

ITEM NUMBER: 5d

23/00610/FHA	First floor front extension and double storey side extension	
Site Address:	253 Chambersbury Lane Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP3 8BQ	
Applicant/Agent:	Webb	Mr Sukhdev Lota
Case Officer:	Heather Edey	
Parish/Ward:	Hemel Hempstead (No Parish)	Nash Mills
Referral to Committee:	Applicant is a DBC Employee/Call-in Request	

1. RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be REFUSED.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 No objections or concerns are raised in regards to the proposed two storey side extension. Whilst the proposed first floor extension is considered to be acceptable in principle in accordance with Policies CS1 and CS4 of the Core Strategy (2013), concerns are raised that the proposed extension is unacceptable in design/visual amenity terms, failing to harmonise with the existing dwelling and wider streetscene.

2.2 By virtue of its scale, depth and height, the proposed first floor front extension would significantly alter the visual bulk, mass and prominence of the dwelling, dominating the main house and appearing an overtly prominent addition to the wider streetscene. The harm of this addition is exacerbated by reason of its context, given that a degree of uniformity is retained by way of the established uniform first floor building line of properties along this part of Chambersbury Lane, noting that the resultant dwelling would project beyond this, appearing visually prominent when approaching the dwelling from both directions.

2.3 As such, the proposal is unacceptable in design/visual amenity terms, failing to accord with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2021).

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application site comprises a two storey, gable ended detached dwellinghouse, situated off Chambersbury Lane within a designated residential area of Hemel Hempstead. The dwelling currently comprises a 4m deep and 3.96m high, single storey front extension with gable roof to match the main house, fronted by a gravel driveway that facilitates off-street car parking provision for two cars.

3.2 The site falls within the HCA19: Nash Mills Character Appraisal Area, wherein it is noted that dwellings are mixed in character and laid out in neat, ordered groups around an informal, curving road layout of Chambersbury Lane. Whilst Chambersbury Lane comprises a variety of dwelling types with mixed external brick and render finishes, a degree of uniformity is retained by reason of the established build line of existing dwellings.

4. PROPOSAL

Previous History

4.1 Planning permission was previously sought for the construction of a first floor front extension and double storey side extension under application 22/01749/FHA. This application was however refused on the following grounds:

By virtue of its scale, depth and height, the proposed first floor front extension would significantly alter the visual bulk, mass and prominence of the dwelling, dominating the main house and appearing an overtly prominent addition to the wider streetscene. The harm of this addition is exacerbated by reason of its context, given that a degree of uniformity is retained by way of the established uniform building line of properties along this part of Chambersbury Lane, noting that the resultant dwelling would project beyond this, appearing visually prominent when approaching the dwelling from both directions. As such, the proposal is unacceptable in design/visual amenity terms, failing to accord with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2021).

The proposed two storey side extension is also considered to be unacceptable in design terms, failing to respect the original design of the main house, (detracting from the simple front facing gable form of the application dwelling), and failing to appear a subordinate addition, by reason of its scale and height. The proposal is therefore unacceptable in design/visual amenity terms, failing to accord with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2021).

Current Application

4.2 Similarly to the previous scheme, planning permission is sought under the current application for the construction of a first floor front extension and double storey side extension. Whilst alterations have been made to the scale/design of the proposed two storey side extension, (i.e. with this addition being set down approximately 0.25m from the existing roof, and marginally set back from the front elevation of the dwelling), the proposed first floor front extension remains the same as previously proposed, extending the full 4m depth of the existing front extension and comprising a gable ended roof with a maximum height of approximately 7.2m.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

Planning Applications (If Any):

22/01749/FHA - First floor front extension and double storey side extension
REF - 26th July 2022

4/02075/15/FHA - Single storey front and side extension. Internal alterations including garage Conversion.
GRA - 10th August 2015

Appeals (If Any):

22/00057/REFU - First floor front extension and double storey side extension
WITHDRAWN

6. CONSTRAINTS

CIL Zone: CIL3

Heathrow Safeguarding Zone: LHR Wind Turbine

Open Land: Open Land

Parish: Hemel Hempstead Non-Parish

RAF Halton and Chenies Zone: Green (15.2m)

Residential Area (Town/Village): Residential Area in Town Village (Hemel Hempstead)

Residential Character Area: HCA19

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 (2021)

Dacorum Borough Core Strategy 2006-2031 (adopted September 2013)

Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1999-2011 (adopted April 2004)

Relevant Policies:

Core Strategy

NP1 - Supporting Development

CS1 - Distribution of Development

CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages

CS8 – Sustainable Transport

CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design

CS12 - Quality of Site Design

CS29 – Sustainable Design and Construction

Local Plan

Saved Appendix 3 – Layout and Design of Residential Areas

Saved Appendix 7 – Small-Scale House Extensions

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:

Accessibility Zones for the Application of Car Parking Standards (2020)

Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (2022)

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 The site is situated within a designated residential area of Hemel Hempstead, wherein Policies CS1 and CS4 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) are relevant. Policy CS1 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) guides new development to towns and large villages, encouraging the construction of new development in these areas. Furthermore, Policy CS4 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) states appropriate residential development is encouraged in residential areas.

9.3 In light of the above policies, the proposed development, (i.e. construction of a first floor front extension and two storey side extension), is acceptable in principle.

Quality of Design / Impact on Visual Amenity

Policy

9.4 The NPPF (2021), Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) and Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) all seek to ensure that new development respects the character of the surrounding area and adjacent properties in terms of scale, mass, materials, layout, bulk and height. Furthermore, Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) provides specific design guidance for extensions, stating that strict requirements will apply to prominent side extensions, (with these additions needing to be positioned set back from the front wall to ensure that they do not upset the balance of the front elevation), and that front extensions may be considered acceptable where they are 'fairly small' and do not project beyond the front wall of the dwelling in a way that dominates the streetscene.

Assessment

9.5 Whilst the application dwelling is noted to be unique in the context of the wider streetscene, (i.e. given that the application dwelling is detached in comparison to properties along Chambersbury Lane which are typically terraced and semi-detached), the property contributes to the degree of uniformity within the streetscene, by reason of its comparable ridge height, form and siting. Whilst the dwelling projects slightly forward of the established uniform building line of properties along this part of Chambersbury Lane, (i.e. by reason of its existing single storey front projection), by reason of its single storey height, it is not considered that the dwelling appears overtly prominent within this context.

9.6 The application proposes the construction of a first floor front extension, projecting the full 4m depth over the existing single storey front projection. Whilst being sympathetically designed to retain the form of the existing dwelling, (i.e. retaining the prominent front facing gable roof), by virtue of its scale, depth and height, it is considered that this addition would significantly alter the visual bulk, mass and prominence of the resultant dwelling, appearing a dominant addition to the house and wider streetscene.

9.7 The harm of this addition is exacerbated by reason of the existing nature/pattern of development, (i.e. noting that a degree of uniformity is retained by way of the established uniform first floor level building line of properties in the immediate streetscene), given that the resultant dwelling would project significantly deeper than neighbouring development, therein appearing visually prominent when viewed from both directions in the streetscene.

9.8 The submitted Planning Statement challenges the above assessment, with the comparison of the existing and proposed building lines shown in Figure 5, (as per page 7 of this document), argued to indicate that no uniform build line exists.

9.9 Whilst properties along Chambersbury Lane are noted to comprise a mix of single storey front projections of varied depth; at first floor level, it is considered that a degree of uniformity is retained in the immediate streetscene with respect to the existing pattern of development. Whilst Figure 5 is therefore useful in providing an understanding of the existing pattern of development along Chambersbury Lane, it is not considered that it provides an accurate reflection of the existing pattern of development on the ground, or that it overcomes the concerns earlier raised.

9.10 The submitted Planning Statement also comprises computer generated images, (shown in Figure 6, on pages 8-9 of the document), and it is argued by the Agent that these evidence that the proposed first floor front extension would not appear a prominent addition to the streetscene.

9.11 Whilst these images are to some extent helpful in providing an understanding of how the resultant dwelling will integrate with neighbouring development, these images do not provide views of the dwelling from the key vantage points in the streetscene at which it is considered that the new first floor extension will appear most visually prominent and harmful. In light of this, it is not considered that these images are sufficient to overcome the concerns previously identified.

9.12 The application also proposes the construction of a two storey side extension. Given its modest 1.1m width, marginal set back from the front elevation of the dwelling and its height/design, (i.e. noting that the new extension would be set down from the front gable roof), it is considered that this extension would appear a subordinate addition to the dwelling, respecting the original design and character of the main house by way of preserving the prominent front gable. Taking this into account, and noting that the extension would be constructed in materials sympathetic to the main house/wider streetscene, this addition is considered to be acceptable in design/visual amenity terms.

9.13 Whilst the proposed two storey side extension is considered to be acceptable on design grounds, the proposed first floor extension is unacceptable, given that the addition would dominate the streetscene. The proposal therefore fails to accord with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2021).

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy

9.14 Policies CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) states that new development should avoid visual intrusion, loss of sunlight and daylight, loss of privacy and disturbance to properties in the surrounding area. Furthermore, Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2004) states that residential development should be designed and positioned to maintain a satisfactory level of sunlight and daylight for existing and proposed dwellings.

Assessment

9.15 The application site shares side boundaries with neighbouring property 251 Chambersbury Lane and Chambersbury Primary School, and a rear boundary with neighbouring property 21 Hill Common.

Impact on 21 Hill Common

9.16 Given the nature and scale of the proposed works and the separation distances retained between the proposed additions and neighbouring property 21 Hill Common, it is not considered that the proposal would have any adverse impacts on the residential amenity of this property in terms of being visually overbearing or resulting in a significant loss of light or privacy.

Impact on 251 Chambersbury Lane

9.17 By virtue of its positioning, it is not considered that the proposed first floor side extension would have any adverse impacts on the residential amenity of no. 251.

9.18 Whilst not indicated on any of the currently proposed plans, under previous scheme 22/01749/PREF, it was evidenced that the first floor front extension would clear a 45 degree line taken from the nearest habitable window of no. 251. Given that no changes have been made to the scale/depth of the proposed first floor front extension, it is evident that this line was also cleared under the current scheme. In light of this, it is not considered that this addition would result in a significant loss of light to this neighbouring property.

9.19 The application proposes the addition of two ground floor level windows, facing towards no. 251. By reason of their scale, height and siting, and noting that they would be predominantly screened by way of the existing boundary treatment between the two properties, it is not considered that these openings would facilitate a significant loss of privacy to this neighboring property.

9.20 In order to facilitate the new first floor layout, the application proposes an increase to the width of the first floor window serving the ensuite bathroom to the master bedroom. Given its positioning and the positioning of windows on the side elevation of no. 251, it is not considered that this opening could be used to facilitate any harmful overlooking of this neighbouring property

9.21 Whilst the proposed first floor front extension would significantly alter the visual appearance of the dwelling, increasing its visual prominence in the streetscene, it is not considered that it would appear a significantly visually intrusive addition when viewed from no. 251, or that a refusal of the scheme could be sustained on this basis, given the existing relationship between the two properties.

Chambersbury Primary School

9.22 Given the nature and scale of the proposed additions, and the relationship between the application dwelling and the Chambersbury Primary School, (i.e. noting the separation distances retained between the two structures), it is not considered that the proposal would result in a significant loss of light or appear visually overbearing to this neighbouring building.

9.23 The application proposes the installation of two first floor side windows facing into the grounds of the Chambersbury Primary School. Given that no local planning policies deal specifically with the relationship between new windows overlooking schools/associated playgrounds, it is considered that an assessment of this element of the scheme is subjective and a matter of planning judgement. Whilst the proposed arrangement of windows is not ideal, in this instance, the relationship between these openings and the neighbouring school is such that it is not considered that a significantly harmful level of overlooking would be facilitated. With this in mind, and noting the lack of local planning policy specifically considering this relationship, on balance, it is not considered that a refusal of the scheme on these grounds could be justified or sustained on these grounds. These proposed new first floor level openings are therefore considered to be acceptable.

9.24 Given the above assessment, the proposal is acceptable in terms of its impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties/buildings, therein according with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2021).

Impact on Highway Safety and Parking

Policy

9.25 The NPPF (2021), Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013), and the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2020) all seek to ensure that new development provides safe and sufficient parking provision for current and future occupiers.

Assessment

9.26 The proposal would not involve any changes or alterations to the site access or public highway. In light of this and given the nature of the proposed works, it is not considered that the proposal would generate any highway or pedestrian safety concerns.

9.27 Whilst the submitted plans indicate that the property would remain a three bedroom dwelling following the construction of the works, the study shown on submitted floor plan CL12 Rev A, indicates that this room would be significant in scale, comprising a bed. In light of this, and given the nature and scale of this room, the proposal has been considered on the assumption that this room would function as a fourth bedroom.

9.28 The Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2020) note that a four bed dwelling in this location should provide off-street car parking provision for three cars. Given that the site currently only provides off-street parking for two cars and no additional spaces are proposed to be provided on the site, the proposal would generate a shortfall of a single off-street car parking spaces.

9.29 In accordance with Paragraph 6.10 of the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2020), changes to the Council's parking standards may be appropriate or required where the Council accepts robust evidence of the following, 'the nature, type and location of the development proposed is likely to make this acceptable.'

9.30 No evidence has been provided in support of the application to justify the shortfall in parking generated by the development. Consideration is however given to the nature of the application site, whilst currently only providing two off-street car parking spaces, the application dwelling is sited within a highly accessible location with on-street car parking available. Taking this into account and noting that dwellings along Chambersbury Lane typically comprise front driveways/garages, (therein accommodating off-street car parking provision), it is felt that there is sufficient spare capacity to accommodate the on-street parking generated by the development.

9.31 Given the above assessment, the proposal is considered, on balance, to be acceptable in terms of its impact on highway/pedestrian safety and on parking grounds. The proposal therefore accords with Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013), and the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

Other Material Planning Considerations

Accuracy of Submitted Plans

9.32 Whilst the application does not propose an increase to the height of the dwelling or any alterations to existing ground levels, having compared the existing and proposed elevation plans, it is evident that there are some inconsistencies between the two; in particular with regards to the ground levels on which the dwelling would be sited and in the relationship/ separation distance between the application dwelling and no. 251 Chambersbury Lane.

9.33 Having visited the site, it is however considered that the proposed plans correctly indicate the nature of existing ground levels and the relationship between the application dwelling and no. 251 Chambersbury Lane, and as such, the application has been assessed on these grounds.

Response to Consultation Responses

9.34 No neighbour comments or objections have been received.

9.35 Councillor Maddern has commented in support of the application, noting that the removal of the existing single storey front projection would amount to a significant benefit, improving the visual appearance of the dwelling and character/appearance of the dwelling in the streetscene.

9.36 Whilst it is considered that the removal of the existing single storey front projection would improve the visual appearance of the dwelling, concerns remain that the first floor front projection, (by reason of its scale, height and depth), would dominate the main house and wider streetscene.

CONCLUSION

10.1 It is recommended that the application be REFUSED.

10.2 Whilst the proposed first floor extension is considered to be acceptable in principle in accordance with Policies CS1 and CS4 of the Core Strategy (2013), concerns are raised that the proposed extension is unacceptable in design/visual amenity terms, failing to harmonise with the existing dwelling and wider streetscene.

10.3 By virtue of its scale, depth and height, the proposed first floor front extension would significantly alter the visual bulk, mass and prominence of the dwelling, dominating the main house and appearing an overtly prominent addition to the wider streetscene. The harm of this addition is exacerbated by reason of its context, given that a degree of uniformity is retained by way of the established uniform first floor building line of properties along this part of Chambersbury Lane, noting that the resultant dwelling would project beyond this, appearing visually prominent when approaching the dwelling from both directions.

10.4 As such, the proposal is unacceptable in design/visual amenity terms, failing to accord with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2021).

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 That planning permission be refused.

Reason(s) for Refusal:

By virtue of its scale, depth and height, the proposed first floor front extension would significantly alter the visual bulk, mass and prominence of the dwelling, dominating the main house and appearing an overtly prominent addition to the wider streetscene. The harm of this addition is exacerbated by reason of its context, given that a degree of uniformity is retained by way of the established uniform first floor level building line of properties along this part of Chambersbury Lane, noting that the resultant dwelling would project beyond this, appearing visually prominent when approaching the dwelling from both directions. As such, the proposal is unacceptable in design/visual amenity terms, failing to accord with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 7 of the Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2021).

APPENDIX A: CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Consultee	Comments

APPENDIX B: NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES

Number of Neighbour Comments

Neighbour Consultations	Contributors	Neutral	Objections	Support
7	0	0	0	0

Neighbour Responses

Address	Comments

APPENDIX C: COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

Details	Comments
Councillor Maddern	<p>I am the Dacorum Borough Councillor for Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead, and I would like to add my perspective to the application on the above property.</p> <p>This property is the last house in a long row of houses. Whilst most were built at the same time and were of a uniform design, all have been altered over the years, and this property was built later and is of a slightly different style.</p> <p>Several years ago a large front single storey extension was built onto the house, which made the property look very different and not in keeping with the street scene. In my opinion the proposed extension will balance the look of the property with the street scene much better than its current elevation.</p> <p>In my opinion, I see no reason why this application was refused and would like my support of the application to be recorded. This extension would enable the owners to increase their living space, and would improve the visual aspect of the property.</p>