

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2007/1139/FP
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NOTATION:

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is situated on the southern side of The Ridgeway on a generous plot, which is approximately rectangular in shape with a frontage of 23 metres and a depth of 85 metres. The plot is relatively level across its width; however the ground level falls away gradually to the rear boundary.

The site contains a detached chalet style dwelling with a gable fronted design and constructed of brickwork and white render with a plain tile roof. There is a detached double garage located to the east elevation and adjacent to the boundary with 91 The Ridgeway. The property has a horseshoe shaped driveway, which provides vehicular access from The Ridgeway.

The rear garden contains a number of modest sized trees of different varieties and the site boundaries with adjoining properties are delineated by various bushes.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks full planning permission for demolition of the existing garage and erection of a two storey side extension with dormer windows.

The extension would be erected to the east elevation of the property and would have dimensions of 7.4 metres in width by 8.2 metres in depth. It would provide for an enlarged kitchen and family room and utility room at ground floor level and an enlarged bathroom and master bedroom with ensuite and dressing room at first floor level.

The roof design would incorporate a gabled with a hipped top. Two gabled dormers and one rooflight would be placed within the front elevation and two in the rear elevation at first floor level. At ground floor level one additional window and patio doors would be placed within the rear elevation to serve the kitchen. A further window would be placed within the side (east) elevation to serve the kitchen and another for the utility room and finally one additional window would provide for the utility room within the front elevation.

It is also proposed to reform the existing dormers to the west elevation and extend the existing porch by 3.4 metres in width by 2.5 metres in depth.

PLANNING HISTORY:

983-68 – Extensions and additions to form double garage - granted

967-69 – Ground floor extension - granted

S6/1989/0031/OP – Site for detached dwelling with garage – refused

S6/2005/1536/FP – Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and outbuildings and erection of two storey detached 4 bedroomed dwelling with associated landscaping – refused

S6/2006/0807/FP – Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two storey detached 4 bedroomed dwelling - refused

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

Policy 5 – Green Belts

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 Sustainable Development

GBSP1 – Definition of Green Belt

RA1 – Development within the Green Belt

RA3 – Extensions to Dwellings within the Green Belt

R3 - Energy Efficiency

M14 - Parking standards for new developments

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

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

CONSULTATIONS

Hertfordshire Highways – Have no objections to the application.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council – Have objected to the application due to the increase by over 60% within the Green Belt, overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbouring properties and the reduction within the separation between 91 and 93 The Ridgeway, which would impact on the street scene.

REPRESENTATIONS

This application has been advertised and 1 representation has been received. Period expired 22/8/2007. A site notice was also erected and expired on 14/9/2007.

One letter of objection was received and the main issues relevant to planning were:

- Poor design that does not relate to the existing building
- Unbalanced location on plot

- Overdevelopment within the Green Belt due to significant bulk of two storey extension

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. Metropolitan Green Belt**
- 2. Design and Impact on Character of Area**
- 3. Impact on Neighbouring Properties**
- 4. Other Issues**

Metropolitan Green Belt

PPG2 sets out Government policy on Metropolitan Green Belts. Paragraph 3.1 states that: -

“The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in the Green Belt but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances”

Paragraph 3.6 also states: -

“Provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, the extension or alteration of dwellings is not inappropriate in Green Belts.”

Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan `sets out the Council's policy with regard to extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt, and these policies are consistent with the advice contained within PPG 2, this policy also applies to those outbuildings for which planning permission is required.

The policies advise that extensions to dwellings located within the Green Belt will only be considered as 'appropriate' development when they do not individually or when considered with existing or approved extensions to the original dwelling have an adverse and disproportionate impact in terms of prominence, size, bulk and design on the character, appearance, pattern of development and visual amenity of the surrounding countryside.

Paragraph 3.6 of PPG2 emphasizes that it is the original building, which is important in assessing whether any proposal is disproportionate.

It is considered that apart from the detached garage and rear conservatory, and in the absence of any other evidence, it is likely that the existing dwelling is similar to that of the original dwelling when first constructed. The original floorspace of the dwelling has therefore been calculated at 168 sq.m and the original footprint is 106 sq.m.

It is proposed to demolish the existing garage as part of the project. The original garage was erected under planning permission 983/68 and created an additional floorspace of 37 sq.m.

The garage would be demolished and rebuilt within a similar footprint, set back slightly further and utilised as additional floorspace of the main dwelling. However, it is proposed to erect first floor accommodation directly above this, which would create additional floorspace and bulk. Also the reforming of the side dormer windows and minimal increase in the porch are considered to be existing features and as such the impact from the alterations on the Green Belt would be minimal.

From looking at the figures it is considered that an increase in floorspace of 130.5 sq.m (78%) and footprint of 69.5 (66%) are considered to be disproportionate to the original dwelling and therefore fail to comply with section (i) of Policy RA3 (Extension to Dwellings in the Green Belt).

However, it is also important to consider the overall visual impact of the extension in relation to its prominence, size, bulk and design on the openness of the Green Belt. The erection of a first floor side extension would have a significant visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and would close up an existing visual gap above the existing garage. The extension would be prominent due to its size, bulk and design of the two storey extension and the insertion of further dormer windows would add additional bulk to the roof slope. This complies with section (ii) of Policy RA3 (Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt).

Design and Impact on Character of Area

Policies D1 (Quality of Design) and D2 Character and Context are both relevant, in addition to the material contained within the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Policy D1 requires all new development to be of a high quality of design incorporating the design principles of the District Plan & Supplementary Planning Guidance. The architecture of new development should contribute to the quality of design in the district, be appropriate to the setting and context of the area and be of the highest quality.

The property has a gabled roof design with two side facing gabled dormer windows at first floor level. There is also an attached side garage to the east elevation of the dwelling, which has a flat roof design.

The proposed extension would maintain the pitch of the existing roofline with a continuation to the east elevation. This would be finished with a gabled end with a hipped top section. This is considered to be appropriately designed and would respect and relate to the original dwelling and character of the street scene, particularly given that the low eaves height and dormer windows would be maintained. The immediate street scene contains a number of chalet style dwellings and it is considered that the proposed dwelling would reflect the existing architectural pattern within the street scene. This complies with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

The proposed dormer windows comply with Section 5.1 vi of the Supplementary Design Guidance as they are located below the ridge height, in proportion to the existing fenestration and 1m from the adjoining party walls. They have also been designed to emulate the existing design of the side dormer windows with a gabled roof and therefore would not detract from the character of the house. This complies with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

The properties most impacted on by the development would be the adjoining sites at 91 and 95 The Ridgeway. However, 91 The Ridgeway would be more adversely affected due to the extension being constructed on the eastern elevation of the property.

The proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the occupiers of 95 The Ridgeway due to the separation distances of approximately 10 metres and as the bulk of the extensions would be constructed on the eastern elevation and as such screened by the existing dwelling from the occupiers of 95 The Ridgeway. The reformation of the dormers on the western elevation would not create any additional overlooking to the occupiers of this property and the extension/alterations to the porch would not have a significant impact on residential amenity.

It is considered that the double storey extensions would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity in terms of dominance, overbearing or loss of sunlight/daylight to the occupiers of 91 The Ridgeway. The ground floor windows along this elevation consist of secondary windows to the rear living room and at first floor level there is one small window to serve a bathroom. The extension would not protrude further to the rear than the existing rear most point of the existing dwelling. This complies with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

The dormer windows would not create unacceptable loss of privacy to either adjoining sites as they would be placed within the front and rear elevations and therefore predominantly have views towards the street scene and rear garden. This complies with Policy D1 and the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

Other Issues

The development does not specify how the development contributes to sustainable development or energy efficiency.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed two storey side extension including dormer windows would result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the dwelling and have an adverse visual impact (in terms of its prominence, size, bulk and design) on the character and openness of the Green Belt. Consequently, this fails to comply with Policies RA1 and RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASON (S)

1) The proposal by virtue of the size, bulk, scale and design would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling and therefore represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The applicant has failed to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority any very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm caused by reason of its inappropriateness. In addition, the proposal by virtue of its siting, design and bulk would have a detrimental impact on the character and openness of this part of the Green Belt and the visual interest of its surroundings. The proposal is therefore

contrary to the advice contained within PPG2 and Policies RA3, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan 8504/S/001 & 8504/P/003 b & 8504 A3 NW1 and date stamped 31 July 2007 and 17 August 2007.

Signature of author..... Date.....