

Committee date	Wednesday, 3rd June 2020
Application reference	20/00300/FUL
Site address	Land Rear Of 250 St Albans Road, Watford WD24 4AX
Proposal	Change of use from workshop/office to dwelling incorporating two dormer windows in the front roofslope and new windows and doors in the elevations
Applicant	Taj Watford Homaid
Agent	Mr Steven York
Type of Application	Minor Dwelling
Reason for Committee Item	To be approved and number of objections
Target decision date (Agreed Extension)	8 th May 2020
Statutory publicity	No Press Advert and No Site Notice published. Neighbouring properties consulted 16 th March 2020.
Case Officer	Obafemi Okusipe, obafemi.okusipe@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Callowland

1. Recommendation

That the application be approved subject to the section 106 heads of terms and conditions as set out in Section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises a parcel of land used for covered storage and a detached, single storey workshop with roof lights at the rear of 250 St Albans Road. The detached building was converted from a double garage to a workshop and is accessible from Cromer Road. As a private access path abuts the rear of the site to the north. The application site is fronted by a cul-de-sac created to form a turning head with yellow line waiting restrictions. The detached building is fenced off and separated from 250 St Albans Road and the rear parcel of land is also fenced off and separated from the rest of the plot. There is an existing on-site car parking space to the side of the building.
- 2.2 The application site is located within a residential neighbourhood, characterised by Victorian terraced housing in a sustainable location adjoining the North Watford Shopping Centre. The site is not located in a designated conservation area or other Article 2(3) land and is not subject to an Article 4 direction.

3 Summary of the proposal

3.1 Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the proposed change of use from a workshop/office to a single, self-contained dwelling. The proposed development would utilise the existing footprint to provide a kitchen/living area with an integral garage for one car at ground floor and two bedrooms (12.7m² to 19.3m²) at first floor within the roof space each served by a new front dormer window. The proposal incorporates 83.2m² gross internal floor area, 3.59m² bin/cycle provision, a 17m² private amenity space to the east of the building and 40m² private amenity space to the west of the building. This latter provision will involve the demolition of an existing single storey structure used to provide covered storage at the rear of the ground floor commercial unit of No. 250.

3.2 Conclusion

The change of use from a workshop/office to a self-contained dwelling is considered acceptable in principle. The proposed additional area of private amenity space to the west of the building is considered sufficient to overcome the sole reason for a previous appeal being dismissed. The siting of the building will ensure that the proposed dormer windows will have no significant adverse impacts on surrounding residential properties. The proposed development would provide good quality accommodation and an acceptable level of amenity for future occupiers. The provision of one on-site parking space is acceptable.

4. Relevant policies

Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application is determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in Section 6 below.

5. Relevant site history/background information

5.1 The following planning history is relevant to this application:

15/01321/FUL - Demolition of existing garages and construction of a new 1 bedroom house. Planning permission refused on 10.11.2015.

16/00560/FUL - Change of use from disused garages to office.
Planning permission refused on 15.06.2016.

18/00508/FUL - Proposed extension and conversion of existing garages into furniture repair workshop/office. Conditional planning permission granted on 27.07.2018.

19/00898/FUL - Proposed change of use from workshop/office to dwelling.
Planning permission refused on 01.10.2019. An appeal against this refusal was subsequently dismissed on appeal (see below).

5.2 **Background Information**

This proposal is a modification of a previous planning application under ref. 19/00898/FUL which was refused based on a poor level of accommodation (sub-standard bedroom floor areas, unacceptable ceiling height, poor outlook) and inadequate private amenity space. The applicant appealed this decision and the appeal was dismissed, with the Inspector upholding the reasons for refusal based upon a poor level of accommodation (outlook only) and inadequate private amenity space. The current planning application has sought to overcome the reasons for the dismissal at appeal by incorporating 2 front dormer windows, one to each of the bedrooms, to overcome poor outlook and providing additional amenity space to the west of the application site (40m²), which can be secured by s106 agreement.

6. **Main considerations**

6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:

- a) Principle of development
- b) Scale and design
- c) Quality of the accommodation provided
- d) Impact on surrounding properties
- e) Parking

6.2 (a) Principle of development

The site is within a primarily residential area and the principal of residential development is acceptable, subject to relevant design and amenity considerations. Furthermore, the principal of residential development has been established through the previous application and appeal decision.

6.3 (b) Scale and design

Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 seeks high quality

design in all new development. Para. 9.1 of the Residential Design Guide (RDG) states that conversion must respect the scale and design of the host building and must not detract from the existing character of the site and the surrounding area. The proposed conversion would utilise the existing building with the scale and design of the proposed front dormers and proposed fenestration considered to be in keeping with the appearance of the building. Although front dormers are not a feature of the locality, this is a unique, single storey building located at the end of the turning head. Having regard to the location of the site and its context, it is not considered to have any harmful impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

6.4 (c) Quality of the accommodation provided

The proposed change of use would provide a 2 bedroom, 3 person dwelling over 2 levels, with the 2 bedrooms, each with front dormer windows, having floor areas of 10.3m² and 14.9m² respectively above a 1.5m ceiling height. The overall floor area of the dwelling is 70.4m², which meets the minimum floor area of 70m² for a two-storey, 2 bedroom, 3 person dwelling. The dormer windows will ensure good levels of outlook and natural light to the bedrooms.

6.5 The proposal will provide 2 private garden areas of 17m² on the east side of the building (as proposed in the previous scheme) and 40m² on the west side of the building. The smaller area will accommodate the bin and cycle stores for the dwelling. This area on its own was considered to be inadequate by the appeal Inspector and was one of the reasons the appeal was dismissed. The proposed additional garden area to the west gives a total provision of 57m², which exceeds the minimum guideline of 50m² in the Residential Design Guide, although it is split between the two areas either side of the building. Nevertheless, the new garden area of 40m² is of a useable shape and is a similar size to many of the garden areas to the adjoining houses in Cromer Road which vary from 35-45m². In this case, this area will provide a useable garden for the dwelling with the smaller area being more practical for bin and cycle storage. Overall, this is considered to be an acceptable provision for the dwelling. The provision of the additional garden area is to be secured by a planning obligation as this currently forms part of a different property (250, St Albans Road).

6.6 (d) Impact on surrounding properties

The proposed development would not result in loss of daylight, outlook and privacy to neighbouring occupiers. In particular, the proposed front dormer windows will face towards the turning head and not give rise to unreasonable overlooking.

6.7 (f) Parking

The proposed change of use would provide one additional off-site car parking space in the form of an integral garage and would provide cycle storage within the small garden area. Given the sustainable location and access to public transport, this level of provision is acceptable in principle. The application site is not within a Controlled Parking Zone. It is considered that the proposed change of use would not result in an increase in traffic generation and parking demand that would exacerbate the on-street parking situation in this section of Cromer Road.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

Hertfordshire County Council Highway Authority

No response received.

7.2 Internal Consultees

No internal consultees.

7.3 Interested parties

Letters were sent to 46 properties in the surrounding area. Six letters of objection and 5 letters of support were received. The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online:

Comments	Officer response
Overdevelopment of the site	The proposal is for the conversion of the existing building and will not result in overdevelopment of the site.
Impact on neighbours' amenities (privacy, outlook, daylight,)	The proposal will not give rise to any adverse impacts to surrounding properties.
No car parking	One on-site car parking space is to be provided.
Provision of additional amenity	The proposed additional garden space provision is considered acceptable.

8 Recommendation

That planning permission be granted subject to the completion of a legal agreement under s.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the planning obligations listed below and the following conditions:

Section 106 Heads of Terms

- i) To secure the provision of the area of land forming the western part of the application site as private garden land for the proposed dwelling.

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

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

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

Site location plan
Block plan (April 2020)
Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations (Amended 3/03/2020)
Section (March 2020)

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

3. All the external surfaces of the development shall be finished in materials to match the colour, texture and style of the existing building.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site, pursuant to Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan: Core Strategy 2006 - 31.

4. The dwelling hereby approved shall not be occupied until a detailed soft landscaping scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of development. Any trees or plants whether new or existing which within a period of five

years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, or in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the amenity of future occupiers, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and the Residential design Guide 2016.

5. The integral garage shall only be used for the parking of vehicles and shall not be used as habitable accommodation or for any other purpose, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure parking provision is provided for the dwelling and to prevent additional on-street parking.

6. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended (or any modifications or re-enactment thereof), no development permitted under Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B, C, D, E and G of the Order shall be carried out to the dwellings hereby approved without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure that any such developments are carried out in a manner which will not be harmful to the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings and will not prove detrimental to the amenities of residents in accordance with Policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

Informatives

1. IN907 - Positive-proactive statement – GRANT
2. IN910 - Building Regulations
3. IN912 - Hours of Construction
4. IN909 - Street Naming and Numbering
5. IN913 - Community Infrastructure Levy Liability
6. IN914 - Section 106 Obligation