

ITEM NUMBER: 5e

24/02223/FHA	Retrofit an existing Semi-detached house. Upgrades to the external fabric and internal services.	
Site Address:	12 Blackwell Road Kings Langley Hertfordshire WD4 8NF	
Applicant/Agent:	Mr Ben Wigley	Mr Ben Wigley
Case Officer:	Rachael Payne	
Parish/Ward:	Kings Langley Parish Council	Kings Langley
Referral to Committee:	Council owned property – neighbour objection received	

1. RECOMMENDATION

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

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The site is located within a residential area of Kings Langley wherein the proposed development is acceptable.

2.2 The application forms part of a project to retrofit a number of dwellings along Blackwell Road. The proposals comprise of the installation of external wall insulation to upgrade the thermal performance of the dwellings. The property is a council owned dwelling.

2.3 The design of the proposed works were amended throughout the application process and therefore the revised proposal is now not considered to harm the character and appearance of the street scene and surrounding area.

2.4 There is not considered to be an impact on residential amenity or parking and highway safety.

2.5 Hertfordshire Ecology were consulted on this application due to the concerns raised over the presence of House Martins, known to nest in the properties along Blackwell Road. They suggested an informative and a condition requiring an artificial House Martin cup to be installed on the property subject to the grant of permission.

2.6 Given the above, the proposal is considered to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) (2024), Policies CS4, CS11, CS12, CS26, CS28 and CS29 of the Core Strategy (2013) and Saved Appendix 3 and 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004).

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The site comprises of a semi-detached dwelling located on the western side of Blackwell Road. The property is situated within a residential area of Kings Langley.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 Permission is sought for the installation of external wall insulation to upgrade the thermal performance of the building. This comprises of rendering the setback part of the front elevation, side and rear elevation of the property. The eaves would also be extended to allow for the wall insulation. The existing cills are also to be replaced with aluminium cills in a similar colour to existing.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

None

6. CONSTRAINTS

Canal Buffer Zones: Major

CIL Zone: 2

Heathrow Safeguarding Zone: LHR Wind Turbine

Large Village: Kings Langley

Parish: Kings Langley CP

RAF Halton and Chenies Zone: Yellow (45.7m)

Residential Area (Town/Village): Residential Area in Town Village (King Langley)

Parking Standards: Zone 3

EA Source Protection Zone: 2 and 3

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)

NP1 - Supporting Development

CS1 - Distribution of Development

CS4 - The Towns and Large Villages

CS8 - Sustainable Transport

CS10 - Quality of Settlement Design

CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design

CS12 - Quality of Site Design

CS26 - Green Infrastructure

CS28 - Carbon Emission Reductions

CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction

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

Appendix 3 – Layout and Design of Residential Areas

Appendix 7 – Small-scale House Extensions

King Langley Neighbourhood Plan (adopted January 2023)

KL3 – Character of Development

KL4 – Design of Development

KL5 – Energy Efficiency and Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Place and Movement Planning and Design Guidance for Hertfordshire (2024)
Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (2022)
Accessibility Zones for the Application of Car Parking Standards (2020)
Planning Obligations (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 The site is located in a residential area of the town of Kings Langley whereby in policy CS4 of the Core Strategy (2013) appropriate residential development is encouraged in towns and large villages if it meets local and national policies. The proposed development is acceptable in principle.

Quality of Design / Impact on Visual Amenity

9.3 Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), Saved Appendix 7 of Dacorum Local Plan (2004) and the NPPF (2024) all seek to ensure that any new development/alteration respects or improves the character of the surrounding area and adjacent properties in terms of scale, massing, materials, layout, bulk and height.

9.4 Policy KL3 and KL4 of the Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan (2023) both seek to ensure that development proposals preserve and enhance the character, heritage and natural environment of the surrounding area by promoting high quality design that incorporates materials which reflect and integrate well with the architectural style of existing buildings found in the immediate locality.

9.5 The properties along Blackwell Road comprise of semi-detached pairs each with a central brick frontage with a varying degree of render on the set back front elevation. The properties also comprise of brick detailing above the ground floor windows and quoins. This centred front brick feature and the brick detailing give the properties along Blackwell Road a distinct strong character.

9.6 The initial plans proposed to render the whole of the front of the property losing the central brick frontage. This was considered to detract from character and appearance of the street scene as the strong character formed by these unique frontages would be lost. Thus, the proposal was initially not considered to preserve the attractive streetscape and thus failed to accord with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

9.7 As such, the proposal was amended and another set of proposed plans were submitted retaining the central brick frontages and brick detailing with render/insulation proposed to the setback part of the front elevation and the side and rear elevation. These elevations already comprise of render at first floor level.

9.8 The roof eaves are to be extended to allow for the installation of the external wall insulation and the existing cills are to be replaced with aluminium cills in a similar colour to existing. This is considered acceptable, it would not appear overly prominent within the street scene and would respect the character of the existing dwelling and surrounding area.

9.9 Overall, the amended proposal is not considered to cause harm to the visual amenity of the area and retains and preserves the street character harmonising with surrounding properties. As such, the proposal is in accordance with Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy, the NPPF (2024), Policies KL3 and KL4 of the Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan and Saved Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Local Plan (2004).

Impact on Residential Amenity

9.10 The NPPF (2024), Saved Appendix 3 of the Local Plan (2004) and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013), all seek to ensure development does not result in a detrimental impact upon neighbouring properties and their amenity space.

9.11 The proposal would result in insulation to the rear elevation of the property which would be on the shared boundary with the attached pair of the application site, No. 10 Blackwell Road. As per the Design and Access Statement, the mass of the building will result in a minimal increase adding an extra 125mm to the existing walls. This is not considered to cause any harm to the residential amenity of the neighbouring property in relation to loss of light, privacy or being visually overbearing.

9.12 Taking the above into account, the proposal is considered to accord with Saved Appendix 3 of the Local plan (2004), the NPPF (2024) and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

Impact on Highway Safety and Parking

9.13 Policies CS8 and CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy seek to ensure that development provides sufficient and safe parking.

9.14 The application does not propose any changes or alterations to the existing access or public highway. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would generate any highway or pedestrian safety concerns. Given the nature of the application there is no concern regarding parking provision as a result of the proposed development.

9.15 As such this planning application is in accordance with CS8 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013).

Other Material Planning Considerations

Ecology

9.16 During the course of the application the presence of House Martins amongst the properties along Blackwell Road was brought to the attention of the Local Planning Authority. House Martins are on the red list of species of conservation concern. Therefore, as part of this application Hertfordshire Ecology were consulted.

9.17 It was confirmed by Hertfordshire Ecology that Blackwell Road properties are known to support nesting House Martins and the nature of the proposal is likely to affect this species where present. It is noted that it is an offence to kill, injure or displace breeding birds and their young. Thus, Hertfordshire Ecology recommended an informative to any consent stating works should be carried out between October – February or if not possible a pre-development search of the area made by a suitable experienced ecologist.

9.18 They also recommended a condition for the provision of artificial House Martin cups on each house to compensate for any loss of suitable nesting locations.

9.19 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should enhance the natural environment and minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, incorporating features which support priority or threatened species. Thus, with the condition for the provision of artificial nesting cups, suggested by Herts Ecology the proposal is now in accordance with paragraph 187 (d) of the NPPF (2024).

Sustainability

9.20 Core Strategy Policies CS28 and CS29 seek to ensure that carbon emissions are reduced and that new development will comply with the highest standards of sustainable design. By insulating the property and improving its energy efficiency, energy consumption is reduced and subsequently results in a reduction of CO2 emissions. This also complies with Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan KL5, A, iii, which highlights the importance of the installation of energy efficiency measures such as insulation.

Response from Parish Council

9.21 The Parish Council initially objected to this proposal due to concerns regarding House Martins and the impacts on ecology. Once further information was submitted including the comments from Hertfordshire Ecology, they withdrew their objection due to the inclusion of the following wording on the decision notice:

“In order to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young, works should only be carried out during the period October to February inclusive. If this is not possible then a pre-development (i.e. no greater than 48 hours before clearance begins) search of the area should be made by a suitably experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, then works must be delayed until the birds have left the nest or professional ecological advice taken on how best to proceed.”

9.22 As mentioned in the Ecology section this wording will be included as an informative on the decision notice.

Response to Neighbour Comments

9.23 These points have been addressed.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

9.24 Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy 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 was adopted in February 2015 and came into force on 1st July 2015. CIL relief is available for affordable housing, charities and Self Builders and may be claimed using the appropriate forms.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 To conclude, the proposed works are not considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the street scene and will harmonise with the surrounding area. The ecology implications have been addressed through the addition of an informative and a condition on the

decision notice. Given the nature of the proposal, it is not considered to significantly impact residential amenity, parking or highway safety. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policies CS11, CS12 and CS26 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF (2024).

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 That planning permission be GRANTED.

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 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 constructed in accordance with the approved details.**

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).

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

Proposed Front Elevation - DAC - AMB - V1 - ZZ - DR - Y - 402 Rev P02
Proposed Side 1 Elevation - DAC - AMB - V1 - ZZ - DR - Y - 404 Rev P01
Proposed Side 2 Elevation - DAC - AMB - V1 - ZZ - DR - Y - 405 Rev P02
Proposed Rear Elevation - DAC - AMB - V1 - ZZ - DR - Y - 403 Rev P01
Proposed Floor Plans - DAC - AMB - V1 - ZZ - DR - Y - 401 Rev P02
Design and Access Statement Project: 12 Blackwell Road dated: 04/11/24

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

- 4. Within two months of completion of the installation of the external wall insulation hereby approved, an artificial nesting cup to allow for the nesting of House Martins shall be installed on the property and maintained and retained thereafter in perpetuity.**

Reason: To provide ecological mitigation for any loss of nesting opportunities for House Martins in accordance with Policy CS26 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Informatives:

1. Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. 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
Kings Langley Parish Council	<p>OBJECTION - This planning application was objected for the following reason:-</p> <p>There needs to be an independent Ecology Report produced for these properties. This is due to a 2020 Hertfordshire House Martin Survey, which found that over 10% of the total number of House Martins in Dacorum were in Blackwell Road. House Martins are on the red list of species of conservation concern. Once this report is received, there may be a suggested work around for this work to go ahead, outside if the nesting season.</p> <p>Further comments received on 18.12.24:</p> <p>No Objection</p> <p>In order to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young, works should only be carried out during the period October to February inclusive. If this is not possible then a pre-development (i.e. no greater than 48 hours before clearance begins) search of the area should be made by a suitably experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, then works must be delayed until the birds have left the nest or professional ecological advice taken on how best to proceed.</p>
Hertfordshire Ecology	<p>ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>Thank you for consulting this office on the above application.</p> <p>Overall Recommendation</p> <p>Application can be determined with no ecological objections (with any Informatives/Conditions advised below).</p> <p>Summary of Advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An Informative for a precautionary approach to works with regard to nesting birds should be added to any permission granted. o The provision of artificial nest cups should be a Condition of approval. <p>Comments</p> <p>House Martins</p> <p>The site listed above is known to support nesting house martins; with the nature of these proposals likely to affect this species where present.</p> <p>All wild birds, their nests, eggs and young are afforded protection and in general terms it would be an offence to kill, injure or displace breeding birds and their young. In order to reduce the risk of an offence being committed, a precautionary approach to works is required, and we therefore recommend the following Informative is added to any consent:</p> <p>"In order to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young, works should only be carried out during the period October to February</p>

	<p>inclusive. If this is not possible then a pre-development (i.e. no greater than 48 hours before clearance begins) search of the area should be made by a suitably experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, then works must be delayed until the birds have left the nest or professional ecological advice taken on how best to proceed". We support the recommendation for the provision of an artificial house martin cup on each house proposed for works, in line with the NPPF regarding compensation for the loss of suitable nesting locations by way of ecological enhancement. The provision of artificial nest cups should be a Condition of approval for each of the above applications.</p> <p>I trust these comments are of assistance.</p>
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APPENDIX B: NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES

Number of Neighbour Comments

Neighbour Consultations	Contributors	Neutral	Objections	Support
10	3	1	2	0

Neighbour Responses

Address	Comments
12 Gilders Sawbridgeworth Sawbridgeworth CM21 0EF	<p>This comment is the same as those previously made on the similar related applications on Blackwell Road as the proposed development threatens the House Martin colony there.</p> <p>There is no objection in principle to the positive measures which should make the houses more energy efficient</p> <p>Concerns are raised however in relation to the colony of House Martins that nest on houses all along Blackwell Road, and the apparent lack of any ecology survey to determine how many are present on these houses and the effect that the works will have.</p> <p>House Martins are on the red list of species of conservation concern, having declined by 44% between 1995 and 2022, see https://www.bto.org/understanding-birds/birdfacts/house-martin</p> <p>A Hertfordshire House Martin survey took place in 2020, organised by the author of this comment, and found that a minimum of 8 House Martin nests were present on this road, over 10% of the total found in the Dacorum BC area (total 75), see the Hertfordshire Bird Report 2020.</p> <p>The houses on Blackwell Road preferred by House Martins were those with deep, angled eaves as on all of these houses. It is likely that there were more nests than those recorded as it was difficult to observe nests due to the depth of the eaves, and not possible to survey the back of each of the properties.</p>

	<p>Should these works take place as planned, it is likely that all of the House Martin nests on these houses will be lost. This is because the proposed plastic soffits and fascias will make it impossible for them to build their mud nests without them collapsing. This can be mitigated by the provision of artificial nest cups once the works are completed.</p> <p>It is regrettable that no ecology survey has been carried out to confirm which of these houses has House Martin nests. Work will not be able to commence on any properties that have active nests during the breeding season, normally May to September</p> <p>Please would the council consider conditions to ensure that nests are not disturbed during the breeding season, and that provision for artificial nest cups is made.</p> <p>I would suggest the following:</p> <p>"No works shall commence during the period May to September inclusive, unless an appropriately qualified ecologist has confirmed the absence of House Martin nests or any other bird nests on the property within a period of 48 hours prior to commencement."</p> <p>"A double artificial House Martin nest cup shall be fitted under the eaves of each property prior to the completion of works, sited away from windows and doors, and retained thereafter"</p> <p>I would be grateful if these comments could also be passed to Hertfordshire Ecology</p>
<p>59 Blackwell Road Kings Langley Hertfordshire WD4 8NE</p>	<p>While I do not object to the thermal upgrade of properties on this road, I do have the following concerns.</p> <p>I second the concerns regarding the ecological impact on the much loved House Martins on this road.</p> <p>I am also concerned that the houses have much character at present and the houses that have already been altered at the end of the road appear soleless and out of keeping with the beautiful village.</p> <p>The brick slips placed above the windows do little to replicate the character of the bricks already on these houses.</p> <p>I would propose more traditional materials are used where possible and the depth of the insulation reconsidered to reduce the depth the windows are sunk into the building, which does impact the internal light.</p> <p>I'd also be keen to understand how the insulation of these houses will impact the adjoining houses that will not be altered. I believe this street will become an eye sore once these alterations are made.</p>
<p>10 Blackwell Road Kings Langley</p>	<p>My husband and I have been proud owners of 10 Blackwell Road, the adjoining semi-detached property, since 1997. As private owners, we</p>

<p>Hertfordshire WD4 8NF</p>	<p>strongly object to the application of external insulation to number 12. These two homes form a single, unified building, and any changes to one side will directly affect the other.</p> <p>Our primary concern is that external insulation will irreversibly alter the appearance of the building, which is constructed from traditional 'Old Stock Yellows' brick. We believe it would be a great loss to cover up this historic and aesthetically valuable feature with rendering, as it would significantly undermine the character of both the building and the surrounding street.</p> <p>Additionally, the proposed retrofit will result in an unsightly step at the boundary between the two properties, with number 12 protruding by approximately six inches due to the insulation. This not only affects the symmetry of the building but also impacts the appearance of the entire street, which has great character.</p> <p>For these reasons, we strongly urge the council to consider internal insulation as a more appropriate solution, one that preserves the integrity and appearance of this property and the street as a whole.</p>
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