

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2007/1242/FP
------------------------	------------------------

NOTATION:

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

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is located on the north eastern side of Kentish Lane on an expansive and well vegetated plot.

The site currently contains a detached chalet style bungalow constructed of brickwork with rendered elevations and a brown tiled roof. The roof design is hipped and there are hipped dormer windows within the roofspace.

There is an existing detached garage with a pitched roof located on the northern elevation of the property and an additional detached garage located further northwards. There is an outbuilding to the east of the site within the rear garden.

The street scene contains a limited number of dwellings of varying design, size and age, which sit comfortably on generous sized plots with a consistent set back from the highway.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks full planning permission to extend the existing dwelling and demolish the existing attached garage and rear lean-to extension as part of the project.

A double storey front/side extension would be erected to the northern elevation of the property following the demolition of the existing garage. It would provide for a kitchen and conservatory at ground floor level. The dimensions would be 4 metres in width by approximately 10.5 metres in depth. The conservatory would be finished with a pitched roof and has a curved wall overlooking the rear garden. One window would be placed within the front elevation and a further window and door within the side (north) elevation to serve the kitchen

A bedroom would be constructed directly above this with ensuite bathroom. Dormer window would be placed in the front and side (north) elevations and double doors leading to a balcony would be placed in the rear elevation. The roof design would be hipped.

The double storey rear element of the extension would provide for a reception room at ground floor level and a master bedroom with bathroom at first floor level. The dimensions would be 7.5 metres in width by 5 metres in depth. Two sets of patio

doors would be placed in the rear elevation to provide for the reception room and a double door with balcony and dormer window would be placed in the rear elevation at first floor level. The roof design would be hipped.

A further dormer window would be placed in the side (south) elevation at first floor level to provide for an ensuite to serve a bedroom.

It is also proposed to erect a family room with bedroom extension above to the rear elevation. It would have dimensions of 4 metres in depth by 2.3 metres in width. Patio doors would be placed in the rear elevation at ground floor level and one additional dormer window at first floor level to provide for the bedroom. The roof design would be hipped.

This application differs from the previously refused scheme in that it proposes to extend the dwelling rather than demolish and rebuild.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2007/543/FP – Erection of detached dwelling and retention of two outbuildings following demolition of existing dwelling, detached garage and outbuilding – refused

S6/1980/201/FP – Fuel store and covered walkway – granted

S6/1979/0208 – Double garage and car port – granted.

E/3-73 – Erection of rear conservatory – granted.

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 in the Green Belt

RA3 – Extensions to Dwellings in 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 County Council (Director of Environment) – Have no objections as the proposal does not raise any issues in relation to strategic planning issues.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

North Mymms Parish Council – have no objections but comment that it is unclear what the increase over the original dwelling would be.

REPRESENTATIONS

This application has been advertised by neighbour notification letters and site notice and 0 representations have been received. Period expired 03/05/2007.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

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

Design

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. Policy D2 requires proposal to either maintain or enhance the character of the area.

The property has not been previously extended, other than the existing rear lean-to structure and as such the original chalet design of the building is still apparent. It is considered that the proposed extensions have been appropriately designed to reflect the original characteristics of the dwelling. The roof design would maintain the existing pitch and hipped design of the original dwelling and would be subordinate to the existing ridge line. In addition, the main features of the chalet style bungalow such as a low eaves level combined with low set hipped dormer windows has been maintained, which enhances the existing architectural merits of the building. This complies with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

The dormer windows have been appropriately designed to reflect the existing architectural features of the building. In addition, they have been set in by one metre from the flank walls, do not extend above the ridge line and are in proportion to the existing fenestration and subservient to the roof. This complies with Section 5.2vi of the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

The construction materials proposed and the traditional finishes would not be out of character with the rural character of the surrounding area and therefore meet the requirements of the Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

Neighbouring amenity

The neighbouring property most affected by this proposal would be 51 Kentish Lane, which is situated to the south of the site. However, due to the adequate separation distances of 5 metres and existing height and bulk of 51 Kentish Lane, it is not considered that the proposed replacement dwelling would have any greater impacts in relation to dominance, overbearing or significant loss of sunlight/daylight.

There would be one window at first floor level in this elevation facing 51 Kentish Lane, however this serves an ensuite and as such could be conditioned to contain obscured glazing and be non-opening below 1800mm to minimise the potential for overlooking. In addition, the proposed balconies to the rear elevation are not considered to create unacceptable overlooking due to the oblique angles and separation distances between properties.

The proposal therefore complies with the amenity requirements of Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

Green Belt

National Planning Guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 'Green Belts' (PPG2) sets out Government policy on Metropolitan Green Belts and in paragraph 1.4 identifies that the most important attribute of the Green Belts is their openness.

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 emphasises that it is the original building, which is important in assessing whether any proposal is disproportionate.

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 what is the original dwelling and what extensions are proposed.

A Green Belt Table below provides an overall assessment and summary of the existing and proposed gross floor areas from the information supplied by the agent and from Council records of earlier permissions.

The Councils assessment of original floorspace includes the existing garage, which is linked to the dwelling and as such considered to be an original feature or present since 1949. The original floorspace was calculated at 243 sq.m including a footprint of 134 sq.m.

The agents figures are slightly different and estimate the existing floorspace to be 257 sq.m with a footprint of 157 sq.m.

However, taking into account the differences in these figures, even if the less favourable ones are considered, there is no question that the proposal at 52% would not substantially exceed the size of the original dwelling (see Green Belt table over page).

The current proposal seeks to create an additional 52sq.m of floorspace and it is considered that these figures would be proportionate to the original dwelling to comply with section (i) of Policy RA3 (Extension to Dwellings in the Green Belt). The additional footprint would represent a 35% increase over and above the original dwelling.

	Floorspace (measured externally of all floors) Sqm	% increase	Footprint Sqm	% increase
Original dwelling (or as at 1949 including garage)	243	-	134	
Previous extensions to dwelling implemented/ extant (<i>excludes outbuildings</i>) <i>rear conservatory(E/3- 73)</i>	26	-	26	-
This application S6/2007/1242/FP (taking into account any floorspace to be removed)	127	52%	46.7	35%

<u>INCREASE IN FLOORSPACE OVER AND ABOVE THE ORIGINAL DWELLING</u>	127	52%	46.7	35%
---------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	-----	------	-----

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 double storey front and side extension and rear extensions would provide additional bulk to the building. However, when considered visually, it would not have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The existing garage to the north elevation would be demolished and part double storey extension placed on this elevation. The proposed two storey extension would not extend as far to the north as the garage and has been tucked neatly along this elevation. The demolition of the existing garage and reduced width of the proposed side extension has increased the spacing between the property and an existing outbuilding (garage), which is considered to be an important visual gap in promoting distant views to the open countryside. Consequently, this would contribute to the balancing out of the visual impact created from the extension on this elevation.

Furthermore, the extension has been set back from the front and rear elevations and the chalet style roof design combined with low eaves height is considered to minimize the visual impact.

The rear extensions have been well located to minimize visual impact and the roof design has been made subordinate to the original dwelling as its slightly below the existing ridge line. The rear extension has also been set in from both side elevations to minimize the visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed dormer windows have been set well below the ridge line, are small in scale and well designed and as such are not considered to create significant additional bulk to the side, front or rear elevations. This complies with section (ii) of Policy RA3 (Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt).

To conclude, the proposal complies with Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan in terms of floorspace and visual assessment and it is therefore considered that the proposals would not have an adverse visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Other issues

The application does not specify how the development would contribute to sustainable development or energy efficiency.

Brookmans Park is located within Zone 4 as designated within the Supplementary Planning Guidance-Parking Standards. It is specified that a dwelling containing 4+ bedrooms within this location should provide for a maximum of 3 car parking spaces. The application form states that three spaces are available and this is considered adequate and in compliance with the revised parking spaces and complies with Policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal complies with the relevant Green Belt policies of restraint in terms of floorspace and visual assessment and it is therefore considered that the proposals would not have an adverse visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

The extensions have been appropriately designed to relate to the existing architectural qualities of the dwelling and surrounding area and as such comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

The extension would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity to comply with Policy D1 and the material contained within the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL AND CONDITION(S)

- 1) C.2.1 – Time limit
- 2) C5.2 – Matching materials
- 3) Prior to the commencement of works, drawings showing the extent of demolition are to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and are to be agreed in writing. The development shall then be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason – To ensure that the proposal retains sufficient original features of the existing dwelling and to comply with the requirements of Policy RA3 and D1 along with the Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

- 4) C.7.9 – Fixed and Obscured Glazing to first floor side dormer bathroom window (south) elevation.
- 5) The garage building identified by a dotted line on drawing ELP_210 shall be demolished before construction works commence on site.
Reason – To preserve the openness of the Green Belt and comply with Policies RA1 and RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Policy 5 of the Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991-2011.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against PPG2 and development plan policies (i.e. Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011 Policy 5 & Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 GBSP1, RA1, RA3, SD1, R3, M14, D1 and D2), in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, 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).

INFORMATIVES

None

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Site Location Plan date stamped 17 August 2007.

Amended drawings ELP_100 & ELP_210 & ELP_220 and date stamped 10 October 2007.

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