

REPORT FOR INDEPENDENT INSPECTOR

22 Cashio Lane



1. Matter for Consideration

1.1 The applicant subject of this appeal sought - Front first floor extension

2. Background

2.1 The subject property is a freehold house, built c1950s. The surrounding area is designated as **Heritage Character Area**. **The property however is not one listed in the design principles as a property of special interest.*

2.2 The property has been the subject of the following applications:

Nature of Works	Outcome
35803 Outbuildings	Approved April 2020
37103 Part single and part two storey rear extension to rear, side and front of property with replacement windows and porch	Refused May 2021
37849 Rear two storey and single storey extension, two storey side extension and single storey front extension	Approved October 2021

2.3 Planning consent was approved on 11th May 2021 ref 21/00940/FPH

- 2.4 The latest refusal letter from the Householder Applications Committee is available in **Appendix A**.
- 2.5 Drawings for the proposals, are available in **Appendix B**.
- 2.6 The original house plan for the property is available in **Appendix C**.
- 2.7 A request for the Independent Inspector was received on 28th September 2021.

3. Application

- 3.1 The applicant subject of this appeal originally sought;
Part single and part two storey extension to rear, side and front of property with replacement windows and porch.

- 3.2 The rear and side two storey and a single storey front extension were approved by Householder Applications Committee (HAC) following the Advisory Management Committee (AMC). The front first floor extension was refused.

- 3.3 The applicant is appealing the refusal for the first-floor front extension only and our Statement of Case reflects this.

- 3.4 The plans provided are for the original submission and include the rear and side extensions as well as the porch and Georgian style windows. However, the remit of the appeal is purely to consider the front first floor gabled extension. The applicant has agreed to removing the porch from the application and altering the windows to match the original Crittal windows, and this can be seen on the recently approved plans.

- 3.5 Pre-application advice was sought. The applicant was advised that the Heritage Foundation (HF) would not support a front first floor extension alongside the extensions, porch and the window design.

- *We will expect all plans to have dimensions on. I am unable to dimension your plans so as a guide – rear extensions (single storey and two storey) cannot be more than 5m in depth from the original building line and side extensions need to be 2m from the boundary at first floor level and 1 m from the boundary at ground floor level.*
- *The proposed front and side two storey element will be considered to be contrary to the Design Principles due to the 2 m side extension rule and the policy on front extensions which are generally discouraged.*
- *Any extension needs to follow the design of the host building and as such the front elevation needs to retain the simplicity of the original design.*
- *Windows should remain open glazed as per the original building.*
- *There is potential for a 5m two storey extension at the rear*
- *There may be potential for a porch, but it would need to respect the horizontal emphasis of the original building.*

Unfortunately, in its current form, I would advise that this application could

not be supported for the reasons given above. I am happy to advise further once you've had opportunity to consider my comments and please see attached a copy of the Design Principles to assist you further. Please note that these comments are informal officer opinions in the context of the current Design Principles and made without prejudice to any final decision

The advice was not heeded, and an application was received without any amendments.

- 3.6 On submission of the application, the plot file was sourced revealing this as a good example of a Crickmer property in his later professional life. A photograph showing the original windows in situ was also found. These helped to confirm that a first-floor front extension would not be in keeping with the property.
- 3.7 During the process, the applicant advised that the porch would be removed, and the window design would be altered to show the crittal window arrangement indicated on the original plan and shown in situ on the earlier photograph.
- 3.8 The original application was refused, and the appellant sought a review from the AMC.
- 3.9 As the applicant was concerned about the delay that the AMC and HAC procedures took due to Committee cycles, further pre-app advice was given which suggested that an alternate application taking on board the concerns of the Heritage Advice Service (HAS) could be submitted and run parallel with the review process.
- 3.10 Please see an extract below pertaining to the front elevation: -

Turning to the front elevation. The simplicity of this Crickmer design, showing his work towards the end of his career is the reference point from which we will consider the application. Thank you for the elevation of Howard Drive which is an interesting set piece by Crickmer for groupings of semi-detached properties. 22 Cashio Lane is a standalone building which needs to maintain the reference of its own design and not of other examples. As such a side extension which is slightly tumbled down to ensure that the host building remains dominant in the street scene but utilising the same pitch would enable you to extend over the existing garage (albeit this is all to be rebuilt). The flat roof to the garage could be replicated and tucked behind the brick parapet of the garage although the extent of any forward extension would need to be looked at in more detail. This would enable ground floor alterations and would still provide bedroom accommodation at first floor. The original host building thus remains at the forefront of the design. This would result in a much simpler design to the frontage and would fully respect the original Architect's design.

- 3.11 The AMC upheld the decision of HAS but the HAC partially overturned the refusal and consented the works to the rear extension.
- 3.12 As the plans and elevations were so entwined, a separate application was

requested to provide plans of the rear extensions and two storey side extension and ground floor front extension. The removal of the gabled porch and the fenestration were changed as part of the submitted plans which were granted Consent on 5th November 2021.

- 3.13 The approved application allows for the house to be extended whilst maintaining the simplistic design and styling of the original building, thus ensuring the front elevation maintains its original design and overall appearance as intended by Crickmer.

4. Scheme of Management and the Design Principles

- 4.1 The Scheme of Management states under the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 in the covenants section at point 6 states:

Restriction on further development

- There is a strong case that the reasons given by the LGCHF for refusing consent are purely based on personal opinion and do not take in to account what others have been allowed to do on the same street and also across the town to similar style properties.
It would therefore be considered unreasonable that the LGCHF are refusing consent.

6. Any owner shall not carry out any development redevelopment or alteration materially affecting external appearance of the enfranchised property or of any building or structure thereon save with the written consent of the Corporation **(which shall not be unreasonably withheld)** and in accordance with plans drawings and specifications previously submitted to and approved by the Corporation. **Any such development redevelopment or alteration shall be made in accordance with the approved plans drawings and specifications and shall be carried out in a good substantial and workmanlike manner with sound and proper materials.**

- 4.2 The Design Principles for the Heritage Character Area state the following: -

Front extensions: -

The quality of the original design of these houses contributes to a special Letchworth Garden City street scene. It has been established that the property is not a property of special interest.

Adding elements, including extensions, to these façades can have an impact on this attractive street scene, particularly on terraced and semi-detached houses. These proposals will therefore be carefully considered as they can detract from the architectural value of the original and alter the relationship within a group of houses by:

- No comments have been received on the unsightly nature of the proposal. The proposed front extension actually makes the development seem stepped and therefore not as broad on the site when compared to the proposal that has been granted.
- A ground floor front extension has been granted therefore the argument that it disrupts the front building line is irrelevant.

This is not a valid reason to refuse otherwise no developments would ever be granted. The house is also not part of a group deeming the following irrelevant.

- *Creating an unsightly or unduly prominent form of development;*
- *Disrupting the uniformity of the front building line;*
- *Disrupting the coherence of a group of semi-detached or terraced houses;*
- *Diluting the 'group value' of a run or cluster of houses.*

This is particularly the case with first floor extensions, which can have a serious impact on the original character of the house and the street scene.

All Dwellings

- *The area and volume of the proposed extension shall be subservient to and in proportion with the host building, plot and street scene.*

- The frontage of the property is in excess of 12m deep and therefore the 2m extension is in no way unreasonable.
 - The proposal maintains the roof line of the original property as well as the roof pitch.
 - By incorporating a front return gable it allows for the differential between the original property and the new extension. The currently allowed proposal will not as it will be impossible to see where the new joins with old.

- *The design of front extensions shall relate well with the original and neighbouring houses and their context.*
- *Front extensions will not normally be acceptable if the existing frontage is less than 6 metres deep.*
- *Extensions should respect the balance and symmetry of a pair or group of houses*

The Design Principles are very clear about front extensions as its states that **Front extensions are discouraged**
Proposals for front additions will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they will not cause harm to the appearance of the existing property or its group

5. Issues

- 5.1 Cashio Lane sits in the Heritage Character Area, the east side of which consists of an eclectic mix of early Garden City homes, with later housing from the 1950s.
- 5.2 The property subject of the appeal is a 1950s detached house by C M Crickmer. It is a very good example of his later contribution to the Garden City. It is a bared back very simplistic design which deliberately stands out from the surrounding pseudo Arts and Crafts detached properties.
- 5.3 C M Crickmer, was one of the most influential and prolific of architects tasked with designing homes and institutions for the new Letchworth Garden City.
- 5.4 The Heritage Foundation have supported the extension of the property to the rear and a side two storey extension running in line with the original façade. This was granted consent on 5th November 2021 and allows for the property to be extended but retains the simplistic design elements and as such complies with the requirement to retain the original front facade of the property.
- 5.5 The applicant's proposal is to create a first floor front gable extension in front of the original building line which would dilute the original design and in our opinion would be an awkward addition, which is detrimental to the simplistic stripped back design style of the property.
- 5.6 The gable would also make the frontage very bulky and the original building would be lost within later inappropriate additions.
- 5.7 The applicant contends that this is to bring the building in line with its neighbouring properties. As one of the strengths of Cashio Lane is the eclectic mix of building ages and styles. We are, however, of the opinion that this would not respect Crickmer's style or the original streetscene and therefore would be harmful to its quality and character contrary to the objects of the Scheme of Management. In this case, it is our view that the differences from the surrounding built form is one of its strengths.

5.4 Not entirely true as the allowed proposal does not allow for differential between old and new. A front return gable would make a clear difference between the new development whilst retaining the original front facade.

5.5 The proposed gable return is a simple addition that has been allowed in many similar properties with front garages across the town, some Crickmer, some by others but from the same era/style.

5.6 It seems unreasonable to label the front 2 metre front addition as 'bulky'. The addition is smaller than the original house facade that will be retained.

5.7 It seems unreasonable to argue what Crickmers original intention would be as this is based upon opinion. There are many examples of Crickmer properties with front gables, in fact most of his most famous examples feature front gables including one on Cashio Lane. For the exact reasons given above we believe the addition is not harmful to the original quality and character. It should also be noted that the Scheme of Management does not mention anywhere about withholding consent due to 'harm to the original building' only that "Any such development redevelopment or alteration shall be made in accordance with the approved plans drawings and specifications and shall be carried out in a good substantial and workmanlike manner with sound and proper materials."

6. Appellants Statement of Case to AMC

6.1 We have driven around the town and photographed in excess of 20 properties that are from the same era, some are in the heritage character area and some are not. Some are designed by Crickmer and some are not. Some are also implemented after 2015. The point remains that it is totally unreasonable to withhold this proposal when others have been allowed.

6.2 This may have been by a different architect however the point remains that this is an example of a recently developed property from the same era which would have shared the same simplistic gable roof and size similar to our property which has been granted front gable returns.

6.3 This is an example of many properties from the 1950's designed by Crickmer featuring a simple front gable that respects the host dwelling.

6.1 The applicant submitted a Statement of Case to the AMC with examples of other front gabled extensions, although some of them are original features. The majority appear to be from Highfield which is in the Modern Character Area where different guidance applies. Furthermore, all the examples were implemented prior to the current Design Principles which were established in 2015. One proposal shows a flat roof porch from December 2016 which complied with the Design Principles.

6.2 In the case of [REDACTED], the original plans held by the Heritage Foundation are by the Architects Co-Operative Partnership. This is a different building set in a different location and is not by Crickmer.

6.3 This is an extract of proposals for a run of buildings along Howard Drive with a series of semi-detached houses with small flat porches enclosed by two bookend gable ends.

6.4 Whilst the applicant has provided examples of other properties, these do not address the concerns over the design being considered. Each building is taken on its own merits and in this instance, the overriding characteristic of the building is its simplistic form and the gable pushed forward of the front elevation would dominate and the host building would be lost, encased in later proposals.

7. Neighbours comments

7.1 One neighbour comment was received in support of the application

These neighbours and others have also commented to say that they dislike the wide appearance of the LGCHF's favoured proposal. Full planning permission for our scheme has also been granted by the planning authority without any conditions or comments from neighbours - other than those in support.

8. Conclusions

8.1 The Heritage Foundation appreciates the desire of the appellant to want to carry out works to his property but remain of the view that the proposal would have a harmful impact on the character of this property and the street scene.

8.2 The AMC supported this view, which was upheld by the Household Application Committee. A largely un-elected committee that has a reputation across the town of being inconsistent and unreasonable in its conclusions.

8.3 A compromise has been reached on the rear and side, thus allowing most of the works to go ahead. This is irrelevant, these were granted after months of dispute which the LGCHF originally wrongfully refused despite many other examples across the town.

8.4 If the Heritage Foundation is to successfully implement the Scheme of Management, which governs external alterations, then it would be difficult to agree to a poorly related addition to the building and the loss of the strong front elevational treatment. The scheme of management does not concern matters of opinion. For the reasons already outlined above our proposal fully respects the original front elevation and gives a strong distinction between the existing and new.

8.5 Overall, it is our view that the application represents a clear breach of the Design Principles, which have been carefully formulated to avoid this type of alteration. The application fails to preserve the character and appearance of the existing property and the Heritage Character Area.

There is no clear breach - only a breach based on opinion by a largely unelected committee. We have had many architects refer to the design principles and by their nature there is no blanket rule to disallow front extensions as this would be unreasonable and beyond the power granted to the LGCHF in the scheme of management. The requirements to match the original character of the house, the materials and the roof pitches/design have been fully met and this cannot be argued against. It is therefore our opinion that the proposals for a front gable are totally reasonable and should be granted.

Appendix A – Refusal Letter

Letchworth
Garden City
Heritage Foundation

Our Ref: 37103
Date: 20th September 2021

[REDACTED]
22 Cashio Lane
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Part single and part two storey extension to rear, side and front of property with replacement windows and porch, 22 Cashio Lane, Letchworth Garden City

I refer to the above application.

I can confirm that the Advisory Management Committee (AMC), has reviewed the application and has recommended that the original decision to refuse is upheld.

The Householder Applications Committee has had an opportunity to consider the views of the AMC and following its site visit at your property has resolved to support the original decision to refuse consent for the proposal for the reasons set out in our letter dated 6th May 2021.

We do have an Independent Inspector process that can further review this decision, which you may wish to consider- please refer to our website for further information:

letchworth.com/your-home/application-process

However, following discussions with the Committee, it is our informal view that a rear extension that aligns with the existing rear line of the neighbouring properties is likely to be acceptable in principle. As such, if this is something that you would like to progress, we would be happy to discuss this further with you prior to the submission of an application.

Should you have any further queries, would like to discuss the decision, or amend your proposal please contact me on the number below.

Yours sincerely

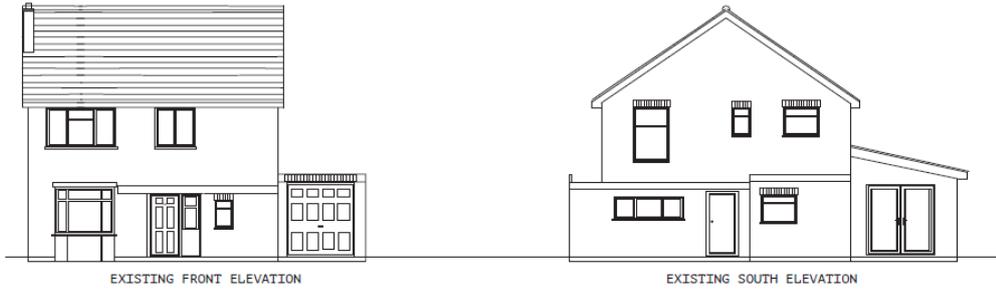


Claire Pudney
Heritage Advice Service Manager
home@letchworth.com
Tel: 01462 530335

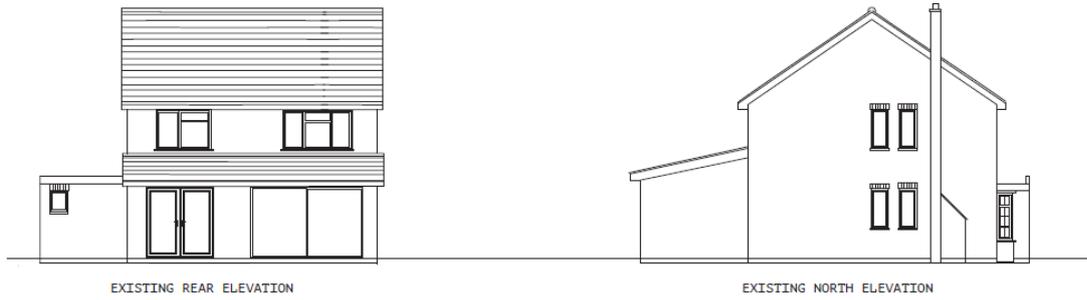
Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, One Garden City, Broadway, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3BF
letchworth.com ☎ 01462 530350 ✉ response@letchworth.com

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation is registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Registration number: 20211R

Appendix B – Plans



NOTES:
 PLANNING PROPOSALS ARE SUBJECT TO FURTHER DESIGN AMENDMENTS AND ARE SUBJECT TO STRUCTURAL ENGINEER INPUT AND BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVAL

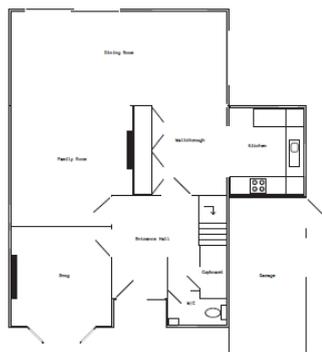


EXISTING ELEVATIONS
 22 CASHIO LANE
 LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY

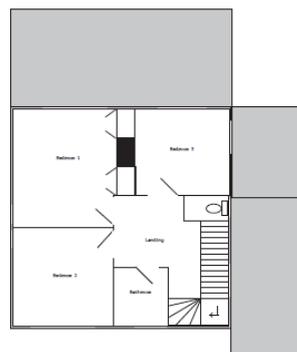
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NOTES:
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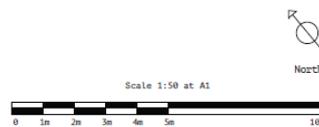
EXISTING GROUND FLOOR LAYOUT



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR LAYOUT

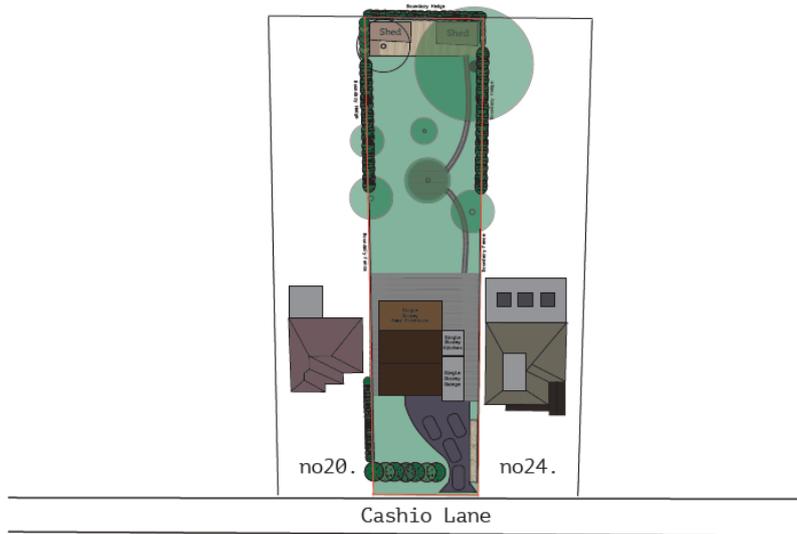
EXISTING GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR LAYOUT
 22 CASHIO LANE
 LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY

01/2021
 DRAWING REV NO.4



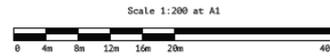
NOTES:

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EXISTING SITE LAYOUT
22 CASHIO LANE
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY

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Scale 1:200 at A1



EXISTING STREET ELEVATIONS
22 CASHIO LANE
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY

01/2021
DRAWING REV NO.4



Scale 1:50 at A1



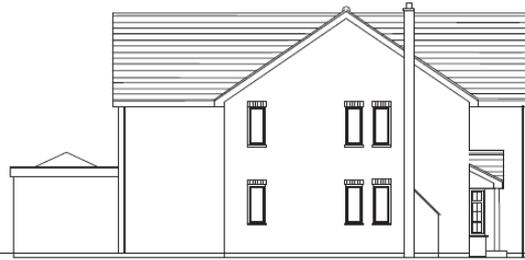
PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION



NOTES:

PLANNING PROPOSALS ARE SUBJECT TO FURTHER DESIGN AMENDMENTS AND ARE SUBJECT TO STRUCTURAL ENGINEER INPUT AND BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVAL

WALLS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN 65MM TRADITIONAL FACING BRICK TO CLOSELY MATCH EXISTING

MAIN ROOF TO BE TILED IN PLAIN MIXED BRINDLE ROOF TILES TO MATCH EXISTING

FLAT ROOF TO BE SINGLE FLY MEMBRANE

WINDOWS TO BE DOUBLE GLAZED UPVC FLUSH CASEMENT UNITS WITH EXTERNAL ASTRAGAL BARS FINISHED IN RAL7038

SOFFITS AND FACIA BOARDS IN RAL7038 TO MATCH GLAZING. BLACK GUTTERING

REAR SLIDING PATIO DOORS IN BLACK POWDER-COATED ALUMINIUM

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

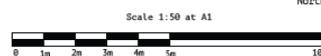
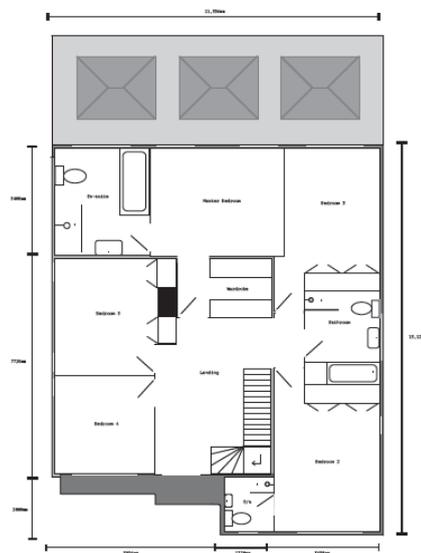
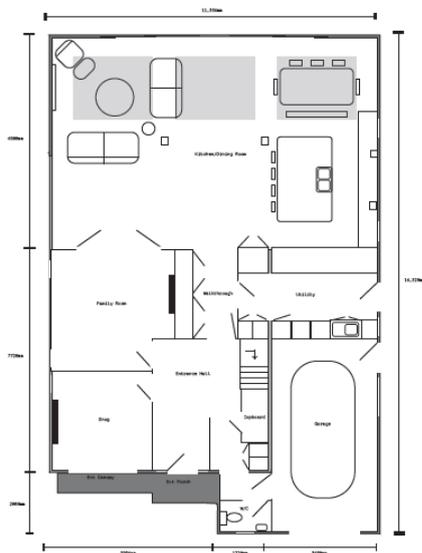
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North

PROPOSED GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR LAYOUT

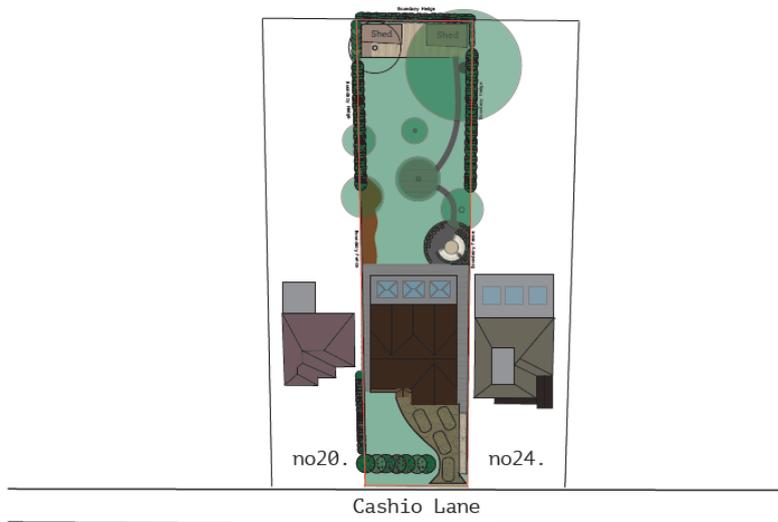
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PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
22 CASHIO LANE
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY



North

Scale 1:200 at A1



01/2021
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*This drawing is incorrect - as per the notes we have already agreed to compromise with the LGCHF by removing the porch and to change the windows to match the original 'horizontal bar' style despite our neighbours being granted consent and having the same style originally.

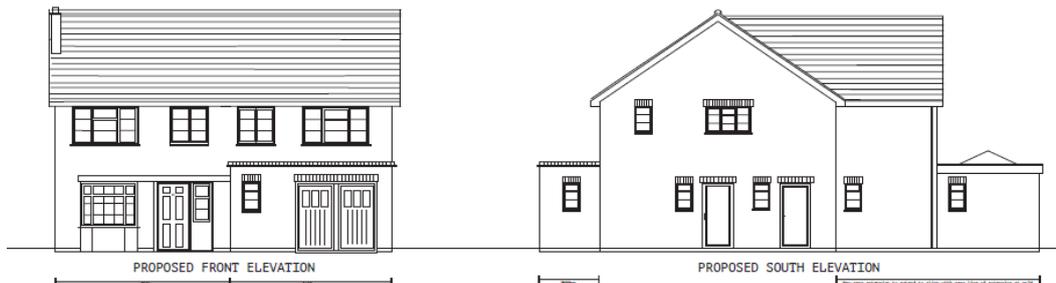
PROPOSED STREET
ELEVATIONS
22 CASHIO LANE
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY

Scale 1:50 at A1



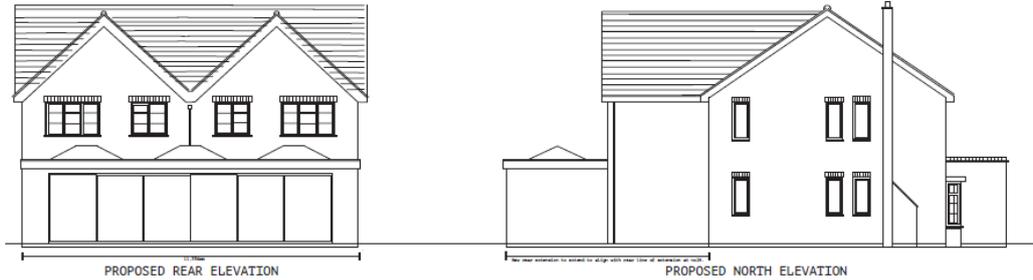
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Approved Drawings without First Floor Front Extension



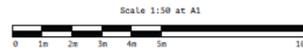
LEITCHWORTH GARDEN CITY
HERITAGE FOUNDATION
THIS IS THE DOCUMENT / ONE OF THE DOCUMENTS
RELATING TO THE FIRST STAGE APPROVAL, DATED
5th November 2021
SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
AUTHORISED BY HERITAGE ADVISORY TEAM

- NOTES:
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 - SOFFITS AND FACIA BOARDS IN RAL7038 TO MATCH GLAZING. BLACK GUTTERING
 - REAR SLIDING PATIO DOORS IN BLACK POWDER-COATED ALUMINIUM



WINDOWS TO HAVE EQUAL SIGHT LINES

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
22 CASHIO LANE
LEITCHWORTH GARDEN CITY
CR/22/01 37849
09/2021
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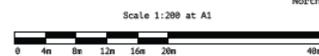


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PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT
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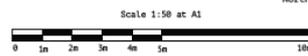
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5th November 2021
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PROPOSED GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR LAYOUT
 22 CASHTO LANE
 LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY

CR/22/02 37849

01/11/2021

DRAWING REV NO.5



Appendix C – Original Plan

