

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2008/1357/MA
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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 comprises of a single storey primary school which is located behind houses in Theobalds Road. Access to the site is by a driveway which runs between the houses.

The site comprises of a mixture of buildings, most of which are however finished in red brickwork. There are a number of courtyard areas created by the irregular plan layout of the buildings. The rear of the site adjoins open countryside to the east and south.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposal seeks full planning permission for the creation of a new disabled WC and the retention of an existing store through the conversion of an existing storeroom and a single storey extension of 1.18m by 4.85m. In addition a small 3m long and 1.4m wide ramp is proposed to improve access to an existing external door.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/1994/0679/FP – Erection of new classroom – granted 24/11/94

S6/1996/912/FP – Erection of single storey extension – granted 17/12/96

S6/2006/0638/FP – Erection of Art Studio and 2 Music Box Classrooms – granted 12/07/09

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development
PPG2: Green Belts

East of England Plan 2008
SS1 – Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:
None

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 Sustainable Development

GBSP1 – Definition of Green Belt

D1 - Quality of design

D2 - Character and context

D9 - Access and Design for people with disabilities

CLT8 - New and Extended Education Facilities

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

CONSULTATIONS

None

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council - no objection

REPRESENTATIONS

None.

Period expired 25/09/08.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1. Green Belt Policy.**
- 2. The impact of the proposal on the character of the area and residential amenity of adjoining neighbours.**
- 3. Other Matters.**

1. Green Belt Policy

The proposal is by definition considered to represent inappropriate development, as it does not fall within the uses listed in PPG2. It is therefore necessary to consider whether Very Special Circumstances may exist to set aside normal Green Belt Policy.

Very Special Circumstances

The location of the proposed extension is in an area which provided a storeroom. The proposed increase in floorspace is around 5 sqm. The location of the extension is within a courtyard area within the existing building complex. The proposal is to provide a new disabled WC and to retain a small storeroom.

Taking into account the discrete location, the small scale of the extensions and their essential requirement for the needs of the school, it is considered the benefits outweigh any potential resultant harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances therefore exist as required to make an exception to Green Belt Policy.

2. The impact of the proposal on the character of the area and residential amenity of adjoining neighbours.

Policy D1 and D2 are relevant along with the accompanying Supplementary Design Guidance.

Policy CLT 8 - New and Extended Education Facilities is also relevant and requires:

- (i) They are situated close to centres of population and passenger transport services;
- (ii) They provide opportunities for shared journeys, for example by school bus;
- (iii) They provide facilities for the secure storage of bicycles for students and staff;
- (iv) The proposal complies with the Council's current car parking standards and there would be no adverse impact on the highway network including highway safety;
- (v) Provision is made for the safety of students whilst being dropped off or picked up;
- (vi) There would be no harmful impact on the amenity of nearby residential properties and other uses; and
- (vii) There would be no significant impact on the character of the area.

Due to the nature and scale of the proposal, only criteria (vi) and (vii) have relevance.

The location of the proposal is distant from any neighbouring residential properties and so no issues are raised by the part of the proposal.

In regards to design, the proposal is to extend the existing brickwork and to create a new flat roof. At the time of the site visit the brickwork had already commenced and it is considered that the brick used was a good match to the existing. The proposed design is in keeping with the character of the existing dwelling and so complies with Policy D1, D2 and CLT8.

3. Other Matters

Policy D9 (Access and Design for people with disabilities) is relevant. The proposal is specifically for providing accommodation specifically for children with disabilities and also the proposed access ramp. In this respect the work is fully compliant with Policy D9.

CONCLUSION:

Very special circumstances are considered to exist to justify the proposed development and due to the small scale and distant location from any neighbouring residential properties, it is considered to comply with Green Belt Policy PPG2, and

design and amenity policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and Policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 Standard Time Limit - 3 Years
2. C13.1 Approved Drawings: 2148-01 Rev A & 2148-02 Rev E & 2148-04 Rev A4 - received and date stamped 02/08/08.
3. C.5.2 Matching Materials

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against national development plan policies PPS1 & PPG2, East of England Plan 2008 Policies SS1 & ENV7 and local plan Policies SD1, GBSP1, CLT8, D1, D2 and 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).

INFORMATIVES:

None

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