

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: H/24/97624

Site Address: 5 MERDON CLOSE, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 1EF

Case Officer: Claire Campbell-Best

Description: Proposed first floor side extension, minor internal remodelling, external cladding alterations and replacement vehicular gates to front (Amended Description and Plans)

Particular Site Constraints	Yes ☒	No ☐
Within the Urban Edge Within Established Residential Area Nature Conservation – The Lakes, Hiltingbury SINC Heritage Parks/Garden – Hiltingbury Lakes Southern Water Services 2m Buffer – Foul and Surface Water Tree Preservation Orders – 283-E and 1-E EBC Owned Land Adjacent to Hiltingbury and Hocombe Park Special Policy Area		

Planning History	Yes ☒	No ☐
Reference No.	Description	Decision
H/20/88146 (8 Merdon Close)	Two storey side extension following demolition of link detached garage	Permit – 26/08/2020
F/16/78240 (1 Merdon Close)	Two side extension and rear extension and single storey rear extension	Allowed at appeal - 10/05/2016
F/11/69363 (10 Merdon Close)	Single storey rear extension and first floor side extension, following removal of existing first floor conservatory and addition of new porch and canopy at front	Permit – 22/08/2011
Z/13359/005/00	Extension to garage	Permit – 12/01/1990
Z/13359/004/00	Construction of roof to swimming pool to incorporate play room	Refuse – 06/01/1986
Z/13359/003/00	Construction of roof to swimming pool to incorporate play room	Refuse – 05/09/1985
Z/13359/002/00	Single storey rear glazed extension to provide sauna and exercise room	Permit – 31/03/1981

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	The application had two rounds of consultation periods and received a total of seven objections from three addresses raising the following issues: - Proposed first floor extension is excessive in scale and size - Poor design - Use of materials (cladding) is out of keeping within the close - The existing garage is not structurally sound to accommodate a first floor extension - The proposal will dominate the street scene - The proposal will detract from the character of Merdon Close - Overdevelopment - Existing property is already substantial in size - Front Juliette balcony is out of keeping and dominant - Proposal will set a precedent within the close		

	• If application is to be permitted, building works should be carried out considerately • Overlooking • Loss of privacy • Loss of light to neighbouring garage and garden • Negative impact on trees • Negative impact on wildlife • Vehicular gates are not in keeping with the open character of the close and will enclose the site • Highway safety concerns • Drainage concerns The following objections were noted in the reconsultation period: • Previous objections still stand • Application should be a local area committee item
Chandlers Ford Parish Council:	<u>Amended plan comments</u> No further comments were received. <u>Original comments</u> No objection to the principle of the proposed development. However, we do recommend that the appearance from the road be adjusted to be more in keeping with the existing area. We note some of the neighbours' concerns make similar points.
Ecology:	<u>No objection subject to conditions:</u> <u>Comments on Bat Survey Report received 26/09/2024:</u> I have reviewed the Bat Survey Report by Hampshire Ecological Services Ltd. (September 2024). The building was assessed to have moderate bat roost suitability and two bat activity surveys were conducted. No bats were seen emerging. Please could you add the following informative to the decision notice: In the unlikely event of any bats being found during demolition or construction, all work must stop immediately, and Natural England must be informed. Additional information is available on the Bat Conservation Trust website at https://www.bats.org.uk/advice/im-working-on-a-building-with-bats/ive-found-a-bat-during-works. The biodiversity enhancements proposed in the report are appropriate and shall be implemented. The recommendations were for at least one integrated bat box and two multi-use boxes for swifts and sparrows to be installed in the appropriate locations shown in Section 6, Figures 6 and 7. Built-in boxes are preferred as they do not need maintenance and cannot fall off. If any exterior lighting is required, it must conform to the guidelines explained in sections 5.2.2 and 5.6.2 and must not be installed near or shining on the bat box. Flowering plants that attract wildlife should be considered as additional enhancements and plants from the list in section 12.2 are selected to attract pollinators and night flying insects as food for bats and birds. <u>Original Comments received 03/07/2024:</u>

	The site is adjacent to Hiltngbury Lakes SINC. It is in a red impact risk zone for great crested newts, and there are records of bats, hedgehogs and nesting swifts nearby. The photo of the house available on Google maps is an old photo (front elevation only, image capture from 2012) but shows hanging tiles on the upper elevations which would be affected by the alterations to external cladding and fenestration. The extension would attach to the existing roof. Bats frequently roost under hanging tiles, so they must be checked very carefully. A preliminary bat roost appraisal is required. A precautionary working method to avoid any potential impacts during construction to great crested newts and hedgehogs will also be required. Biodiversity enhancements will be required in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF paragraph 180. A bat brick and a swift brick may be appropriate for this building. The Bat Conservation Trust recommends installing a bat brick/box at least 4 m above the ground, away from artificial light sources, sheltered from strong winds and exposed to the sun for part of the day, facing south, south-east or south-west. (https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/putting-up-your-box) Swift nest boxes are best positioned under the eaves or on walls facing north, northeast or north-west out of direct sunlight, five metres above the ground, with clear adjacent airspace so swifts can access them in a high-speed direct flight. (https://www.swiftconservation.org/Nestboxes%26Attraction.htm)
Trees:	<u>Comments:</u> No response is required from Tree Consultations for planning application H/24/97624
Hampshire County Council Highways:	<u>No objection:</u> Whilst it is noted that a gate is to be located at the existing site access, and this would normally need to be set back into site by a minimum of 6.0m, this is primarily to prevent obstruction of the highway gate is opened. It is noted that the site is located at the end of a small cul-de-sac, and as such in this specific case (from a highway perspective) there would be no objection to the gates location.
Southern Water Services:	No objection
Asset Management:	<u>Comments:</u> No response is required from Asset Management consultations for planning application H/24/97624
The Gardens Trust:	No comments were received
Hampshire Gardens Trust:	No comments were received

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: Site visit carried out on 15/07/2024 – Photographs on file.		

Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan:

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1 and S2; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM11 and DM14.

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Character Area Appraisals – Hiltingbury and Hocombe Park Special Policy Area

Assessment:

Site and Surroundings

The application site contains a two storey detached dwelling located on the southeastern side of Merdon Close. The property has an attached flat roofed garage to northeastern elevation of the property. The garage has been extended to the rear over time and contains a swimming pool, leisure, gym, shower and sauna room, resulting in a substantial ground floor to the site. The property itself is finished in a combination of red facing brickwork and brown tile hanging with white uPVC fenestration. The dwelling is set back from the highway by a driveway and front garden; to the site's entrance are wooden vehicular access gates. To the rear is a fully enclosed garden which is bound by a combination of high fencing and mature, protected trees.

The surrounding area is predominately residential in nature; Merdon Close features similar detached properties with attached garages, some of which have been extended over at first floor level (Nos. 1, 8 and 10 Merdon Close) to the northeast of the site lies The Hiltingbury Lakes.

Proposal

This application seeks approval for the construction of a pitched roof first floor side extension to the northeastern elevation over the existing garage. The first floor side extension would be angled away from the host dwelling and would extend approx. 6.4m in width from the side wall to the front and 10.9m in width to rear, 7.3m in depth and a 7.1m in height (4.3m to eaves). This extension would accommodate a master bedroom, ensuite bathroom, dressing room and prayer room. The existing bathroom would be relocated to bedroom four to create a landing area linking the main house to the extension. The extension would be finished in matching brickwork, horizontal grey cladding to the front elevation and white uPVC fenestration. Over the course of the planning application, amended plans were received which shows the proposed extension reduced in height and width, reducing the overall massing and resulting in a more appropriate and subservient extension.

In addition, the application proposes external alterations to the existing front elevation of the host dwelling; this would involve replacing the existing tile hanging with grey cladding to match the proposed extension. Two existing first floor front windows would also be replaced with larger windows to serve the landing area. Automatic opening vehicular gates are also proposed which would replace the existing wood gate. The replacement gates would be black railed and would have a maximum height of 1.4m and a minimum of 1.2m and 3m in width.

Principle and Policy

The development is within the urban edge where the principle of development is acceptable.

The site is also in close proximity to the Hiltingbury Special Policy Area. The character appraisal area is described as well-wooded, consisting generally of large residential plots which are visually attractive and which help to meet demand for such properties.

In order to protect the special character of Hiltingbury, the sub-division or redevelopment of plots will not be permitted unless all the following criteria are met:

- i. the size of any proposed plot is not significantly smaller than those in the immediate vicinity of the site;
- ii. the proposal does not involve the loss or prejudice the retention of existing healthy mature trees in the site
- iii. the design, siting, scale and proposed development is compatible with the Arcadian character of the locality and does not involve back land or tandem development; and
- iv. the proposal is accompanied by a detailed planting scheme designed to assimilate the development into its surroundings.

Background of similar planning applications within the area

Merdon Close contains three similar properties that have extended to the side at two storey or first floor level over an existing garage which has resulted in a more varied street scene.

In a planning appeal decision for a two storey side extension at 1 Merdon Close (F/16/7824) the Planning Inspector noted 10 Merdon Close (F/11/69363) was a substantial addition which represents a significant departure from the local distinctness of Merdon Close. The Planning Inspector also noted that the flat roofed garages present in the curtilage of properties in Merdon Close have only limited design merit and aesthetic appeal, and clearly have potential for further extension.

Therefore, the Planning Inspectorate's comments on similar applications within the local vicinity are considered to be a material consideration upon the assessment of this application.

Character and Design

The properties within Merdon Close are detached and sited centrally within generous plots. The majority of the properties have a similar character; this being traditional 1960's houses with traditional form and materials. There are a few examples within the close (as noted) where there are deviations from this traditional character and as a result there is a more varied street scene.

The proposal would result in a first floor side extension which is considered to be proportionately sized and subservient to the host dwelling in terms of its scale and massing. It would be set down from the main ridge of the property and not too dissimilar in size to the other existing side extensions seen within the locality. The siting of the extension over the garage does not extend the footprint of the dwelling. Other dwellings have extended over their garages in a similar manner and as noted by the Planning Inspector, the garages have limited design merit and there is clear potential to extend over them provided the scale, form and design is appropriate.

In terms of external design, the proposed extension and external alterations to the existing tile hanging would introduce new materials (grey cladding) not currently found on the host dwelling or the surrounding area. It is acknowledged this would change the appearance of the front elevation and be visible within the public realm. Concerns have been raised by The Parish and Neighbours that the proposed materials would be out of keeping with the character area.

While these concerns are noted, a planning balance has been applied to the use of the grey cladding. It should be important to note, the site itself is not within the Hiltingbury and

Hocombe character area appraisal and while it is acknowledged new development should take into account the surrounding character, this is only guidance. The cladding would be installed along the front elevation to the proposed first floor extension and replace the brown tile hanging; it should be noted the applicant could remove the tile hanging with replace this with cladding of a similar colour that can be found on the existing dwelling.

During the site visit, it was noted the garage door to the application site and some surrounding properties were an anthracite grey colour, as such this colour is seen within the locality. It is also important to note that the dwelling is not a listed building or within a conservation area and as previously stated, the close has a varied street scene with differing materials already present. Given these considerations, the grey cladding is deemed acceptable in this instance and would not be so visually dominant that it would warrant refusal of the application. A condition will be applied to ensure material samples are provided before works commence to ensure the materials would suit the character area and be of high quality design.

Turning to the larger replacement windows to the existing front elevation, these are considered to be modest and would not result in an acceptable amount of glazing to the front elevation. The addition of larger windows would allow more light into the newly created landing area.

The replacement vehicular gates are also considered to be visually non-obtrusive due to their design and appearance. The gates would be railed and are not expected to create a sense of enclosure when considering the gates that are currently in place. As such, the proposed gates are not expected to be a dominant feature within the street scene.

Overall and to conclude, the first floor extension is considered to be acceptable in scale and form; on balance, the proposed materials are also deemed acceptable and comply with national and local planning policies.

Residential Amenity

The neighbours most impacted as a result of the proposals would be the immediate adjoining neighbours, 4 and 6 Merdon Close.

Impact on 4 Merdon Close:

4 Merdon Close is to the north of the application site. This neighbour has raised concerns the first floor extension would cause loss of light to their garage window and create overshadowing within their garden.

A site visit to this neighbour was undertaken and it was ascertained the garage is used as a garage and workshop/store. This garage has two windows to the southern elevation which face the application site. The first floor extension is set in from the shared boundary and there would be an approx. 4.6m separation distance from the neighbouring garage which is considered reasonable. While it is acknowledged the extension would impact upon the light and outlook to these windows, a workshop/store is not considered to be a primary habitable room.

Turning to the no. 4's garden, during the visit to this neighbour, it was established the main private garden area used by the occupants was to a patio area located further north to the rear of the main dwelling. There would be a 26m separation distance from the proposed extension to this area of garden. It is acknowledged the extension would cause some overshadowing to no. 4's garden but due to the separation distance, the shadowing would only be at certain times of the day and would not affect the whole garden and in particular the main garden area used by the occupants of no. 4. As such, the proposed extension is not considered to impact the amount of light received to the neighbouring garden to an unacceptable degree to cause detrimental harm.

The main dwelling to no. 4 would be distanced approximately 13.9m away from the proposed extension, due to this separation distance, the proposal is not expected to impact upon the outlook and light to no. 4 to a significant degree. The extension proposes front and rear facing windows that either look out onto the street or the rear garden to the application site. There are no side facing windows proposed that would cause privacy or overlooking concerns to no. 4.

This neighbour has also raised concerns with regards to drainage and that the existing garage is not structurally sound enough to accommodate the extension. Drainage and structural matters will be covered by Building Control legislation.

Impact on 6 Merdon Close:

6 Merdon Close is to the west of the site and has raised concerns the front facing windows will cause overlooking and loss of privacy to the front windows, front garden, driveway, garage window and small portion of the rear garden.

The proposed first floor extension would have a separation distance of approx. 21.7m between the proposal and this neighbour's garage and 27.1m between the proposal and the main dwelling. While the neighbour's concerns are noted, the separation distances are considered enough mitigation to alleviate any unacceptable privacy or overlooking concerns. Furthermore, the front facing windows to the first floor extension would mainly face the street which are expected and tolerated. There would be an oblique view from these proposed windows to the front windows, garden and driveway to no. 6 but due to the abovementioned separation distances this is not considered to significantly impact this neighbour's privacy.

This neighbour has also commented should the application is to be permitted then the applicant should be mindful and considerate to the residents within Merdon Close. A considerate builder's note will be added as advisory to the applicant informing them of good building practises during commencement works.

Overall and to conclude, the development accords with guidance set out in the 'Quality Places' SPD in that there will be no unacceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbour properties in terms of loss of privacy, light or outlook.

Ecology and Trees

The Council's Ecologist was consulted due to the nature of the works and the site being in close proximity to the Hiltingbury SINC. Initially, the Ecologist requested a preliminary bat roost assessment. The Bat Survey Report by Hampshire Ecological Services Ltd was submitted in September 2024. The Ecologist reviewed this report and was satisfied with the findings of the report and the protection measures set out. This will be secured via condition as well as advisory biodiversity enhancements as set out in the Ecologist's response to the application.

The Council's Tree Officer was also consulted as there are protected trees within the site. They confirmed they have no aboricultural objections to the proposal and as such, the nearby protected trees will not be negatively impacted upon.

Highways Safety and Parking

Residents have raised concerns the replacement vehicular gates will result in highway safety issues. Hampshire County Highways were consulted upon due to this concerns. The Highways Officer commented gates should be set back into the site by a minimum of 6.0m to prevent obstruction to the highway. However, as the site is located towards the end of a cul-de-sac, in this instance there is no highway objection to the replacement gates.

The extension does not propose any additional bedrooms. The property will remain a four-bedroom property which requires three off-street parking spaces as set out in the Residential Parking Standards SPD. The can be accommodated by the existing garage and driveway to the front of the site.

Therefore, the proposals are not considered to generate any highway safety or parking concerns.

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, development plan and adopted local plan policy 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 adopted 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, 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 reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 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

Conclusion: A planning balance has been applied and taking into account the points raised in the report, this application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐