

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2008/0360/FP
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NOTATION:

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

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site accommodates a primary school and is within the Northaw Common Parkland Landscape character area. The site has had many additions and extensions that are both freestanding and attached to the original building. The original building has some single storey flat roofed extensions to the front elevation. The front boundary of the site is enclosed by railings and a gate. The land level of the site falls to the rear. Beyond the boundary to the east is a residential plot. To the north and west of the site is open Green Belt land.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application is an amended scheme to the previous refusal application S6/2007/1107/FP. This application has been submitted with a supporting statement.

The proposed development would be a single storey addition to the front elevation of the school. The proposal would measure a maximum 13.8m in width by 3.8m in depth with a gable sided roof with a ridge height of 4.8m.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1459/2002/FP – Proposed early years classroom and re-location of playground – Approved

S6/0184/95/FP – Extension of school library – Approved

S6/0706/94/FP – Proposed formation of 8 No. additional car parking spaces – Approved

S6/2007/1107/FP – Erection of a single storey front extension – Refused for the following reasons:

The proposed extension would form an overly prominent addition to the street scene and have an incongruous appearance. This would be to the detriment of visual amenities of the street scene and the character and appearance of the locality. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The proposed development would have an adverse impact upon the open character of the Metropolitan Green Belt, due to the bulk, siting and prominence of the

proposed extension. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy RA1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National 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

RA10 – Landscape Regions and Character Areas

R3 - Energy Efficiency

M14 - Parking standards for new developments

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

D5 - Design for movement

D9 - Access and Design for people with disabilities

CLT8 - New and Extended Educational Facilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking

Standards, January 2004

CONSULTATIONS

NORTHAW PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS

No neighbour objections were received. Period expired 3 April 2008.

Hertfordshire County Council Children, Schools and Families Department – A letter supporting the application was received from this department.

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group – Comments were received stating that the development should comply with the relevant access policies of the district plan.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. The proposal's impact upon the character and appearance of the locality.**
- 2. The proposal's impact upon the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt.**
- 3. The proposed developments impact upon the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.**
- 4. Other material planning considerations**

1. The proposed development has been designed to reflect the character of the original building. When compared with the modern flat roof extensions to the front of the school, the proposed development would have a better design and be more appropriate within the street scene. The scale of the proposed extension has been reduced from that of the refused application. Although the proposal would sit forward of the existing buildings it would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. The existing site is wider than the surrounding residential plots, although the proposed extensions would not be appropriate to a residential dwelling the school is viewed as an individual site and the resultant building would not appear out of place.

The proposed development has overcome the design reasons for refusal of the previous application and would not harm the character and appearance of the locality. The proposed development would with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

2. The application site has had several additions and been extended far beyond the original school building. The proposal has been reduced in scale from the previous application and would not appear as dominant. The proposed extension would be sited to the front elevation and would be viewed from the surrounding street scene. The proposal would not be a particularly large addition, however, due to its siting and previous additions, there would be a cumulative impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

The agent has submitted a statement detailing that the school has very poor reception facilities and there are very special circumstances, which are sufficient to allow the development if it is considered inappropriate.

The supporting statement includes the following details:

- The number of pupils attending the school has recently increase by 25% following an extension
- The reception area and head teachers offices were previously too small and are now inadequate
- For access reasons it is necessary to locate the proposed extension to the front of the building
- There is currently not a disabled toilet facility that can be access from the reception area

Due to the recent extension of the school, there has been an increase in the number of visits to the reception area and the number of people waiting in this area. This area is currently cramped to the extent that it does not function efficiently. Furthermore, there is not a provision of toilet facilities that meet the requirements of disabled access. The proposed facilities are not considered to be sufficient for the effective running of the extended school. The information provided are considered to form very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm of the proposal upon the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed development would therefore comply with the requirements of PPG2.

3. The application site adjoins a residential plot to the east and residential plots face the proposed development to the south. The proposal would be sited a sufficient distance from these properties to ensure that the occupants would not suffer an adverse loss of amenity. The proposed development would be single storey and would not result in a loss of light, overbearing impact, or overlooking to the neighbouring dwellings. Although the proposed development would be visible from

the properties across the road, the visual impact of the proposal would be to the street scene rather than the general outlook if these neighbours.

4. The proposed extension would form a small addition to the existing school, which would help it function more efficiently rather than increase its capacity. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable when assessed against Policy CLT8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the appearance of the landscape character area and would comply with Policy RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

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

The proposed development would make provisions for disabled access to the building and to toilet facilities this would comply with the requirement of Policy D9 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene and the open character of the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the neighbouring occupiers. The proposed extension would comply with the relevant policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 - Time Limit Full Permission
2. C.13.1 -The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details 07/23/01 & 07/23/02 C received date stamped 22 February 2008 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

3. C.5.2 - Material to match

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of Full Planning Consent:

The proposal has been considered against PPS1, PPG2 development plan policies (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 SD1, GBSP1, CLT8, R3, M14, D1, D2, D5, 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.

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