

ITEM NUMBER:

21/00362/FUL	Conversion of existing 3 bedroom semi-detached two-storey dwelling to provide two self-contained 1-bed flats	
Site Address:	2 Central Nursery Two Waters Road Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP3 9BY	
Applicant/Agent:	Jason Grace	Mr John Soper
Case Officer:	Mike Davey	
Parish/Ward:		Apsley And Corner Hall
Referral to Committee:	DBC are applicants	

1. RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle in accordance with Saved Policy 19 of the Local Plan as it would provide self-contained flats of a reasonable design, layout and standard of amenity in a highly sustainable location on the edge of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. The conversion of the property into smaller units would contribute to housing delivery and address an identified need for smaller starter homes in sustainable locations whilst not significantly impacting upon the stock of single family sized dwellings.

2.2 The development has demonstrated compliance with, , Policies CS10, CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and could be delivered in a manner which would not adversely impact upon the visual amenity of the immediate street scene, the residential amenity of neighbouring occupants or highway safety. The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application relates to one of a pair on semi-detached properties situated on the edge of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre and accessed off Two Waters Road. The existing dwelling is situated to the rear of the K2 restaurant and adjacent to the Sunnyside Rural Trust. The property forms one of a small number of residential properties arranged informally around the informal access and parking area primarily serving the Sunnyside Rural Trust. The dwelling two-storey with a gable ended form featuring a private amenity space to the rear and a single garage.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 The application proposes the conversion of the existing two storey dwelling into two self-contained one-bedroom flats on the ground and first floors. The proposals include the provision of a new porch to provide separate street level entrances to each unit and the use of the rear garden area of the existing dwelling as a shared amenity space.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

Planning Applications (If Any):

Appeals (If Any):

6. CONSTRAINTS

Special Control for Advertisements: Advert Spec Contr

EA Banktop EPlanning Tool: Banktop 20m Buffer
Canal Buffer Zone: Minor
CIL Zone: CIL3
EA: Flood Zone 2
EA: Flood Zone 3
Heathrow Safeguarding Zone: LHR Wind Turbine
Open Land: Open Land
Parish: Hemel Hempstead Non-Parish
RAF Halton and Chenies Zone: Yellow (45.7m)
Parking Standards: New Zone 3
Town: Hemel Hempstead

7. REPRESENTATIONS

Consultation responses

7.1 These are reproduced in full at Appendix A.

Neighbour notification/site notice responses

7.2 These are reproduced in full at Appendix B.

8. PLANNING POLICIES

Main Documents:

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)
Dacorum Borough Core Strategy 2006-2031 (adopted September 2013)
Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1999-2011 (adopted April 2004)

Relevant Policies:

NP1 - Supporting Development
CS1 - Distribution of Development
CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages
CS10 - Quality of Settlement Design
CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design
CS12 - Quality of Site Design
CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy 19 - Conversions

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:

Parking Standards (Nov 2020) Planning Obligations (2011)
Roads in Hertfordshire, Highway Design Guide 3rd Edition (2011)
Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (2011)

9. CONSIDERATIONS

Main Issues

9.1 The main issues to consider are:

The policy and principle justification for the proposal;

The quality of design and impact on visual amenity;
The impact on residential amenity; and
The impact on highway safety and car parking.

Principle of Development

9.2 Core Strategy (2013) Policy CS1 states that Hemel Hempstead will be the focus for homes and Policy CS4 states that appropriate residential development within residential areas in the Towns and Large Villages is encouraged. Additionally, Saved Policy 10 of the Local Plan (2004) seeks to optimise the use of available land within urban areas.

9.3 Saved Policy 19 of the Local Plan deals with conversions and states that the conversion of houses to flats will be permitted in the towns and large villages, except in the following locations:

- a) in roads where a significant proportion of the houses originally built as single family dwelling are already converted;
- b) In roads where traffic movement would be hindered and the safety of road users and pedestrians prejudiced;
- c) In small houses with an internal floor area of less than 100sqm; and
- d) In terraced houses over 110sqm.

9.4 In accordance with Saved Policy 19 all conversions must be designed to a high standard and, where flats are provided, must also satisfy a number of criteria which will be discussed in the following sections of this report.

9.5 The dwelling proposed to be converted fails to satisfy criterion c) as the existing dwelling has an existing internal floor area of approximately 90sqm. Whilst this is the case, the rationale which sits behind Saved Policy 19 of the Local Plan must also be taken into account in the application of this policy. The supporting text recognises the conversion of properties into smaller units as a significant source of new homes more suitable as starter homes but suggests that a balance needs to be struck between different sizes and types of accommodation and that the stock of single family homes should be protected.

9.6 The age of this policy relative to more recent guidance in the NPPF in respect of achieving well designed places is also a consideration. The NPPF refers to the application of nationally described space standards, where the need for an internal space standard can be justified. The national space standards for a 1 bedroom, single storey property (which includes a bath) is 39sqm. With regard to the need to protect single family homes identified by the policy, it should be noted that the most recent housing needs survey for the Borough indicates a clear need for 1 and 2 bedroom units over larger family dwellings. Both of the units proposed are 1-bedroom and would measure 38.9 and 45.4sqm respectively.

9.7 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that Saved Policy 19 the Local Plan needs to be applied with a degree of flexibility given its age, in the context of more up to date guidance at a national and local level. On this basis it is considered that the proposed development can be considered acceptable in principle, subject to an assessment of the details of the development against other relevant policy considerations discussed in the following sections of this report.

Quality of Design / Impact on Visual Amenity

9.8 Core Strategy Policies CS10, CS11 and CS12 highlight the importance of high quality sustainable design in improving the character and quality of an area, seeking to ensure that developments are in keeping with the surrounding area in terms of scale, mass, height and appearance.

9.9 Given the context in which the existing dwelling sits, adjacent to the Sunnyside Rural Trust and well separated from residential development in the surrounding area, other than the dwelling it is attached to there is limited potential for the proposed conversion to adversely impact the character of the area. The existing pair of semi-detached properties do not sit within a traditional or consistent street scene in this regard.

9.10 The construction of a new double-width porch on the front elevation of the existing building would facilitate the creation of a self-contained, independently accessible 1-bedroom unit on the ground and first floors. An existing door serving a utility room on the grounds floor would be replaced with a window to serve a bathroom to Flat 1. Other than this, no external alterations to the existing building are proposed to facilitate the conversion of the building and the remainder of the works would be internal.

9.11 The existing rear garden of the property would become a shared amenity space for both however no additional subdivision or operational development is required to facilitate the use of this space. Furthermore, the internal alterations to the property to not necessitate the provision of additional or re-location of existing fenestration of the building. As such the only visible alteration to the property would be the addition of a porch with two entrance doors and provision of a window in place of a door on the ground floor flank elevation. Given the property does not form part of a consistent street scene, these alterations would not be harmful to the character of the surrounding area.

9.12 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the design and layout of the proposed units will not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal therefore complies with Saved Appendix 3 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004), Policies CS10, CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and the NPPF (2019).

Impact on Residential Amenity

9.13 The NPPF outlines the importance of planning in securing good standards of amenity for existing and future occupiers of land and buildings. Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy, seek to ensure that new development does not result in detrimental impact upon the neighbouring properties and their amenity space. Thus, proposals should be designed to reduce any impact on neighbouring properties by way of visual intrusion, loss of light or privacy.

9.14 Other than the small scale porch to the front of the building, there are no external alterations to the existing dwelling proposed to facilitate the conversion which would give rise to any concerns relating to the impact on the amenity of residential properties in the surrounding area. The proposed porch is of very small scale and would have no impact on neighbouring amenities. Some intensification of the use of the building would likely occur as a result of its conversion into two separate properties although, given the characteristics of the site described above and its level of separation with surrounding residential dwellings, this impact would be minimal.

9.15 With regard to the residential amenity of future occupiers the existing rear garden of the property would become a shared amenity space for both flats and provide adequate space for outdoor seating, clothes drying and refuse storage. There would be overlooking between the units and whilst this area would not be private, the site is situated in a highly sustainable location on the edge of Hemel Hempstead town centre with access to large open space very close to the site. As such a small shared amenity space is considered to provide a reasonable standard of amenity given the size of the resultant units and the location of the site. 1 habitable room window to the ground floor flat could be overlooked from the communal garden however other habitable spaces would have a reasonable degree of privacy and it is considered overall that a reasonable standard of amenity would be achieved.

9.16 In terms of the internal space provided by the proposed units, Flat 1 on the ground floor would have a GIA of 38.9sqm and Flat 2 of the first floor would have a GIA of 45.4sqm. The proposed internal layouts provide relatively small, but reasonably proportioned rooms with adequate internal circulation space and access to light. Whilst Flat 1 falls marginally short of the national space standards, it is considered that both units would provide a reasonable amount of internal space in order to provide an adequate standard of amenity for their potential future occupiers.

9.17 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development will not detrimentally impact the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, or future occupiers, thus is considered acceptable in terms of Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2004), Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and the NPPF.

Impact on Highway Safety and Parking

9.18 Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) seeks to ensure developments have sufficient parking provision. Policy CS8 of the Core Strategy (2013) and Saved Policies 57, 58 and Appendix 5 of the Local Plan (2004) promote an assessment based upon maximum parking standards. The Councils Parking Standards SPG details requirements based on nature and location of development proposals.

9.19 The application site is situated within Accessibility Zone 3, albeit the site is sandwiched between the 2 primary Zone 1 areas arranged around Hemel Town Centre and Hemel Train Station and is clearly a highly sustainable location. The existing dwelling is currently served by one on-plot parking space to rear of the property adjacent the garden space in a garage. This would be retained as a result of the development but no additional on-plot parking spaces are proposed. For 1 bedroom properties in this location the SPG requires the provision of 1.25 allocated or 1 unallocated space per unit. The proposals therefore fall 1 space short of this requirements.

9.20 Whilst this is the case, the building is located adjacent to the large unmarked parking area primarily serving the Sunnyside Rural Trust. This area is significant, providing parking for upwards of 20 vehicles. Given the use of this area is unrestricted, and primarily used by customers of the Rural Trust during operating hours, this area could comfortably accommodate the parking requirements of the two flats without compromising the use of the space by customers or giving rise to highway safety concerns. It is also relevant to consider that the existing dwelling is currently served by one space which as it stands would represent a similar shortfall with respect of the parking standards. The highway authority have been consulted on these proposals and raised no objections on the grounds of highway safety.

9.21 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on local parking provision, nor will it have a severe impact to the safety and operation of the adjacent highway. Thus, the proposal meets the requirements of Policy CS8 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and Saved Appendix 5 of the Local Plan (2004).

Other Material Planning Considerations

9.22 Waste Management

Saved Policy 129 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that developments have adequate storage for refuse and recycling. It is considered that there is adequate space within the site to provide secure space to store wheelie bins. It is considered that the development could be incorporated into the existing refuse and recycling service and therefore complies with Policy 129.

9.23 Flood Risk

The application site is located in Flood Zones 2 & 3. The Environment Agency were consulted and raised no objections to the proposed development. Furthermore, given the nature of the proposals, the level of operational development required to facilitate the conversion is limited to a small porch entrance. On this basis it is considered that the proposed development would not give rise to increased flood risk.

Response to Neighbour Comments

9.24 None Received

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

9.25 Policy CS35 requires all developments to make appropriate contributions towards infrastructure required to support the development. These contributions will normally extend only to the payment of CIL where applicable. The Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was adopted in February 2015 and came into force on the 1st July 2015. This application is CIL Liable.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 To conclude the proposed conversion through layout, design, scale and external finish will not adversely impact upon the visual amenity of the immediate street scene or the residential amenity of neighbouring occupants. The proposal will not have a severe impact to the safety and operation of the adjacent highway and will not detrimentally impact on local parking provision. A reasonable standard of amenity for the potential future occupiers of the development would be provided. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Saved Policy 19, Saved Appendixes 3 and 5 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004), Policies CS4, CS10, CS11, CS12 and CS17 of the Core Strategy (2013) and the NPPF.

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out below:

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/documents:

6821/1101 - Site Location Plan

6821/1103 - Proposed Site Plan

6821/1202 - Proposed Plans & Elevations

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives:

1. The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the

use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

2. It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence.

3. It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway.

APPENDIX A: CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Consultee	Comments
Hertfordshire Highways	Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.
Environment Agency	Thank you for consulting us on the above application. We have no objections to the proposed development.

APPENDIX B: NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES

Number of Neighbour Comments

Neighbour Consultations	Contributors	Neutral	Objections	Support
5	0	0	0	0

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APPENDIX A: CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Consultee	Comments
Environment Agency	Thank you for consulting us on the above application. We have no objections to the proposed development
Hertfordshire Highways (HCC)	Decision Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission. Highway Informatives HCC as Highway Authority recommends inclusion of the following

Advisory Note (AN) / highway informative to ensure that any works within the highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

AN 1) Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN 2) Obstruction of public highway land: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act

1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free

passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public

highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must

contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works

commence. Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

AN 3) Road Deposits: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or

other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority

powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical

means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the

development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the

highway. Further information is available via the website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

	<p>Comments</p> <p>The proposal is for the conversion of existing 3 bedroom semi-detached two-storey dwelling to provide two self-contained 1-bed flats at 2 Central Nursery, Two Waters Road, Hemel Hempstead.</p> <p>The dwelling is on a private route that is not highway maintainable at public expense. The route joins the highway network via a junction onto Two waters Way a 30 mph, principle A main distributor route.</p> <p>The dwelling in the application is not proposing a new access and will continue to use the current access r at the site. The current access has good visibility on both sides for vehicles to enter and exit safely.</p> <p>Parking is a matter for the Local Planning Authority (LPA). However, HCC would comment that from the application form the dwellings will maintain the 1 parking space from the previous dwelling.</p> <p>The proposal should not affect surrounding dwellings or the highway network and therefore HCC is satisfied with this outcome.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>HCC as Highway Authority considers that the proposal would not have a severe impact on the safety and operation of the surrounding highway network. Therefore, HCC has no objections on highway grounds to the application.</p>
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APPENDIX B: NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES

Number of Neighbour Comments

Neighbour Consultations	Contributors	Neutral	Objections	Support
5	0	0	0	0

Neighbour Responses

Address	Comments

