

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2007/1723/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 application site consists of a detached two storey dwelling which is set back from the highway with a driveway providing access to a covered car porch to the side of the dwelling and a large gravel hard standing.

To the rear of the property and about half way down the garden there is an open air swimming pool with a couple of outbuildings close by.

The property is individually designed following planning permission granted in 1972, although the current site is now smaller as part of the garden has been severed and now forms part of a new dwelling and residential curtilage of No.125 The Ridgeway.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application seeks full planning permission for the building of a first floor front and side extension. The first floor side extension would be approximately 2.2m wide over an existing ground floor area which has a flat roof and would extend the full depth of the dwelling.

The first floor front extension would also be over an existing ground floor area, and would create a new gable end roof feature.

These changes to the first floor would provide two extra bedrooms and a dressing room.

A rear conservatory is also proposed which would be approximately 7.0m by 3.3 m.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1972/511/FP - Detached house, double garage and access – 6/07/72

The following applications were originally linked with the application property, but are now on land no longer in the ownership of the applicant and so have limited relevance to this application.

S6/1977/481/FP - Double garage and garden store – approved 06/10/77

S6/1993/600/FP - Erection of detached triple garage - approved 28/10/93

S6/1996/695/FP - Change of use of triple garage to self contained dwelling (Retrospective application) - withdrawn 12/11/96

S6/2007/519/FP – Erection of a single storey and two storey side extension and rear conservatory, and rear balcony railings – refused 13/07/07.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Planning Policy

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPG2 – Green Belts

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 Sustainable Development
GBSP1 – Definition of 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
D9 - Access and Design for people with disabilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

None

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council : *“The PC are generally against any proposed extensions in the Green Belt. However, this appears to be marginal and the PC leaves to the Officer’s Decision”*

REPRESENTATIONS

No letters of representation have been received.

Period expired 24/12/07

DISCUSSION:

This application is a re-submission following the refusal in July last year for extensions.

The main issues are:

- 1) Whether the proposal complies with Green Belt Policy**
- 2) The impact of the proposal on the character of the existing dwelling and surrounding area including the adjoining Listed Building.**
- 3) The impact on the amenity of the adjoining neighbours.**
- 4) Other matters**

- 1) Whether the proposal complies with Green Belt Policy

Green Belt

PPG2 states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless for one of a range of specified purposes. A limited extension to a residential development and alteration can be one of these, provided that 'it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling'. This is incorporated into Policy RA3 of the adopted local plan.

This proposal therefore needs to be assessed on whether the further increase in its size is appropriate and whether it would result in development that would have a detrimental impact upon the openness of the Green Belt in terms of its size, bulk, prominence and design.

The original dwelling as granted by the 1972 planning permission has been extended already with the addition of a number of outbuildings, some of which are no longer within the residential curtilage of the current property. The remaining outbuildings and structures consist of a swimming pool, pool building and shed which are located considerably well away from the main dwelling house.

Other extensions include a single storey rear extension which has a flat roof and extends across the full width of the property to a depth of approximately 1.8m. It appears that this was probably constructed under permitted development.

A roof has also been added to the side of the building to create an open car porch.

In assessing the impact on the openness of the Green Belt, a comparison of floor space between the original and resultant building is useful. The original dwelling has a floorspace of approximately 233sqm.

The resultant building (including the existing rear extension of approximately 25sqm) would be approximately 342sqm (this includes the covered carport area which although open, is still considered to be relevant for the purposes of this calculation).

This would result in an increase of approximately 48% over and above the original dwelling. The areas of the existing outbuildings have been excluded from this calculation.

Turning to a visual assessment, the proposed extension to the front would have the greatest impact due to its prominence within the streetscene. This proposal differs

from the previous one by extending towards the front with a more modest side extension. A pre-application design showed a deeper front extension than currently proposed as the depth has been scaled back following informal advice that the extensions were out of proportion.

The resultant wider space to the side of the building is a significant improvement over the previous proposal and maintains the larger gaps, a feature along this stretch of the Ridgeway. The extension to the front of dwelling is limited to only an increase at first floor level, and when all the extensions are taken into account, the visual impact is still considered to be in proportion with the original dwelling. The floorspace calculation also supports this view with the percentage increase at 48%

In summary, the overall bulk of the resultant dwelling is now considered to be proportional to the original dwelling and respects the openness of the Green Belt in accordance with Policy RA3.

2) The impact of the proposal on the character of the existing dwelling and surrounding area

In regards to design issues, Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan are relevant along the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG). The proposal will extend the features of the original dwelling as the proposal is to maintain the existing hipped pitched roof and window design. Although there are considerable changes to the front elevation, they are still in keeping with the overall character of the property. The proposal therefore would reflect the architectural character of the original dwelling.

Turning to the wider context, Policy D2 is particularly relevant and also the Supplementary Design Guidance which states in regards to residential extensions:

- the extension must not reduce the space around the dwelling to such an extent that the dwelling looks cramped on its site. The spacing of buildings adjacent to and in the locality should be reflected

- for all multi-storey, two-storey and first floor side extensions, a minimum distance of 1m between the extension and the adjoining flank boundary must be maintained: it is important that existing spacing in the street scene is reflected which may result in larger distances being required. This spacing is to prevent over development across plot width and a terracing effect within areas of detached and semi-detached properties, to ensure that the extension does not prejudice the ability of an adjacent occupier to extend without destroying any separation spaces that exist and to preserve the amenity of adjoining dwellings including those whose rear gardens adjoin the proposed extension.

The revised proposal has maintained a 3.6m gap from the side boundary and this overcomes the concerns in the last application about respecting the character of the surrounding area where gaps between buildings are often larger than the 1m minimum stated in the SDG.

The proposal therefore complies with the requirements of Policies D1 & D2 and the Supplementary Design Guidance of the adopted Local Plan.

3) The impact on the amenity of the adjoining neighbours.

The last application proposed a rear first floor balcony, however, this has been deleted for the current proposal.

The only neighbour close to the proposed extension is at No129. The current proposal will have less impact than the previous submission as the depth of the side extension has been considerably reduced. Although the proposed front extension will be visible from this adjoining neighbour at No.129, there is a good separation distance between the buildings and therefore there would be no significant loss of sunlight/daylight as a result to No.129.

One en-suite bathroom side window is proposed and this should be subject to a planning condition requiring it to be obscure glazed to protect the privacy of No.129 and also non opening below 1.7m above floor level.

The proposal therefore complies with the amenity requirements of Policy D1 and the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 in regards to privacy.

4) Other Matters

The site has a large hardstanding area to the front, and so there is ample parking for the extra bedrooms proposed. The proposal therefore complies with the parking requirements of the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

CONCLUSION:

The revised design has reduced the bulk and scale of the proposed extensions and increased the resultant visual gap between the application dwelling and No.129 so that it is in keeping with the character of the area.

The proposal therefore complies with the design and amenity requirements of Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and the national policy guidance contained in PPS1 and PPG2.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL AND CONDITIONS.

1. C.2.1 3 Year Standard Time Limit
2. C.5.1 Matching Materials
3. The west facing first floor en-suite bathroom of the proposed side extension hereby permitted shall be glazed with obscured glass and shall be fixed so as to be incapable of being opened below a height of 1.7 metres above floor level, and shall be retained in that form thereafter.

REASON: To protect the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Planning Policy Statement 1.

4. Other than the windows shown on the approved drawings to which this planning permission relates, no windows shall be inserted into the west facing side elevation of the extension hereby permitted without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

REASON: To protect the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Planning Policy Statement 1.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against National Planning Guidance in PPS1 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP1, RA3, R3, M14, D1, D2 & D9 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 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).

APPROVED DRAWING NUMBERS:

1:1000 Site Location Plan & 1:500 Block Plan (both un-numbered) & 2225-E-01 & 2225-P-01 –all received and date stamped 14/11/07

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