

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE – 18 JANUARY 2007
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

S6/2006/1582/FP

RECONFIGURATION OF EXISTING ROOF TO PROVIDE FIRST FLOOR
ACCOMMODATION, INCLUDING RAISING OF RIDGE AND REAR AND FRONT
DORMERS AND DEMOLITION OF REAR SINGLE STOREY ACCOMMODATION
AT THE FORGE, 5 BELL LANE, BROOKMANS PARK, HATFIELD

APPLICANT: MR G WOOD

North Mymms

1 Site Description

- 1.1 The application property consists of a single storey bungalow which is set back from the highway by around 13m with vehicular access from Bell Lane. The property has a wide frontage of approximately 72 sqm onto Bell Lane which tapers down to approximately 30m on the rear boundary.
- 1.2 The property appears to be in its original form when built in the 1960's and only a couple of small wooden garden sheds and another small detached prefabricated concrete outbuilding appears to have been added.
- 1.3 A 2m high close boarded fence forms the common boundary with a public house which adjoins the application site to the north. To the rear and south of the application site is a parcel of open grazing land.
- 1.4 There are a number of trees located on the application site, but they are located away from the existing dwelling and towards the perimeter of the application site.

2 The Proposal

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for remodelling the existing roof configuration to create first floor habitable accommodation. This requires increasing the pitch of the existing roof and increasing the ridge line height by approximately 2m. A gable ended roof is proposed over the existing garage, and dormers are proposed on the front and rear elevations. The existing garage is to be converted in to a kitchen. An existing bedroom and bathroom at the rear of the building is to be demolished.
- 2.2 At first floor level 3 bedrooms are proposed, a bathroom and an en-suite shower room. At ground floor level the existing internal layout is amended which includes the conversion of the existing garage in to a kitchen.

3 Planning History

3.1 386/62 – New Bungalow – approved 30/08/62

4 Planning Policy

4.1 Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

Policy 5 – Green Belt

4.2 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 - Sustainable Development

D1 - Quality of Design

D2 - Character and Context

RA1 - Development in the Green Belt

RA3 - Extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt

RA10 – Landscape Character Areas and Regions

M14 - Parking Standards for New Development

4.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

2005 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

5 Consultations

5.1 None.

6 Representations Received

6.1 North Mymms Parish Council – object to the application – this would be a disproportionate increase over the size of the original dwelling contrary to Green Belt policies in PPG2 – paragraph 3.6

7 Discussion

7.1 The main planning issues are considered to be:

- Green Belt Policy
- Design
- The Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties

- Parking and Highway Matters

7.2 Green Belt Policy

7.3 The main issues relate to firstly whether the proposal represents an appropriate form of development having regard to the general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if not, whether there are any very special circumstances that justify it.

7.4 Policy RA3 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 sets out the Council's policy with regard to extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt and states that they may be appropriate development provided that they would not result in disproportionate additions to the original house and would not have an adverse impact on the surrounding countryside. This policy is consistent with Government Policy relating to Green Belts found in PPG2.

7.5 PPG2 sets out Government policy on Metropolitan Green Belts. Paragraph 1.4 states that: -

“The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness.”

7.6 This Government policy highlights that the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness and that one of the purposes of including land in Green Belts is to safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

7.7 The first test necessary to establish whether the proposal would represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt, under the terms of PPG2 and Policy RA3, is to compare the proposed extensions to that of the 'original' dwelling.

7.8 The existing dwelling is a replacement dwelling dating from the early 1960's which replaced earlier buildings on the site which are believed to have been an old forge. No details of these earlier buildings now exist, apart from their footprint which is in size not dissimilar to that of the current dwelling house. It would for the purposes of establishing what might be considered to represent the 'original' dwelling as referred to in Policy RA3 be reasonable to consider that the existing building is also the original one, in the absence of any other evidence.

7.9 In terms of the footprint of the resultant building, it is proposed to reduce this by removing 26 sqm by demolishing an existing bedroom and bathroom to the rear. The increase in overall floor area, taking account this loss of accommodation at ground floor area would represent 77 sqm compared to the 'original' dwelling of 213 sqm. This equates to an increase of 36% over and above the original dwelling which is not considered excessive or disproportionate.

- 7.10 Turning to the overall impact of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, the increase in volume of the dwelling due to the enlargement of the new roof is the main issue for discussion. This proposed increase has, however, been limited through the design by the use of dormers and keeping the eaves line to a minimum. The property when viewed from Bell Lane would also appear more prominent in the streetscene, however, the intention of Policy RA3 is not to restrict any form of extension to dwellings in the Green Belt, but to ensure that they are of a scale that would not be disproportionate to the 'original' and do not adversely effect the character of the countryside.
- 7.13 The design approach for this scheme has reduced the existing footprint of the original dwelling and located the additional accommodation within the roofspace. This design solution is considered to be less intrusive in the countryside, than for example by simply extending the existing bungalow at ground floor level, which would increase the footprint and diminish the space around the current dwelling. It would be reasonable to attach, however, a planning condition to any approval granted requiring the works for removing the rear bedroom and bathroom to be carried out prior to the works to the first floor, bearing in mind that the removal of the existing accommodation is seen to be critical in assessing the overall impact of the resultant building on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.14 On balance, the increased in roof height is considered to be offset, by the reduction of the footprint of the existing dwelling, with the resultant building presenting a compact form with a proportionate increase in floor area. The overall design of the dwelling therefore would have no adverse visual impact on the countryside and would represent an appropriate form of limited extension in compliance with Green Belt Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield Plan 2005.

Green Belt Table

	Floorspace (measured externally of all floors) sqm	% increase	Footprint Sqm	% increase
Original dwelling (or as at 1949)	213	-	213	-
Previous extensions none	-	-	-	-
This application (taking into account any floorspace to be	77	36%	187	Minus 12%

removed)				
TOTAL	290	36%	187	Minus 12%

7.15 Design

7.16 The proposals will have a significant impact on the character of the existing bungalow with the addition of first floor accommodation. Notwithstanding this, the property is individually designed and the changes therefore will have no detrimental impact on the character of the streetscene which also comprises of detached dwellings built to a variety of architectural styles. In regards to the quality of the design, it is considered that the proposals would create a chalet style bungalow that would be in keeping with the character of the area and would comply with the design requirements of Policies D1 & D2 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance.

7.17 The impact on the amenity of adjoining neighbours

7.18 Due to the isolated location of the application property, it is considered that the proposal will have no undue impact on the amenity of adjoining neighbours in terms of privacy or that it would appear overly dominant. The proposal therefore complies with the amenity requirements of Policy D1 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance.

7.19 Parking and Highway Matters

The existing access to Bell Lane is to remain unchanged, and although the existing garage is to be converted into habitable accommodation, there are at least 3 parking spaces to the front of the dwelling which is sufficient for the proposed 4 bedrooms. The proposal therefore complies with Policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield Plan 2005 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance – Parking Standards.

8 Conclusion

8.1 To conclude, the existing property is considered for the purposes of Green Belt Policy to represent the 'original' dwelling, and the proposal is considered to be a limited extension which would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the 'original' dwelling, bearing in mind that the existing footprint would be reduced and the new accommodation would be primarily contained within the new roofspace. The proposal, therefore, complies with the Green Belt requirements stated in Policy RA3 and also the design and amenity requirements of Policies D1 & D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield Plan 2005

9 Recommendation

9.1 It is recommend that planning application S6/2006/1582/FP be APPROVED with the following conditions:

9.2 SC01 - Full Permission – Time Limit

9.3 SC19 –Standard Materials Condition

9.4 Prior to the commencement of the approved works to the proposed first floor accommodation, the rear single storey accommodation which comprises of bedroom 1 and the adjoining bathroom as shown on the approved drawing no.1239-01 (received and date stamped 22/11/06) shall be demolished as shown on the approved drawing no.1239-03 (received and date stamped 22/11/06) and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) notified upon the completion of these works and allowed to inspect the area demolished. Written approval is to be given by the Local Planning Authority that these works have been carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

REASON

To ensure that the openness of the Green Belt is maintained during and after the implementation of the approved scheme and to comply with the requirements of Policy RA1 and RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

9.5 REASON FOR APPROVAL

The proposal has been considered against development plan policy 5 of the Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011 & policies SD1, D1, D2, RA1, RA3, RA10, & M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, which indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the Development Plan (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

Chris Conway, Chief Planning and Environmental Health Officer
Date 20/12/06

Background papers to be listed Planning Application - 386/62



