

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/23/95453

Site Address: Site of Ramcrest, Lowford Hill, Bursledon

Case Officer: Summer Sharpe

Description: Replacement dwelling.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Within urban edge - Nature Conservation: SAC, SPA, Ramsar - Article 4 (restricting the use of land by Hovercraft)		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Planning App no.	Proposal	Decision
H/20/89187	Addition of first floor and attic storey with rear dormer, two storey front extensions single storey side extension, remodelling to exterior of property.	Permitted (April 2021)
LDC/19/84711	Lawful Development Certificate Proposed: Conversion from hipped roof to gable end to side elevations with dormer to rear and single story side extension	Lawful Development Certificate Granted (March 2019)
H/18/82376	Ground and new lower ground rear extensions including rear terrace	Permitted (June 2018)
F/16/79067	Single storey rear extension & provision of revised decking to rear (amended design to F/16/78431)	Permitted (September 2016)
F/16/78431	Single storey front & rear extension with raised decking to rear	Refused (July 2016) Appeal Dismissed (December 2016)

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	<u>1no. Comment, summarised as follows:</u> (a) clarity is requested with regard to first floor balcony/ roof space, (b) concern about overlooking. <u>1no. Support comment.</u>		
Parish Council:	No objection.		
EBC Ecology:	I have reviewed the Preliminary Roost Assessment Report by Hampshire Ecological Services (April 2021). The report states that the bungalow had negligible bat roost suitability and no signs of bats were found. According to the DAS, most the building was demolished. Therefore, although the PRA report is only considered valid for 12months, this only related to whether bats were using the existing building. The recommendations for the new building are not subject to a time limitation. The recommendations for biodiversity enhancements, precautionary vegetation clearance, lighting and eradication of invasive montbretia are all sound and can be condition. The proposed enhancement are shown in figure 4 and include an integrated bat box on the southern elevation, a woodstone bird box on the west elevation and a swift box/brick on the northern elevation. The location of the montbretia to be eradicated is shown in figure 3. Information about bat sensitive exterior lighting		

	is explained in 5.2.3 and 5.6.3. Any additional vegetation clearance that has not yet been done must be done either outside of the nesting bird season or if this is not possible, the only immediately after a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist, as explain in 5.3.2. A surface water drainage statement is required. This must provide details of the existing surface water drainage arrangements and any proposed changes to the existing system, including accommodations for the additional volume of surface water drainage due to the larger roof area of the new dwelling.
EBC Environmental Health:	We do not have any additional comments.
Hampshire Highways:	No objection, additional information is requested. As present, the vehicle access is located on the eastern side of the property frontage, accessing out onto Lowford Hill. The layout of the parking shown on drawing 2005-05-06 (Proposed Site Plan) shows vehicle parking situated at 90degree angles to this, suggesting that the vehicle access will be changed to the western side of the frontage. Whilst there would be no objection in principle to this, a change in vehicle access would not only require a new drop kerb to be installed, but also the formal closure of the existing access which would need raising of the drop kerbs, re-instatement of the footway, and this would need to be undertaken via a minor works S278 legal agreement with HCC. As such, unless there are layout or highway safety reasons for the change in vehicle access position, it would be recommended that this be amended on plans for resubmission. If there is however a requirement for the access position to be changed then this should be fully shown on plans, inclusive of width and visibility splay requirements.
Natural England:	None received.

Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan:

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

Policies: S1 (Delivering sustainable development), S2 (Approach to new development), DM1 (General development), DM2 (Environmentally sustainable development), DM3 (Adaption to climate change), DM6 (SUDs), DM8 (Pollution), DM11 (Nature Conservation), DM13 (Transport), DM14 (Parking), DM23 (Residential development in urban areas), DM29 (Higher access standards), and DM30 (Internal space standards for new residential development).

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places; and Residential Parking Standards.

Site Visit	Yes ☒	No ☐
20 July 2023.		

Assessment:

Site & Surroundings

The application site is associated with Lowford Hill, but is located to and accessed via the south of Portsmouth Road. The site is situated on a hill, with the neighbour to the east 'Rohais' being on lower ground, and the neighbour to the west 'Highfield' being on higher ground than the application site. To the south of the application site are properties rear gardens associated with Reeves Way.

From a history search it was noted that there was formerly a bungalow on the site. Whilst out on a site visit in the Summer of 2023, it was noted that the former bungalow had been completely demolished and significant excavation works, associated with the previously approved application H/20/89187, had commenced.

A site visit was also undertaken to Rohais (neighbour to the east), which is on lower ground than that of the application site. There was, however, significant screening in the form of a hedgerow along the shared eastern boundary with the application site, thus providing privacy and preventing overlooking between the 2 properties.

On site at the application site, the change in levels was noted, whereby Highfield (west) had a significant brick wall and fence along the shared boundary. It was also noted that there was a single storey extension which was situated fairly tight and spans a significant portion of the shared western boundary.

Proposal, Background & Comparison to Previous Scheme

The application proposes a replacement dwelling. During the site visit, it was noted that the previous bungalow had been demolished, and excavation works had started.

Planning application H/20/89187 granted permission for *addition of first floor and attic storey with rear dormer, two storey front extensions single storey side extension, remodelling to exterior of property.*

As a result of the changes in land level to the front, the dwelling would measure approx. 10.1m in height and to the rear elevation the proposed dwelling would measure 12.7m in height. The dormer would project approx. 1.3m from the rear roof slope and would measure 1.5m height and 7.1m in length. The front extension comprised a two-storey extension with a barn hipped roof. The single storey side extension would project approx. 2.6m to the shared eastern boundary and would have a depth of approx. 9m and a maximum height (from the highest ground level) of approx. 5.7m with a hipped roof.

Following the demolition of the bungalow, it was deemed that the previous application could not be implemented as this only granted extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling. As such, this application for a replacement dwelling was submitted. This application is largely similar to the previous approval, however there are some differences. The application has also been amended during the process to include the addition of privacy screens serving the proposed balcony and omission of extension/ balcony area attached to the single storey side extension.

For clarity a comparison of the approved development under H/20/89187 and the current proposals under this application F/23/95453 are set out below:

- The proposed dwelling would be in the same position within the plot
- There would be no change to the principal elevation
- The single storey eastern side extension would remain as previously approved
- The lower ground and ground floor extension would be deeper (from 7m to 9.5m)
- The lower ground floor would facilitate a balcony above, following amended plans 1.8m privacy screens have been proposed
- The overall height would remain as approved

- The rear dormer would remain as approved

Principle

The application site falls within the urban edge, whereby alterations or extensions to, or within the curtilage of residential dwellinghouses are considered to be acceptable in principle, however, would be subject to the following considerations. Further to this, there was a previous application which sought extensions and alterations (H/20/89187) which are not dissimilar to the current application submitted, thus would be acceptable in principle.

Design

Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that all new development should respect the character and appearance of the surrounding areas, take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbouring, and be compatible in terms of mass, scale, layout density, design and siting.

The proposed replacement dwelling, as set out above, is largely as previously approved. The sole differences relate to the increased ground and lower ground floor extensions, balcony and the addition of privacy screens. It is important to note that the proposed dwelling would appear as previously approved to the frontage, whereby views can be obtained of the site along Lowford Hill/ Portsmouth Road.

Whilst this application would result in the replacement dwelling with larger extensions than previously approved, the extensions are not so much larger such as to be harmful with regard to the overall design. Further and given the siting of the ground and lower ground floor extensions these would not be visible from public vantage points. Views of the rear elevation can be obtained from properties along Reeves Way, (and adjoining east and west neighbours), however this is not considered to be detrimentally harmful to the visual amenities of these neighbouring properties. Nor would the extensions result in any adverse harm by being overbearing/ excessively close to shared boundaries.

The other new elements would be the balcony and privacy screens. The balcony would be situated above the extended lower ground floor extension. Following amendments, privacy screens were introduced, which are proposed to be obscurely glazed panels. Whilst this may increase the mass of the extension/ height close to the shared boundaries, given that they would be obscurely glazed panels, this would allow light to pass through and would help to mitigate any perceived increase in mass/ bulk.

Ultimately, and to conclude, whilst the replacement dwelling is large, it is comparable to the previously approved scheme and would therefore not warrant refusal.

Internal & External Space for Future Occupiers

To ensure adequate internal living standards are met the Local Planning Authority assess the measurements of space against the 'National Described Space Standards' (NDSS) (March 2015). Policy DM30 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) requires that all new dwellings meet the NDSS as a minimum. In addition to internal arrangements, the Quality Places SPD requires all new residential development to provide a garden area of 60% of the host dwellinghouse.

The NDSS sets out the minimum space required for new dwellinghouses, this is dependent upon the number of bedrooms, people who would reside there and storeys. There are also standards relating to sizes of bedrooms; a single occupancy bedroom should measure 7.5m², and a double occupancy bedroom should measure 11.5m².

The application effectively proposes a four-storey, 5no. bedroom dwelling, although there is potential for the office to be used as a sixth bedroom. The NDSS sets out the minimum size required for a maximum of 6no. bedroom three-storey building which would be 138m², of which the proposed dwelling would exceed, therefore would comply with these standards.

All bedrooms except bedroom 3 would exceed 11.5m², for a room of double occupancy. Bedroom 3 would, however, would exceed single occupancy. From the submitted floor plans and elevations, it is noted that each habitable room would be served by natural light. Therefore, the proposals are considered to provide an acceptable internal living environment for future occupiers.

In addition, and as set out within the Council's Quality Places SPD, the garden size for new residential development must be at least 60% of the floor space of the host dwellinghouse. The proposals would fall below this standard (providing approx. 45%) external amenity space. Whilst falling below the standard, it should be noted that the application site is and has been an established residential plot. The plot itself is not subject to any change in terms of size, solely the footprint of the proposed dwelling, which would be significantly larger than the original bungalow. It should also be noted that previous applications have approved similar sized extensions and alterations, albeit acknowledging this is the largest scheme proposed on site. As such, and whilst not providing the 60% external amenity space, in this specific instance, this would not warrant reason for refusal.

Impact upon Neighbouring Amenities

Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) amongst other matters, stipulates that all new development should not have an unacceptable impact upon residential amenities of both new and existing residents.

The proposals are largely as previously approved, there is, however the enlargement to the lower ground and ground floor extensions and addition of balcony.

Previously with the Officer Report for H/20/89187 it was noted that an objection letter was received concerning loss of light and overshadowing. The applicant, however, provided a sun study. This study showed that there could be some loss of early morning light, however it was considered minimal. It was also noted that the neighbours to the rear were a sufficient distance from the application site so as not to be adversely impacted.

The previous assessment would largely remain in situ. The proposed increased lower ground and ground floor extensions are unlikely to adversely impact the neighbouring amenities given their position. This would result in additional bulk, however this would be at a lower level thus not resulting in any adverse impact upon the neighbours to the east, west or south. This is supported by the submitted section plan, which shows the development to be of a lower level than the neighbouring properties.

The addition of the balcony was considered acceptable subject to the introduction of privacy screens which the agent has shown on the proposed elevations. The lower ground floor roof height would effectively make the ground floor level to what would have been the rear garden, as shown on the proposed sections plan. Further to this, the neighbour to the west does have a sufficient boundary treatment to prevent any adverse impact from the application site. A privacy screen has, however, been proposed on this side and therefore there is unlikely to be any adverse harm arising in terms of overlooking/ loss of privacy to this neighbour. The eastern boundary, however is screened by vegetation (which is believed to be within Rohais ownership). At present this vegetation would provide some screening, however in the winter months the vegetation could thin and opportunities for overlooking could occur. Furthermore, because the vegetation is believed to be within the neighbours ownership this cannot be controlled and without this in place there would be

an adverse impact upon this neighbour. As such and to ensure that even if the vegetation were to be removed there would be no adverse impact upon the neighbour a privacy screen has been proposed. Whilst this would increase the height of the development the obscurely glazed panel would allow light to transfer through so as not to appear oppressive. As such and to conclude, the proposals are not considered to have an adverse impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring property to the east. To ensure the proposals would not have an adverse impact, it is recommended that the privacy screens are in situ prior to first use of the balcony, which would be secured via condition.

To the south, the rear elevation of the lower ground floor is over 25m away from the outshot to the rear of no.10 Reeves Way. The upper floors are recessed further back and are therefore further away. As a result of this separation distance, the proposals are not considered to have an adverse impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring properties to the south in terms of overlooking, and would therefore have an acceptable relationship.

Whilst concluding that the built form would not have an adverse impact upon the neighbouring amenities, it is noted that the construction works could have an impact. As such a CEMP and working hours are recommended to be secured via condition. Thus the proposals would not result in adverse harm to the amenities of the neighbouring properties.

Overall and to conclude the proposals, subject to conditions, are considered to be acceptable with regard to the neighbouring amenities.

Highway Safety & Parking

Policy DM13 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) requires that development is or could be well served by public transport, cycling and walking and it includes measures which minimise its impact on the existing highway network. Policy DM14 of the same Plan requires that an appropriate level of car parking be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards. The policy provisions are consistent with the requirements of the NPPF and in particular those of paragraphs 107 and 108.

Due to the nature of the proposals, the LHA have been consulted. They raised concern with regard to the proposed site layout, noting that this appeared to change the access arrangement. Following discussions with the agent, they confirmed that the existing access would remain in situ, and provided amended plans showing the relocation of parking provisions. With specific regard to parking, the Council's SPD sets out that dwellings with more than 4no. bedrooms require 3no. on-site parking provisions. The Proposed Site Plan 2005-05-06A shows this standard can be met. This plan also shows the siting of bin storage, and whilst not explicitly shown on the plan, it is noted that there is sufficient space on site to provide cycle storage. As such, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in this regard.

Drainage & Ecology

Policies DM3 and DM6 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulate that new development must provide sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) wherever feasible, naturalised filtration should also be included. Policy DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that the Borough Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers to; protect, conserve and enhance areas subject to international, national and local nature conservation designations, and promote the net gain of biodiversity on all sites through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing provisions and new habitats and features compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough.

Starting with drainage, the Council's Ecologist originally requested a surface water drainage statement, which should cover the existing surface water drainage arrangements

and any proposed changes to the existing system (including measures to accommodate the additional volume). The agent provided the “Proposed Site Plan 2005-05-06B” which the Council’s Ecologist reviewed and confirmed they would be agreeable to.

Turning to ecology matters, a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was submitted supporting the application. This covered the previous bungalow noting that there was negligible bat roost suitability. The Council’s Ecologist noted that the PRA was out of date, however, the bungalow that was on site, had since been completely demolished. The report set out recommendations for biodiversity enhancements, precautionary vegetation clearance, lighting and eradication of invasive montbretia which are recommended to be secured via condition.

To conclude, subject to conditions, the above matters are considered to be acceptable.

Sustainability

Policy DM2 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) requires new development to provide a 19% improvement in predicted carbon emissions, and water consumption standards of 110L per person per day.

Other than being situated within a suitable location, the proposals do not provide any sustainability measures. It is therefore recommended that sustainability measures be secured via condition.

SPA Mitigations

The Council, as the responsible body for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), must ensure as part of a planning application that a development will not have an adverse impact upon any European protected sites, and specifically in this case, the European protected Solent Complex (SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites), River Itchen (SAC) and New Forest National Park (SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites). It is recognised that the addition of residential development would have an adverse impact upon the surrounding designated European protected sites. The Solent & Southampton Water Special Protection Area is an internationally designated conservation site and is protected for its overwintering birds. It is recognised that new house building (within a 5.6km buffer of the designated area) is placing increased pressure on these overwintering birds from more people visiting the coastline. It is noted that the application site does fall within 5.6km. Further, residential development generates additional nitrogen output into the Solent. Lastly, a more recent impact identified by Natural England is the impact additional housing has upon the New Forest (especially within a 13.8km radius). The application site also falls within this radius. However, in this instance, the proposal would result in the replacement of an existing dwelling therefore the proposed impact would be assessed against the existing impact, and therefore the proposals are not considered to have a worse impact than the existing, and ultimately would be acceptable in this specific regard.

Other Matters

In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018, the Local Planning Authority informed the agent of the pre-commencement conditions to which they confirmed they were agreeable (email dated 13 December 2023).

Equalities Act:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2021 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020-2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF and development plan do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and Local Plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Local Plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and Policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF and Policies, S1, DM2, and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Conclusion:

The application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐