

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

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>S6/2008/778/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 southern side of The Ridgeway on a generous plot, which is approximately rectangular in shape with a frontage of 23 metres and a depth of 85 metres. The plot is relatively level across its width; however the ground level falls away gradually to the rear boundary.

The site contains a detached chalet style dwelling with a gable fronted design and constructed of brickwork and white render with a plain tile roof. There is a detached double garage located to the east elevation and adjacent to the boundary with 91 The Ridgeway. The property has a horseshoe shaped driveway, which provides vehicular access from The Ridgeway.

The rear garden contains a number of modest sized trees of different varieties and the site boundaries with adjoining properties are delineated by various bushes.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:**

The application seeks full planning permission for demolition of the existing garage and erection of two storey side and rear extension with dormer windows.

The single storey side extension would be erected to the east elevation of the property and have dimensions of 4.5 metres in width by 13.5 metres in depth. It would provide for an enlarged kitchen, utility room and additional bedroom at ground floor level. The existing conservatory and detached garage on this elevation would be demolished. Directly above this first floor accommodation would consist of an additional bedroom and ensuite and extension to Master bedroom. It would have dimensions of 2.8 metres in width by 10.5 metres in depth. The side extensions would be finished with hipped rooflines and three additional windows and door in the side elevation at ground floor level and two at first floor level. Also, additional windows would be placed in the front and rear elevation at ground floor level and one in the first floor front elevation.

It is also proposed to erect a double storey rear extension with dimensions of 3 metres in depth by 8 metres in width to provide for an enlarged kitchen and dining room at ground floor level and an enlarged Master bedroom at first floor level. The roofline would incorporate a pitch with rear facing gabled end and a bay window would be placed in the first floor rear elevation. At ground floor level two sets of

double patio doors would be placed in the rear elevation and a further window in the side (west) elevation.

It is proposed to install one additional dormer window with gabled roofline to the west elevation to serve the extended master bedroom.

There would also be several internal alterations regarding the layout at first and ground floor level.

It is also proposed to infill an existing area to the front elevation to provide for a porch extension. It would have dimensions of 3.5 metres by 2.6 metres.

This application differs from the most recently refused scheme (S6/2008/254/FP) in that the first floor element of the side/rear extension has been reduced in scale.

### **PLANNING HISTORY:**

983-68 – Extensions and additions to form double garage - granted

967-69 – Ground floor extension - granted

S6/1989/0031/OP – Site for detached dwelling with garage – refused

S6/2005/1536/FP – Demolition of existing dwelling, garage and outbuildings and erection of two storey detached 4 bedroomed dwelling with associated landscaping – refused

S6/2006/0807/FP – Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two storey detached 4 bedroomed dwelling – refused

S6/2007/1139/FP – Erection of two storey side extension including dormer windows following demolition of existing garage – refused.

S6/2007/1503/FP – Erection of a two storey side extension including dormer window following demolition of existing garage

S6/2008/254/FP – Erection of single storey side and rear extension and two storey rear extension including dormer windows - refused

S6/2008/756/FP – Erection of single storey side and rear extensions and new dormer windows – granted.

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

National Policy

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPG2 – Green Belts

East of England Plan 2008

SS1 – Achieving Sustainable Development

SS7 – Green Belt

ENV2 – Landscape Conservation

ENV7 – Quality in the Built Environment

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 Sustainable Development  
GBSP1 – Definition of Green Belt  
RA3 – Extensions to Dwellings within the 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  
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005  
Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Hertfordshire Highways – Have no objections to the application.

## **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council – Have objected to the application and consider the proposals to represent a disproportionate addition.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

This application has been advertised and 3 representations have been received. Period expired 09/06/2008. A site notice was also erected and expired on 12/06/2008.

The main issues were:

- Impact on the character and openness of the Green Belt
- Substantial increase in floorspace, which is out of proportion to the existing building
- Two storey side extension would overlook number 91 The Ridgeway
- Out of keeping with design of chalet properties in the locality
- Overdevelopment within the Green Belt

## **DISCUSSION:**

The main issues are:

- 1. Metropolitan Green Belt**
- 2. Design and Impact on Character of Area**
- 3. Impact on Neighbouring Properties**
- 4. Other Issues**

### Metropolitan Green Belt

PPG2 sets out Government policy on Metropolitan Green Belts. Paragraph 3.1 states that: -

“The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in the Green Belt but there is, in addition, a general presumption against

inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances”

Paragraph 3.6 also states: -

“Provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, the extension or alteration of dwellings is not inappropriate in Green Belts.”

Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan `sets out the Council’s policy with regard to extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt, and these policies are consistent with the advice contained within PPG 2, this policy also applies to those outbuildings for which planning permission is required.

The policies advise that extensions to dwellings located within the Green Belt will only be considered as ‘appropriate’ development when they do not individually or when considered with existing or approved extensions to the original dwelling have an adverse and disproportionate impact in terms of prominence, size, bulk and design on the character, appearance, pattern of development and visual amenity of the surrounding countryside.

Paragraph 3.6 of PPG2 emphasizes that it is the original building, which is important in assessing whether any proposal is disproportionate.

It is considered that apart from the detached garage and rear conservatory, and in the absence of any other evidence, it is likely that the existing dwelling is similar to that of the original dwelling when first constructed. The original floorspace of the dwelling has therefore been calculated at 168 sq.m and the original footprint is 106 sq.m.

It is proposed to demolish the existing garage as part of the project. The original garage was erected under planning permission 983/68 and created an additional floorspace of 37 sq.m. The proposed extension would be built within a slightly larger footprint that wraps around to the rear and is set back slightly further from the front elevation. This would be utilised as additional floorspace of the main dwelling.

From looking at the figures it is considered that an increase in floorspace of 133 sq.m (79%) and footprint of 85 sq.m (80%) are considered to be disproportionate to the original dwelling particularly at ground floor level. The most recently refused scheme S6/2008/254/FP had a floorspace of 123 sq.m (73%) and footprint of 100 sq.m (94%) and it is considered that the figures for the current scheme are not too dissimilar. Also, it is considered that even taking into account the existing 37 sq.m of floorspace provided by the garage, these figures would be unacceptable in terms of Green Belt policy. Consequently, it is considered that the proposals fail to comply with the advice contained within PPG2 and section (i) of Policy RA3 (Extension to Dwellings in the Green Belt).

However, it is also important to consider the overall visual impact of the extension in relation to its prominence, size, bulk and design on the openness of the Green Belt. It is acknowledged that there is an existing garage on this side elevation, which would be demolished and the proposed side extension would be relocated slightly further to the rear of the site. However, the proposed extension incorporates additional bulk to both the side and rear elevations at ground and first floor level.

The applicant has referred to planning application reference S6/2007/1588/FP, which granted a similar scheme at 85 The Ridgeway. It is acknowledged that there are similarities between each scheme, however there are some notable differences. Firstly, the property at 85 The Ridgeway had a clutter of buildings within 5 metres of the dwelling (including garage and sheds) and these were taken into account with the planning permission. Additionally, there was an existing first floor rear extension granted prior to 1977, which incorporated a veranda at ground floor level and part of the 2007 scheme involved the infill of this existing floorspace. Also, when comparing each scheme it was noted that the permitted scheme at 85 The Ridgeway had a maximum depth of 9.6 metres and was set back from the highway by 5.4 metres whereas the proposed scheme at 93 The Ridgeway has a maximum depth of 10.3 metres and is set back from the highway by 4.7 metres and proposed an additional dormer window in the side (west) elevation. It is considered that these variations represent a bulkier and more prominent feature.

Consequently, it is considered that the proposed extensions would have a greater visual impact in terms of prominence, size, bulk and design on the openness of the Green Belt and as such fails to comply with PPG2 and Section (ii) of Policy RA3 contained within the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

### Design and Impact on Character of Area

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 property has a gabled roof design with two side facing gabled dormer windows at first floor level. There is also an attached side garage to the east elevation of the dwelling, which has a flat roof design.

The proposed extension would involve demolition of the existing detached flat roof garage and creation of a ground floor wrap around extension with hipped roof design and a first floor side extension with hipped roof design, which are considered to be appropriately designed and relate to the surrounding properties. Additionally, the double storey rear extension would maintain the gabled end and pitched roof design of the original dwelling, which is considered to relate adequately to the original architectural features of the dwelling.

The roofline of the proposed side extension has been set slightly lower than the ridgeline of the property and is level with the positioning of the existing dormer window on the side (west) elevation. This is considered to maintain balance and symmetry from the front elevation.

The bay window to the rear and gabled dormer window to the side (west) elevation would respect the original architectural features and would not be detrimental to the character of the dwelling or street scene and as such complies with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

It is also proposed to create a further dormer window within the side (west) elevation. This would maintain the existing design and proportions to the existing windows and would be placed at a similar height above ground level within the roofline. The proposed dormer window complies with Section 5.1 vi of the Supplementary Design Guidance as it is located below the ridge height, in proportion to the existing fenestration and set in by at least 1m from the flank walls. It has also been designed to emulate the original chalet design of the bungalow and therefore would not detract from the character of the house or street scene. This complies with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

The immediate street scene contains a number of chalet style dwellings and it is considered that the proposed extensions and dormer windows would reflect the existing architectural pattern within the street scene. This complies with Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with PPS1, Policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008 and Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield Plan 2005 and supporting Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

### Impact on Neighbouring Properties

The properties most impacted on by the development would be the adjoining sites at 91 and 95 The Ridgeway. However, 91 The Ridgeway would be more adversely affected due to the bulk of the extension being constructed on the eastern elevation of the property.

A number of concerns have been addressed by the residents at 91 and 95 The Ridgeway, however the majority of the issues raised have been discussed in the Green Belt section. Other issues raised in terms of amenity include the impact created from the two storey side extension facing 91 The Ridgeway particularly in relation to overlooking.

The proposed two storey side and rear extensions would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the occupiers of 95 The Ridgeway due to the separation distances of approximately 14 metres and as the bulk of the extensions would be constructed on the eastern elevation and therefore screened by the existing dwelling.

The proposed extensions would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity to the occupiers at 91 The Ridgeway. The double storey side/rear extension would not be overbearing or cause unacceptable loss of sunlight/daylight due to the orientations of the site and as the extensions would not project substantially further of the rear building line at 91 The Ridgeway. Additionally, the first floor element of the extension is set in by approximately 5 metres from the common boundary with 91 The Ridgeway and existing windows along this elevation consists of secondary windows to the rear living room at ground floor level and a small bathroom window at first floor level.

The additional dormer windows within the side elevations have the potential to create further overlooking to adjacent properties. Consequently, a condition could be attached to obscure windows as those situated within the eastern elevation provide for an ensuite bathroom and a secondary bedroom window and a new dormer within the west elevation creates a secondary bedroom window . This complies with Policy D1 and the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

### Other Issues

The development has submitted a sustainability checklist as part of the application, which discusses its contribution to sustainable development and energy efficiency. An effort has been made to incorporate sustainable construction including maximising use of south facing windows, maintaining existing vegetation and installing water-efficient fixtures. Additional, energy saving opportunities have been maximised by incorporating cavity wall insulation and double-glazing.

Cuffley is situated as a Zone 4 location whereby a maximum of car parking spaces are required for a dwelling containing 4+ bedrooms. The proposal would result in the loss of a garage and creates an additional bedroom, however a site visit confirmed that parking spaces are available for at least 3 cars on the application site, which is considered adequate and in compliance with Policy M14 and the revised parking standards.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The proposed single storey side and two storey side and rear extensions with new dormer windows would result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the dwelling to have an adverse visual impact (in terms of its prominence, size, bulk and design) on the character and openness of the Green Belt. This fail to comply with the advice contained within PPG2 and Policy RA3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

### **RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASONS**

1. The proposal by virtue of the size, bulk, scale and design would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling and therefore represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The applicant has failed to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority any very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm caused by reason of its inappropriateness. In addition, the proposal by virtue of its siting, design and bulk would have a detrimental impact on the character and openness of this part of the Green Belt and the visual interest of its surroundings. The proposal is therefore contrary to the advice contained within PPG2 and Policies RA3 and RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**DRAWING NUMBERS:**

8504/S/001 A and date stamped 13 May 2008  
Amendment 8504/P/011b and date stamped 23 June 2008

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