

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

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>S6/2008/0556/LB</b>
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**NOTATION:**

The site lies within a Green Belt area of Brookmans Park as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE:**

Mymwood House was built as a residential dwelling around 1820 and is a two-storey, detached, white rendered building with a pitched slate roof. Mymwood House has a single storey, flat roofed extension to the rear. The building has been used as a residential care home for the elderly since the mid-1980's and before this had been used as a boarding school from the 1930's. Mymwood house is set back from the highway by approximately 65m. To the front of the site is a detached building Mymwood Lodge. Both Mymwood House and Mymwood Lodge are Grade II Listed Buildings. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and to the east of the settlement of Brookmans Park.

The site slopes upward from the west to the eastern boundary of the site and Mymwood house is set on an excavated ground level. To the east of the site is an adjacent residential development (Lysley Place). The nearest property to the proposed development, which lies beyond the eastern boundary, is 'The Barn'. To the eastern boundary of the plot is a tall brick wall, which varies in height. The site has several mature trees some of which are protected. Clusters of large trees lie to the front (south) of the plot and beyond the rear of Mymwood House to the east.

Within the building there have been many alterations and many modern additions, which have been carried out without any formal consent. Prior to this application an officer from BEAMS attended a site visit where he confirmed that there were many modern fixtures and fittings that did not add to the character of the Listed Building, but also some historic elements that worth important and worthy of retention.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

The application site has extant approval for the demolition of an existing single storey prefabricated extension and the construction of a part single and part two-storey rear extension to accommodate a 13 new bedrooms and an associated accommodation. The proposed extension would be L-shaped around a courtyard area. A further application granted permission for a basement under the rear extension and a single storey side extension replacing the modern additions to the eastern flank of the building.

The proposed developments would involve a complete internal refurbishment. At the time of the site visit many of the modern additions had been stripped back. The proposal would involve the repair and restoration of several parts of the building, which are in a dilapidated state.

## **PLANNING HISTORY:**

**S6/1983/592/FP** – Change of use from school house to office – Refused.

**S6/1984/519/FP** – Change of use from school to residential home for the elderly – Granted.

**S6/1985/601/FP** – Construction of fire escape stairs in connection with change of use of existing building to old people's home – Granted.

**S6/2005/225/FP** – Alterations and Extensions to Care Home – Refused for the following reasons:

1. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt in the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991- 2011 and the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, wherein permission will only be given for erection of new buildings or the use of existing buildings or land for agricultural, other essential purposes appropriate to a rural area or small scale facilities for participatory sport or recreation. The proposed development is an inappropriate use within the Green Belt. On account of its design, size and location the extension would be prominent and therefore detrimental to the open character of this area of the rural Green Belt. This is contrary to Policy 5 of the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991-2011, Policy RA1 and CLT17 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the advice contained in PPG2. The proposed development cannot be justified in terms of the purposes specified and no exceptional circumstances are apparent in this case.
2. The proposed extension is not designed to complement and reflect the design and character of the existing building. The proposal fails to comply with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

**S6/2005/226/LB** – Alterations and Extensions to Care Home – Refused for the following reason:

1. The design, scale and location of the proposed extension fail to respect the character, appearance, setting and historic form of this Grade II Listed building. This is contrary to Policy R25 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Applications S6/2005/225/FP and S6/2005/226/LB were subsequently dismissed at appeal. The Inspector's decision gave allowance for the development within the Green Belt due to very special circumstances, but did not accept the design or the proposal's relationship with the existing Listed Building.

**S6/2007/422/MA** – Removal of pre-fabricated buildings and erection of extensions to provide 13 additional bedrooms and ancillary accommodation – Planning application Approved.

**S6/2007/0421/LB** – Removal of pre-fabricated buildings and erection of extensions to provide 13 additional bedrooms and ancillary accommodation – Pending consideration.

**S6/2007/1711/LB** – Erection of single storey and basement level extensions – Approved.

**S6/2007/1724/MA** – Erection of single storey and basement level extensions – Approved.

## **SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:**

National Policy  
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:  
None.

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:  
None.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**The Conservation Officer (Beams)** – The proposed development was discussed within a site meeting for application S6/2007/1724/MA. Suggestions were made by the conservation officer and the fireplace was recognised as being an important feature. It was recommended that the site is made secure to ensure the fireplace and other important features are not damaged or stolen.

**Parish Council Comments** – No comments received.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

No neighbour objection. Period expired 9 April 2008.

## **DISCUSSION:**

**The main issues are:**

### **1. The impact upon the adjacent Grade II Listed Building**

Mymwood House is set back from the Shepherds Way and is screened by tall dense vegetation from the front of the plot, therefore when approaching the site the main building is not particularly visible. To the west and north west of the site the building is viewed across open Green Belt land.

From the outside the western elevation of the building has an imposing Italianate character, which is considered to be an important feature of the building and its listing. The interior of the building has been substantially altered but retains some features that are important to its history. The contentious issues and important areas of the proposed works have been addressed below.

A lot of the ground floor contains historic features and the majority of work would involve restoring and renovating this area. The windows would be mostly repaired and restored, which is important as they are also a feature when viewed from the outside of the building. The layout of this floor would not be significantly altered, which would preserve the original fabric of the building. A lift shaft which is a modern addition would be altered to accommodate additional floorspace.

The current entrance hall is noted within the building's listing and is considered to be important. The proposed development would consolidate this room and conserve its

historic fabric. The proposed works would alter it to become a staff room but would not involve any structural change. The proposed works to this area of the building are considered to be acceptable.

Within the ground floor entrance it has been proposed to refurbish the doors and frames. A specialist contractor would be employed to repair a 19<sup>th</sup> century fireplace and replace some missing delft tiles. This fireplace was identified as being particularly important by the conservation officer and its retention and repair is necessary.

Within the building there is an area which contains 7 vaults which have historic importance. The vaults are on the eastern side of the building at ground floor level. These would be retained with one being converted to be a medical room, a WC and another being used for storage. The retention of this area is considered to be important and the proposed restoration is considered to be appropriate.

At first floor level several partitions have been proposed. Although these would divide up the previous layout it is intended to leave the original fabric intact. When considering the proposed first floor layout would be similar to the previous layout when the extensions to the building were approved. The proposed development would restore and repair several areas of the Listed Building, which had been altered or were in a poor state of repair.

An iron balustrade to a staircase to the rear would be retained. This staircase is mentioned within the listing of the building and is an important feature.

The attic rooms would be renovated but no significant or structural works are proposed. The proposed development would restore a large amount of the existing building.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The resultant dwelling would be an improvement when compared with the building when the extensions were approved. The proposed development would not adversely affect the character and appearance or historic fabric of the Listed Building. The application is therefore considered to be acceptable and to meet the requirements of PPG15.

### **RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS**

#### **CONDITIONS:**

1. C.2.2 – Time Limit Full Permission (Listed Buildings)
2. C.13.1 – The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details JDA/03/940/LB/WD.001 & JDA/03/940/LB/WD.002 & JDA/03/940/LB/WD.004 & JDA/03/940/LB/WD.005 & JDA/03/940/LB/WD.012 & Existing and Proposed Door Patterns received and dated 11 March 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.

C.5.1 – Where it has been detailed with the schedule of works that further information is to be submitted and agreed, no works shall take place until detailed plans or relevant information is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans/details. Subsequently, the development shall not be changed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To protect the historic fabric and aesthetic quality of the Listed Building in accordance with PPG15, Planning and the Historic Environment.

Reason for Granting:

The proposal has been considered PPG15, 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.....**