of the side boundary, which would potentially contravene adopted design Policy 28. This is acknowledged, however, the emerging policy specifies no minimum distance from the party boundary and instead provides encouragement for development that does not

result in a terracing effect on the street scene. Given that an access track shares the party boundary adjacent to the side extension and given that No. 4 (the closest neighbour to this side elevation) is set away from the proposed development, a two-storey side extension in this location is unlikely to occasion a terracing effect and would therefore comply with emerging policy. The provision of two dormer windows and a single rooflight to the front roof slope would alter the appearance of the dwelling, but is not considered to be harmful, incorporating traditional design cues and details to be sympathetic to the host dwelling and wider street scene.

- 4.3.5 The proposed two storey rear extension would adjoin the proposed side extension. This feature would incorporate a hipped roof and extend across half of the rear elevation of the dwelling. Acute views of this extension would be gained from the track to the side, however, views would be obscured from the wider public realm given the location of the extension to the rear elevation of the dwelling. It is considered that the proportionate scale and sympathetic and in-keeping appearance of the development is unlikely to harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or surrounding area. The proposed dormer windows to the rear roof slope would modestly enlarge the dwelling but would match the windows proposed to the principal elevation roof slope. These would also be obscured from the street scene and are therefore unlikely to harm the appearance of the host dwelling or surrounding street scene.
- 4.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy 28 of the District Local Plan, Policy D2 of the Emerging Local Plan and the core principles set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

- 4.3.7 A core planning principle set out in the NPPF is to always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This principle is reflected in the provisions of Policy 28 of the Local Plan and D3 of the Emerging Local Plan.
- 4.3.8 The application site is neighbored to the south by dwellings served by Watton Road, by an access track and No. 4 Stevenage Road to the north and by Knebworth Sports Pavilion to the east.
- 4.3.9 The proposed side and rear extensions would be set relatively centrally within the site and would be set away from the party boundaries shared with the dwellings along Watton Road. Furthermore, the application site is to the north of these dwellings and is unlikely to cause a loss of light or be overbearing. With regards to No. 4, it is noted that a neighbour objection was received relating to the impacts to light levels for the occupiers of this dwelling. Given that the application site is to the south of this neighbour, there is potential for direct sun light and ambient light loss to the windows serving rooms at No. 4. This is acknowledged, however, given that the proposed extensions would not substantially enlarge the built bulk beyond the existing bulk of the dwelling as viewed from No. 4, matters of light loss are unlikely to be substantially harmful.
- 4.3.10 Matters of privacy were raised in the neighbour representation by No. 4 Stevenage Road. The proposed first floor side window facing this neighbour would serve an en-suite and therefore, to preserve the privacy of this neighbour, a condition securing this window as being obscure glazed would be prudent. With regards to the privacy of other neighbours close to the application site, the proposed development would

provide predominantly rearward and forward views from the dwellings, similar to the existing layout of windows at the dwelling. Furthermore, the development would be set away from the party boundaries shared with these neighbours and therefore, overlooking from the dwelling is unlikely to cause material harm to the amenity of occupiers neighbouring the application site.

- 4.3.11 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would result in no unacceptable overbearing impact upon neighbouring occupiers and is therefore compliant with Policy 28 of the District Local Plan, Policy D3 of the emerging local plan and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on Car Parking

- 4.3.12 The proposed development would enlarge the dwelling to incorporate seven bedrooms, an increase of three. This would require two or more parking spaces on the driveway of the dwelling, in accordance with the Parking at New Developments SPD. The host dwelling would continue to possess sufficient off-street parking space to meet the needs of a dwelling of this size and therefore, the development is unlikely to harm the parking provision of operation of the highway in the locality.

Other Matters:

- 4.3.13 The original scheme incorporated an overhang over the boundary shared with the access track to the side/rear for Knebworth Sports Ground. Certificate A was signed and therefore, insufficient notice was served to enable this to occur without an amendment. Altered proposed plans were received which showed no overhang over the party boundary and therefore, the application can proceed. It is noted that the Parish Council objection raised this point.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable and is considered to comply with the necessary provisions of both the existing and emerging Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework. Grant conditional permission.

4.5 Alternative Options

- 4.5.1 None applicable.

4.6 Pre-Commencement Conditions

- 4.6.1 No pre-commencement conditions are recommended.

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. The first floor side window in the proposed north elevation of the side extension shall be permanently glazed with obscure glass.

Reason: To safeguard the privacy of the occupiers of the adjacent dwelling.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted proactively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which led to improvements to the scheme. 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.