

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE
26 AUGUST 2004
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

PCC 26.08.04
PART 1
ITEM NO
FOR DECISION
CPEHO

S6/2004/0886/FP
AMENDMENT TO PLANNING PERMISSION S6/2001/1530/FP TO ALLOW
FOR AN ALTERNATIVE GARAGE DESIGN FOR PLOTS 1 – 4 AT LEGGATTS
PARK, GREAT NORTH ROAD, LITTLE HEATH

APPLICANT: MICHAEL SHANLEY HOMES

(Brookmans Park/Little Heath)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Leggatts Park is an estate of 73 ha (180 acres) in area, located immediately to the north of Little Heath and to the east of Great North Road (A1000). Vehicular access to the estate is by means of a private drive from Great North Road, opposite its junction with Swanley Bar Lane.
- 1.2 Until 1990, the estate was run as a farm and now comprises a mixture of pasture and woodland together with six dwellings of varying sizes (under construction) and their immediate residential curtilages. There are many mature trees of varied species on the site.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for an amendment to S6/2001/1530/FP, involving an increase in size of the detached garages of plots 1- 4 of the development. The footprint of the garage buildings remains unchanged, each being a triple garage. Currently they are to have a gabled roof with side parapets, rising to a height of 5.6m for the ridge and 5.8m for the parapet. The amendments proposed are that the garage roofs be hipped for two of the plots, retaining the gable for the remaining plots but losing the parapet for all plots. The height of the ridges would be raised by 0.4m to 6m. This heightened ridge would allow the creation of floorspace at first floor in the garages resulting in additional floorspace of 109sqm approx.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 S6/369/1997/FP Demolition of existing buildings and erection of five dwellings. Conditional permission.
S6/1999/580/FP Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 18 hole golf course and associated clubhouse. Refused – contrary to Green Belt policy.
S6/2001/114/FP Demolition of existing buildings and erection of six dwellings together with garages, access, landscaping and construction of lake. Conditional permission.
S6/2001/1530/FP Revision to planning permission S6/2001/114/FP. Conditional permission, subject to Section 106 agreement.
S6/2002/1095/FP Variation of application S6/2001/1530/FP for the erection of six detached houses, repositioning of Rose Cottage. Conditional permission.
S6/2003/325/FP Amendment to planning permission S6/2002/1095/FP for residential development to incorporate reduction in floor area of approved gatehouse. Conditional permission.
S6/2003/0859/FP Amendment to S6/2002/1095/FP to enlarge floor area of Rose Cottage. Refused – contrary to Green Belt policy.
S6/2004/0624/FP Amendment to S6/2002/1095/FP to amend design of Rose Cottage – approved.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011
Policy 5 – Green Belt.
- 4.2 Hertfordshire Structure Plan Alterations 2001 – 2016
Policy 5 – Green Belt.
- 4.3 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No.1, 1998
Policy GB3 – Development in the Metropolitan Green Belt
Policy GB6 – Replacement of dwellings in the Green Belt.
Policy BEV18 – Archaeology
Policy CR1 – Landscape Conservation Areas
Policy CR6 – Countryside trees, woodlands and hedgerows
Policy CR8B – Nature conservation – locally designated sites
GEN Criteria 3 – Impact on amenities of residential properties
- 4.4 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review Revised Deposit Version June 2002
RA1 – Development in the Green Belt
RA4 – Replacement of dwellings in the Green Belt
RA10 – Landscape Conservation Areas
Supplementary Design Guidance

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

- 5.1 North Mymms Parish Council – object as the site is in the Green Belt
- 5.2 North Mymms District Green Belt Society – We consider that the proposed room over the garages should be counted as potential, if not actual, habitable accommodation. As such, the floorspace will increase over the approved floorspace by an unacceptable amount.

6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The principle of residential development within Leggatts Park has already been established by the granting of earlier planning permissions. The main issue, therefore, is whether the proposed alterations to the approved garages and their new designs and bulk would accord with Green Belt policy or have any other adverse impacts on landscaping or nature conservation issues within the site.
- 6.2 The previous permissions on this site were granted subject to strict consideration of the Green Belt policies within the District Local Plan. Policy GB3 outlines those forms of development for which permission will be given in the Green Belt, while Policy GB6 states that permission for replacement dwellings in the Green Belt will not be granted unless the replacement dwelling would not materially exceed the size in terms of floorspace and height of the original dwelling. These policies were used in consideration of the original applications on the site which involved the demolition of various farm buildings and the farmhouse at Leggatts Park and the erection of six dwellings.
- 6.3 The additional floorspace of the garages cumulatively amounts to 109sqm approx, while the ridges of the garages are to be raised by between 300mm and 400mm, to 6m. Given that the approved scheme for the whole of the site is based upon the re- apportioning of the cumulative floorspace of the buildings existing on the site prior to redevelopment, and that increases in the floorspace of other buildings within Leggatts Park have been resisted in other applications (and on one occasion, the refusal was supported by the Planning Inspector at appeal), it would initially appear consistent to view this application unfavourably.
- 6.4 Application S6/2003/0859/FP sought permission for an increase in the size of Rose Cottage on the site, of 156sq. m, and was refused. Application S6/2002/1095/FP sought an increase in size of the Cottage of 200sq. m. This was withdrawn, despite the applicants proposing to reduce the size of, or delete, the approved Gate House. The treatment of these two applications demonstrates the Council's consistency in being strict on the site in Green Belt terms.

6.5 However, as Members will be aware, it is necessary to consider the visual bulk of changes proposed to buildings, as well as the pure floorspace figures. In this case a modest increase to the roof heights of the garages is proposed, which is offset to a degree by the hipping of two of the garages and the loss of the parapets to all of the garages. In terms of the overall bulk of development over the whole of the Leggatts Park site, the additional volume created by the proposed changes is considered to be negligible. As a result it is considered, that it would be difficult to sustain a refusal of the application.

6.6 Prior to this application, parts of the site had been designated as wildlife sites and included in a landscape management plan for the whole of Leggatts Park. The proposed increase in the size of the garages would not impact upon these sites as they are to remain on the previously approved sites. Furthermore, as the development is to remain on the approved sites, it would not impact upon the existing bat habitat. No objections are raised in this respect, either.

6.7 The dormer windows will not allow any overlooking of the neighbouring properties by virtue of the distance between them and the boundary treatments.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The amendment to the approved scheme has only a marginally greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. Neighbour amenity is not impacted upon as a result of the amendments.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 That the application be approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. SC01 – Standard time limit
2. The garages hereby approved shall only be used for the parking of cars and for other purposes ancillary to the use of the site for residential purposes.

REASON: To protect the amenities of the surrounding residential properties.

8.2 The reason for grant of permission is:

The development will not have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt or the amenities of the neighbouring properties. The wildlife

status of the surrounding area will not be adversely affected by the development either.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011

Hertfordshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Alterations No.1, 1998

Welwyn Hatfield Review Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft, June 2002

Application file S6/2004/0702/FP

