

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2007/1521/FP
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NOTATION:

This site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt as outlined in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is located to the north of Wilkins Green Lane. The dwelling was built in the early to mid 17th century and consists of red brick with stone detailing and is Grade II listed. The site has a number of outbuildings towards the rear of the site and landscaped lawns behind the dwelling. The dwelling has two vehicular accesses. One access is from Wilkins Green Lane to the south of the dwelling and close to the frontage of the main building, the other is from St Albans Road to the north which leads to a long tree lined gravel drive through the grounds. The entrances currently have pillars and gates which are modern in comparison to the original dwelling.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposed development would involve the removal existing gates and piers to the two vehicular entrances of the site. Replacement gates and pillars would be erected.

To the north of the site it is proposed to erect a set of gates within the site in a position that would enclose a tree lined avenue which leads to the residential area of the site. These gates would be set back from the boundary with the highway by approximately 26m and would measure 4m in width by 4.9m in height. These gates would be hung off of brick pillars measuring 1m in width that would have a maximum height of 5.4m. The proposed pillars and gates would have an ornate design with reconstituted stone features. It has been proposed to densely plant yew hedges to the outsides of the pillars to create an enclosure. The agent has confirmed that the application does not include the gates and wall that have been illustrated adjacent to St Albans Road.

To the south of the site it is proposed to erect a set of gates at the entrance to Wilkins Green Lane. These gates and would be similar to the proposed north gates but have a simpler design. The proposed gates would measure 4m in width by 4m in height. The proposed pillars would measure 4m in height and have small sections of lower wall either side, both would have reconstituted stone features. The existing trellis along this boundary would be removed.

The metal work for both sets of gates would be worked to appear as wrought iron and finished in either black or a dark colour.

PLANNING HISTORY:

- S6/1984/297 - New boiler house - granted
- S6/1984/298 - New boiler house (Application received May, 1984) - granted
- S6/1984/299 - Car Park (Application received May, 1984) - granted
- S6/1990/536 - Internal alterations - granted
- S6/1988/643 - Listed building consent for removing dilapidated timber barn - granted
- S6/2001/1367 - Elevational Alterations to Kitchen and Breakfast Room - withdrawn
- S6/2001/1362 - Elevational And Internal Alterations - granted
- S6/2006/326/LB - Formation of internal doorway at first floor level - Approved
- S6/2007/620/FP -Erection of new gates to north and south entrances - withdrawn

S6/2007/625/LB - Erection of new gates to north and south entrances - withdrawn
S6/2007/1403/LB - Removal of render from main entrance - Approved

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy
PPG13

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:
None.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 - Sustainable Development

GBSP1 - Definition of Green Belt

RA1 - Development in the Green Belt

R3 - Energy Efficiency

R25 - Works to Listed Buildings

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

D5 - Design for movement

D7 - Safety by Design

D8 - Landscaping

D9 - Access and Design for people with disabilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS:

Beams – No objection to appropriate conditions.

Hertfordshire Highways – No objection subject to a condition.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:

No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS:

None. Notification period expired 25 November 2007.

Application was advertised by way of site notice.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are

- 1) **The impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the locality.**
- 2) **Impact of the proposal upon the adjoining occupiers.**
- 3) **The impact of the proposal upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt.**
- 4) **Impact of the proposal upon the character and setting of the Listed Building.**

The proposed development is similar to the withdrawn application under reference S6/2007/620/FP. Since the previous application the agent has carried out pre-application discussions with both the LPA and the Conservation Officer from BEAMS. The application has been submitted with further information detailing the design of the proposed gates.

The proposed development would be sited a sufficient distance from the neighbouring properties to ensure that the occupants would not suffer an adverse loss of residential amenity. The proposed development would comply with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The agent has acknowledged that the site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and that the proposed gates are relatively tall and prominent, which gives them the potential to affect the openness of the Green Belt. However, it has been also noted that the site accommodates a unique and substantial Listed Building. Although the proposed development may not meet

the requirements of Green Belt policy the proposed development would be appropriate and would enhance the setting of the Listed Building. Therefore, the agent considers that there are very special circumstances to allow the proposal, which maybe contrary to Green Belt Policy. Due to the application site accommodating a large dwelling on substantial grounds, although the proposed gates would appear large, they would not appear out of place. The impact of the proposed gates would be limited. It is considered that the application does have very special circumstance to allow this application which would affect the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal is considered to comply with Policy RA1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The current gates are not in keeping with the Listed Building and do not add to its setting. The agent has detailed that although the main dwelling is from the 17th century and gates from this time rarely survive. Contemporary and later illustrations show them as painted timber gates comprising staves and spindles within a framework of rails and stiles. Many properties of this period have 18th century wrought iron gates, which are very rust resistance and survive for a much greater time.

The proposed gates are intended to be convincing in terms of design, materials and scale. When compared to other historic properties the agent considers the proposed gates to be historically correct and convincing within the setting of the Listed Building.

To the north of the site the plans illustrate gates in two positions. It has been confirmed by the agent, that this application is only applying for the gates set into the grounds and the gates and wall close to the public highway were to illustrate the details of a possible future application. The proposed gates to the north are of a more elaborate design as they from the main entrance to the dwelling. Although, these gates would be elaborate they would be set back from the public highway by approximately 26m. When viewed from the surrounding areas these gates would be against the backdrop the main house and grounds. Due to the large area of land surrounding the proposal and trees and vegetation within view, the proposed gates would not appear particularly prominent.

To the south of the site the proposed gates would be relatively close to the boundary. Several examples of tall vehicular gates are within the surrounding street scene albeit more modest in appearance. Due to the substantial elevation of the main dwelling, which is clearly viewed from the street scene, the proposed gates would not appear out of place as an access to this dwelling. The proposed development would involve the removal of the existing pillars and the existing trellis, which is near some of the southern the boundary. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. The proposed development would comply with Policies R25, D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The application does not indicate how the proposal contributes to sustainable development or energy efficiency.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality and would not affect the setting of the Listed Building. The residential amenity of the neighbouring occupiers would be maintained. It has been demonstrated that there are very special circumstance to allow the development, which would impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development therefore complies with the relevant policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and is considered to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.2 – Time Limit Full Permission – Listed Buildings
2. C.5.1 – Materials to be submitted and agreed
3. The proposed entrance gates shall be set back a minimum of 6.0m from the edge of carriageway/back of the footway and shall open inwards into the site.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety so that a vehicle may be parked within the curtilage without obstructing the public highway in accordance with PPG 13.

4. Notwithstanding the details on the approved plans, the proposed north gates are only granted planning consent in the position furthest from St Albans Road, which is labelled as being short-term. A further application would be required to reposition the gates and construct a new brick wall close adjacent to St Albans Road.

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policies R25, D1 and RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against development plan policies (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 Policy GBSP1, SD1, RA1, R3, R25, D1, D2, D5, D7, D8, D9) 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 1:1000 6103/G/001 & Existing North Gates 6103/G/004 & Existing South Gates 6103/G/006 & Existing South Gates 6103/G/007 & Plan – Proposed North Gates 6103/G/14C & Elevation of Inner Gateway 6103/19 & Proposed South Gates 6103/G/018 B & Proposed South Gates 6103/G/016 & Proposed South Gates Plan 6103/G/017 all date stamped 15 October 2007.

Signature of author.....

Date.....