

Location:           **14 Oakfields Avenue  
Knebworth  
Hertfordshire  
SG3 6NP**

Applicant:           **Mr Glencross**

Proposal:           **Retention of anthracite grey windows**

Ref. No:             24/00952/FPH

Officer:             **Thomas Howe**

**Date of Expiry of Statutory Period:**

24 June 2024

**Extension of Time:**

31 October 2024

**Reason for Referral to Planning Control Committee:**

An objection was received from Knebworth Parish Council. Councillors Lisa Nash and Paul Ward were notified of this objection and given an opportunity to call the application into planning control committee. Councillor Ward advised on 2 July of the intention for the application to be determined at planning control committee. The following reasons were provided:

*“1. Breach of the Development Plan - specifically the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan. The anthracite grey windows are in breach of the Character Area design and relevant policies in the adopted Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan for that area and more generally.  
2. Design and materials - They are clearly out of character with respect to all nearby properties on Oakfields Avenue, which exhibit the archetypal small white windows with close Georgian bars typical of the Garden Village style and Picton houses,  
3. Previous decisions - Grey windows have already been installed against the specific stipulations of the Planning Control Committee conditional approval for external materials to match the existing (at the time) dwelling on 22/01920/FPH, plus the delegated approval on the roof alternations 23/00619/FPH in which the officer’s report specified in keeping materials.”*

**1.0 Site History**

- 1.1 23/00619/FPH - Alterations and extension to roof to create additional habitable space at first floor level. – Conditional Permission
- 1.2 22/01920/FPH - Single storey rear and side extensions. Erection of attached double garage to the front of existing dwelling. – Conditional Permission
- 1.3 22/01921/FPH - Single storey front/side infill extension – Conditional Permission

## 2.0 **Representations**

### 2.1 **Neighbour Consultation** – 2x Objection:

- Fails to comply with planning policy.
- Does not accord with previously approved plans and conditions.
- Local area comprises a character neighbourhood and the works do not respond to this.
- The windows and doors, by reason of their colour, style and design are not suitable for the location.
- Windows are out of character.
- Lack of Georgian bars fails to comply with local character of area.
- Consistent materials pallet of street scene is disrupted.

### 2.2 **Parish Council** – Objection:

- o The believed there to have been breaches to the plans and recommended an inspection of the site to see how the actual build versus plans deviate*
- o There are now bold white markings in place for what looks like a new construction on a site that has already been rejected*
- o A beech tree was felled when they applicants were advised not to fell as the tree was undergoing a protection order but the work was done regardless and prior to the protection order being put in place*
- o The Grey anthracite windows are out of character with the neighbourhood and against the application approval*
- o They are not in keeping with Knebworth Parish Council's neighbourhood plan.*
- o The windows have a ridge line that is not in keeping with the planning application.”*

## 3.0 **Planning Considerations**

### 3.1 **Site and Surroundings**

3.1.1 The site lies within an established residential area to the north of Knebworth within the village boundary. No. 14 comprises a 2 storey/chalet bungalow dwelling off Oakfields Avenue, Knebworth.

3.1.2 Oakfields Avenue is a cul-de-sac off Stevenage Road, of detached dwelling houses of varying size and design, set back from the road with parking mostly within the front gardens. The front boundaries are mostly formed hedges, which contribute the character of the street scene.

### 3.2 **Proposal**

3.2.1 Retrospective planning permission is sought for anthracite grey windows and doors.

### 3.3 **Key Issues**

3.3.1 The key issues for consideration are as follows:

- The acceptability of the design of the development and its resultant impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact that the development has on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
- The impact that the development has on car parking provision in the area.
- The impact that the development has on the environment.

#### Design and Appearance:

- 3.3.2 Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design of the development appropriately and positively responds to the site's local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development. Policy D2 of the Local Plan requires extensions to houses and the erection or replacement of buildings to incorporate design that is sympathetic to the main dwelling in terms of its scale, form and orientation and does not harm the character and appearance of the locality around the site. These policies are broadly consistent with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.3.3 This application follows previous applications approved for extension works to the dwelling. Oakfields Avenue is a relatively long cul-de-sac comprising dwellings of varying scale from large two storey detached dwellings to smaller chalet bungalows. Some dwellings benefit from windows without glazing bars. Front doors and garage doors vary in colour and design including anthracite or grey. All the windows to other dwellings that are visible from within the street comprise white windows frames with different window bar types, including Georgian.
- 3.3.4 The existing windows to this dwelling comprise anthracite grey frames with no glazing bars. Whereas, most dwellings in the vicinity have glazing bars. However, the character of the street scene is not one of uniformity, but of diversity of design and form dwellings. An important characteristic of the street scene are front boundary hedges of varying species and height, which sometimes screen views of the dwellings from the street.
- 3.3.5 It is considered that the windows do not appear out of place when viewed in isolation at No. 14 given its dark brick and roof tile colouring. Nevertheless, the windows appear as a departure from fenestration design and colour to dwellings nearby and the character of the street scene. However, the set-back nature of the dwelling together with hedging to the front boundary significantly reduces these visual impacts. Consequently, the windows do not appear as prominent features within the street scene and the dwelling does not appear out of place within this street comprising dwellings of varied design and scale with prominent front boundary hedges. Whilst white framed windows would be more appropriate, within the context of this street, it is considered that the windows and doors do not result in the dwelling appearing incongruous within the street scene and they are therefore considered acceptable.
- 3.3.6 The development therefore complies with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the core principles set out within Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework together with Policy KBBE4 of the Knebworth Neighbourhood Plan. The design and appearance are therefore acceptable.

#### Impact on Neighbouring Properties:

- 3.3.7 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.
- 3.3.8 The windows and doors do not allow for overlooking or losses of light. Therefore, it is considered that the works hold an acceptable relationship with the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. No neighbour objections were raised citing amenity concerns.
- 3.3.9 Given the above, it is considered that the development results in no unacceptable detrimental impact upon neighbouring occupiers and is therefore compliant with Policy D3 of the local plan and the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### Environmental Implications:

- 3.3.10 The development, by virtue of its limited scale in general terms together with the sustainable location has no significant implications for the local environment in terms of carbon emissions and therefore is generally in compliance with Section 14 of the NPPF.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain:

- 3.3.11 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.

### 3.4 **Conclusion**

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

### 3.5 **Alternative Options**

- 3.5.1 None applicable.

### 4.0 **Legal Implications**

- 4.1 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.

### 5.0 **Recommendation**

- 5.1 That unconditional planning permission be **GRANTED**.

#### 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.