

Committee date	Wednesday, 3 June 2020
Application reference	20/00356/FUL 807 St Albans Road Watford WD25 0LE
Site address	
Proposal	Demolition of existing derelict bungalow and erection of group of 4no. private dwellings
Applicant	Mr And Mrs J McGroarty
Agent	MTWarchitects
Type of Application	Full Planning Permission- Minor
Reason for committee Item	6 objections received
Target decision date	05.06.2020 (extended by agreement)
Statutory publicity	Letters to adjoining dwellings
Case officer	Alice Reade, alice.ream@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Stanborough

1. Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions as set out in section 8 of this report.

2. Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The site is currently occupied by a large detached bungalow set in a wide plot of land on the western side of St Albans Road.
- 2.2 Adjacent to the north is a semi-detached property 809 St Albans Road. This property has a two-storey side extension abutting the side boundary of the application site and is also set forward of the existing bungalow. Adjacent to the south is a detached two-storey property 805 St Albans Road. To the west, the site backs on to the rear gardens of the two-storey properties along the cul-de-sac Gwent Close.
- 2.3 The site is not within a conservation area and does not encompass any listed buildings. There are no protected trees on the site.

3. Summary of the proposal

3.1 Proposal

- 3.2 Demolition of the existing derelict bungalow and erection of a group of 4 x 3/4 bedroom terrace dwellings of 2 storeys plus roof accommodation. The front of the site will contain parking using the two existing vehicle entrances to the site.

3.3 The plans have been amended during the course of the application to correct an accessway annotation and to reduce the depth of the proposed building adjacent to 809 St Albans Road.

3.4 **Conclusion**

The proposed development of 4 houses would be appropriate in form, design, height and layout for the site and the context. The dwellings would provide high quality accommodation and amenity areas. On-site parking using the existing vehicle accesses is acceptable to the Highway Authority. Following amendments, the development has appropriate relationships with neighbours to the side and rear and would not create adverse harm to the light, outlook or privacy of these dwellings.

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

<u>App Number</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Status</u>
74/00501/FUL	Erection of single storey extension at front and rear of bungalow	Conditional Planning Permission
05/00793/FUL	Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 5 no . 2 bedroom flats and 3 no.1 bedroom flats together with associated access and parking	Withdrawn
06/00679/FUL	Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 6 flats with associated access, parking and amenity	Refused Planning Permission
	Reasons for refusal relating to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor design- size, layout and siting • Loss of outlook and privacy of neighbours • Poor amenity for future occupiers • Poor access/highway impact • Financial contributions not secured 	

6. Main considerations

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of these applications are:
- (a) Principle of development
 - (b) Scale and design
 - (c) Residential amenity
 - (d) Impact on surrounding properties.
 - (e) Access, parking and highway impact
 - (f) Bin and bicycle storage
- 6.2 (a) Principle of development
The existing building on site is not listed or locally listed and is not within a conservation area. The demolition of the building to allow for redevelopment of the site is therefore acceptable in principle.
- 6.3 The site is suitable for residential development in accordance with policy HS1 of the Core Strategy. Specifically, the site is not at risk of flooding and has access to public transport and a range of local services. Furthermore, the site has no heritage significance or biodiversity or landscape value. The proposed residential use would be in keeping with the residential context of the surrounding area. The development also provides much needed family sized 3/4 bedroom homes, compliant with policy HS2 of the Core Strategy.
- 6.4 For these reasons, the loss of the existing building and the proposed residential development of the site are acceptable in policy terms and are supported in principle.
- 6.5 (b) Scale and design
St Albans Road consists of a varied streetscene of residential and commercial premises. The immediate streetscene features predominantly semi-detached and detached houses with an infill development of 3 terraced buildings on the eastern side of the road. To the north of the site there is also the local shopping group of Garston Park Parade.
- 6.6 The proposed group of terraced dwellings would be of a form appropriate within this varied context. The development of houses, rather than flats, maintain front doors to St Albans Road continuing residential activity and character onto St Albans road.
- 6.7 The design approach includes a staggered front building line for the development with plots A and B approximately level with 805 St Albans Road to the south and plots C and D stepping forward. This will follow the stepped

nature of the building line on the western side of St Albans Road. The set back of the fronts of buildings C and D behind the front of 809 St Albans Road to the north will ensure the development does not infringe the visual building line and would not appear as dominant or overbearing within the streetscene. The building also includes 1m gaps to both side boundaries to maintain separation and avoid a cramped appearance.

- 6.8 The building is taller than the bungalow it replaces, however, the hipped roof design, pitch, eaves height and ridge heights will relate comfortably to the neighbouring properties. Specifically, the height does not exceed that of the ridge of 809 and whilst also being set back from the road, it would not appear as unduly large or bulky.
- 6.9 The design of the 4 terraced dwellings includes articulation to create the appearance of 2 pairs and includes various elements of detailing and articulation. Within the context of semi-detached pairs of properties showing symmetry as well as detached houses showing asymmetrical features, this articulation of the development will allow it to sit comfortably within the streetscene. Front dormers are seen on buildings in this streetscene and the proposed front dormers at 2nd floor level are acceptable.
- 6.10 The front landscaped area of the site is showed substantially laid to hardstanding. Although much is required to provide the 4 car spaces shown with turning areas, this is excessive and the dominance of hard landscaping on the frontage is not visually acceptable. A condition has been added to request a detailed landscaped scheme to secure a more appropriate degree of soft landscaping at the front of the site.
- 6.11 (c) Residential amenity
Each dwelling consists of 3 bedrooms plus a loft room annotated as a playroom/study. As these loft rooms for each dwelling are of a size and location usable as a single bedroom, the dwellings has been assessed as 4 bed 6 person dwellings over 3 floors. The gross internal areas (GIAs) of the dwellings is set out in the table below along with the required minimum standard of Section 7.3.6 of the Residential Design Guide.

	GIA provided	GIA standard	Compliant?
Plot A	113m ²	112m ²	Yes
Plot B	114m ²	112m ²	Yes
Plot C	111m ²	112m ²	No- see comments below
Plot D	111m ²	112m ²	No – see comments below

Table 1: GIA of proposed dwellings.

- 6.12 The GIA of plots C and D are marginally below the minimum standard, however, as this is less than 1% below the standard, this is not considered to be significantly harmful. The dwellings will also provide well-proportioned accommodation with good light and outlook.
- 6.13 The dwellings would have private garden space each of between 66sqm and 87sqm. These garden sizes exceed the minimum standards of the Residential Design Guide.
- 6.14 (d) Impact to neighbouring properties
809 St Albans Road
 The existing allows the two storey property at 809 to benefit from more than typical light and privacy at the rear. The development would be to the south of 809 and would project to the rear of this dwelling at a greater height than the existing bungalow. To minimise this impact, plots C and D nearest 809 have been amended during the course of the application to reduce the depth of Plot D adjacent to 809. Although there is still a notable change to the environment of 809, it is now considered that this would not be unduly harmful to the occupiers.
- 6.15 The 45 degree lines taken on plan and elevation from the nearest ground floor window of 809 are as marked on the proposed plans. This shows that Plot D would not infringe the 45 degree lines taken on elevation and on plan to the first floor. The ground floor of Plot D would marginally infringe the 45 degree line on plan from 809, however, as this is the single storey element and is set in from the boundary, this is not considered to be harmful.
- 6.16 The relative depth of Plot D to the ground floor rear of 809 would be 5.4m at ground floor and 3.9m at first floor. Although closer to 809, the depth of Plot D would not exceed the rear depth of the existing building. It is also noted

that there are outbuildings including a wooden shed at 809 adjacent to the boundary with the proposed Plot D. As such, the relative depth and position of the development and Plot D would not create an unduly harmful impact to the rear and rear garden of 809.

- 6.17 It is noted that due to the ground floor extension at 809, Plot D would have a greater relative depth to the upper floor windows of 809. The RDG guidance does not apply the 45 degree line guidance to upper floor windows, however, it is considered that due to the set in of Plot D from the boundary, it would not create unreasonable loss of light or outlook to the first floor rear windows of 809.
- 6.18 All upper floor side windows are to be obscurely glazed and fixed close below an internal height of 1.7m meaning that the development will not create unreasonable overlooking to neighbours at 809.
- 6.19 *805 St Albans Road*
The development would be only marginal beyond the front and ground floor rear of the adjacent property at 805 and would be inset 1m from the common boundary. All upper floor side windows are to be obscurely glazed and fixed close below an internal height of 1.7m. As such, the development has a relationship with 805 fully compliant with the RDG and would not create loss of light, outlook or privacy to this neighbour.
- 6.20 *Gwent Close properties*
The creation of houses at the site to replace the bungalow will create a change in the rear outlook of Gwent Close properties. However, the development will maintain a 16m rear garden depth which is in excess of the 11m guidance within the RDG. The development would also not infringe the 27.5m back to back distance or 27.5m privacy arc to the Gwent Close properties. As such, the relationship with Gwent Close properties is fully compliant with the guidance of the RDG and would not create unreasonable loss of privacy or amenity to these occupiers.
- 6.21 (e) Access, parking and highway impact
The Watford District Plan states maximum parking standards within Appendix 2. This site is located within zone 4 and for the development of 4 x 4-bedroom units, the maximum parking provision for the development should not exceed 12 spaces (4 x 3 spaces per dwelling max). The provision of parking for 4 cars on the site would be within the maximum standards and is considered to be a reasonable level of parking provision. The development uses the existing two vehicle access and the access arrangements and turning within the site are acceptable to the Highway Authority.

6.22 (f) Bin and bicycle storage

Each plot includes secure bicycle and bin storage within the rear gardens of each house and this is secured by condition.

7. Consultation responses received

7.1 Statutory consultees and other organisations

7.2 Internal Consultees

Consultee	Comments	Officer response
Hertfordshire Highways	No objection subject to conditions	Noted and conditions added.
Tree officer	There are no protected trees on site and no objection	Noted.
Waste and recycling officer	No comments received	No comments received, however, each dwelling includes appropriate bin storage and collection from St Albans Road would be maintained.

7.3 Interested parties

Letters were sent to 14 properties in the surrounding area. Responses have been received from 7 properties with 1 general representation and 6 objections. The main comments are summarised below, the full letters are available to view online:

Comments	Officer response
Harm to the light, outlook and privacy of neighbouring properties	This is discussed in full in sections 6.14 to 6.20 of the report. The neighbouring properties have benefited from the nature of the existing bungalow adjacent to their two storey houses. The development will change this to create a two storey building. However, this would not create unreasonable harm to neighbours
Increased traffic generation	The Highway Authority have not raised concerns or objections in relation to traffic generation.

Insufficient parking	Maximum parking standards seek to prevent increased traffic generation. The provision of one space per dwelling is appropriate for this location.
The height and design would be odd in the streetscene and the bungalow should be retained	The buildings in the area are predominantly two storey and the two storey development would be entirely appropriate. The design approach is acceptable as discussed in sections 6.5 to 6.10 of the report.
Increased noise pollution	Creation of new residential dwellings in a residential area is reasonable and acceptable.
The proposed cycle path/access is questioned and is a security concern	This has been amended in revised plans. The dwellings would have access along the side and rear of the site only.
Additional time is required for neighbours to comment	All comments received since the neighbours consultations on 30 th March have been accepted and considered.
The previous application was refused.	National and local planning policy has changed considerably since the previous application was considered in 2006. Nonetheless, the concerns regarding the design, highway and amenity impacts of the previous development have been overcome by this revised design. Planning applications must be considered on their individual merits.
The existing fence to the site is not secure	At this time, this is a civil matter between two properties, however, should the development be approved, secure boundary fencing is required as part of the landscaping condition.
Potential damage to property and disruption during construction works	Any disruption during construction works would be temporary and a construction management plan would be secured by condition. If damage were to be caused during construction this would be a civil matter.

8. Recommendation

That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions listed below:

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. The following drawings are hereby approved:

20-68-01 Existing Plans
20-68-20 Rev F Proposed Plans
20-68-21 Rev F Proposed Elevations

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

3. Prior to the commencement of the site works the applicant shall submit a construction management plan setting out details on any demolition works, removal of materials from site, parking for all contractors, sub-contractors, visitors and delivery vehicles, storage of materials to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority and that area shall be maintained available for use at all times during the period of site works.

Reason: To minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway

4. A 2mx2m pedestrian visibility sight splay, free from obstruction between a height of 600mm and 2.0m and relative to the back of the footway shall be provided on both sides of vehicular access prior to the operational use and thereafter.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of the development in the interest of highway safety

5. Before being brought in to use new parking areas shall be surfaced in tarmacadam or similar durable bound material and arrangements shall be made for surface water from the site to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge into highway.

Reason: To avoid the carriage of extraneous material surface water from the site into the highway so as to safeguard the interest of highway safety.

6. Prior to commencement of the proposed development works the existing gates at the two access points should be removed permanently to avoid vehicles parking on a busy highway a main distributor road for gates to be opened and closed.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and maintaining the free and safe flow of traffic.

7. No external facing materials shall be installed on any building of the development until full details and samples of all the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the buildings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

8. No part of the development shall be occupied until full details of both hard and soft landscaping works, including details of all trees and soft landscaping to be planted, any changes to ground levels around the building, all pathways, all hard surfacing, amenity areas/paving and boundary treatments have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include increased soft landscaping to the front area of the site. The approved landscaping scheme, with the exception of the planting, shall be completed prior to any occupation of the development. Any proposed planting shall be completed not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of the development. Any new trees or plants 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, to safeguard trees, to ensure the provision of suitable car parking and turning areas, to ensure suitable screening is maintained or provided between the site and neighbouring occupiers in accordance with saved policies T21 and SE37 of the Watford District Plan 2000

9. The refuse, recycling and cycle storage shall be constructed and installed in accordance with the approved drawings and made available for use prior to the occupation of any part of the development. The storage shall be retained as approved at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure adequate facilities are provided for the future occupiers and in the interests of the visual appearance of the site, in accordance with saved Policies SE7 and T10 of the Watford District Plan 2000 and Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

10. All upper floor windows in the south and north side elevations shall be installed and retained with obscure-glazing, and shall be non-opening other than in parts of the windows which are more than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which the window is installed.

Reason: To prevent overlooking and consequent loss of privacy to neighbouring premises pursuant to Policy UD1 (Delivering High Quality Design) of the Watford Local Plan (Core Strategy) 2006-2031 and the Residential Design Guide (2016).

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