



Report to East Area Planning Committee

Application Number:	PL/23/0712/FA
Proposal:	Single storey front and rear extensions, replacement of existing windows and internal alterations, new rooflight to first floor bedroom
Site location:	Letterbox Cottage, 11 Grimsdells Lane, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 6HF
Applicant:	Miss V Shivji
Case Officer:	Mr Mike Shires
Ward affected:	Amersham and Chesham Bois
Parish-Town Council:	Amersham Town Council
Valid date:	23 March 2023
Determination date:	2 June 2023
Recommendation:	Conditional permission

1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 The application proposes a single storey front extension, a single storey rear extension, replacement of some existing windows and internal alterations, with a new rooflight to the first floor bedroom.
- 1.2 The extensions are considered to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the host building and the wider area. They would not harm the amenities of neighbouring properties or result in the need for any additional parking.
- 1.3 It is important to note that, whilst the letterbox in the wall of the property is shown to be removed on the submitted plans, this does not form part of this planning application, as this does not need planning permission. Officers have liaised with Royal Mail to understand their procedures. Royal Mail have advised they have an obligation to remove a postbox which is located on private property, if the owner requests its removal. Royal Mail also have their own procedures for advertising the closure or relocation of a postbox. As such, this does not form part of this planning application.

1.4 The application has to be brought to the Planning Committee, under the Constitution, as the applicant is a member of staff in the planning department.

1.5 Recommendation – conditional permission.

2.0 Description of Proposed Development

2.1 The single storey front extension to the West would measure 2.0m in width by 1.4m in depth. It would adjoin the existing porch and would have a flat roof to a height of 2.7m. The extension would be faced with matching brickwork.

2.2 The single storey rear extension to the East would measure 2.5m in width by a maximum of 2.69m in depth. It would have a flat roof and the existing section of mono-pitched roof over an existing rear projection would be removed and replaced by a matching flat roof. The extension would be faced with matching brickwork.

2.3 The new bedroom rooflight would be in the front (West facing) roofslope of the property.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 PL/23/1092/FA - Two storey front extension, single storey rear extension, replacement of existing windows and internal alterations. Pending consideration and on the same Committee agenda.

3.2 PL/20/4008/FA - Vehicular access and hardstanding. Conditional permission.

3.3 CH/1985/1559/FA – Single storey rear extensions and front porches. Conditional permission.

4.0 Summary of Representations

4.1 Amersham Town Council states “no objections.”

4.2 Two letters of comment/objection from neighbours have been received (both comment on the extensions and also the loss of the postbox, which does not form part of this application).

4.3 Amersham and District Residents Association object.

4.4 These responses are reproduced at Appendix A.

5.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

- Core Strategy for Chiltern District - Adopted November 2011:
- Chiltern Local Plan adopted 1 September 1997 (including alterations adopted 29 May 2001), consolidated September 2007 and November 2011.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021.
- National Design Guide, revised 2021

- Sustainable Construction and Renewable Energy SPD - Adopted 25 February 2015.
- Buckinghamshire Parking Standards SPD, 2015 (Adopted 2021).

Raising the quality of place making and design

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 (Ensuring that the development is sustainable)

CS20 (Design and environmental quality)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC1 (Design of development)

GC4 (Landscaping)

H13 (Extensions to dwellings in the built-up areas excluded from the Green Belt and in Policy GB4 and GB5 areas in the Green Belt - general policy)

H15 (Design and siting of extensions)

H17 (Distance between single storey side extensions and boundary of dwelling curtilage)

- 5.1 The site lies in the built-up area of Amersham outside the Green Belt, where residential extensions are acceptable in principle.
- 5.2 The existing property sits in an irregular shaped plot, with its side facing the street. It has a private garden area to the front (West) and a small parking area to the rear (East). The pair of semi detached properties fronts West and are of a similar scale, with single storey additions to the rear. They are not completely symmetrical, due to the differences in some of the external materials, windows and rooflights.
- 5.3 The proposed single storey extension on the front (West) elevation would be small. It would only be 2.0 metres by 1.4 metres in footprint, with a flat roof adjoining the existing porch. Given its modest scale, it is not considered to harm the form and appearance of the host dwelling itself.
- 5.4 In terms of the impact on the street scene, the proposed single storey front extension would be small and only the end wall would be visible from the street, given the retention of the boundary hedge, which can be secured by condition. In the context of the building as a whole, the proposed front extension would be modest in size and would appear subservient in character. It is not considered to significantly harm the character or appearance of the building or the street scene.
- 5.5 The proposed single storey extension on the rear (East) elevation would be modest in footprint, being around 2.5m by 2.7m in size. It would have a flat roof with a parapet along the southern edge, which would also replace the existing section of mono-pitched roof over an existing rear projection. Both the adjoining cottages have similar rear projections, although the neighbouring extension is larger, having been previously extended. The proposed rear extension is not considered to significantly harm the character of the existing dwelling, given its modest height. It would appear as a subservient addition,

and would replace a section of close boarded panel fencing, with its matching brick wall arguably presenting a better frontage to the street.

- 5.6 Given the above, the proposed extensions are not considered to harm the character or appearance of the locality.

Amenity of existing and future residents

Local Plan Saved Policies:

GC3 (Protection of amenities)

H13 (Extensions to dwellings in the built-up areas - general policy)

H14 (Safeguarding the amenities of neighbours in relation to extensions)

- 5.7 The single storey front extension would be modest in depth and height and would not appear overbearing or intrusive when viewed from the windows of the attached dwelling.
- 5.8 The proposed single storey extension would project modestly beyond the rear of the neighbouring property, by 2.68m. The neighbouring property has a rear window and door, which serve a kitchen. The proposed extension would be located to the North of these openings, so due to the orientation and the path of the sun, there would be no material loss of sunlight or overshadowing. Given the modest projection to the rear, the new section of side wall on the shared boundary is not considered to appear overbearing and it is noted it would replace a section of close boarded fencing and trellis.
- 5.9 The neighbour has raised a concern regarding rear access from her gate onto the driveway and the street. However, this would be unaffected by the proposed rear extension.
- 5.10 The hedging around the front garden, which makes an important contribution to the verdant nature of the street scene, is shown to be retained. As noted above, this could be required by condition.

Transport matters and parking

Core Strategy Policies:

CS25 (Dealing with the impact of new development on the transport network)

CS26 (Requirements of new development)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

TR2 (Highway aspects of planning applications)

TR11 (Provision of off-street parking for developments)

TR15 (Design of parking areas)

Buckinghamshire Parking Standards SPD, 2015

- 5.11 The extensions do not create any new bedrooms, as the existing property is fairly small internally, and the extensions simply enlarge some of the existing rooms. As such there is no requirement for any additional parking, as the relevant Parking Standard for the property would not change. The Parking Standards set out that a one-bed property in Zone B requires one parking space, and this is provided.

Ecology

Core Strategy Policies:

CS4 (Ensuring that development is sustainable)

CS24 (Biodiversity)

Local Plan Saved Policies:

NC1 (Safeguarding of nature conservation interests)

- 5.12 Given their single storey nature, the extensions would not impact the existing roof and the location of the dwelling is within a built-up area. As such a full initial ecology survey is not necessary and an Informative is considered reasonable and proportionate, to draw the attention of the Applicant to their legal responsibilities regarding bats, if any are found during the works.
- 5.13 All planning applications should demonstrate a biodiversity net gain, and there is an opportunity to install additional habitats in the form of bird or nest boxes within the site. This can be required by condition.

6.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

- 6.1 This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 6.2 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- a. Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
 - b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
 - c. Any other material considerations
- 6.3 As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the development plan policies.
- 6.4 Local Planning Authorities, when making decisions of a strategic nature, must have due regard, through the Equalities Act, to reducing the inequalities which may result from socio-economic disadvantage. In this instance, it is not considered that this proposal would disadvantage any sector of society to a harmful extent].
- 6.5 The recommendation has been made having regard to the above and also to the content of the Human Rights Act 1998.

7.0 Working with the applicant / agent

- 7.1 The agent was updated regarding the likely recommendation and progress of the application and offered the opportunity to speak at the Planning Committee meeting.
- 7.2 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2021) the Council approaches decision-taking in a positive and creative way, taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and working proactively with applicants to secure sustainable developments.
- 7.3 The Council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service and, as appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

8.0 Recommendation: Conditional Permission. Subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions, to enable the Local Planning Authority to review the suitability of the development in the light of altered circumstances and to comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.
2. The materials to be used in the external construction of the development hereby permitted shall match the size, colour and texture of those of the existing building.
Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the enlarged building is not detrimental to the character of the locality.
3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order, with or without modification), no windows shall be inserted or constructed at any time in the South facing flank wall of the rear extension hereby permitted.
Reason: In order to protect the amenities and privacy of the adjoining property.
4. The existing hedge along the Northern street frontage of the application site shall be retained at a height of no less than 2 metres for at least 5 years from the date of implementation of this permission and they shall not be removed without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority. If at any time any part of these retained hedges shall die, be uprooted, injured, wilfully damaged or be removed for any other reason, it shall be replaced with hedge planting of the same species and a similar size in the next following planting season.
Reason: In order to maintain, as far as possible, the character of the locality, in accordance with Local Plan Policy GC4.
5. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a scheme of ecological enhancements, and a timetable for its implementation, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to show that

an overall net gain in biodiversity will be achieved. The scheme shall include such measures as landscape planting of known benefit to wildlife and/or the provision of artificial roost features, including bird and bat boxes. The scheme shall be implemented in full and as per the timetable approved by the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of enhancing biodiversity in accordance with Section 15 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy 24: Biodiversity.

6. This permission relates to the details shown on the approved plans as listed below:

List of approved plans:

<u>Received</u>	<u>Plan Reference</u>
29 Mar 2023	SGL-PL00
29 Mar 2023	SGL-PL10

and in accordance with any other conditions imposed by this planning permission.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the details considered by the Local Planning Authority.

INFORMATIVE(S)

1. The applicant is advised that, if any bats or bat roosts are found during the works, all work must stop until advice has been obtained from a specialist ecologist. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to: deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat; intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a roosting or hibernating bat; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under these acts. Buildings, other structures and trees may support bats and their roosts. Where proposed activities might result in one or more of the above offences, it is possible to apply for a derogation licence from Natural England. If a bat or bat roost is encountered during works, all works must cease until advice has been sought from Natural England, as failure to do so could result in prosecutable offences being committed.
2. The Council is the Charging Authority for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). CIL is a charge on development; it is tariff-based and enables local authorities to raise funds to pay for infrastructure.

If you have received a CIL Liability Notice, this Notice will set out the further requirements that need to be complied with.

If you have not received a CIL Liability Notice, the development may still be liable for CIL. Before development is commenced, for further information please refer to the following website <https://www.chiltern.gov.uk/CIL-implementation> or contact 01494 475679 or planning.cil.csb@buckinghamshire.gov.uk for more information.

APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations

Councillor Comments

None.

Town Council Comments

Amersham Town Council: "No objection."

Consultation Responses

None.

Representations

Two letters of objection have been received. Both comment on the loss of the postbox, which as noted earlier does not need planning permission and does not form part of this application.

The material planning points raised in the letters are as follows:

- The proportionately large flat roof to the rear of the property seems excessive, I understand the planning preference is for pitched roofs which would be more in keeping with the property.
- I have no problem with the front extension but both extensions are not in keeping with the period property.
- Will block light to neighbouring windows and affect access through back gate.

Amersham and District Residents Association (ADRA) also object as follows:

Firstly, the proposals are not at all in keeping with the character of the existing dwelling, which is an old building even if unlisted. The two dwellings currently present a matched pair with a projecting porch and shared gable. Even a single storey extension to the (rear) wall on Grimsdells Lane would be easily visible from the street and would have a detrimental effect on the adjoining property, being considerably higher. The contorted design devise with a small section of pitched roof used to meet its neighbour on the other elevation (front) would be most unattractive. Really, it would be rather better to rebuild the whole of the front porch to the two properties.

(Officer Note: ADRA also comment on the loss of the postbox, but as noted above, this does not require planning permission).