

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**  
**DELEGATED REPORT**

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>S6/2007/1405/FP</b>
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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 south western side of the Great North Road, which is a classified road.

It contains a bungalow, which sits comfortably on an extensive and irregular shaped site with associated outbuildings.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

The application seeks full planning permission to create a new vehicle crossover fronting the Great North Road.

It is also proposed to erect entrance gates, wall and fencing along this elevation. The entrance gates would be 2 metres in height with brick piers of 2 metres on either side. The piers would decrease to approximately 1 metre with railings directly above to approximately 2 metres in height.

It is proposed to create soft landscaping to the front of the entrance gates and railings.

**PLANNING HISTORY:**

S6/1985/732/OP – site for new dwelling – granted

S6/1986/988/DF – Erection of detached bungalow after demolition of existing buildings - granted

**SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:**

National Planning Policy Guidance

PPG13 - Transport  
PPG2 – Green Belts

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:  
None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

GBSP1 – Definition of Green Belt

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Hertfordshire Highways – have recommended refusal due to the curvature of the road and as the proposed access would not be able to achieve the required visibility splays of 2.4m x 160m.

## **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS**

North Mymms Parish Council – have no objections, but have commented that as there is already access onto Bell Lane there does not appear to be a reason for the new access onto a main road. Also, the style of the gates and fencing appear to be out of keeping with those in the immediate neighbourhood.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

None. Period expired 15/10/2007. A site notice was posted and expired 18/10/2007.

## **DISCUSSION:**

**The main issues are:**

- 1. Impact on the Green Belt**
- 2. Design and Impact on Character of the Area**
- 3. Highways**

### Impact on the Green Belt

National Planning Guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 'Green Belts' (PPG2) in paragraph 1.4 identifies that the most important attribute of the Green Belts is their openness. PPG2 sets out a general presumption against 'inappropriate' development in Green Belts, adding such that development should only be permitted in very special circumstances.

This guidance is reflected in Policy RA1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan which states that permission will only be given for development for the following purposes.

- (i) Agriculture, forestry or mineral extraction;
- (ii) Small scale essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation or for cemeteries and for other uses of the land, which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- (iii) The re-use of buildings in accordance with Policy RA17

This particular section of the Green Belt is rural with a limited number of buildings. It is considered that the proposed entrance gates with brick piers and railings to two metres in height would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt. No special circumstances have been demonstrated to support the proposals and as such it is considered that the gates would represent inappropriate development.

Furthermore, the addition of soft landscaping to the front of the railings would not minimise the impact of the development to make it appropriate.

Consequently the proposals would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt and no special circumstances have been justified. This does not meet the advice contained within PPG2 or Policy RA1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

### Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

National Planning Policy Guidance PPS1-Delivering Sustainable Development requires planning authorities to plan for high quality design which is appropriate in its context.

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 that all new development respects and relates to the character and context of the surrounding area. It should be sensitive to the surrounding developments and seek to enhance key characteristics which contribute to the architectural quality.

PPS1 (Sustainable Development) states that:

**Good design ensures attractive usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.**

**Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.**

The proposed entrance gates with brick piers and railings would represent an obtrusive form of development, which is inappropriately designed and fails to reflect its rural setting. The street scene contains a limited number of buildings with site boundaries delineated by hedging and vegetation. There are no similar developments within the immediate vicinity and as such it is considered that the development would be out of character with the site and surrounding area. This fails to comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the information within the supporting Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

### Highways

Hertfordshire Highways have objected to the proposal on the grounds that the creation of a new access would lead to conflict and interference with the free and

safe flow of traffic. In addition the curvature of the road would result in visibility problems, which would be detrimental to highway safety. Consequently this fails to comply with highway safety and the advice contained within PPG13 (Transport).

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposed entrance gates by virtue of their siting, height, length and design and materials would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt and represent inappropriate development.

In addition, the development fails to comply with highway safety and would have a detrimental impact on the free and safe flow of traffic. This is contrary to the advice contained within PPG13 (Transport).

**RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASON (S)**

1. The proposed wall and railings would, by reason of its height, length, siting, materials and design, have an unnecessarily intrusive appearance out of keeping with and detrimental to the character of this rural Green Belt setting. As such, the proposals represent inappropriate development and as no very special circumstances have been advanced of sufficient weight to set aside Green Belt policies of restraint, is contrary to the advice contained in PPG2 (Green Belts) and would conflict with Policies RA1, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the information contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).
2. The proposed vehicle crossover would have a detrimental impact on highway safety, which fails to comply with the advice contained within PPG13 (Transport).

**DRAWING NUMBERS:**

Site Location Plan & 2007/0119 and date stamped 21 September 2007.

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