

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

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>S6/2008/787/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 19 metres and a depth of 90 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 pitched plain tile roof with an apex point. The front elevation features one flat roof dormer window and there are also hipped roof dormers within the rear and side (west) elevation.

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 roof alterations to incorporate first floor accommodation consisting of roof enlargement and part raising of ridge line and new front dormer window.

The ridgeline would be increased by 0.6 metres in places and the enlargement would incorporate a gabled end with hipped top.

The highest point of the existing dwelling is an apex point, which projects approximately 1.5 metres above the rest of the roofline. The proposed scheme seeks to reconfigure the roof to maintain the ridgeline at approximately 6.8 metres. It is also proposed to remove the existing flat roof dormer window within the front roofspace and replace it with two hipped roof dormer windows. The existing dormer window and rooflight within the rear roofslope would also be removed and replaced with two windows. It is also proposed to insert two additional rooflights within the side (east) elevation and another in the side (west) elevation to serve the ensembles bathrooms. A roof lantern would also be inserted within the roofslope to provide for the hallway and landing.

The roof alterations would create an additional bedroom with ensuite and bedroom enlargement at first floor level.

The application also proposes some internal alterations at ground and first floor level.

## **PLANNING HISTORY:**

E/746/54 – Bungalow and Private Driveway – granted 22/7/54

S6/2007/1207/FP – Erection of first floor rear extension, alterations to roof to include two dormer windows to front elevation following demolition of existing dormer window – granted.

S61998/981/FP – Erection of replacement dwelling at 59 The Ridgeway, Cuffley – granted.

S6/1996/440/FP – Erection of replacement dwelling at 59 The Ridgeway, Cuffley – granted.

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

National Policy

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development  
PPG2 – Green Belts

East of England Plan 2008  
SS1 – Achieving Sustainable Development  
ENV2 – Landscape Conservation  
ENV7 – Quality in the Built Environment  
T14 - Parking

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:  
Policy 43 – Landscape Conservation Areas

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**

None

## **TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council – Have no objections to the proposed scheme.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

None. Period expired 20/06/2008.

A site notice was also posted and expired 24/06/2008.

## **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.

The original dwelling is the property which was built following planning permission granted in 1954 (see file for copy of approved design drawing). The property has been altered since this time, as first floor accommodation has been added, however the Council do not hold any planning records for these alterations. Following a site visit, it appears that the only main changes have been the addition of dormers which could have been achieved through permitted development rights in the past.

Planning application reference S6/2007/1207/FP was for a first floor rear extension and alterations to roof including two dormer windows to the front elevation. This increased the existing floorspace by approximately 80%, however taking into account that the height of the new roof was slightly lower than the original and that the

increase in bulk and mass would still be proportional, the overall impact on the openness of the Green Belt was deemed acceptable.

The current proposal does not seek to create any further floorspace at first floor level other than that approved under planning permission S6/2007/1207/FP; however it is proposed to alter the roof configuration. Consequently, it is also important to consider the overall visual impact of the proposals in relation to their prominence, size, bulk and design on the openness of the Green Belt.

The proposal would still use the resultant roofspace for the new first floor accommodation, albeit in reconfigured style. When comparing this scheme to the original bungalow granted under planning permission E/746/54 and the more recently approved scheme S6/2007/1207/FP, it appears that the dwelling has altered from its original built form of a low density bungalow. The current scheme proposes to further alter the appearance of the property to resemble that of a more chalet styled bungalow. The main visual impact would result from the roof enlargement, which incorporates gabled ends with hipped tops to the side elevations and an overall bulkier structure when viewed from the street scene and other public vantage points. Additionally, the ridgeline would be part raised and maintained at a height of approximately 6.8 metres, which involves the loss of the existing apex point of 7.6 metres; however a large proportion would be raised by 0.7 metres.

The previous scheme had a marginally higher ridge line (approximately 0.2 metres higher) in comparison to this scheme; however the style was different in that there was reduced bulk, massing and prominence. Additionally, it is considered that the roof alterations would be highly visible from the street scene and would close up an important visual gap between adjacent properties.

It is acknowledged that dwellings within the immediate context and wider vicinity are of a larger scale and particularly the adjacent properties at 59 and 55 the Ridgeway. However, the dwelling at 59 The Ridgeway had previous planning permissions granted for a new dwelling (S6/1996/440/FP and S6/1998/981/FP). Planning records indicate that the original dwelling had a ridge line at 6.4 metres and the approved scheme had a ridge line of 6.9 metres. However, the overall increase in ridgeline was 0.5 metres whereas this scheme incorporates an increase of 0.7 metres.

In conclusion, it is considered that despite the dwellings within the immediate street scene, the proposed roof alterations are considered to create a more prominent dwelling due to the scale, bulk, massing and design and the insertion of further dormer windows would create additional bulk to the roofslope. This fails to comply with Section (ii) of Policy RA3 (Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt) and the advice contained within PPG2.

### 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.

The original dwelling features a pitched roofline with an apex point and alterations since the dwelling was constructed have incorporated the insertion of dormer windows and rooflights. However, the proposed alterations to the roofline to incorporate a gabled end with hipped top are considered to be sympathetic to the original design of the building. Additionally, given the wider context of the area, it is acknowledged that there are a variety of dwelling types within the Ridgeway, which contains two storey dwellings, chalet style properties and bungalows (generally with accommodation within the roof space). It is also acknowledged that the street scene features dwellings of varied architectural designs, age and materials and there are also a number of dormer windows and roof lights within the context of the site. It is therefore considered that the alterations to the dwelling have been appropriately designed and relate to the varied character of The Ridgeway to comply with PPS1, Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, Policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008 and the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

The proposed dormer windows comply with Section 5.1 vi of the Supplementary Design Guidance as they are located below the ridge height, in proportion to the existing fenestration and 1m from the adjoining party walls. They have also been designed to emulate the existing character of the dwelling with a hipped roof and therefore would not detract from the character of the house. This complies with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

### Impact on Neighbouring Properties

The properties most impacted on by the development would be the adjoining sites at 55 and 59 The Ridgeway.

It is considered that the proposed changes to the roof configuration would not have any further impacts on the amenity of the adjoining occupiers as the alterations would take place within the existing roofspace. The ridgeline would be increase by a maximum of 0.7 metres in places and given the differences between the ridge lines of the property in question and adjacent properties (approximately 1-2 metres), it is considered that this would not result in unacceptable loss of sunlight/daylight or be overbearing to the occupiers of these properties. Consequently, the proposals would not be detrimental to the amenity of occupiers at adjacent properties.

Also, the proposal would not result in unacceptable loss of privacy to adjoining sites as no additional dormer windows are proposed within the side elevations. The additional dormer window within the front elevation would predominantly have views towards the street scene. This complies with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the supporting material outlines within Section 5 (Residential Design Guidance) of the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

The proposals therefore comply with Policy D1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the material contained within the Supplementary Design Guidance 2005.

### Other Issues

The development does not specify how the development contributes to sustainable development or energy efficiency.

Cuffley is located within Zone 4 as designated within the Supplementary Planning Guidance-Parking Standards. It is specified that a dwelling containing 4+ bedrooms within this location should provide for a maximum of 3 car parking spaces. A site visit

confirmed that there are 2/3 available spaces to the front of the property and a garage, which is considered adequate and in compliance with the revised parking standards to comply with Policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance and Policy T14 of the East of England Plan 2008.

**CONCLUSION:**

The proposed alterations to roofline including dormer window would result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the dwelling and have an adverse visual impact (in terms of its prominence, size, bulk and design) on the character and openness of the Green Belt. Consequently, this fails to comply with PPG2 and Policies RA3 and RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**RECOMMENDATION: REFUSAL AND REASON (S)**

1) The proposal by virtue of its bulk, scale, massing and design would encroach into an important visual gap and result in a prominent structure, which would have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance and openness of this part of the Green Belt, Landscape Conservation Area 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:**

8529/S/010 & 8529/P/011 and date stamped 16 May 2008.

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