

ITEM NUMBER: 5d

24/00725/FUL	Alterations including extensions to provide enhanced community facilities to the existing building	
Site Address:	Adeyfield Day Centre The Driftway Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 4EA	
Applicant/Agent:	Mr Kevin Clinton	Mr John Soper
Case Officer:	Sally Robbins	
Parish/Ward:	Hemel Hempstead (No Parish)	Adeyfield West
Referral to Committee:	Council-owned Building with Neighbour Objections	

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED**

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The principle of development is acceptable, and the scheme would enhance an existing social infrastructure facility providing additional communal services for the residents of a Council-owned supported housing scheme. The layout, scale and design of the proposed extensions would not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, nor would there be any significant loss of amenity to surrounding residential units. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS1, CS4, CS11, CS12, CS23 of the Core Strategy and Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The application relates to a detached, single storey building situated to the south of the Driftway in the Adeyfield area of Hemel Hempstead. The surrounding area comprises the Driftway supported housing scheme, which consists of 52 flats dispersed over 14 blocks of flats with six communal gardens. The application building forms part of the supported housing scheme and comprises a common room, kitchen, storeroom and toilet facilities. The building is located within an open amenity space situated between two blocks of residential units.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of two single storey side extensions, one on the east and one on the west elevations of the communal hall. The extensions would provide enhanced community facilities to the existing building, including a new wardens office, laundry room, laundry plant room, guest bedroom, guest shower room and storeroom. The enhanced facilities would be for the use of residents of the Driftway supported housing scheme and the guest bedroom facilities would be for occasional use when residents require a family member/friend to stay nearby.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

5.1 None

6. CONSTRAINTS

CIL Zone: CIL3

Former Land Use (Risk Zone):

Parish: Hemel Hempstead Non-Parish

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

Residential Character Area: HCA22
Smoke Control Order
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 (2024)
Dacorum Borough Core Strategy 2006-2031 (adopted September 2013)
Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1999-2011 (adopted April 2004)

Relevant Policies:

Dacorum Borough Core Strategy:

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
CS13- Quality of the Public Realm
CS23- Social Infrastructure
CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Dacorum Borough Local Plan:

Appendix 3 - Layout and Design of Residential Areas

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:

Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (2022)
Accessibility Zones for the Application of Car Parking Standards (2020)
Place and Movement Planning and Design Guidance for Hertfordshire (2024)

9. CONSIDERATIONS

Main Issues

9.1 The main issues to consider are:

- Principle of Development
- Quality of Design / Impact on Visual Amenity
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Highway Safety & Parking
- Other Material Considerations.

Principle of Development

9.2 The application site is located within a residential area of Hemel Hempstead, which will be the focus for new homes and other development, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS1. This is supported by Policy CS4, which states that in residential areas appropriate residential development is encouraged and that non-residential development for small-scale social, community and leisure purposes are also encouraged, provided that they are compatible with the surroundings.

9.3 The Driftway provides supported living, which is classed as social infrastructure. Policy CS23 of the Core Strategy stresses the importance of social infrastructure in the Borough, with the definition including community buildings for community care, general welfare and social contact. Policy CS23 encourages the provision of social infrastructure and states that the dual use of new and existing facilities will be encouraged wherever possible.

9.4 The communal hall is an existing social / community / leisure facility within a residential area. It is considered that the proposal to provide upgraded facilities is compatible with surrounding uses and is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to the below assessment.

Quality of Design / Impact on Visual Amenity

9.5 Core Strategy Policies CS11 and CS12 and paragraph 131 of the NPPF highlight the importance of high-quality sustainable design, seeking to ensure that developments are in keeping with the surrounding area.

9.6 As outlined above, the surrounding area comprises The Driftway supported housing scheme, which is comprised of 14 blocks of purpose-built flats. These blocks are generally two storeys with dual-pitched roofs and are finished in facing brickwork. The existing communal hall is single storey with a dual pitched roof and finished in materials that match the surrounding blocks. The proposed extensions would be single storey with hipped roofs and would be finished in materials to match the parent building, including red/brown facing brickwork, red/brown roof tiles and brown uPVC window frames.

9.7 It is considered that the proposed layout, scale and design would harmonise with the parent and surrounding buildings not would thus not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal therefore complies with the above-mentioned policies in terms of its visual impact.

Impact on Residential Amenity

9.8 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 a detrimental impact upon the neighbouring properties and their amenity space in terms of visual intrusion, loss of light or privacy. It is noted that objections have been received from two neighbouring properties, with concerns relating to the visual impact and impact on light provision.

9.9 The proposed extensions would occupy an area of existing communal amenity space. The west extension would measure 6m deep and 4.3m wide (footprint of 25.8m²) with an eaves height of 2.5m and a ridge height of 3.8m. The east extension would measure 4.85m deep and 8.3m wide (footprint of 40.26m²) with an eaves height of 2.5m and a ridge height of 4.8m. The proposal would result in built form sited closer to the neighbouring residential units at 25-28 and 29-32 The Driftway. The proposed extensions would be single storey with roofs pitched away from the nearest neighbouring properties.

9.10 Due to the concerns raised by two neighbouring properties, the applicant was asked to demonstrate the 25° test on the submitted plans. This test requires a line drawn at 25° from the centre of nearest habitable windows that are situated opposite a proposed development. According to the test, if the whole of the proposed development falls beneath a line drawn at 25° from the horizontal, then there is unlikely to be a substantial effect on daylight and sunlight to that window, according to guidance set out within the BRE's Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice. Drawing no. 8442_DR_CH_021 Rev. A shows that both of the extensions would fall well below a line drawn at 25° from the centre of the nearest habitable windows. This indicates that the proposed development is unlikely to have a substantial effect on daylight and sunlight and does not meet the threshold for further daylight and sunlight checks. Sufficient light would continue to reach all existing windows. It is therefore felt that an objection on the grounds of impact on light provision could not be sustained.

9.11 In terms of the visual impact of the proposed extensions, the new built form would be sited closer to and thus would be visible from the ground floor windows of the residential properties opposite the development. However, due to the low-profile of the single storey extensions, the inclusion of hipped roofs that would be pitched away from the neighbouring properties, and the separation distance of around 5m, it is not felt that the visual impact of the extensions would be significantly harmful to the occupants of the neighbouring residential units. The resulting building would not appear visually intrusive or overbearing. Objections have been received from two properties to the west of the building (29 and 32 The Driftway). The proposed extension on the west side would measure 4.3m deep, thus an open aspect would be retained in front and behind the proposed extension.

9.12 In terms of the loss of the existing communal amenity space, sufficient space would be retained within the wider site within which the building resides, there are numerous open grassed amenity areas serving the supported housing. In addition, biodiversity enhancements (discussed in further detail below) would improve the remaining garden space such that there are no significant concerns regarding the loss of communal amenity space.

9.13 In terms of privacy and overlooking, there would not be any windows or doors on the east or west elevations. The proposed extensions would include fenestration on the north and south elevations only i.e. at right angles to the neighbouring blocks of flats. As such, there is unlikely to be any significant increase in overlooking or loss of privacy. The proposals would enhance existing communal facilities and there is nothing to suggest noise and disturbance would arise as a result of the development. If it did this could be adequately dealt with under separate legislation or by the Council who run the sheltered accommodation.

9.14 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed extensions, whilst visible form surrounding residential units, would not cause significant harm to existing occupiers, to accord with the above-mentioned policies in terms of residential amenity.

Impact on Highway Safety and Parking

9.15 The NPPF, Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Core Strategy and the Parking Standards SPD all seek to ensure that new development provides safe and sufficient parking provision for current and future occupiers.

9.16 The proposed development does not fit neatly into any category of Appendix A of the Parking Standards SPD. The new facilities could be classified as Use Class E (a) (day centres) for which the parking requirement within Zone 3 is 1 space per 2 staff members plus 1 space per 3 persons attending or 1 space per 9 m² GEA. The office would be occupied by a warden (staff - so calculated requirement of 0.5 spaces). All users of this building would be from the existing sheltered accommodation in the immediate locality and thus would walk. The proposal would not therefore require any additional parking spaces for uses.

9.17 The additional bedroom accommodation could be classified as Use Class C3 (residential – elderly persons accommodation) for which the visitor parking requirement is 0.25 spaces per unit. As such, the total parking requirement is 0.75 spaces. The proposal does not include any parking provision, thus there is a technical shortfall of 0.75 spaces. However, there are existing parking bays adjacent to the site on the Driftway and there are no parking restrictions in the vicinity. It is therefore felt that any nominal increase in parking demand could be absorbed into the existing network of on-street parking spaces.

9.18 Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the above parking requirements and would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highway. The proposal is acceptable from a parking and highway safety perspective and accords with the above-mentioned policies.

Other Material Planning Considerations

Ecology

9.19 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Furthermore, Core Strategy Policy CS26 seeks to conserve and restore habitats and species. The Environment Act (2021) has made it mandatory requirement for all major and minor development to achieve at least 10% biodiversity net-gain. This application is subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain of 10%, which would be provided on site through improvements to the existing garden and secured by a biodiversity gain condition.

Habitats Regulations Assessment – Chilterns Beechwoods SAC

9.20 The planning application is within Zone of Influence of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC). The Council has a duty under Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Regulation 63) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (EU exit amendment) Regulations 2019 to protect the CBSAC from harm, including increased recreational pressures.

9.21 The application includes a new residential element (the guest bedroom), which would provide a small, ancillary facility/use in connection with the primary planning unit. The use of the guest bedroom would only be for short periods of time and only for residents who need a family member/friend to stay nearby. The residential unit would not qualify as a self-contained unit as it lacks the facilities to be independently occupied (i.e. it only comprises a bedroom and bathroom, and does not include a kitchen or living space). Nonetheless, for the avoidance of doubt, this would be secured by a planning condition ensuring that the unit is not occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the main use and shall not be independently occupied.

9.22 Taking the above into account, the proposed development, given its scale and nature, is not considered to result in an increase in recreational pressure at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and therefore has been 'screened out' at Stage 1 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment is not required in this instance. The proposed development therefore complies with Policy CS26, paragraph 194 of the NPPF and the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 2017.

Waste Management

9.23 Saved Policy 129 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan seeks to ensure that developments have adequate storage for refuse and recycling. As an existing community facility, it is reasonable to consider that the existing waste management arrangements would be continued.

Response to Neighbour Comments

9.24 These points have been addressed above.

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. However, this application is not CIL Liabile.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 To conclude, the proposed development would enhance an existing social infrastructure facility and would provide additional communal services for the residents of a Council-owned supported housing scheme. The layout, scale and design of the proposed extensions would not cause any significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Built form would be brought closer to residential properties, however there would not be a significant loss of light to the nearest habitable windows, nor would the proposal be visually overbearing. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS1, CS4, CS11, CS12, CS23 of the Core Strategy and Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan.

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED**

Conditions and Reasons:

- 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:**

**8442/DW/CH/020 Rev. B
8442/DW/CH/005**

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

- 3. Development may not be begun unless:**

- (a) A biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority; and**
- (b) The planning authority has approved the plan in writing.**

The biodiversity gain plan must include:

- (a) Information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;**
- (b) The pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;**
- (c) The post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;**

- (d) Any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;**
- (e) Any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and**
- (f) Any such other matters as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.**

The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the Small Sites Metric dated 27 November 2024 and prepared by Conor McCabe.

The development shall not commence until a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) / Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan and including:

- (a) A non-technical summary;**
- (b) The roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the LEMP / HMMP**
- (c) The planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;**
- (d) The management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and**
- (e) The monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.**

Notice in writing shall be given to the Council when the:

- (a) LEMP / HMMP has been implemented; and**
- (b) Habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the LEMP / HMMP have been completed.**

No occupation shall take place until:

- (a) The habitat creation and enhancement works set out in the approved LEMP / HMMP have been completed; and**
- (b) A completion report, evidencing the completed habitat enhancements, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved LEMP / HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved LEMP / HMMP.

Monitoring reports shall be submitted to local planning authority in writing in accordance with the methodology and frequency specified in the approved [HMMP].

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) (or as subsequently amended), Policies CS26 and CS29 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

These details are required prior to commencement to ensure that the ecological and biodiversity enhancements can be achieved before construction works begin and to ensure statutory requirements are fulfilled.

4. **The development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the materials specified on the application form.**

Reason: To make sure that the appearance of the building is suitable and that it contributes to the character of the area in accordance with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013).

5. **The guest bedroom hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the primary use of the community facility known as The Driftway and shall not be independently occupied.**

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development does not result in an increase in recreational pressure at the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, to accord with Core Strategy (2013) Policy CS26, paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 2017.

Informatives:

1. 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 pro-actively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2015.

APPENDIX A: CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Consultee	Comments

APPENDIX B: NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES

Number of Neighbour Comments

Neighbour Consultations	Contributors	Neutral	Objections	Support
24	2	0	2	0

Neighbour Responses

Address	Comments
32 The Driftway Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 4EA	I strongly object to your proposed development of Adeyfield Day Centre in The Driftway. At this time of the year my flat has good day light hours, if you were to extend the building both out and up then this would reduce the sunlight hours into my flat, and on the ground floor flats the building would also cast these flats into shadows for 12 months and really would you like to have a brickwall replace your garden on a permanent basis I think not. And to make the tenants in the flats situated nearer the building suffer from stolen day light I see as a selfless act because everyone else would not have the daylight hours

	<p>stolen from them. And can you imagine when winter time comes would you like to sit in permanent darkness I think not.</p> <p>Reasons to object: Loss of light, overshadowing Overlooking/Loss of privacy Noise and disturbance</p> <p>This building is only used twice a week.</p>
<p>29 The Driftway Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 4EA</p>	<p>Letter received by post:</p> <p>Dear Ms Robbins,</p> <p>I would like to register my strong objection to the above planning application on the grounds that the Guest Bedroom, Bathroom and store proposed will be immediately outside my front windows and I believe it will cause considerable loss of light and overshadowing.</p> <p>After my recent diagnosis of Blood Cancer I find the idea of a brick wall a few feet from my living room window, making my little home dark and dingy, especially depressing.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration for this matter.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Online comment:</p> <p>The Guest Bedroom, Bathroom and store proposed on the plans will be immediately outside my front windows and I believe this will cause considerable loss of light and overshadowing to my home, making it dark, and depressing.</p>